

WORKPLACE FUN AND CREATIVE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose:

Individuals spend a big chunk of their day at work and out of many intangibles, fun perks will be a good persuader for superior employee performance. Therefore, it's important and even essential to have a culture that stems from the energy to set the tone of creative performance that doesn't always cost much. Considering this present study examined the contribution of Fun in improving the creative performance of employees in the private banking sector

Methodology:

In order to revalidate it with a sample of 120 respondents we tested fun at work by coworker socializing, celebration at work, personal freedom and global fun and found it significantly related in improving creative performance of employees. The developed model was tested through regression and correlation.

Findings:

The results showed that three of the hypotheses were accepted whilst, the one hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that to generate productive results and creative performance organizations should focus on the techniques to engage people. These simple strategies with low cost can benefit the banks in long run.

1. Introduction

In Today's rapid changing work environment employees need to have more command to deal with complicate and non-routine challenges (Aleksić, 2016). As a matter of fact, creative individual considered as free-range thinkers that can go out of the box for solutions and when it comes to workplace environment this creative side must be back up by having a fun culture at workplace that anticipates joy and amusement which in turn become a source of providing viable creative solutions for handling routine challenges. Once this understanding increases in organizations a dynamical environment can be produce. Brett's suggests that fun culture is a way to deal with challenges of life– it's like a light in darkness. Moreover, Studies Put forward a fact that young workers hope for fun culture and suggests managers to incorporate this recognized need to have a creative work environment in order to obtain and engage a productive workforce (B.Vimala, 2014).

Previous researches also define fun activities as a way of promoting enjoyment through group and social activities. A great variety of these activities can be done but our study considers fun activities as celebrations to recognize achievements, celebrations at work, manager supervision in this regard that to which extend they allow such activities to get practice at their workplace. Moreover, personal freedoms considerations, friendships at workplace, gatherings and seeking the company of each other outside the workplace are few more ways of promoting fun at work (J. Tews, 2015).

Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982) were the founders of "modern workplace fun". They introduce this understanding among managers to incorporate the corporate culture of fun, play and humor at workplace. Considering these suggestion, employers of Ben and Jerry's, Southwest Airlines, and Google implement this concept in workplace environment with good success (Becker, 2012)Google and southwest airlines encourages their employees in promoting "corporate fun culture" by engaging them in unusual activities with the purpose to promote sociability and fun work environment, other companies are also in the same vein of letting their workforce involve in unusual work activities like Kodak headquarters of New York have humor rooms for employees in order to have a fun break , IBM also encourages this understanding therefore they have play rooms and imagination spaces for their employees (Fluegge, 2008). In the light of all these studies, current study is to promote these understanding in the context of Pakistani society where its relationships and outcomes have not been explored yet.

In Pakistan issues related to human resource management are mostly ignored by organizations, human resource management practices are lacking among employers. They have forgotten the human approach towards their employees. Globally organizations are implementing new trends in human resource management but in our region despite of the fact that many companies holds ISO 9001 certification still backwardness in the human resource development is observed in Pakistan. In these scenarios it is much needed to make a conscious attempt in improving the quality of workforce and to introduce the emerging trends of workplace fun.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the role of fun at workplace in improving the creative performance of employees. The objectives of this study are further subdivided as follows: First, Identifying the factors of fun at workplace affecting creative performance of employees. Second, is to identify the relationship of personal freedom,

socializing with coworkers, celebrations at work, global fun on creative performance of employees.

This study will help the banking sector to improve employee's creative performance at their job task. The sub variables of fun at work will help identify the employers to work on these areas. Personal freedom, socializing, celebrations at work place and global fun are the variables which will help the banking sector to improve their work efficiencies.

2. Literature Review

Fun at workplace means unusual activities that are not related to work and that gives employees a feeling of amusement and excitement, these include experiences like BBQ setting on any casual Friday, picnics with colleagues, office parties, celebration on birthdays and achievements (Fluegge, 2008).

