Fun at Work: Construct Definition and Perceived Impact in the Workplace

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (in Organisational Psychology)

December 2008
ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, there have been numerous claims in the popular media relating to having fun at work, touting a plethora of benefits for both individuals and organisations that have to date not been empirically investigated. Thus far, any research related to fun in the workplace has often been indiscriminate with its use of terms, interspersing *fun* with *humour* and *play*, thus adding confusion to an already inadequately defined construct. The aim of this research is two fold: to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the construct to differentiate and define *fun* in a work context, and to measure the perceived impact of having fun in the workplace. In order to locate fun as a unique construct, literature related to fun, humour and play/playfulness was reviewed and positioned in a nomological net utilising a three phase framework consisting of presage, process and product (3P). Four studies in this research program investigated the domain of fun activities in the workplace, the underlying structure of the construct, the process of having fun and the perceived impact of fun specifically in relation to job satisfaction, stress reduction, effectiveness and workplace relationships. Results identified a domain of 15 distinct fun activities. Using multidimensional scaling, an underlying structure of four neighbourhood clusters (humour and play, informal socialising, formal socialising and organisational activities) and two dimensions (*contextual connections with others* and *activity structure and intensity*) were identified. The investigation of the process of fun was conducted by examining case vignettes using the 3P framework. Results suggest the experience of fun at work is activity based, with an emotionally qualitative dimension that is highly socially interactive and engaging. The organisational context for fun appears to be embodied in supportive
management and colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non stressed environment. The participant experiencing the fun is usually in the role of contributor rather than observer, is highly engaged, experiencing amusement, laughter, flow, social connection and as an outcome, an increase in positive mood. While humour and play contribute to the process of fun, fun appears to be a uniquely distinct construct. Finally, the present results suggest the perceived impact of having fun at work, while positive, was not reported globally to the extent suggested in the popular press. The most significant outcome of having fun was the reporting of improved positive mood after the fun event, with the related cascading organisational effects discussed. Complimentary to this, having fun at work was perceived to positively influence workplace relationships to a moderate-high degree, contribute to managing stress to a moderate degree, improved job satisfaction to moderate degree and was reported to have a little more than neutral, direct impact on workplace effectiveness. These outcomes must however be examined in the context of results, suggesting not only are different types of fun activities enjoyed more, but different types of activities are highly salient in relation to the particular organisational variable measured. Results of this series of studies have provided a revised nomological net that can be used in further research to define the construct of fun in a workplace context. Supplementary to this, outcomes suggest having fun at work has positive impacts for both individuals and workplaces and therefore further investigation, at multiple organisational levels is required, ranging from individual disposition in relation to fun, to the effects of fun on workplace culture.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As with most PhD journeys, this one has been epic and would not have been endured without the support I have received over the years. It is with gratitude I thank Alf Lizzio, my primary supervisor for encouraging me to follow my passion and explore what was unchartered terrain in the area of understanding fun at work. Alf’s belief in my capabilities to complete this journey, even when I was sure I did not resemble a Doctoral student in any manner, was unwaivering. Through his patience, guidance and solid support my academic knowledge has blossomed and this document was produced.

Clearly without the support of participants I would have had no studies and there were several people who were hugely complicit in the quest of questionnaire returns. Firstly the unconditional support of my sister, Stef Baker in talking through ideas, reading drafts and more importantly taking surveys to her workplace at a phenominal level cannot be thanked enough. Without her belief in my quest and capabilities, the journey would not have been endured. I would also like to thank Marion Grover for championing of my cause at Brisbane City Council and her constant generosity with resources and time. Finally to all of the friends and colleagues who provided me with heart felt data and endured boring questionnaires, you own a part of this outcome.

My gratitude extends to the many people who generously gave both their emotional and practical support and ideas, but none more than Zoe McGovern. She not only listened endlessly to my tales, but contributed her extensive skills and knowledge in producing this document as it stands today. Her hours of toil were contributed out of love and belief in me, and I am so priveledged to have her as a constant in my life. I
would also like to thank Dave Lawson and Brett Myors for their contribution to the
development process and review of the thesis at critical points.

Finally, I can hardly believe at this point that the journey is nearly over, but if I have learnt anything in the process, it is that life is *a journey*, not a *destination*. So to those that have contributed to my hopes and dreams thankyou and to my precious daughter, Cait Lawson and my husband, Justin it is not the end, but the beginning of a new phase.
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Kerryann Cook  
Date
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................... iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................................................. v
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY ................................................................................ vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS ................................................................................................... viii
LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................ xii
LIST OF FIGURES .......................................................................................................... xv

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PROGRAM ............................................. 1
  Focus of research ......................................................................................................... 1
  Why study fun at work? ............................................................................................... 2
  Methodological framework .......................................................................................... 6
    Theoretical orientation ............................................................................................... 7
    Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................. 9
  Research aims ............................................................................................................. 12
  Research scope ........................................................................................................... 13
  Structure of research program ..................................................................................... 14
  Research questions ..................................................................................................... 16

CHAPTER 2: REFINING THE NOMOLOGICAL NET OF FUN AT WORK ............. 18
  Construct definition ..................................................................................................... 19
  Are fun and work mutually exclusive? ........................................................................ 20
  The theory and context of humour .............................................................................. 23
    What makes something humorous? ......................................................................... 24
    The context of humour ............................................................................................ 26
    Sense of humour ...................................................................................................... 28
  General outcomes of humour ..................................................................................... 29
  Humour in the workplace ........................................................................................... 29
    Types of humour in the workplace ....................................................................... 30
    Functions of humour in the workplace. ................................................................ 31
  Summary of humour theory ....................................................................................... 34
  Theory and context of playfulness .............................................................................. 35
    Definitions of play .................................................................................................... 35
    Types of play ............................................................................................................ 36
    Characteristics of play and playfulness ................................................................... 36
    Context of play ........................................................................................................ 38
  Play at work ................................................................................................................ 38
  Outcomes of play ....................................................................................................... 43
  Summary of theory related to adult play .................................................................... 45
  Theory of fun ................................................................................................................ 46
    Current definitions of fun ...................................................................................... 46
    Anecdotal Accounts of Fun at Work ..................................................................... 47
    Extant empirical research relating to fun .............................................................. 51
Fun through a constructive lens ................................................................. 51
Fun at work through a cynical lens .............................................................. 57
Gaps in knowledge relating to fun at work ..................................................... 60
Links between fun, humour and play ............................................................. 62
CHAPTER 3: ORGANSATIONAL CONTEXT OF FUN AT WORK .................. 67
Anecdotal literature ....................................................................................... 68
Individual perspective .................................................................................. 69
  Psychological well-being ............................................................................ 69
  Affect, mood and emotion ........................................................................ 70
  Affect in the workplace ............................................................................. 72
  Happiness .................................................................................................... 74
Flow .............................................................................................................. 75
Job satisfaction ............................................................................................. 77
Workplace stress .......................................................................................... 78
Summary of key individual influences of having fun at work ....................... 80
Team and interpersonal perspective .............................................................. 81
Organisational climate .................................................................................. 82
Workplace relationships .............................................................................. 86
  Social aspects of work .............................................................................. 87
  Workplace friendships .............................................................................. 88
  Social exchange theory .......................................................................... 90
  Team development .................................................................................. 93
The potential impact of fun in the team or interpersonal context .................... 94
Work performance and productivity and fun at work .................................... 95
The process of fun ..................................................................................... 96
CHAPTER 4: THE DOMAIN OF FUN ACTIVITIES IN THE WORKPLACE .......... 102
Study 1 ......................................................................................................... 102
  Method ...................................................................................................... 104
  Participants .............................................................................................. 104
  Measures .................................................................................................. 105
  Instrument ............................................................................................... 106
  Procedure ................................................................................................ 106
  Methodology of analysis ........................................................................ 109
Results ....................................................................................................... 109
  Fun for me and others ............................................................................ 110
  Fun for me, but not for others ................................................................. 116
  Not fun for me, but fun for others ........................................................... 117
  Not fun for anyone ................................................................................ 118
  Summary of activities that are fun and not fun ....................................... 119
Discussion .................................................................................................. 120
CHAPTER 5: STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS OF FUN AT WORK .................. 124
Study 2 ....................................................................................................... 124
  Method .................................................................................................... 125
  Participants ............................................................................................. 125
CHAPTER 6: EXPLORING THE CONTEXT AND PROCESS OF HAVING FUN AT WORK

