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Editor

Ts Dr Umol Syamsyul Rakiman
Profesor Madya Dr Hazliza Haron
Madam Halimatussaadiah Iksan
Madam Nurul Fatimah Wan Ismail
Dr Wan Maisara Wan Mohamad
Dr Nawal Esa Yazid Esa

Department of Business and Management, UiTM Perak Branch

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MITIGATING EFFECT OF AFFECTIVE TRUST ON THE WORKPLACE FUN AND WORK ENGAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP: EVIDENCE FROM THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

[1]Fatima Ashraf, [2]Laila Khan

[1]Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology University, Islamabad, Pakistan

[1]fasaifi77@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In an environment driven by constant change and pressure for sustainability, modern HRM must plan and execute novel, positive methods for a constructive work environment. In this pursuit, the present study was driven by two aims: one, to test direct effect of workplace fun on work engagement; two, to test possible mitigating effect of affective trust on the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement. Using co-relational study design and employing survey methods, we collected data from 235 hospitality and tourism sector employees. Regression analyses confirmed the two hypotheses, suggesting a direct affect of workplace fun on work engagement and confirming mitigating effect of affective trust on this relationship. We suggest that HRM design and implement policies that integrate fun and recreation activities at work, and boost affective trust at workplace for safe, healthy and productive work environments.

Keywords: *affective trust, hospitality, Pakistan, psychological capital, tourism, work engagement, workplace fun*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern employees must distinguish between a pleasant and an unpleasant workplace (Georganta & Montgomey, 2019). Workplace fun, a relatively old concept, (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peter & Waterman, 1982) helps employees differentiate between the two types of workplaces through recreation, play, interpersonal and social activities that offer amusement and leisure and release work stress (Lamm & Meeks, 2009). As modern firms experience intense pressures and rivalry, workplace fun has become increasingly important (Schneider & Bowen, 2010; Tsaur, Hsu & Lin, 2019). Worldwide research conducted on workplace fun points to its implication for firm survival, (Karl, Peluchette & Harland, 2007) work performance, (Tews, Michel & Stafford, 2013) and shared achievements (Pahl & Barrett, 2007). Specifically with reference to developing nations as Pakistan, research focusing on workplace fun and its correlates gain importance because various demands have placed strain on the Pakistani workforce (Tsaur, Hsu, & Linet al., 2019) as research on this topic is scant.

A good number of studies point to a desirable impact of workplace fun on important effects that include work satisfaction, (Karl, Peluchette, & Harland, 2007) work exhaustion, (Kuruuzum, Anafarta & Irmak, 2008) work performance, (Zani,

Merican, Saad & Safin, 2017) intentions to quit, (Tews, Michael, Michel & Allen, 2014). Multiple studies have suggested additional empirical research on workplace fun to augment current knowledge of how workplace fun relates to other organizational variables (McManus & Furnham 2010; Tews et al., 2013; Georganta & Montgomery, 2018). Alongside, favourable impact of employee engagement on desirable work outcomes is well documented in earlier research. For instance, according to Demerouti, Cropanzano, Bakker and Leiter, (2010) engaged employees have higher performance, while according to Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, (2006) work engagement reduces emotional exhaustion at work. The importance of work engagement for business leadership has been outlined by Choi, Tran and Park's (2015) study.

Although these studies highlight the importance of workplace fun and work engagement for important work-related effects, inter-relationships between these variables are under-examined. Exploring possible moderation and mediation effects in the workplace fun – work engagement relationships are necessary to fathom intricacies for better planning and executing management interventions at the workplace for sustained work performance and growth. In specific, there is dearth of studies, specifically within Pakistan, that have investigated how workplace fun and employee

engagement are related and variables that are possible moderators and mediators of this relationship. We believe that this is an important research gap that needs to be bridged, according to scholarly suggestions. Chan (2019) suggested that affective trust should be examined as a moderator of the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement, while its mediating impact has been confirmed (Sharma & Yadav, 2018). No study could be located that has examined the mitigating effect of affective trust on the said relationship. To bridge this notable research gap, the present study is guided by three aims: one, to examine the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement; two, to test a possible moderating role of affective trust on this relationship; three, to investigate a possible mediating role of psychological capital in the said relationship.