The concept of workplace fun was initiated from the "Fish!" movie. It highlights that employees treat their customer well because of their fun philosophy (Chan Ying In, 2010). In 1998 John Christensen, founder of Fish! Philosophy, in-depth observe Fish mongers of Pike Place a Fish.

Market in Seattle, Washington that showcase an innovative method of administering business. He was surprised to see they were laughing and tossing trout in the air just behind their heads. This market is famous for its fun culture, energy. Passion and enthusiasm for their work. An interesting thing about the job of fish selling is that it is very much exhausting and bore due to the fact that their job demands a repetitive behavior but yet they were able to find fun in their work and sold a lot of fish (Polaczyk, 2017).

Considering all this he developed a strategy of cultural improvement in organization. Supposition of deliberate intention to immerse energy, excitement, enthusiasm and fun in daily work life create an amusing environment that foster a successful organization.

Recognized four key concepts that symbolize Fish! Philosophy are play (enjoyment at work), make someone's day (an effort to enhance one's life), be there (embrace every moment) and choose your attitude (choose a positive approach). Fish! Philosophy also explains that it's not necessary to be dead serious all the time about our jobs, we should also consider fun and amusement as it doesn't interfere much with work. When we make ourselves focused on now (be there) and stop making complains and start noticing good in all (choose attitude), emphasize the importance of making ourselves available for others and acknowledging gratitude (make their day) and have fun at work (Play) then we create a workplace that becomes a source of happiness for all (Polaczyk, 2017).

Since its inception this philosophy is utilized by thousands of organizations around the globe. A successful implementation in promoting team work, excitement and interdisciplinary cohesion are the heart of this philosophy. Purpose of fish philosophy is to implement a cultural improvement in organization. A comparison on pre-and post-employee survey was used, in that they appraise competence of Fish! Philosophy. In final evaluation he concluded an overall improvement in appreciation, enjoyment at work and perception of work (Arledge, 2016).

One of the most discussed problem in this concern is its quality as it's too difficult to measure if they are having fun or not or is that activity sensed to be enjoyable or not. In

this regard workplace fun can be defined as an environment that with a purpose initiates and appreciates pleasurable activities. It polishes employee's team bonding, reliability interaction and leadership views, in comparison with a normal working environment. Hence it is suggested to bring employee at its full potential by bringing this element (Mehta, 2013). Absence of its encouragement will not only be resulted in weaken performance, creativity, morale and adaptability but it also effects employee's health. This gap in incorporation of this element is reported as "terminal professionalism ". Moreover, a study on humor revealed that approx. 92% of nurses claimed that sense of humor can helps to communicate and manage workplace stress and shared laughter connects people in positive manner. "Fun is more Fun when shared with others".(Chan Ying In, 2010)Fun and laughter is considered as a short-lived escape from the work life hassles. McDowell explained fun through four distinct categories. Coworkers Socializing, Celebrations at work place, Personal freedom and Global fun.

2.1. Fun at Workplace and Creative Performance of Employee

Creativity is an asset for any organization and creative performance brings in focus the procedures, solution, brainstorming of ideas that can be of very much importance to any organization (Fluegge, 2008). Various analysts argued and emphasize that in order to gain competitive advantage its necessary to enhance creative performance of employees in first step. When they respond creatively they provide with novel ideas and procedures that can be an important raw material that can be a source of subsequent development. This implementation can enhance organizations ability to redesign, grow and compete (Cummings, 1996). Unfortunately, there is little knowledge about the conditions that promote individual creative performance in organizations. Although a lot of researchers have attempted to recognize those personal characteristics of individual's that forecast creative accomplishment, among them only a small proportion concentrated on creative achievement in work setting in which some empirical work systematically examined performance about the probability that characteristics of organizational surrounding's contribute significantly to employee's creative performance. Therefore, it is expected that surrounding's that promotes intrinsic motivation enhance creative achievement. In contrary surrounding's that restrict an individual excitement in work activities minimizes creativity.

