What role Workplace Fun (WF) play in Organizations? Analysing the Effect on Job Satisfaction, Task Performance and Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

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**ARTICLE DETAILS**

**ABSTRACT**
Workplace fun has been taken as non supportive in organizations, however, happy and satisfied workers play a critical role in the success of the organizations. The fun at workplace enables the employees to remain calm and exert more effort in the performance of their tasks. Thus, the main objective of the research is to examine the effects of workplace fun on individual workplace outcomes. The extensive literature studied in the field of workplace fun and performance of employees, but the gap has found that how it affects on the employee’s work behavior outcomes. Therefore, it empirically examines the impact of workplace fun on job satisfaction, task performance and organization citizenship behavior of employees. Thirty four (34) item questionnaires were designed with five point Likert scale, which were distributed to the employees who had been working in the oil and gas companies. The convenience sampling technique was used that enable to get 216 effective responses. The key finding of this study is that workplace fun more positively on task performance as compared to job satisfaction and organization citizenship of employees. This study provides the platform for HR professionals that they should develop such an amusing and entertaining environment at work place through which employees love to do the work. This study also provides the new road map for further research: role of management, cultural issues, and parental status of employees can be considered for a future as a moderating variable.

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1. Introduction
The growing researchers highlight the importance of fun at work place. Therefore, the organizations are striving for introducing fun at the workplace as it is helpful in motivating and retaining employees or even award competitive edge from competitors. (K. Karl & Harland, 2005)
suggested that creating and maintaining fun at work place is vital for raising employee motivation and productivity, while reducing the stress level. Workplace fun affects positively on both individuals as well as organizations. Such as, for individuals it is helpful in reducing stress level and also an effective tool for stress management. In addition, it’s also a source of creativity, curtail workplace conflict, improve communication and build up group cohesiveness. For organization, fun is useful to minimize the status difference in the staff, provides shortcuts to develop harmony and build trust and openness with team members. Hemsath and Yerkes (1997) have recommended that an environment, which promotes fun in the workplace, was also characterized by positive energy, high self-esteem and team morale. Additionally, fun also builds motivation level of employee and they trained to do even a complex task. The motivation of employees towards workplace fun activities can be enhanced by fulfilling their social needs. Davidson, McPail, and Barry (2011); (Newstrom, 2002) suggested that hospitality industry consists of workplace fun loving people and hope that its customer would also have a fun with them. Further, the hospitality industry has a more potential to have a fun at the workplace as it establishes an environment that is full of fun without having its negative consequences. Ford, McLaughlin, and Newstrom (2003) presented a survey of 572 human resource managers and recommended that an environment having a fun in the workplace is to be called when it “deliberately encouraged, commenced, and support a wide range of pleasing and fun activities that have a positive impact on attitude and efficiency of individuals and groups”. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the fun goes beyond job satisfaction as it includes that sort of activity which expresses the sense of “friendliness, gladness, and affirmative well-being that formulate the working condition not only satisfactory but also full of fun.” It has argued that workplace environment plays a critical role in the performance of employees. Therefore, firms are eager to design their workplace which satisfies the need of its employees. Highly cited examples of successful organizations like Southern Airlines and Googolplex have led to believe that having a fun is always better for employee as well as organization. Mesmer-Magnus, Glew, and Viswesvaran (2012) suggest that the employees that uses the positive form of humor benefited the organization in the form of job productivity and job satisfaction and also reduce the cost that are connected with suffer exhaustion, turnover and unfortunate worker health. Thus, there is need to introduce the element of fun in the work climate which stimulates the positive behavior of employees in terms of job satisfaction, task performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Further the researchers had found the positive effects of workplace fun as the when employee perceive the workplace to be fun then it is source of increasing employee morale, creativity, performance and organizational commitment (Fluegge, 2008; Ford et al., 2003; Lamm & Meeks, 2009; McDowell, 2004; Pryor, Singleton, Taneja, & Humphreys, 2010). Although a lot of research is conducted in defining the importance of workplace fun but there is a little study that defines what workplace fun is and how the positive effects of workplace fun can be achieved. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to assess up to what extent, workplace fun impacts the job satisfaction, task performance and organization citizenship behavior of employees. This paper fulfills the need of employees who are working in a stressful environment that how they remain productive at the desk. Furthermore, the companies which are suffering from high turnover issues can also get benefited from introducing the workplace fun strategies in the organization culture. Further to test the hypothesis of the study, the oil and gas sector has chosen which offer many kinds of workplace fun activities for the employees which facilitate for the achievement of the research objectives.