1.1 An overview of Pakistan's Hospitality Sector

Continuous, fierce global competition within the service industry firms pushes such organizations to surpass customer expectations to sustain competitive advantage (Schneider & Bowen, 2010). Specifically within developing economies, factors such as low compensation, job insecurity, and unpredictable economic changes (Cuyper, Piccoli, Fontinha, & DeWitte, 2018) plausibly threaten work engagement; hence, organizational efforts at creating engagement during work tasks is necessary. Towards this end, notable service sector organizations, such as Google, Marriott and Southwest Airlines have strategically integrated workplace fun in their environment in order to support their service quality through creating a constructive work culture for their employees (Fluegge-Woolf, 2014). These firms indicate the significance of integrating workplace fun in the work environment for service sector firms for

sustained competitive advantage and success. According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017, the Pakistani tourism and hospitality industry ranks 124 out of 136 countries, which is clearly below average. While tourism and hospitality is a growing global industry, Pakistan's low rank on TTCI clearly indicates much investigation into factors that promise to uplift this important industry (Arshad, Iqbal & Shahbaz, 2018). According to Chan, (2010) an appealing, cheerful work environment would attract and retain good work talent that is important for firm success. Specifically for hospitality sector firms, forefront workers must be practical and cautious for effective customer interaction, (Li, Sanders & Frenkel, 2012; Tsaour, Hsu, & Lin., 2019) which suggests inculcation of workplace fun at workplace to attract and preserve good work talent through boosting fun at work.

Given the importance of workplace fun for organizational outcomes, as discussed earlier, we aim to uplift this globally important sector. In view of

this, the present study examines direct effect of workplace fun on work engagement, a possible mitigating role of affective trust on this relationship, and also explores psychological capital as mediator of the said relationship within the Pakistani tourism and hospitality sector. For sustained growth and survival amid a developing yet competitive economy, tourism and hospitality sector firms may design and build effective interventions in their workplace. Thus, this study paves the path for uplifting growth within the promising Pakistani tourism industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Workplace Fun

According to Lamm and Meek, (2009, p.614) fun at work includes the "...interesting, sociable, interpersonal, and recreational tasks and activities that create an interesting working environment". Composed of facets of enjoyable activities, peer socialization, and supervisor's encouragement for pleasurable activities, (Tews, Michel & Noe, 2017) fun work activities concern individual; or team-based socialization opportunities that the organizations creates for its employees (Karl, Peluchette, Hall-Indiana & Harland, 2005). Fun at work involves coworker's socialization that entails constructive co-worker interaction (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Manager's support for fun essentially concerns the degree to which the management promotes fun and relaxation activities at work (Tews et al., 2014). Fun activities, such as planned parties, gaming events and outings, as well as unplanned, spontaneous acts such as jokes and humor with fellow workers foster a motivational reaction among employees (Nazir, Abdullah, Nasir, Shafie, Omar & Halim, 2019).

2.2 Work Engagement

Characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, Schaufeli et al. (2002, p.74) defined work engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind." A positive, motivational construct conceived by Kahn (1990), work engagement is a psychological state that merges an employee's personal self and work role START HERE (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande & Nielsen, 2018) with an aim to boost work competence. Vigor refers to the regular effort an employee exerts towards their job fulfillment and requires purpose and resilience; dedication involves enthusiasm about one's work-related tasks and necessitates high levels of commitment and work motivation; absorption entails psychological detachment from one's environment so that one is immersed in work-related tasks with high focus so that one is oblivious to time passing time. Thus, an engaged employee is passionate and engrossed in

work-related activities (Yalabik, Rayton & Rapti, 2017).

2.3 Psychological Capital

Composed of the four psychological states of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, psychological capital is an employee's positive psychological state (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007). Self-efficacy is the confidence in an employee to take up complicated tasks that enables the employee to exert effort towards success in achievement of those tasks. Hope is the direction in an employee towards goal accomplishment as well as the appropriate channelization of employee's efforts in the right direction for success. Optimism involves an employee's affirmative ambitions for present and future work success. Resilience is the employee's ability to bounce back from failures and endure hardships (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007).