Study 3 .......................................................................................................................... 145

Research Questions ............................................................................................... 160
Method ...................................................................................................................... 162
Participants ............................................................................................................ 163

Instrument ............................................................................................................. 164

Procedure................................................................................................................... 168
Results ...................................................................................................................... 168
Discussion ................................................................................................................. 209

CHAPTER 7: MEASURING THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF HAVING FUN AT WORK

Study 4 .......................................................................................................................... 218

Research Questions ................................................................................................... 222
Method ...................................................................................................................... 224
Participants ............................................................................................................ 224
Instrument ............................................................................................................. 225
Procedure............................................................................................................... 226
Results ...................................................................................................................... 226
Structure of analysis.............................................................................................. 226
Discussion ................................................................................................................. 250

Chapter 8  Integrative discussion .................................................................................. 261

Fun at work; past to present in brief.......................................................................... 261
Defining and differentiating the construct of fun at work......................................... 264
What is considered fun at work? ............................................................................ 264
Underlying structural dimensions of fun at work ................................................ 267
Understanding the process of having fun in the workplace .................................. 269
Contextual conditions required for fun at work ................................................. 269
Personal characteristics of the fun participant .................................................. 271
Features of fun events in the workplace............................................................ 272
Products of fun at work..................................................................................... 273
The impact of fun at work on mood.............................................................. 273
Workplace relationships and fun................................................................... 274
Contribution of fun to managing stress in the workplace .................................. 277
The effect of having fun on job satisfaction.................................................. 278
Workplace effectiveness and having fun ...................................................... 280
Perceptions of management beliefs............................................................... 283
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 28  
Factors in sense of humour .......................................................................................................................................................... 28  
Table 2.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 108  
Mean results of perceptions of frequency and desire in relation to fun at work; primary compared to additional sample ....................................................... 108  
Table 3.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 112  
Fun at work coding schema and example activities ................................................................................................................ 112  
Table 4.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 113  
Frequencies of themed examples nominated as fun for me and others........................... 113  
Table 5.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 114  
Fun at work activities as nominated by gender .............................................................. 114  
Table 6.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 116  
Fun at work activities as nominated by supervisory status ....................................... 116  
Table 7.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 119  
The domain of Fun and Not fun activities at work in ranked order ................................. 119  
Table 8.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 121  
Similarities and differences; Nominated items in Study 1 and McDowell, 2005 ......... 121  
Table 9.......................................................................................................................................................................................... 127  
Stress and RSQ values of complete sample .......................................................................... 127  
Table 10....................................................................................................................................................................................... 140  
Dimensions and factors of fun at work: Study 2 and McDowell (2005) ..................... 140  
Table 11....................................................................................................................................................................................... 170  
Coding criteria for case vignettes using dimensional structure from Study 2 ............ 170  
Table 12....................................................................................................................................................................................... 171  
Dimensional activity category as reported in case vignette; Frequency of gender and supervisory status ................................................................. 171  
Table 13....................................................................................................................................................................................... 172  
Examples of nominated fun activities allocated to each dimensional category ...... 172  
Table 14....................................................................................................................................................................................... 175  
Mean reported ratings of contextual questions in relation to having fun at work displayed by gender and supervisory status .............................................. 175  
Table 15....................................................................................................................................................................................... 177  
Reported frame of mind prior to nominated fun event ................................................. 177  
Table 16....................................................................................................................................................................................... 180  
Reported levels of coercion and contribution while participating in the fun event based on dimensional activity groups .................................................................. 180
Table 17................................................................................................................................. 181
Frequencies of activities nominated in case vignettes as fun at work in the past 12 months ........................................................................................................................................
Table 18......................................................................................................................................... 183
Items in the process of having fun; Spontaneous versus planned events ................................
Table 19......................................................................................................................................... 185
Features of fun in reported in case vignettes for Organisational and Social events ranked in order frequency ................................................................. 185
Table 20......................................................................................................................................... 189
Mean flow rating for dimensional activity categories ................................................................
Table 21......................................................................................................................................... 190
Features of fun events as reported in case vignettes; represented in dimensional categories and ranked in order of frequency ......................................................... 190
Table 22......................................................................................................................................... 194
Reported positive outcomes of fun events and mean reported levels of laughter: Represented in dimensional activity categories in ranked order ................................. 194
Table 23......................................................................................................................................... 195
Mean reported frame of mind prior and post fun event ..............................................................
Table 24......................................................................................................................................... 202
Frequencies of responses relating to general humour item as reported in case study ............
Table 25......................................................................................................................................... 203
Frequencies of responses relating to disparaging humour item in case examples ................
Table 26......................................................................................................................................... 204
Mean ratings of disparaging and general humour items displayed in dimensional categories ................................................................. 204
Table 27......................................................................................................................................... 205
 Responses to play items in fun process; Representing frequencies of 1 = not all to 3 = limited ................................................................................................. 205
Table 28......................................................................................................................................... 206
Mean responses to play items as reported in fun examples; represented in dimensional categories ................................................................. 206
Table 29......................................................................................................................................... 227
Fun at work activities grouped in neighbourhood clusters .........................................................
Table 30......................................................................................................................................... 229
Levels of enjoyment; mean ratings in relation to fun activities ....................................................
Table 31......................................................................................................................................... 231
Mean ratings of enjoyment of domain of activities presented in neighbourhood cluster groupings ................................................................. 231
Table 32.........................................................................................................................................
Participants’ mean responses of fun activities effects in lowering stress. .............. 235
Table 33........................................................................................................................................

Mean ratings of fun cluster activities impact on capacity to lower stress levels. ..... 236
Table 34........................................................................................................................................

Participants’ mean responses in relation to the impact of fun activities on increasing
job satisfaction. ......................................................................................................................... 239
Table 35........................................................................................................................................

Participants’ mean perception ratings of fun cluster activities impact capacity to
increase job satisfaction ........................................................................................................ 240
Table 36........................................................................................................................................