As a matter of fact, laughter relaxes mind and opens the gate of ideas and make all accept and understand mistakes. Connection between laughter and creative performance can be explained by flexibility of mind. Various researches have been catered on various populations and it revealed that laughter gives flexibility to mind and perceptions that enhance creative performance. Much similar interpretation was given by Ziv. He explained that unconventional thinking is a product of laughter. People are told to engage in this practice in which individuals are asked for more solutions to one problem. This thought process allows individuals to make new connections and relationships which were previously unexplored. Moreover, Dixon also supported this fact that laughter and humor provides shifts in perspectives that exhibits unique behavior to forecast a new solution. Similarly, if workplace fun functions same to humor or laughter it will also give consistent results keeping creative performance in mind (Fluegge, 2008).

Fun filled experiences give birth to creativity. An approach of being calm and not perceiving everything too seriously allows mind to accept ideas without being judgmental. Hence in problem solving settings, an appropriate level of fun can bring creativity and innovation at its best. Fun culture is a lighter approach that reduces anxiety that will in further allows creativity to deal with complications. He also suggests that an arousal in amusing moment motivates a person to experience new and unusual plans

(Becker, 2012). Fun culture anticipates happiness that may positively affect the workforce creative performance. It's considered that happy employees have less fear of accepting failure so they respond more positively and they are more likely to face hurdles and barriers. Their proactive ability of inventiveness heightened their potential to demonstrate the unusual circumstances with their tendency of being creative. Positive thoughts amplify cognitive processes, increase flexibility and ease creative behavior. So, in a nutshell it broadens individual perceptions and thinking's that can transform organization creative performance. Miller explained this relationship with a physiological explanation, Researches shows that exposure to fun culture released chemicals like adrenalin, endorphins and epinephrine that nourishes individual's self-esteem, energy level, decision making and creative thinking (Dr. B.Vimala, 2014). Moreover, causing laughter and humor extricates the flow of ideas facilitating thought process to get unbound to the obvious or traditional answers. Fun also allows having a thrilling and risky attempt facilitating people to think on broader aspect more freely, notifying link to overlook (Becker, 2012). Hence it can be hypothesized that:

H₁: A positive and significant relationship exists between fun at workplace and creative performance of employees.

2.2. Personal Freedom & Creative Performance of Employees

Freedom and flexibility in attire, music and other facets of workplace can be referred to as a personal freedom at workplace (Tews, 2016). In some cases, it has been observed that employees show full engagement if they have less formalities at workplace (Chan, 2010). Moreover, when jobs are complicated and challenging, individuals feel excited about their work task and more likely to complete their work activities with more attentiveness in the absence of external controls. This level of interest creates more chances to nurture creative achievement at work.

Moreover, complicated jobs actually demand freedom to accelerate creative behavior because it is a need of their job to deal with multiple dimensions of their work. Scott and Bruce explained about high quality relationships of employees with their supervisors (characterized by autonomy and support) and it is considered they are more likely to generate creative solutions. Andrews and farris proved that team of scientist performed more creatively in case of freedom at work and opportunities to participate in important decisions (Cummings, 1996). Hence it can be hypothesized that:

H₂: A positive and significant relationship exists between Personal Freedom and creative performance of employees.

2.3. Socializing with Co-workers and creative performance of employees

Informal socializing leads to social cohesion, ease friendships and amplify resource network. Moreover, it provides opportunities to new entrants to socialize and work with other members of organization. (Jamaludin, Ahmad & Muhammad, 2016). It is encouraged because of the fact that culture facilitates the quality of work you will produce individually or in a group. Everyone in a work environment brings a different set of skills and personality. If you will focus only on your own you might miss the experiences that your colleagues may offer. Exposure of different personalities and perspectives will result in less conflicts and thus equipped personality to deal with wide dimensions of business.