2.4 Affective Trust

Affective trust is rooted in emotional attachment and reliance between individuals, (McAllister, 1995; Webber, 2008) thus is about "trust from the heart" (Chua, Ingram & Morris, 2008). It is differentiated from cognitive trust, as the latter entails the

impartial, logical appraisal of personal characteristics of another, (Dirks & Ferrin 2002; Yang, Mossholder & Peng, 2009) thus it is termed as "trust from the head" (Chua, Ingram & Morris, 2008). Meanwhile, affective trust is an interpersonal standpoint and is beyond external persuasion and causality (McAllister, 1995).

2.5 The Relationship Between Workplace Fun and Work Engagement

Workplace fun activities are productive for organizations because they involve social interactions (Becker & Tews, 2016). Workplace fun distinguishes between good and poor work performance, (Joyce, 2003; Oowler, Morrison, & Plester, 2010) which suggests that an attractive, fun-based work culture paves the path for good work performance. Thus, a good number of studies have associated workplace fun with desirable outcomes including job satisfaction, (Karl & Peluchette, 2006) organizational commitment, (McDowell, 2004) as well as reduced anger, frustration, and turnover intentions among workers (Tews, Michel & Allen (2014). It is, therefore, rational to posit that fun activities at work offset an environment in which employees feel lively, energized, and absorbed in job-related activities, i.e. are engaged in work tasks. Along similar lines, some authors (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009; Plester and Hutchison, 2016) theoretically posited that a fun-based work culture should trigger work engagement, while the empirical evidence is deficient. Based on earlier literature suggestions that workplace fun is likely to positively affect work engagement, and

toempirically examine the said relationship, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H1: Workplace fun will positively relate with work engagement.

2.6 Psychological capital as mediator of the workplace fun – work engagement relationship

As positive states at work boost work engagement, organizations encourage interactive, pleasurable activities (Nigah, Davis & Hurrell, 2012). Hence, workplace fun, humor and work engagement build a positive work culture (Plester & Hutchison, 2016; McManus, 2018; Muceldili & Erdil, 2016) where workers feel joyous, are relaxed, and experience higher energy levels. Such work motivation uplifts employee performance and contentment (Fluegge & Woolf, 2014; Nazir, Abdullah, Nasir, Shafie, Omar & Halim, 2019). It may, therefore, be posited that entertaining activities at work encourage positive psychological states. An important positive psychological state is psychological capital, initially theorized and tested in the organizational behavior field by Luthans (2002). A good number of studies have confirmed that psychological capital helps promote positive organizational behaviour (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans & May, 2004). Empirical studies have proven a desirable relationship of psychological capital on job performance, (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007) and higher job satisfaction, work happiness, and commitment (Anglin, Short, Drover, Stevenson, McKenny, & Allison, 2018; Luthans, Avey & Patera, 2008; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Anglin, Short, Drover, Stevenson, McKenny, & Allison, 2018; Tsaur, Hsu, & Lin, 2019).

According to Luthans et al., (2007) psychological capital boosts work resources to effectively employ competencies to facilitate work. In relation with work engagement, employees with higher psychological capital possess higher work engagement levels (Karatepe & Avci, 2017; Gupta, Shaheen & Das, 2019). In addition, there is sufficient empirical evidence indicating a pivotal role of psychological capital for task completion and job roles (Peterson, Avolio, Walumbwa & Zhang, 2011). Deducing from these studies, we argue that task completion and facilitation is only possible if employees are engaged in work, as employees with high psychological capital are vigorous, happily immersed in work, and have greater work dedication (Gupta, Shaheen & Reddy, 2017; Karatepe & Avci, 2017; Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). Likewise, Paek, Schuckert, Kim and Lee (2015) showed that psychological capital is related with work engagement, and that individuals with high psychological capital have higher levels of work engagement. Gupta, Shaheen and Reddy (2017) also claimed that high confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience build high levels of work engagement.