Participants’ mean responses in relation to the impact of fun activities on getting work
done more effectively........................................................................................................... 242
Table 37........................................................................................................................................

Mean participant rating of getting work done more effectively grouped in
neighbourhood cluster activities .......................................................................................... 243
Table 38........................................................................................................................................

Participants’ mean responses to the effect of fun activities on workplace relationships.
.................................................................................................................................................. 246
Table 39........................................................................................................................................

Effect of positive workplace relationships in relation to neighbourhood cluster
activities ................................................................................................................................... 248
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Nomological Network: observable manifestations and interrelationships...... 10
Figure 2: Applying 3P framework to defining the construct of fun at work................. 11
Figure 3: 3P conceptual framework applied to the global process of fun in the workplace
......................................................................................................................................... 12
Figure 4: Conceptual Framework for the Review of Humour ...................................... 24
Figure 5: Existing nomological net of the constructs of humour, play and fun at work..63
Figure 6: Affective events theory .................................................................................. 72
Figure 7: Hypothesised reflexive process of having fun at work presented in the 3P
framework .......................................................................................................................... 99
Figure 9: Neighbourhood analysis of fun at work activities as represented in MDS ... 130
Figure 10: Revised nomological net of humour, play and fun constructs; Presage and
Process ............................................................................................................................ 287
Figure 11: Revised nomological net of humour, play and fun constructs; Product..... 288
Figure 12: Multilevel impact of having fun for individuals, teams and organisations
combining current research and McDowell (2005) ...................................................... 294
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PROGRAM

Focus of research

Over the past decade, there have been numerous claims in the popular media regarding the benefits of workplace fun; however, there has been little empirical research to substantiate these claims. Fun at work has been presented in popular media (Ford, McLaughlin & Newstrom, 2004; Management issues, 2006; Sharp, 2008) as an organisational panacea, suggesting that having fun at work will almost miraculously reduce stress and turnover, and globally improve customer service and efficiency (Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath, 2001). Thus far the construct of fun, let alone fun at work, has yet to be differentiated and defined. A sociological theory of fun has been developed (Podilchak, 1985) and comparatively distinguished in relation to enjoyment and leisure (Podilchak, 1991). Yet the construct of fun has neither been validated nor located in relation to the more commonly associated constructs of humour and play. Numerous management articles (Abramis, 1989 a, b, c; Ford, McLaughlin & Newstrom, 2004; Management issues, 2006) and books (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Weinstein, 1996; Lundin & Christensen, 2000) prescribe how to have fun at work and how to develop a fun workplace culture, touting a plethora of benefits for both individuals and organisations that to date have not been empirically investigated. Nevertheless, few empirical studies have explored the concept of having fun at work, and those that have tend to concentrate on specific areas of the construct such as the fun climate (McDowell, 2005) and cynicism in relation to the orchestration of a fun workplace culture (Fleming, 2005). A review of relevant literature has established that the construct of fun, and fun at work, has not been adequately defined, particularly in
differentiating fun from similar constructs such as humour and play. Such lack of definition impedes both application of the construct at an operational level within organisations, and adequate measurement of the impact of having fun at work. Therefore, the pivotal questions for this research program are two fold. Firstly, this program of research will focus attention on developing a more comprehensive understanding of the distinct construct of fun at work in order to map the domain and distinguish it from related constructs such as humour and play/playfulness, as outlined theoretically in Chapter 2. Secondly, this thesis will locate fun at work in an organisational context and empirically explore perceptions related to the impact of having fun in the workplace. The particular organisational areas of interest in terms of perceived outcomes are: job satisfaction, managing stress, workplace relationships and efficiency, as outlined in Chapter 3.

Why study fun at work?

My interest in both the practice, and the value of having fun at work, originated when I was managing a counselling organisation. During this time, a group of staff developed the *birthday club* and for one year, everyone’s birthday was celebrated by honouring them in some unique way. For example, we had a high tea for our English receptionist, a children’s party for the child therapist and a king’s banquet for the director. Apart from the fun involved in participating in the activities of the day, I began to notice these events were having additional and unexpected organisational effects. The fun and laughter of participating in the themed parties appeared to not only lift the spirits of people during the event, but the levity created ensued for several days.
Additionally, people who did not normally interact in their work roles were helping plan events together; thereby creating an integrated team atmosphere that appeared to flow on to other more task related occasions. Over time, people began to state that the positive atmosphere generated by both planning and participating in the fun activities, and the cascading effect of the events, was a key feature in their continuing to be committed to the organisation.

It seemed that the opportunity to have fun at work was being recognised as an important component of workplace culture in this agency and it became apparent this was not the only organisation recognising the benefits of orchestrated fun at work. Over the past decade, there have been a number of advocates for fun at work, and they have been sharing their observations and the idea that fun and work can not only co-exist harmoniously, but potentially synergise outcomes that are positive for both workers and organisations as a whole (Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996).

In a workplace study by American Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2002) which surveyed over 500 human resource professionals, the majority of respondents endorsed the proposition that having fun at work is important in a workplace climate. Importantly, these results were nearly double the number of participants who reported the importance of fun at work five years prior. Prospectively, in terms of anticipated trends, ninety-five percent of the sample believed that having fun at work would become even more important in the next five years. Five years has now elapsed and anecdotally, having fun at work and the happiness it is claimed to produce is still presented as an important ingredient in a healthy work environment (Gostick &
Christopher, 2008; Sharp, 2008). However, having fun at work has continued to be a surprisingly neglected topic in organisational research, leaving many questions in relation to the construct and its application unanswered.

Very little research has been published in empirically rigorous sources in the area of fun, and even less in relation to having fun in a work context. Of the extant empirical literature, the term fun most frequently appears in relation to research on humour and/or play. Frequent interchangeable use of the terms fun, play and humour make it difficult to distinguish them as separate constructs, if indeed they are, in organisational contexts. In order to locate fun as a discrete construct, literature related to humour and play/playfulness was reviewed and positioned in a nomological net (Trochim, 2006). The nomological net articulates several theoretical frameworks for each construct including contextual features, personal characteristics, activities and documented outcomes of the given construct when applied in a workplace setting.

Chapter 2 of this research program provides an extensive exploration of fun and related literature, establishing fun at work as an under-defined construct. This review raises research questions relating to the interplay of humour and play in connection with fun and this research program will explore if fun is indeed a discrete construct, related to humour and play yet uniquely distinguishable. The contextual features of fun at work will also be explored including the types of activities that are considered fun at work, the process of having fun and the perceived outcomes of fun in the workplace context.

It is argued in this research program that fun is a systemic construct, existing in a reflexive relationship between the individual and the organisational context. Anecdotally, fun has been presented as having a positive, systemic organisational impact. Various
sources (Abramis, 1990; Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; SHRM, 2002; Weinstein, 1996) report that having fun at work can be a vehicle for workers to become more creative, increase their decision making capabilities, lower stress, increase job satisfaction, and therefore influence both employee retention and engagement. In addition, at a team and organisational level, having fun at work has been prescribed as an effective modality to build better teams, facilitate increased worker cooperation, improve customer service, build morale and improve profits. Chapter 3 explores these anecdotal claims, reviewing relevant literature, and locating fun as a construct in an organisational context of the individual, the team and the organisation. In essence, fun at work has been well reported in popular media as a powerful workplace intervention, but given the lack of construct definition the ability to measure the impact of fun reported in anecdotal sources is difficult as they are potentially describing impacts of the combined constructs of humour, play and fun. Therefore, this research program will explore the organisational context of fun at work, and the effects of having fun on affect, job satisfaction, stress management, job efficiency and workplace relationships.