Socializing can bring a sympathy and understanding in the workplace, even if you have

to return to your desk in a helpless state, you may feel little soothed by your colleagues. With a habit of saying a brief hello to your coworkers you can't expect them to be on your side in your hard times. Keep conversing with colleagues is also a break it also facilitates in the state of workplace burnout. The Huffington Post entitled "Not Socializing at Work Could Be Hazardous to Your Health" suggested that when employees have friendships at their work place their bodies release particular hormones those contribute to their good health (Archer, 2016). Hence it can be hypothesized that:

H₃: A positive and significant relationship exists between Socializing with Coworkers and creative performance of employees.

2.4. Celebrations At Work & Creative Performance of Employees

Celebrations of noteworthy events is considered as the most common reported fun which includes birthday celebrations, anniversary of employment, award reorganizations ceremonies for employees with small gifts like flowers, chocolates or refreshments, something that gets them all together (Jamaludin, Ahmad & Muhammad, 2016). The benefits of celebration at work go beyond the amusement. It also exhibits concern of employer. Employee gets a boost when get acknowledge by celebrations.

We often celebrate things either they are big or small in our personal and social lives. Why not incorporate this feelings and sentiments into our workplace? Celebrations at workplace are not just a perk. When no one say thanks for their efforts employees do feel unimportant. It gives them a sense of purpose to them (Sumayya & Raziq, 2019). It is also about acquiring and retaining top talent, which is one of the challenges that individuals and professionals are experiencing in today's work environment. Moreover, as a matter of fact, feeling of gratitude makes us competent thinkers with a better sense. So, no need to save all good and rewarding memories for performance appraisals (Staff, 2016).

Employee retention has become a difficult task in the organizations especially in this competitive era. Workplace fun works as an energy drink for employee retention as well as it increases employee motivation, productivity and performance. Companies should provide a happy on the job environment for their employees, as happier the employee more is the employee productivity which helps the organizations to make their position in the market (Sumayya., Kumari, Rashid, & Shakir2020). For promoting workplace fun organizations has to focus and emphasize on management games, unofficial social gathering and get to gather, occasional celebrations too. It is necessary that before promoting workplace fun, organizations should make sure that employees have a positive attitude towards workplace fun. Fun with work keep companies energize and make employees' happy on and off clock. Hence it can be hypothesized that:

H₄: A positive and significant relationship exists between Celebrations at work and creative performance of employees.