These studies suggest that positive psychological capital assists in building work engagement so that higher positive psychological state offsets higher work engagement. A positive relationship of psychological capital with workplace fun on the one hand and with work engagement on the other, implies that psychological capital is a possible mediator of the workplace fun – work engagement relationship. Psychological capital has been studied as a mediator of the relationship between work resources and work engagement, (Lewig, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Dollard & Metzger, 2007) and Luthans, Avey & Patera (2008) suggested that psychological capital is a potential mediator between variables. Yet, empirical examination of a possible mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement is lacking in current literature. Deducing from these studies and given its state-resembling nature, psychological capital may be conceptualized as a possible mediator of the workplace fun – work engagement relationship as it is a resource that facilitates task performance. Specifically, workplace fun activities are likely to boost self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience in employees who will then experience higher levels of work engagement. Therefore, it may thus be postulated that:

H2: Psychological capital will mediate the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement.

2.7 Moderating effect of Affective Trust on the Workplace Fun – Work Engagement Relationship

We believe that both workplace fun and work engagement are likely to be impacted by affective trust because as trust is known to impact employee attitudes and work behaviors (Innocenti, Pilati, & Peluso, 2011). As workplace fun activities promote a comfortable, stress-free work milieu, (Tsaur, Hsu & Lin, 2019) such positive interpersonal experiences and social interactions are likely to prompt affective trust among employees (Newman, Kiazad, Miao & Cooper, 2014). Arguably, affective trust built on such grounds will fluctuate, (Dowell, Morrison & Heffernan, 2015; Hsieh & Huang, 2018) leading to variations in affiliations and bonding among individuals who are working in such an environment. Alterations in the type and regularity of such fun-based, affirmative social interactions is likely to generate affective trust, which in turn, will alter work engagement, because trust depends upon work relationships (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000; Jiang & Probst, 2016). This implies that in the presence of high affective trust, workplace fun activities are more likely to trigger engagement in workers. Specifically, when affective trust is low, fun activities will help build engagement at work yet to a lower level. Therefore we propose that affective trust is a possible moderator of the workplace fun – work engagement relationship, such that the

relationship is strongly positive when affective trust is high, and the relationship is workplace fun – work engagement relationship.

Affective trust has been dominantly conceptualized as a mediator between important variables, such as between procedural justice and organizational citizenship behavior, (Guh, Lin, Fan & Yang, 2013) leadership and its outcomes, (Xiaqi, Kun, Chongsen & Sufang, 2012; Guinot & Chiva, 2019) while few studies have proposed affective trust as a moderator of work relationships. With specific reference to the workplace fun – work engagement relationship, we were unable to locate any study that had examined affective trust as a moderator of the said relationship. Given the importance of affective trust for organizations, it is important to examine it as a possible moderator of the workplace fun – work engagement relationship, particularly given its notable importance within the service industry (Bloemer, Pluymaekers, & Odekerken, 2013; Johnson & Grayson, 2005). Based on a review of these studies, it is suggested that:

H3: Affective trust will moderate the workplace fun – work engagement relationship, such that the relationship will be strongly positive when affective trust is high and weakly positive when it is low.

2.8 Underlying Theory

We draw on the Self Determination Theory, (Deci & Ryan, 1985) a theory that offers a framework for understanding employee motivation and psychological needs, in order to explain inter-relationships between workplace fun, affective trust, psychological capital, and work engagement. The SDT suggests that employee need autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Employees with satiated needs are content, intrinsically motivated, experience high work engagement, and possess high well-being. We propose that creating a fun based environment gives a sense of ownership and autonomy, satisfying their innate needs and helps them stay engaged during work tasks through through boosting their self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism levels (psychological capital).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

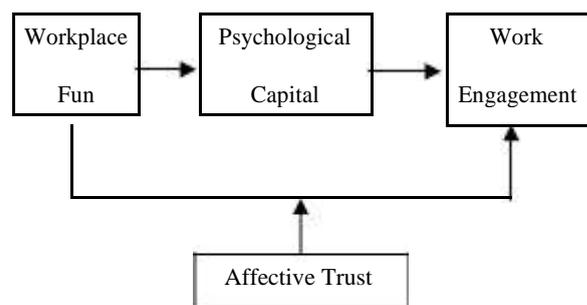


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework for the Study

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study variables, i.e. workplace fun, psychological capital, work engagement, and affective trust are quantifiable and proven, their inter-relationships are investigated, and conclusions are deduced from these investigations. As such, we believe that the reality and the dilemma that this study aims to answer are objective, evident and quantifiable, thus this study assumes the positivism paradigm (Kaboub, 2008). Moreover, the present research is correlation-causal, hypotheses-testing type of study and employs the survey method with minimal researcher interference (Cooper, Schindler & Sun, 2006; Creswell, 2013). Population of this study is employees working in the hospitality industry of Pakistan, and non-probability convenience sampling method was the selected sampling strategy (Aker, Kumar & Day, 2001).