The primary focus of this research program is two-fold: the first aim is to empirically define the construct of fun at work, and secondly, to explore the proposition that fun at work has positive workplace benefits. The value of defining fun at work as a discrete construct is to both inform future empirical research, and to assist in the application of fun at work in organisational contexts. Providing clear parameters for the construct of fun at work, including both contextual and process details, will contribute to developing an operational definition that can be utilised in numerous ways. For example, it is unknown on an individual level whether disposition for having fun at work exists
and if so, what if any role disposition plays in the complex interaction of individual perceptions of fun and the creation of fun at work. In addition, it is unknown what influence the context has on fun events, and inversely what impact fun events have on the workplace context, potentially influencing workplace climate and culture. The extent to which fun can be prescribed organisationally is also open for debate. Ultimately defining and differentiating the construct of fun at work will contribute to the measurement of the impact of having fun, both at an individual and organisational level.

In summary, increasing empirical understanding of the construct of fun at work will provide a foundation to explore not only the processes and activities related to the phenomena of fun, but the organisational ramifications of creating workplace cultures that encourage fun. If results replicate anecdotal reports, having fun at work could have positive, beneficial, multiple and far reaching implications for both individuals and organisations in terms of reducing costly employee turnover and providing organisations who embrace a fun workplace culture with a competitive market advantage.

Methodological framework

Philosophically this research program is epistemologically informed by positivist social, organisational and positive psychology, and is ontologically pragmatic (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). An essentially phenomenological approach is taken in relation to data collection, and a process oriented conceptual framework is utilised for interpretation. The series of studies contained in this research program are primarily phenomenological, documenting the reported qualitative and quantitative experience of participants in relation to fun at work (Neuman, 1991). These experiences and
perceptions were gathered through multiple methodologies including a series of questionnaires and structured case vignettes. Questionnaire methodology was utilised given both the exploratory nature of this research program and the value of obtaining enough data to aid construct definition. Collection of quantitative data included information on types of fun activities, underlying dimensions of fun at work and perceived impacts of having fun. Qualitative data obtained through case vignettes allowed the exploration of the unknown context and processes associated with having fun at work, answering why questions, in addition to what and how (Yin, 2003). The methodological details uniquely pertinent to each study are discussed in detail in the relevant chapters.

**Theoretical orientation**

Social psychology covers the spectrum from an individually focused perspective, to one more flavoured by sociology, including a focus on context, politics and power (Carr, 2003). Organisational psychology sits alongside social psychology, exploring psychological perspectives within the work context. Organisational psychology differentiates itself from other business-focused approaches with its focal point on the social processes inherent in organisations (Jex, 2002). Studies conducted from an organisational psychological perspective can include an analysis of how individual players in the workplace influence and perceive each other, the messages they send and receive in relationship dynamics, and the antecedents, occurrences and consequences of interactions. These influences can encompass emotions, cognitive processes, motivations and behaviour in recursive loops and be explored in their systemic context.
at a team level or organisational level (O’Driscoll, Taylor & Kalliath, 2003). Within the
restricted scope of this thesis, it is not possible for the systemic analysis to be exhaustive,
and therefore this series of studies will be limited to exploring fun from an individual
perspective, while acknowledging that individuals exist within complex organisational
systems. Multilevel theorising (Deazin, Glynn & Kazanjian, 1999), a tool for mapping
the relationships between individuals, group and organisational levels, could be applied
to the construct of fun at work in further research to fully appreciate its intricacies and
complexities.

In addition to organisational psychological theory, the studies in this program
reflect the four major imperatives of positive psychology: the notion of meeting life’s
challenges by making the most of setbacks and learning opportunities, engaging and
relating to people, finding fulfilment through creativity and productivity, and looking
beyond oneself to others to find meaning in life (Keyes & Haidt, 2004). It is anticipated
that understanding fun as a workplace intervention will assist organisations to embrace
the opportunity for multiple types of organisational learning, encompassing creativity,
relationship building and potentially capitalising on meaning for employee work life.
The common meta purpose reflected in positive psychology is a focus on strengths
rather than weaknesses, with the related goal of building solution-oriented (as opposed
to problem-saturated) communities (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Thus, increasing
understanding of the construct of fun at work can be viewed as a positive move to
enhance more of what is working within organisational climate and culture and provide
strength for organisations to harness and build upon.
In summary, theoretically this research program is viewed through a systemic lens with a focus on the context and processes involved in having fun at work in order to embrace positive psychological principles of being solution, rather than problem, focused in relation to organisational interventions.

Conceptual Framework

The present research program has three broad objectives: firstly, to identify the contextual issues associated with having fun at work; secondly, to explore processes that define the fun experience; and finally, to identify the outcomes of having fun at work. In order to achieve these objectives, a conceptual framework was developed using a systemic process framework as the foundation. The 3P framework encompasses three aspects: presage (context), process and product. The choice of this framework was two fold; firstly the developed framework provided the capacity to deconstruct the process of fun in stages, allowing ease of comparison between the like constructs of play and humour. While the 3P framework (Biggs, 1989) has primarily been used as an educational model for understanding student learning, the additional strength of the application in this thesis is the capacity of the framework to encompass both an individual perspective and to acknowledge the environmental context. In application to this research program, the presage phase of the framework includes exploration of both worker and environmental contexts, the process includes exploring fun activities and features, and the product focuses on individual and organisational outcomes. The conceptual framework will be applied in a dual manner, both for construct definition and application in the workplace.
In the process of construct definition the development of a nomological net can make an important contribution in integrating theory and data (Trochim, 2006; See Figure 1 Nomological Network: observable manifestations and interrelationships). A nomological net visually represents theory and observations about a construct and how they relate to other similar constructs.

Figure 1: Nomological Network: observable manifestations and interrelationships

Identifying a nomological net during the defining process can add discriminant validity by assisting to identify common and different features of theoretically associated constructs (Roest & Pieters, 1997). It can also aid in identifying whether the construct could primarily be determined by an alternative construct that would operationally suit just as well (Trochim, 2006). Given that both humour and playfulness are commonly interchanged with the term *fun*, these constructs will be used to build a
nomological net in relation to fun at work. The 3P framework will illustrate the features of each construct including contextual and personal characteristics required, process issues such as types of activities and defining features, and product outcomes. Multi-dimensional scaling will be utilised to systematically identify the underlying structure of the domain. The construct mapping process will readily identify the similarities and differences between fun, humour and play in order to more fully define the construct of fun at work (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Applying 3P framework to defining the construct of fun at work

What is fun at work?
- Organisational context
- Domain of activities
- Underlying structure of domain
- Defining features
- Process of fun
- Products of fun

What is not fun at work?