The effective use of workplace fun has positive implications for employee physical and mental health. This enables the protection from negative impact of workplace anxiety and promotes effective functioning of employee job related behaviors. The HR practitioner will get benefit that how
the workplace fun is integrated in HR policies and working environment for the efficient performance of the employees.

2. Literature Review

Workplace fun is emerging concept in the modern era due to numerous benefits as it has not only the positive organizational outcomes, but it also affects the personal and social life of an individual. Positive workplace fun provides relief from frustration promotes effective communication and reduces the social distance among people by improving relationships. A common problem lie in most of the companies is the lack of culture that supports the fun at workplace. It was mostly assumed that work should only be working and do not involve any type of playful activity. In the past fun has not been linked with work, however, the literature support suggested that fun at workplace raise the quality of work life, reputation, performance, employee development programs, diversity initiatives, communication, group cohesiveness, enthusiasm, satisfaction, creativity, causes less human resource problems and employee retention (Fineman, 2006; Ford, Newstrom, & McLaughlin, 2004; Guerrier & Adib, 2003; Jeffcoat & Gibson, 2011; K. Karl & Peluchette, 2006; K. A. Karl, Peluchette, & Harland, 2007; Newstrom, 2002). However, to have a fun at the workplace not only important for the task performance but also the source of the expedite increase in employee performance. Bakke (2005) a professional business writer also advocates, “People should love to come to work”. Furthermore, creating fun in workplace culture is pivotal for increasing employee motivation and productivity, reducing stress and increasing customer satisfaction (Kersley et al., 2013). Owler (2008) suggested the perspective point of view that workplace fun could only be occurred when work and play are successfully intermixed. This integration is helpful in creating calm, anxiety free and healthy environment.

Fluegge (2008) defined that Workplace fun is playful, social, interpersonal, recreational, or task activities intended to provide amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure. Furthermore, McDowell (2004) also gives the definition of the fun at workplace as a “social, interpersonal, or job activities at work of a playful or entertaining in nature which is a source of amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure for individuals”.

The implementation of fun philosophy of a workplace is not an easy task and it’s found that there is significant difference lies in the organizations according to their culture which tolerate, support and reward fun (Aldag & Sherony, 2001; Plester, 2009). Furthermore, people’s attitude also varies according to the significance, correctness, and apparent consequences of having fun at the job place (K. A. Karl et al., 2007). These issues, along with questions about the motives behind Philosophy of fun, it can be reason a few workers react with doubt and confrontation (Fineman, 2006; Warren, 2005). The degree to which employee can find fun at workplace depend on their special point of view, socialization processes, work experiences and personality distinctiveness – each accounting for changing attitudes and perceptions about the significance of workplace fun (Aldag & Sherony, 2001). Baptiste (2009) suggest that the basic purpose of fun was to achieve engaged and relaxed employees as an instant factor of improvement of quality of work life. On the other hand, several questions emerged about the chant of fun could be a fake way to pleasure and well-being. Researchers give suggestion as how the fun with the organizational culture is infused. For example, starts company weekly meeting with the funny and silly games to make employee relax before the serious talks. Moreover, by giving small and funny gifts and incentives likes’ chocolate, cinema tickets on the accomplishment of the task, all these sorts of activities creates a new sense of urgency and enjoyment among the teammates. Furthermore, it’s also proposed that by adding social
trips together for better understanding of each other's and make the work environment bright with colors and posters are also helpful in generating a pleasing organization workplace culture. Chan (2010) categorized the workplace fun activities in four different ways named as staff-oriented, supervisor oriented, social oriented and strategy oriented fun at workplace. In his classification staff-oriented fun activities includes celebration of personal event like birthday, marriage and retirement. This sort of activities is a source of appreciation for employees from its coworkers and organization. Further, it also leads towards employee job satisfaction, high motivation for the better performing the organizational task and also helping the colleagues other then the job tasks. Supervisor oriented fun activities includes lunches, breaks and informal meeting with the immediate supervisor. Such meetings between employee and his immediate supervisor had lead to discuss the performance standards more openly and improve their relationships in the performance of task. Further, the firms mostly sponsor the social fun oriented activities that includes, holiday parties, charity events and picnics. Such activities enhance the group cohesiveness and enable them to work by having better understanding with one another. The last type of fun activities at work is strategy oriented that includes family friendly policies, management practices of outstanding performers and policy of participation program. These activities clearly shows the appreciation of organizations towards hard work and active participation in organization life, Thus organization support the employee to promote the well being of organization in return by having better performance in the teamwork.