4.1 Measures

All research instruments used for this study had been tested and well-validated in earlier studies. The following research instruments were used to gauge study variables:

Workplace fun. It was measured using Tews, Michel & Allen's (2014), 14 item scale that consists of three dimensions of fun activities (5 items), coworker socialization (4 items), and manager's support for fun (5 items).

Work engagement. It was assessed using Schaufeli, Salanova, M., González-Romá & Bakker's (2002) nine item scale that comprises of three dimensions of vigor (3 items), dedication (3 items), and absorption (3 items).

Psychological capital. Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman's (2007) 12 items Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ form) was employed. The PCQ consists of four dimensions of self-efficacy (3 items), hope (2 items), optimism (4 items), and resilience (3 items).

Affective trust. It was measured using McAllister's (1995) three item Affective Trust Measure.

All research instruments had a five point Likert-type scale with scale anchors ranging from '5' representing 'Strongly Agree' and '1' representing 'Strongly Disagree'. The research instrument comprised of two parts; the first part included the demographic data, while the second part comprised of items pertaining to the study variables. We used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20) to analyze the study data.

4.2 Pilot Study

In order to assess language clarity and general ease of responding to the items, we carried out a pilot test using 50 respondents from among the study sample preceding the actual, full-fledged study. The research aim, purpose, and topic were explained to the pilot study respondents. We also confirmed privacy and secrecy of research data (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Lee, 2003). Following the pilot study results, we concluded that there were no problems related to understandability of the items, as English is well understood by white collar workers in Pakistan. As depicted in Table 1, all Cronbach's alpha values were greater than 0.7, signifying that all items of study variables were reliable and ready for final testing (Toth, Sakaguchi, Mikami, Hirose & Tsukuda, 2005).

Table 1
Results for the Pilot Study

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Workplace Fun (14 items)	0.919
Work Engagement (9 items)	0.754
Psychological Capital (12 items)	0.884
Affective Trust (3 items)	0.902

N=50

Next, data collection for the main study was arranged through personal distribution and administration of 259 copies of the research instruments among the study sample (Roscoe, 1975). Of those, we received 210 complete and usable replies that meant an effective response rate of 96.5 %. There were no missing values as the survey was self-administered. Then, we analyzed the demographic data, correlation analysis, followed by testing the study hypotheses using regression technique.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of 210 study respondents revealed that the majority of the respondents were from the 21 – 25 years age group (86%); 172 were men (68.8%) and 78 were females (31.2%); 106 had organizational tenure of one year or less (42.4%), and the majority were non-managers (80%). The complete demographic profile of study respondent is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Demographic Profile of Study Respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	172	68.8
	Female	78	31.2
Age	21-25	86	34.4
	26-30	81	32.4
	31-35	48	19.2
	35-40	35	14.0
Tenure	Less than 1year	106	42.4
	2-4 years	96	38.4
	5-7 years	34	13.6
	8-10 years	12	4.8
	Above 10 years	2	0.8
Managerial position	Manager	50	20.0
	Non-manager	200	80.0
	Total	210	100.0

N=210

5.2 Correlation Analysis

In order to measure the strength and direction of correlations between study variables, correlation analysis was carried out. All bi-variate correlations and descriptive data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Bi-variate Correlations Among Study Variables

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	PC	WF	WE	AT
PC	2.25	5.00	4.00	0.67	(0.88)			
WF	1.36	5.00	3.95	0.90	0.46*	(0.95)		
WE	2.67	5.00	3.98	0.58	0.45*	0.47*	(0.71)	
AT	1.00	5.00	3.99	1.26	0.59*	0.46*	0.51*	(0.98)

N=210

* $p < 0.001$.

WF=workplace fun, WE=work engagement, PC=psychological capital, AT= affective trust. Cronbach's alpha scores are displayed along the diagonal.