Relationship of fun to humour and play

Nomological net

To utilise the construct of fun in an organisational setting, it is important to understand how the construct can be operationalised. The 3P conceptual framework will be utilised for this purpose. The presage phase of this conceptualisation includes identifying worker and environmental contextual issues. The process phase will identify the different features of fun activities and the product phase focuses on documenting both individual (state of mind and mood shift) and a selection of organisational outcomes including job satisfaction, management of stress, efficiency and impact of fun on workplace relationships (See Figure 3 Operationalising of Construct).
Figure 3: 3P conceptual framework applied to the global process of fun in the workplace

If indeed fun at work does influence a range of workplace variables including job satisfaction, stress management, efficiency and workplace relationships, then having fun at work may well be a factor that has been significantly overlooked as an organisational strengths-based tool. On the other hand, having fun at work may well be just that, ‘a bit of fun’ or a distraction from our day, and not a robust intervention that is able to be developed and modified to improve workplace well-being and organisational outcomes.

Research aims

There are two broad research aims in this program. Firstly, the studies in this program will aim to further define and differentiate the construct of fun at work. By mapping the domain of fun activities and using the 3P process framework, the construct will be compared and contrasted to the related constructs of humour and play/playfulness. This process will explore the hypothesis that fun, while a similar construct to humour or playfulness, is indeed distinct from these two concepts. The
second aim of this research is to explore the anecdotal evidence that engaging in fun at work can improve in a range of individual and organisational variables, specifically including job satisfaction, stress, workplace relationships and job efficiency.

Research scope

Two factors are highlighted when considering the scope of this research program and its ultimate application: the Western paradigm and the chosen sample. Most reports of studies on having fun at work emerged from English speaking Western nations, primarily the United States of America. This current research program was based in Australia, which is also considered an English speaking country of Western cultural orientation. Therefore, results could be considered relatively comparable. In contrast, the limitations of interpreting data through a Western paradigm may result in the data produced in this study being culturally biased toward English speaking humour and a level of development reflected in a first world country.

The second issue of scope relates to the populations of interest. The populations described in the extant studies were primarily based in office and service based sectors, rather than in manufacturing industries. As such, throughout this research program a similar representative sample of human service workers were the population of interest. Participants were considered human service workers if they were primarily occupied in generating work from either internal or external clients. With participants’ jobs based around providing a service, perceptions of efficiency rather than productivity were used. The Australian Bureau of Statistic reported 55.7% of the population was employed as either managers/administrators, professionals, associate professionals, clerical, sales and
other service workers considered as human services workers (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001) suggesting this sample represents slightly over half of the working population. Therefore, this research program is of Western cultural orientation, based on the experiences of Australian human service workers.

Structure of research program

This thesis consists of eight chapters in total. The current chapter provides an overview of the research area of interest with Chapters 2 and 3 reviewing relevant literature. Chapters 4 to 7 present the data collection studies, and finally Chapter 8 consists of an integrated discussion.

Each chapter will be outlined in more detail below. Chapter 2, *Refining the nomological net of fun at work*, presents an overview of literature related to humour, play/playfulness, fun, and fun at work, in order to chart an extant nomological net and identifying gaps in existing knowledge. Chapter 3, *Organisational context of fun at work*, explores the construct of fun in the organisational setting, juxtaposing *fun* and *work*. This chapter also reviews claims made in the popular media suggesting fun at work is linked with a selection of individual and organisational constructs such as job satisfaction, stress management, workplace relationships and profitability. Chapter 4, *The domain of fun activities in the workplace*, presents data from Study 1, focusing on mapping the domain of activities that are considered *fun* and *not fun* in the workplace. Results from this study assisted with construct mapping and provided a platform of fun activities for further studies. The domain of activities identified in Study 1 as *fun* activities for everyone were then utilised in Study 2 to explore the underlying structure
of fun at work which is described in Chapter 5, *Structural dimensions of fun at work*. Using multi-dimensional scaling, the structure of fun at work is analysed using both neighbourhood clusters and a dimensional perspective. Chapter 6, *Exploring the context and process of having fun at work*, presents Study 3, probing more comprehensively into the experience of having fun at work. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected for this study. Case vignettes were used to explore contextual features and processes related to having fun at work. Chapter 7, *The perceived impact of fun at work*, describes data from Study 4 which collates and analyses information related to the perceived effects of having fun in relation to job satisfaction, managing stress, workplace relationships and job efficiency based on the activities identified in Study 1. Data is also collected recording enjoyment preferences in relation to the fun activities identified in Study 1. The conclusion of the research program is presented in Chapter 8, *Integrative discussion*, combining the results of this research with extant research and related theory to explore the two main aims of this series of study; Is fun at work a unique construct, related to, yet distinct from humour and play? And is having fun at work perceived to have positive individual and organisational outcomes? Limitations of this research and suggestions for further research are also presented in this chapter.
Research questions

The following specific research questions will be addressed:

Research Q 1: What is the domain of activities that are considered to be fun at work?
Research Q2: What is the domain of activities that are considered not fun at work?
Research Q3: What are the defining features/dimensions of the construct ‘fun at work’?
Research Q4: What are the contextual conditions required for fun to occur in the workplace?
Research Q5: What features contribute to the process of having fun at work?
Research Q6: What are the products or outcomes of having fun at work?
Research Q7: To what degree are humour and play represented in the reported examples of fun at work?
Research Q8: What activities from the domain of having fun at work are perceived as most enjoyable?
Research Q9: Does participating in fun activities positively influence stress management, job satisfaction, workplace effectiveness and workplace relationships?

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has outlined the construct of having fun at work as the area of interest. Given the dearth of research available in relation to the topic, this research program will focus on two broad aims. Firstly, it aims to more fully differentiate and define the construct of fun at work, including a deeper understanding of the underlying dimensions of the construct, the processes involved and the affective outcomes of having fun at work. Secondly, this thesis aims to extend knowledge of the
contextual application of having fun at work, locating fun in an organisational context and measuring perceived outcomes. The importance of this research is primarily in its exploratory nature; a search to more fully define the construct of fun at work in order to provide a solid foundation for fun to be validated and recognised as a legitimate, positive workplace construct that may just well provide the significant workplace outcomes as described in anecdotal literature. Hemsath, in his book *301 Ways to have fun at work*, encapsulated the perceived organisational impacts of having fun at work;

The business climate is evolving constantly, and the contemporary workforce is highly-sought after, mobile, and maybe for the first time in history, less concerned with monetary rewards than about how work affects their preferred way of living. The message to both employers and vendors is crystal clear: I will work for you, or I'll do business with you if I am enjoying myself. Fun can be used as a strategic weapon to help companies achieve extraordinary results (Hemsath, 2001, p. vii).
CHAPTER 2: REFINING THE NOMOLOGICAL NET OF FUN AT WORK

Introduction

Encouraging employees to have fun at work has been regularly touted in the popular media (Sharp, 2008) and in management articles (Ford et.al, 2004; Management issues, 2006) in the past decade as an important strategy for improving customer service and employee well-being. Commonly, the concept of having fun at work is presented as an intervention focused on adding more humour or playfulness to the workplace, with a number of authors and trainers providing instructions on a range of different prescriptive activities (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Weinstein, 1996; Lundin & Christensen, 2000). To date there has been little empirical research related to the construct of fun, let alone the unique context of fun at work. When reviewing the literature in relation to both fun, and fun at work, it is clear that there is a gap in knowledge with the construct of fun having never been adequately defined or differentiated from related constructs. This lack of demarcation has engendered confusing empirical research and has allowed interventions to be applied purporting to represent fun and fun at work, when potentially they are representing a related, but different domain. This confusion occurs primarily with the constructs of fun, humour and play/fullness. Therefore, before the psychological dispositions to fun or interventions prescribed as fun can effectively be used as a legitimate organisational tool the question must be asked, “What is the construct of fun at work?”.