2.5. Global Fun & Creative Performance of Employees

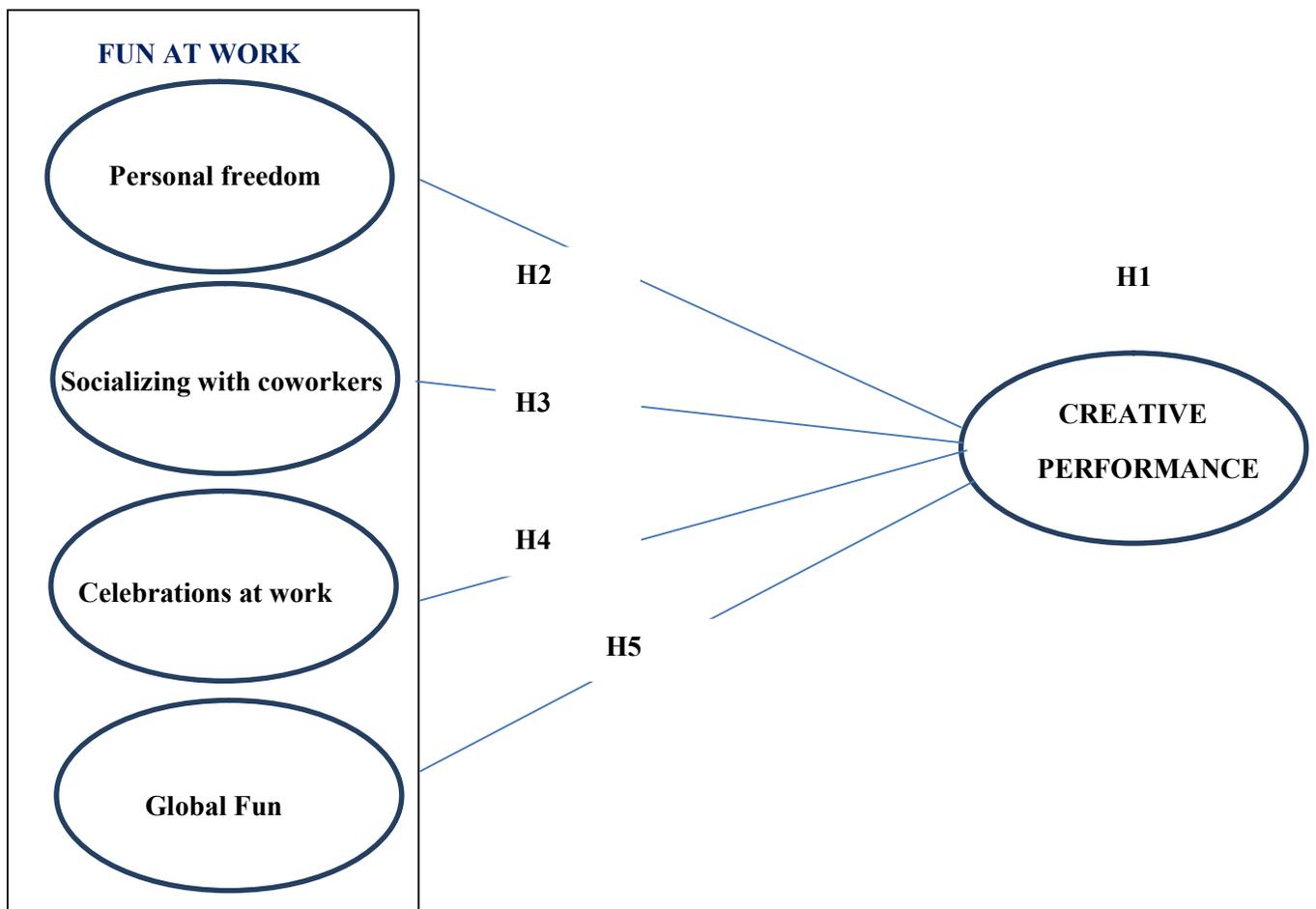
Global fun is consideration, supervision and sense of fun in organization. Moreover, it also emphasizes that whether supervisor value fun or encourages this understanding or not? It also includes overall culture of organization and do people in organization have fun at work or not? (Jamaludin, Ahmad & Muhammad, 2016; Imran, Billah Tufail, & Amen, 2019). In this regard Style of supervision matters a lot in organization

composition and fun culture and it is considered as a vigorous factor of employee creativity at work. In particular if supervision is supportive it is forecasted to accelerate the creative achievement, in contrary if supervision is limiting it is more likely to diminish creative performance of employees this is because when supervision show concern about employee's feelings and needs it provide positive, mainly informational feedback and provide facilitation in skill development, in case of limiting and control supervision, supervisors closely analyze employee behavior, make decision without involvement, respond in a controlling manner and usually pressurize employees to feel or think in particular way (Sumayya & Amen, 2017). This behavior also undermines motivation and shifts in attention and focus from work activities to other dimensions (Cummings, 1996). Hence it can be hypothesized that:

H₅: A positive & significant relationship exist between global fun and creative performance of employees

2.6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented in figure 1 has been derived from the previous literature.