As Table 3 shows, workplace fun had a positive correlation with work engagement, ($\gamma=0.471$, $p < 0.01$). Psychological capital, the hypothesized mediator had positive correlation with workplace fun, ($\gamma=0.47$, $p < 0.001$) while and with work engagement, the dependent variable ($\gamma=0.45$, $p < 0.001$). These correlations were in accordance with expectations and offered initial support for hypotheses 1 and 2. As expected, the hypothesized moderator, affective trust had positive correlation with workplace fun ($\gamma=0.46$, $p < 0.001$) and with work engagement, ($\gamma=0.51$, $p < 0.01$) which provided initial support for hypothesis 3. Hence, all bi-variate correlations were in line with expectation.

5.3 Hypotheses Testing

We used Preacher and Hayes' (2008) moderated-mediation Process model 5 to test study hypotheses. Table 4 presents the results from hypotheses testing. As suggested by H1, workplace fun and work engagement had a positive, significant relationship ($\beta=0.29$, $R^2=0.37$, $F=37$, $p=.000$) that supported H1.

Psychological capital would mediate the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement, according to H2. As may be seen in the following table, psychological capital mediates the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement ($\beta=0.075$, $R^2=0.3766$, $F=37$, $p=.000$), offering support for H2. Finally, H3 that had predicted a moderating effect of affective trust on the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement also finds support ($\beta=0.62$, $R^2=0.3766$, $F=37$, $p=.000$).

Table 4

Regression Results to test Study Hypotheses (H1, H2, H3)

	β	SE	p	LLC I	UL CI	R^2	F
WF	0.29	0.08	0.0	0.12	0.45	0.376	37.0
WF*	0.62	0.06	0.0	0.10	0.01	0.376	37.0
AT	0.10	0.04	0.0	0.02	0.19		
Direct effect of X on Y							
WF-	0.02	.05	0.0	0.08	0.12		
PC-							
WE	0.02	.06	0.0	0.15	0.10		
	0.075	.018		0.04	0.11		

Note: N=210.

WF= Workplace Fun, WE= Work Engagement, PC= Psychological Capital, AT= Affective Trust

6. DISCUSSION

Intense rivalry, ongoing changes, and organizational problems of employee talent attraction and retention are challenges that the hospitality sector largely confront. Specifically for developing economies, these factors are of great concern, as the service industry is a worthy contributor to the national economy (Ahmed & Ahsan, 2011). Hospitality sector organizations of Pakistan, therefore, must, look for methods to attract, retain, and boost worker performance in

order to gain competitive advantage. Given such contextual milieu, the present study was guided by three aims: whether workplace fun positively relates with work engagement, whether psychological capital mediates the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement, and whether affective trust moderates the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement.

According to the study's findings, all three study hypotheses were supported. Results pertaining to the first hypothesis suggest that workplace fun positively relates with work engagement. This implies that pleasurable, recreational activities at work offer a positive, supportive work environment that facilitates employees in building engagement during work tasks. With regards to the hospitality industry, several challenges are faced by hospitality sector firms that are likely to hamper their work engagement. Lengthy work hours, unsupportive job surroundings, recurrent work rotations, compensation discrimination, prejudices, tight deadlines, pressurizing projects and work assignments are environmental factors that possibly reduce employee engagement during work tasks (Eek & Axmon, 2013). Our finding implies that through integrating fun behaviours during work, hospitality sector firms may develop work engagement in employees, which is important for work performance (Karatepe, 2013). These findings concur with earlier studies that found similar results, as they concluded that organizations that successfully implement activities based on fun, amusement, and social interaction boosts employee social awareness, enhances work relationships, and helps in work tasks' management (Karatepe & Karatepe, 2009; Kuruüzüm, Anafarta & Irmak, 2008; McManus, 2018; Nazir et al., 2019; Plester & Hutchison, 2016).