This chapter will outline the important features to consider when defining the construct of fun and will review the literature related to having fun at work. Given the
propensity of the terms *fun, humour* and *play* to be used interchangeably, this chapter will focus on literature that either integrates or distinguishes these constructs. The following chapter will review literature related to the organisational context of having fun at work.

Construct definition

The process of construct definition in psychological research has a number of identified phases (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). The first phase requires both conceptual and operational definitions of the construct, including both what the construct of interest is purported to be and what the construct of interest is not. Once the construct is mapped, it is then compared and contrasted with other similar constructs with unique features identified and overlapping concepts made explicit. The gathering of information in this process utilises both theoretical and observable data in order to establish whether the construct has unique authenticity or is indeed a subset of an existing construct.

The first phase of construct definition in this research program will focus on both conceptual and operational definitions of fun at work. Existing definitions, research and anecdotal information in relation to fun at work will be noted. A second layer of construct definition will utilise a nomological net (Trochim, 2006). The establishment of a nomological net includes articulating the theoretical framework linked to the construct, how the construct is likely to be measured and the linkages with other similar constructs. In the case of having fun at work, the most similar constructs apparent in the literature appear to be humour and play/playfulness.
While it may seem logical to present research related to fun at this point, it is important to understand the differences between fun and work, and the related constructs of humour, play and playfulness. Much of the current literature on fun frequently intersperses these constructs and the merging of information implicitly suggests that fun, humour and play at work are one in the same. In understanding the existing research in relation to work, humour, play and playfulness, the potential construct of fun can then be more readily located and critically examined.

Are fun and work mutually exclusive?

One of the phases of effective construct development is to explore the construct not. When something is ‘not’, it does not necessarily entail thinking of its opposite, but requires including enough defining features to distinguish it from the other. For example, we know a table can come in many forms but it has a primary function to hold or display things, as opposed to a chair which is used for seating. Both of these items are furniture, but are used for different purposes. If we are to think about fun, it is important to define its unique features, and its purpose, as opposed to the construct of work. Are work and fun an integral part of each other, or are they distinctly different? Is fun an integral part of work culture in today’s society?

Work as a concept has been studied by social scientists for many years and there is still no consensus on the definition of work. Work cannot be clearly defined by the activity, but must encompass references to purpose of the activity and the context in which it is performed. Work activities have been defined as instrumental because their
major purpose is to produce an end, with the intrinsic rewards achieved because of the extrinsic purpose (Gallagher, Rose, McClelland, Reynolds & Tombs, 1997).

The view of work has dramatically changed over history. The ancient Greeks and Romans saw the manufacture and supply of basic necessities as degrading and these tasks were designated to those on low social scales, such as slaves. The only good life was seen to be a life of leisure. With the reformation and the emergence of the Protestant Christian ethic, hard work became not only a means to meet basic needs, but a virtue and duty in its own right. Weber (1965) described the Protestant work ethic of hard work as a vocation, serving god in a disciplined way and being frugal in order to achieve salvation (cited in Gallagher et al., 1997). This is quite a contrast to Roman times.

The impact of the Protestant work ethic spread widely in the western world, but was somewhat refined to encompass the notion that if you inherited or earned enough capital, you reverted to the Greek and Roman way of life by paying others to take care of the menial tasks. Success at work was eventually measured in terms of social advancement and a prestige lifestyle, with the main aim being one of self-fulfilment. Karl Marx, in his analysis of capitalist society, argued that self-fulfilment and self-actualisation came with a dark side, the concept of worker alienation. He noted that individuals risked becoming alienated from society through calculation and self-interest, with the product that they were working to produce becoming so far removed due to industrialisation that there was little connection between the ends (the product/service) and the workers’ own needs for satisfaction and contribution (Gallagher et al., 1997).
The discussion of meaning of work is still debated today and much of the research of the past half century has focused on this very issue.

The modern western work life appears to require a balance between performing meaningful work and having a work/life balance (McShane & Travaglione, 2007). An in-depth examination of these issues is far beyond this thesis, but the changing landscapes of organisations in the 21st Century encompassing transformational models of change and leadership (Davidson & Griffin, 2006) provide a clear argument that any exploration of the construct of work requires a focus on human experience, and it is argued here that this would include the capacity to have fun in a work context.

This section began to explore what fun was not, and historically work was not fun. However, the sociological context of work has substantially changed, indicating the gulf between work and the lighter side of life has narrowed. With the focus of this research program aimed at more effectively understanding the construct of fun in the workplace, it is important to juxtapose the constructs of fun and work to identify if indeed fun is an integrated part of today’s working landscape. The question also needs to be asked to aid in construct definition, ‘What is not fun in today’s workplace?’. 
The theory and context of humour

Weaver and Wilson (1997), in their study on addiction counsellors, propose that the “secret to having fun at work is to focus on humor” (p. 108). They accordingly prescribe the use of comic strips, funny quotes, good jokes and the like as stress reduction techniques. Although stating that the focus is on humour they also suggest playing music and displaying children’s drawings can add to a fun culture. Anton (2002), in an overview of workplace culture, has extended this view of humour;

The word humour has taken on a broader, gentler meaning in recent times. It has come to encompass a range of human interactions where the spirit is lifted… Indeed, the term ‘humour in the workplace’ has matured into somewhat of an umbrella concept. It has moved beyond jokes, riddles, gags, kidding, clowning, mimicking, smiles and laughter to become something far more. Humour now encompasses anything that positively enhances well-being, such as gestures, music, rituals and recognition (Anton, 2002, p. 73).

Both of these works are examples of the many that intertwine the constructs of playfulness, humour and fun, utilising them interchangeably as their chosen term.

While humour has been studied by scholars from various disciplines over the years, it has not lent itself easily to a definition. Hatch and Ehrlich-Sandford (1993) proposed that most researchers have side-stepped the definition process and used a colloquial interpretation to define their domain of interest. Research to date in relation to humour has focused on two main areas: the micro level with the exploration of types of humour and individual motivation in the use of humour; and the macro level of the social function of humour. Each of these views will be explored and then contextualised using the model developed by Duncan, Smeltzer and Leap (1990).
What makes something funny?

Incongruity
Cognitive/Appraisal
Superiority

What roles does humor at work perform?

Gender
Ethnic
Contextual

How is humor affected by individual differences?

Windows into the social psychology of humor at work

Power & Leadership
Group Cohesiveness
Communication & Culture

Specific issue: legal and arbitral implications


What makes something humorous?