3. Methodology

3.1. Method of Data Collection

One hundred and twenty employees from four banks located in Karachi were invited to participate in this study in order to understand the required phenomena in their respective organizations. Employees received questionnaire with an enclosed cover letter, with each questionnaire package having objectives about the study, instructions for adequate completion and assurance of confidentiality. Prior to administering the surveys, each employee was given a definition of Fun so that he may link with it before responding the asked phenomena. Employees who chose to participate completed the survey during work time. The population of this study includes the private bank residing in Karachi. The target audience for this paper are people that exhibited creative performance in their jobs, therefore the data was collected from the 4 leading banks (Habib Metropolitan, Al-Baraka, Bank Islami and MCB) residing in Karachi. The sample size for this study is 120 which is more than 100 suggested for a framework of 5 variables (Sekaran, 2006). The sample was comprised of approximately thirty from each bank. Convenience sampling technique is used in this regard.

3.2. Scale and Measures

The data is collected by distributing questionnaires containing measures of fun at workplace and creative performance of employees contained 2 Parts. The first part search information about the demographics profile of individuals. Contain details of Age, income, gender and job Tenure with current organization. The Second part encompasses with 23 Close ended questions.

Fun at work was tested using the four subscales (coworkers socializing, personal freedom, celebrations at workplace and Global Fun) of McDowell's (2005). Each scale comprises of 5 items other than Global Fun, it has 3 items. Participants were asked to rate respectively using a five-point Likert scale from one being "Never" to five depicting "Almost Always".

Creative Performance was measured through 4 items scale George and Zhou (2002). Participants were asked to rate each of the following items using five-point Likert scale from one being "Never" to five depicting "Almost Always".

3.3. Statistical Technique

In order to examine the relationship between the four sub dimensions of fun (Independent variable) 1. Socializing with co-workers 2. Personal freedom 3. Global fun and 4. Celebrations at work in improving the creative performance (Dependent variable) of employees, multiple regressions and correlation were carried out. After feeding the data, prefatory test was conducted for reliability, normality and validity. Then each proposed hypothesis was tested through multiple regressions and correlation.

4. Results & Discussions

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Univariate normality was tested through Skewness and kurtosis, to understand the basis parameters of Data set which are also depicted in Table 1 below:

Table.1. Discriminant Analysis

Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
SWC	3.42	0.78	-0.252	-0.286
CAW	2.94	0.84	0.019	0.135
PF	2.57	0.77	0.751	0.581
GF	2.85	0.93	0.142	-0.300
FAW	2.94	0.63	0.530	0.825
CP	3.42	0.95	-0.616	0.202

*SWC (socializing with coworkers), CAW (Celebrations at work), PF (Personal freedom), GF (Global Fun), FAW (fun at work), CP (creative performance).

Source: Author's own elaboration

Table-1, shows that Personal freedom (M= 2.57, SD= 0.77) has the highest skewness(-0.75) followed by creative performance (M= 3.42, SD= 0.95), Fun at work (M=2.94, SD=0.63) Socializing with coworkers (M= 3.42, SD= 0.78), Global fun (M=2.85, SD=0.93) and celebrations at work (M=2.94, SD=0.84). At the same time, kurtosis was as high as (KR = 0.82) for Fun at work (2.94, SD=0.63), and as low as (KR = 0.13) for celebrations at work (M=2.94, SD=0.84). Since the skewness and kurtosis values ranged between ± 2.5 , which indicates that the construct used in this study have no issue with univariate normality (Hair Jr., 2015).

4.2. Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of constructs was re-ascertained by Cronbach Alpha. Summarized results are depicted in Table 2.

Table.2. Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach Alpha	# of items
SWC	0.711	5
CAW	0.781	5
PF	0.663	5
GF	0.783	3
FAW	0.854	18
CP	0.831	3

Source: Author's own elaboration

The reliability values as shown in Table 2 are as high as ($\alpha = 0.85$) for fun at work and as low as ($\alpha = 0.66$) for personal freedom. As all the Standardized Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.60, which demonstrates the adequate reliability (Bryman, 2015).