Hemsath and Yerkes (1997) believe that fun at work place is highly effective single characteristics of successful organizations and enables the direct link of workplace fun with employee productivity, creativity, satisfaction, retention as well as customer satisfaction and many other aspects that’s determine the business success. Meanwhile, work place fun also covers all those fun activities that are designed with purpose and having an expectation of enhancing the organizational productivity. In Addition, it also suggested that by surveying before and after fun activities researcher could directly measure the impact of workplace fun on the attitude and behaviors of the respondents. K. Karl and Peluchette (2006) established a link between job satisfaction and experienced fun. Task performance of employees also improves by the integration of fun at work place. Fluegge (2008) also established an indirect relationship between workplace fun and task performance in his dissertation. This research added the organization citizenship behavior in order to examine the effects of workplace fun on it. Therefore, the following research hypotheses of the study are as under:

**H1:** There is a positive and significant impact of Workplace Fun (WF) on the satisfaction level of employees.

**H2:** There is a positive and significant influence of Workplace Fun (WF) on task performance of employees.

**H3:** There is a positive and significant effect of Workplace Fun (WF) organizational citizenship behavior of employees.
3. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework

![Diagram of theoretical framework]

H1

Job Satisfaction

H2

Task performance

H3

Organization Citizenship Behavior

Workplace Fun

4. Research Methodology

The survey began with 280 questionnaires out of which 240 returned by the respondent. However, the validity of the number of responses reduced substantially after deleting the responses, which did not fulfill the criteria. Therefore, those responses were excluded that work on a third party contract in the oil and gas industry. So the sample size reduced up to 216 having valid responses. This study considers public and private sector Oil and gas organizations that were engaged in exploration, drilling, purification and distribution of Oil and gas. Data was collected through convenience sampling technique because of limited budget and time. The employees were targeted that were solely represented the oil and gas companies doing their jobs in the areas of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The reason to specify these two cities was that majority of respondents employed in service industry and as well as had a diverse background.

4.1 Workplace Fun (WF)

An eleven-item scale used to measure the workplace fun which was drawn from previous researches (Aldag & Sherony, 2001; K. Karl & Harland, 2005). Initial reliability estimates of this survey produced a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.834 and KMO value is 0.691; Example of items is “Joking, laughing, or having a “playful attitude” while on the job is mature and professional?”

4.2 Job satisfaction (JS)

A Seven-item scale to measure the job satisfaction which was drawn from previous researches (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981). Initial reliability estimates of this survey produced a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.833 and KMO value is 0.773; Example of items is “All in all, how satisfied are you with the persons in your work group?”
4.3 Task performance (TP)
A four-item scale to measure the task performance which was drawn from previous researches (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Initial reliability estimates of this survey produced a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.926 and KMO value is 0.844; Examples of items are “I adequately completed assigned duties.” And “I fulfilled responsibilities specified in the job description.”

4.4 Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCB)
A twelve-item scale used to measure the Organization citizenship behavior which was drawn from previous researches (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Initial reliability estimates of this survey produced a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.864 and KMO value is 0.755; Example of items is “I help others who have been absent.”

5. Result and Discussion
5.1 Bivariate Analysis (Correlation Matrix)
Table 4.2: Correlations between workplace fun, job satisfaction, task performance and organization citizenship behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workplace Fun</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Task Performance</th>
<th>OC Behavior</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Workplace Fun</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Performance</td>
<td>-.414**</td>
<td>.208**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC Behavior</td>
<td>-.377**</td>
<td>-.344**</td>
<td>.263**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Bivariate analysis is used to determine the statistical relationship between two variables. Here all the variables are positively correlated and significant by having a p value less than 0.05.