With regards to the second hypothesis, our finding that psychological capital mediates the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement, pointing to a desirable impact of psychological capital in building work engagement. Earlier literature has suggested that an organizational environment typified by positive, social interactions and relationships paves the path for worker morale, drive, enthusiasm, and purpose for tasks, (Maassen, van Oostveen, Vermeulen, & Weggelaar, 2021) enabling employees to be engrossed in work through uplifting employees' self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism related to work tasks. Through building such positive psychological states, employees feel constructively motivated, are immersed in work tasks, as they are able to channelize their efforts for fulfillment of job duties and responsibilities (Karatepe & Karadas, 2014; Luthans & Youssef 2007). Employees are able to affirmatively cope through difficulties during work, as they are able to maintain engagement during work tasks through pleasurable,

collective activities organized at work that positivity uplift employee psychological state, that in turn has a positive effect on employee work engagement. These findings agree with earlier literature that has highlighted the significance of psychological capital work performance within the hospitality industry (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020)

. With specific regards to the mediating effect of psychological capital, a good number of studies have concluded a mediating effect of psychological capital for important outcomes (Fontes & Russo, 2021). Thus, our findings correspond to results from earlier studies.

Pertaining to results from testing the third hypothesis, our finding that affective trust moderates the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement indicates that affective trust strengthens the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement. In specific, when affective trust is high, the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement is strongly positive, while it is weakly positive when affective trust is low. The finding that the relationship between workplace fun and work engagement is moderated by affective trust may be explained on basis of the inter-employee socio-emotional exchange and subsequent shared appreciation, as affective trust is relational and is based on inter-relationships (Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata, & Rich (2012). Moreover, affective trust depicts the assurance and bonding that employees have in each other, is rooted in involvement and sentiments that employees share (Dowell, Morrison, & Heffernan, 2015). Hence, affective trust is built upon inter-individual, collective encounters. In this way, affective trust fluctuates and changes as social interaction vary. Therefore, when this inter-employee social interactions are high, affective trust is high, leading to a stronger positive impact of workplace fun on work engagement, versus when affective trust is low, which results in a weaker positive impact of workplace fun on work engagement. Earlier studies have suggested affective trust as a favourable moderator of important work-related relationships, (Mushonga, 2018) which is in concurrence with our findings.

Overall, our findings that workplace fun positively relates with work engagement, psychological capital mediates this relationship, and that affective trust moderates this relationship are in line with the positive organizational behaviour theory (Luthans, Luthans, & Chaffin, 2019). The positive organizational behaviour theory advocates that positive psychological capacities and states are essential for boosting work performance. Recreational activities organized at work build psychological capital that comprises of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Affective trust, which is a positive construct, strengthens the relationship.

6.1 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Managers at workplace need to plan and arrange pleasurable, recreational activities during work to help employee unwind from work pressures and feel connected to the organization. Birthday gatherings, workshops, trainings recreation, employee recognition meetings, friendly competitions, and family events should be planned to support workplace fun. These activities augment social, interactive relationships at work, and create encouraging feelings among employees that enhance favourable development of employee psychological capital and work engagement. These fun-based, social interactions are particularly beneficial for hospitality industry managers and workers, given the work pressures and competition, as they would help build employee self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience that would further boost work engagement, whilst building affective trust alongside.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

This study tests interrelationships between workplace fun, psychological capital, affective trust, and work engagement using a cross sectional study design. Thus, the causality in these relationships cannot be ascertained unless a longitudinal study design is undertaken to test the relationships. Secondly, this study is specifically targeted towards the hospitality industry; hence the results cannot be generalized across other sectors such as the manufacturing sector.

6.3 FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research may examine other positive psychology variables that may moderate and mediate the relationship. For instance, cognitive trust may strengthen or weaken the workplace fun – work engagement relationship, as employees may cognitively appraise the work situation that may enhance work engagement. Another suggestion is conducting a longitudinal study to confirm causality in the inter-relationships tested in the present study.

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Surat kami : 700-KPK (PRP.UP.1/20/1)

Tarikh : 20 Januari 2023

Prof. Madya Dr. Nur Hisham Ibrahim
Rektor
Universiti Teknologi MARA
Cawangan Perak



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Sekian, terima kasih.

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Saya yang menjalankan amanah,

Setuju.

27.1.2023

SITI BASRIYAH SHAIK BAHARUDIN
Timbalan Ketua Pustakawan

PROF. MADYA DR. NUR HISHAM IBRAHIM
REKTOR
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
CAWANGAN PERAK
KAMPUS SERI ISKANDAR

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