4.3. Correlation Analysis

Bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to comprehend uniqueness and Multi collinearity. Summarized results are demonstrated in Table 3.

Table.3. Bivariate Correlation

Construct	SWC_T	CAW_T	PF_T	GF_T	FAW_T	CP_T
SWC	1					
CAW	0.530	1				
PF	0.259	0.410	1			
GF	0.568	0.385	0.387	1		
FAW	0.780	0.768	0.668	0.796	1	
CP	0.554	0.464	0.315	0.570	0.636	1

Source: Author's own elaboration

The highest correlation is between fun at work and global fun. On the other hand the lowest correlation is between personal freedom and socializing with coworkers. Moreover, as the correlation values are ranged between 0.30 and 0.90 therefore constructs are unique with no issue of Multi-collinearity except Personal freedom (Hair J, 2010).

4.4. Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was carried out to determine the integrated effect of Independent variables (Fun at work) on creative performance of employees.

Table.4. Multiple Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.667	0.357		1.89	0.061
SWC	0.305	0.118	0.254	2.58	0.011
CAW	0.204	0.104	0.181	1.96	0.052
PF	0.054	0.104	0.044	0.517	0.606
GF	0.344	0.095	0.339	3.607	0.000

Dependent variable CP, $R^2 = 0.431$, $F(4, 105) = 19.88$, $P < 0.05$

Source: Author's own elaboration

Results show that the Predictors of fun at work explains 43.1 % of the variance towards creative performance however Global fun is more effective among 4 predictors. Overall model fitted well, the effect of personal freedom and celebrations at work was insignificant.

Table.5. Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.609	0.337		1.809	0.073
FAW	0.957	0.112	0.636	8.554	0.000

Dependent variable CP, $R^2 = 0.404$, $F(1,108) = 73.170$, $P < 0.05$

Source: Author's own elaboration

Results shows Fun at work predicts 40% of the variation towards creative Performance ($R^2 = 0.404$, $F(1,108) = 73.170$, $P < 0.05$). Further more Fun at work statistically predicts

significant relationship with creative performance.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

The results of hypothesis were consistent with previous literatures that there is positive and significant relationship exists between fun at work and creative performance. Considerable investigations revealed that fun at work is situating as a higher order variable comprising celebrations, socializing, personal freedom and global fun. Finding seems adequate as these activities not only showcase better moods, more engagement but also exhibited greater creative performance (Fluegge, 2008). The highest mean score was between socializing with coworkers and least is found with personal freedom therefore it is recommended that banking sector needs to promote more personal freedom.

The results suggest that socializing with others has a positive and significant relationship on creative performance. The results are presented in table 4. The findings support the previous literature and hypothesis (Becker & Tews, 2016; Chan & Mak, 2016). The results suggest that celebrations at work do not has a positive and significant relationship on creative performance. The results are similar to the study of Becker, 2012 where he found that celebrations at work do not influence older employee's creative performance.

The results suggest that personal freedom does not have a positive and significant relationship on creative performance. Previous literature does not support the findings (Chan, 2012). The results suggest that global fun has a positive and significant relationship on creative performance. The results are consistent with the previous literature. (Jamaludin, Ahmad & Muhammad, 2016; Fluegge, 2008).

Moreover at the same time it has also been demonstrated that its benefits are not that straight forward as its successful implementation require careful thought process and employer's considerations therefore it's important to understand that how and when it will make a difference (Becker & Tews, 2016).

5.1. Limitations and Future Research

This study emphasizes the positive effects of fun culture however the detrimental effects should also be discovered. Therefore attention must be paid on the type of activity in question and workplace culture employer is trying to nurture. Moreover sample size of this study was limited as we have been able to managed only one industry therefore more areas need to be explored in this context however Findings can be upgrade further by cross comparison among different industries on equitable concepts.

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