The correlation values demonstrate that there is positive relationship between Workplace fun and job satisfaction. The value of these two variable 0.430 that show high significant relation; which means those employees who like to work in healthy funny environment are more satisfied with their jobs. Furthermore, results indicate that there is a strong positive correlation between workplace fun and task performance. The value of 0.414 represents that employee who engage in workplace fun is loved to work and perform their task efficiently. Similarly, workplace fun also has a strong positive relationship with organizational citizenship behavior. The correlation value of 0.377 shows that employee are more committed toward organization when the fun environment is provided at the workplace. In addition, the employees also take good care of the organization property.

5.2 Simple Linear Regression between workplace fun and job satisfaction, task performance and organizational citizenship behavior
In Linear Regression, all variables are entered one by one and soon evaluated in term of their predictive power.
The R² defines the explanatory power of variables and it is the portion of the variance of the dependent variable (here JS, TP & OCB) explained by the independent variable (WPF) operationalized one by one where as the adjusted R² corrects the overestimation of R² to reflect the better population. The higher the value of R², the higher is the explanatory power of the model. In the above table all the variables have R² above than 0.600 percent, which implies that more than 60 percent variation in the dependent variable explained by the predictor variable.

The standardized coefficient beta value between workplace fun and job satisfaction is 0.113 that show less significant relation which means 1 percent change in independent variable (workplace fun) brings 0.113 percent change in the dependent variable (job satisfaction). That indicates the employees who like to work in healthy funny environment are more satisfied with their jobs. So, there is a need to incorporate fun in workplace to maximize the job satisfaction of employees. Moreover, the standardized coefficient beta value between workplace fun and task performance is 0.314 that show moderate significant relation; which means 1 percent change in independent variable (workplace fun) brings 0.314 percent change in dependent variable (task performance). That indicates the employees who like to work in healthy funny environment are more efficiently performing their task on jobs. The results indicate that by inducing fun at workplace employee complete their task on time. So, there is a need to incorporate fun in workplace to maximize the organization productivity through task achievement. Further, the standardized coefficient beta value between workplace fun and organization citizenship behavior is 0.277 that show reasonable significant relation; which means 1 percent change in independent variable (workplace fun) brings 0.277 percent change in dependent variable (organization citizenship behavior). That indicates the employees who like to work in healthy funny environment are more committed to their organization. The results indicate that by inducing fun at workplace employee become more loyal towards their organization. So, there is a need to incorporate fun in workplace to boost the employee commitment level towards their organization.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The main objective of the study was to test the relations of workplace fun and individual performance outcomes and to conclude that whether it was productive for effective organizational culture. The estimation of the study was supported for job satisfaction, task performance, as well as OCB. The most important finding of the study was that workplace fun effect more positively as to task performance as compared to job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior.
The results of conceptualize hypotheses provide rationale to the researchers who suggested that workplace fun has abundant positive inferences. The activities of workplace fun must be designed with the expectation that they will motivate employees to provide more output toward the organization. The findings of research add value to both theory and practice. In the workplace fun literature, alike to previous researches that dimensions of personalities impact attitudes toward fun (Karl et al., 2007). This study makes an addition by having a link between workplace fun and job related behaviors. Further, it was suggested that all the effects of workplace fun on job outcomes should examined carefully.

For practical implications, the results, evidently pointed out that workplace fun cannot simply put into practice without carefully taken into the consideration to whom being taken place. The fun activities at the work place must be designed with the consideration of employees to achieve better results from it. Moreover, before introducing any fun activity at the workplace, the practitioner must conduct a survey to find out the wait age of employees towards fun activity.

All the research projects have its limitations and the research had no exemption from all. At first, it is admitted that the data had been collected from convenient sampling that limits its generalizablebility. Second, we could not control the industry, type of organization and occupation because of highly varying norms and expectations that could affect employee opinions about the truth of fun in their surrounding workplace; as it would add the confusion in the mind of the employee. Moreover, upcoming researches would also verify the finding through the examination of employee before and after the commencement of workplace fun activities. Therefore, it is persuaded to other researchers to persist with the evolving facet of workplace fun by exploring potential moderating variables like as a culture, supervisor role and stage of life aspects e.g. marital and parental status.

References


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