Humour takes a topic and, in a joking fashion, places that topic in a different light. Humour can be used as a vehicle to convey messages that would otherwise be unacceptable or impossible to negotiate, establishing it as a type or means of communication. The process that occurs in the experience of humour has been identified when the familiar is taken to the unfamiliar, creating interactive incongruencies and often multiple meanings for the participants. Finally, the process of humour is accompanied by laughter, or at least a smile or its inverse when the event is not perceived as humorous (Hatch & Ehrlich-Sandford, 1993; Gruner, 1997).

Duncan et al., (1990) propose three distinct components that make an incident humorous: incongruity, cognitive appraisal or superiority. Incongruity is the experience
of taking the expected suddenly to the unexpected. Many of us have found ourselves inappropriately laughing when someone trips on a street corner, or when the punch line in the joke is delivered with a twist, noting the surprise factor in the event. Rather than focusing on the physiological or emotional effects, the cognitive basis for humour suggests that it is the interpretation of the event that allows us to compare what is typical with the current discrepancy. The cognitive appraisal of the event explains why an incident is experienced as humorous; arguing the incongruity of the event raises cognitions and arousal and results in an experience of pleasure (Meyer, 2000).

Sociological research has identified two types of humour as a sub-context for cognitive appraisal. Standardized humour, the canned joke carries its context with it, being self-contained and transferable from one setting to another. Spontaneous humour, however, is much more vulnerable to its context, commonly eliciting the statement “you should have been there”, making the cognitive understanding of the humour more tied to the contextual factors rather than the content of the humour (Hatch & Ehrlich-Sandford, 1993).

The third component that identifies the type of humour is a group referred to as superiority, disparagement or dispositional theories. These theories suggest that people laugh either when they feel superior to people, thus feeling triumphant when others look bad, or when they feel the opposite of superiority and show self-derision (Lynch, 2002; Meyer, 2000). The superior type of humour is often targeted at people who are outside the in group or are lower in status, whereas self-derision is used to make oneself look silly or be the butt of the joke. Divisiveness in humour can be most often observed when jokes are gender or culturally based. Hassett and Houlihan (1979) noted that the most
popular jokes had both sexual and ethnic themes. In contrast, the joke teller can weave the situation where they present themselves as the object of ridicule and at the same time increase their own status within the group by elevating the status of the listener, or by illustrating the nuances of a minority culture and providing status to that minority group (Alexander, 1986). These three areas summarise the motivation literature assisting us to identify types of humour.

The context of humour

A positive view of humour has been a relatively recent historical development. Until the 19th Century, in most Western countries humour was considered impolite, with Freud linking humour to repressed hostility and sexuality. Today, humour is not only sanctioned, but it has been “hailed for its life-enforcing and curative powers” (Gelkopf & Kreitler, 1996, p. 236). McGhee (1979) suggests that humour is a part of our everyday lives, identified by dialogue that is set in a framework of play or unreality, and that it exists in the discourse of our more serious and real life worlds.

Humour is fundamentally a communicative process (Lynch, 2002). It is argued that humour is a collaborative process, with the receiver having as much, if not more, influence on the meaning attributed to the message. Consistent with this, Du Pre (1998) argues that meanings embedded in humour are mutually managed, not just imparted. In a study investigating the use of humour in medical settings, she argued that people choose to use humour, based on personal and situational contexts. Du Pre proposes that people are not “born funny”, and that, with practice and sensitivity, they develop the ability to use humour while observing the implicit rules of the setting and gaining
cultural insider knowledge. Heseltine (1997) also makes the point that humour is context bound. There are rules of humour that are embedded in cultural codes and shared meaning, creating and influencing its function in any given circumstance. In a similar vein, Vinton (1989) suggested that the process of humour is a method used for groups and individuals to negotiate understanding of relationships and environmental cultural contexts.

Lynch (2002) reviewed humour studies that focused on communication and categorised these into two groups: rhetorical studies and examinations of the social functions of the messages. Rhetorical studies centre on the content of the message, exploring why people laugh and how humour can be used to motivate and persuade people. Social research focuses on the broad functions of humour at a social level involving the analysis of power, differentiation, inclusion, and resistance, and at a micro level in communication, exploring functions such as relieving boredom and gaining favour or attraction. Lynch (2002) also argues that it is important to understand that the role of humour in social situations requires an appreciation of the paradoxical nature of humour. Humour can have multiple functions such as putting someone at ease, yet actions by the humourist can either lead them to identify with the participant, or differentiate themselves (Lynch, 2002; Martin, 2004). Tracy, Myers and Scott (2006) argue that humour lives within the paradox of reproduction; often when humour is repressed by those in power, it engenders more covert humour, or when humour is purposefully injected the results can sometimes be humourless.
Sense of humour

Humour is a constant part of the culture of our lives with most people claiming to possess a good sense of humour (Galloway & Cropley, 1999). Enacting our sense of humour has been recognised as not only a means of getting along in the world, but also as a self-protective mechanism (Duncan et al., 1990). Thornson and Powell (1993) describe the elements that make up an individual’s humour repertoire as: recognition of oneself as a humorous person, recognition of other’s humour, behavioural response to humour (e.g. laughter), perspective/coping (ability to laugh things off). They highlight the difference between measuring components of humour as previously discussed, and a sense of humour that is the property of the individual. Thornson and Powell (1993) developed a multidimensional scale and identified six factors that mapped the personal construct of a sense of humour (see Table 1). These factors link constructs such as creativity and play to the broader context of recognition and appreciation, highlighting the complex interaction between the process of humour and the context in which it exists.

Table 1

Factors in sense of humour

| 1. Humour production and creative ability. |
| 2. Playfulness or a sense of whimsy/to have a good time. |
| 3. The ability to use humour to achieve social goals. |
| 4. Recognition of humour. |
| 5. Appreciation of humour. |
| 6. Use of humour as an adaptive or coping mechanism. |

**General outcomes of humour**

Humour has been demonstrated to have physiological, medical and social outcomes. The following is an overview of the research. In a review of the benefits of positive types of humour Galloway and Cropley (1999) found that various components of humour can beneficially influence mental health by assisting with dealing with problems as they occur or by reducing perceived threats of negative life events. Generally the therapeutic use of humour has been used as a means of assisting people cope with their day to day problems (Mindess, 1996). Humour has been found to increase alertness, respiration, muscle activity, decrease pain and increase pleasure. Wilson (1989), in a review of studies, stated that humour often reduces stress, promotes problem solving and boosts performance. Martin, Kuiper, Olinger and Dance (1993) stated that humour, in addition to buffering stress, can also play an important role in the enjoyment of positive life experiences. Du Pre (1998) noted that some types of humour serve as an invitation to create buffers for emotions such as anxiety, anger, fear and embarrassment.

**Humour in the workplace**

Research interests in the mix of humour and work have waxed and waned over the years, receiving some attention in the 1950’s and sporadic attention since then. Duncan et al. (1990) state that humour has not been seriously researched in relation to the context of organisations (see Duncan et al., 1990 for an overview of the history of research) and this does not appear to have changed greatly in the subsequent 17 years, although there has been some sporadic interest. Much of the research related to humour
in the workplace is focused on two components of humour: types of humour and the function of humour, rather than sense of humour.

**Types of humour in the workplace.**

In a case study approach to a small industrial/retail business, Vinton (1989) found a taxonomy of humour that covered four areas including the use of puns, goofing off (slapstick), jokes/anecdotes, and bantering/teasing to get things done. The jokes were further sub-categorised into self ridicule, bawdy jokes and industry jokes. Berger, Coulehan and Belling (2004) explored humour in a medical setting noting, as Vinton (1989) did, that there were several types of humour present. These included destructive gallows humour and therapeutic humour, used both by medical practitioners and patients. Smeltzer and Leap (1988) in an analysis of the acceptability of different types of joking behaviour in the workplace focused on racist, sexist and neutral jokes in work settings. They found that women regarded sexist jokes as less appropriate than men and women were more offended by racist jokes than sexist jokes. They noted surprisingly that those that identified with black culture were less offended by racist jokes than were white participants and they suggest that this could be interpreted in a number of ways. Firstly, the joke was more acceptable when told by a member of their own group (disparage theory), and secondly that poking fun at oneself is valued in organisational life. Finally, black subjects were conditioned to display humour in a one down situation. They raise the serious question however, that while this form of joking may be accepted, it still may not be appropriate or appreciated.
Martin, Rich and Gayle (2004) in a study of 106 manager/subordinate dyads found that males engaged in more negative and expressive humour than females did, that male subordinates used more humour than female subordinates and that subordinates reported using more positive humour than managers did. Overall, workers described using more positive than negative humour and that jokes and stories positively enhanced the work environment.

*Functions of humour in the workplace.*

Humour is employed in the workplace in a wide variety of situations, both with positive and negative outcomes (Smeltzer & Leap, 1988; Martin et al., 2004; Rizzo, Wanzer & Booth-Butterfield, 1999). On an individual level, humour has been attributed to mediate the seriousness of some tasks, make monotonous work more bearable, reduce burnout and lower stress, and increase job satisfaction (Avtgis & Taber, 2006; Collinson, 2002; Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 2005). Humour has been found to assist in stress management in occupational therapy practitioners (Bennett, 1991; Vergeer & MacRae, 1993) and in aged nursing care, for both patient and carers benefit (Isola & Astedt, 1997). Thornson and Powell (1993) describe humour as a coping strategy for difficult work, particularly related to the process of death, with a tendency for people to make fun of circumstances that threaten their psychological well-being. Humour has also been found to affect emotions by reducing tension and aggression or enhancing social feelings and to have the cognitive effects of enhancing optimism, levels of playfulness and the ability to shift to new points of view (Gelkopf & Kreitler, 1996). Humour for medical students and emergency services was seen as a coping
mechanism to deal with frustration, depressive situations and stress; it is a way to deal with the tragedy of their job, keeping the pain at arms length (Tracy et al., 2006; Wear, Aultman, Varley & Zarconi, 2006). Tracy et al. (2006) found that the use of humour with emergency and correctional service workers aided employee identity through differentiation, superiority, role distance and relief. Humour has also been found to be used as a coping mechanism to adjust to new roles or organisational change (Hatch & Ehrlich-Sanford, 1993; Vinton, 1989).

On a team level, humour can play a role in interpersonal connections by socialising new-comers and building knowledge, and can function to save face or break the strain in order to create more trust between tense parties (Tracy et al., 2006). The function of humour in the workplace that Vinton (1989) studied was primarily inclusive and demonstrative of a workplace culture in which bantering and teasing were an acceptable and encouraged form of communication. Vinton identified that humour strongly influenced socialisation. Socialisation with humour seems to ease entry into a group and create a sense of being part of the crowd. Martin et al., (2004) found positive and expressive humour was used frequently by managers and subordinates to enhance their overall work environment and was found to influence organisational citizenship behaviours among peers. These results support prior research (Rizzo et al., 1999; Meyer, 1997) that humour can play an important role in maintaining a positive organisational climate. Finally, humour has been identified as having a role in educational settings, making lessons more memorable and allowing students to see things from different perspectives (Duncan et al., 1990).
In contrast, *horseplay* or practical jokes are an area of contention within the humour genre as it is open to misinterpretation. Duncan et al. (1990) document a number of legal cases where sexism and racism at work have been successfully prosecuted, but they state that horseplay does not usually have legal implications. Arbitrators do, however, take a dim view of practical jokes and disciplinary action often follows. A recent Australian incident of a baggage handler *borrowing* a fancy dress camel costume from a traveller’s luggage and wearing it on the tarmac is an example of horseplay at work gone wrong. As a result of his actions, the baggage handler was dismissed and several other staff members were disciplined (ABC news online, 2005).

Superiority humour can also have dual functions in the workplace, establishing it as an inclusive/exclusionary social process (Gruner, 1997). Alexander (1986) explores the role of humour in ostracising *victims*. He suggests that the creator(s) of humour take a one-up position in an attempt to elevate their own status within the group, while lowering someone else’s position, usually a party not present. This type of humour is often referred to as *wit, mirth or gallows* humour (Lynch, 2002). More recent studies of humour have taken the ambiguity of humour into account. Meyer (1997) noted the theme of *uniting* and *dividing* in their narrative study of a child care centre and highlighted the humour as a means of social control, illustrating to members shared values and expectations and demonstrations of ridicule if unacceptable practices were shown. Berger et al., (2004) report that medical students begin their training as somewhere between *us* and *them* but gradually develop more familiarity with the medical culture, ultimately joining *us*, and using humour in an exclusionary fashion. Recently Wear et al. (2006) explored how medical students made fun of patients, with
students identifying those patients that were fair game and those off limits, highlighting the continued use of superiority humour in a medical setting. Wear et al. (2006) describe the moral contradiction embedded in making fun of patients and their argument advocates for further training of medical students to highlight the downside of disparaging those placed under their care.

Avtgis and Taber (2006) noted that there are both positive and negative types of humour used as coping mechanisms in the workplace. While positive humour (using jokes to amuse others) did mediate stress and add to job satisfaction, negative humour (self disparaging and aggressive) was associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, job stress and lower job satisfaction. In contrast to other studies, a study exploring humour in call centres challenged the notion of humour’s role in contributing to organisational harmony. Taylor and Bain (2003) found that while satire and jokes did provide relief from boredom and routine, humour also contributed to the development of counter cultures that were vying for power and often conflicted with corporate priorities or aims, causing a negative outcome on organisational climate.

Summary of humour theory

In summary, the research that has been conducted on humour focuses on two main areas: micro issues such as types of humour and the motivation for using humour, and the macro area which explores the functions of humour, including the effect on communication and group functioning. Positive types of humour have been found to have substantial impact on influencing well-being, health, stress and the capacity to buffer a range of psychological issues. All of the areas related to humour have been
studied in the workplace, but to a much lesser extent than those concerned with the
general application of humour. Humour’s defining features are the meaning placed on
the ‘play’ with language or activity, taking topics from one context and placing them in
another in a joking fashion, and its use as a respite from issues. Humour is therefore a
process where interactions are made amusing by changing the context or perception of a
situation. The information obtained here will be utilised in a nomological net to assist in
identifying the similarities and differences between fun and humour.

Theory and context of playfulness

As previously stated, fun is often used interchangeably with the terms humour
and playfulness in academic and anecdotal literature. The following discussion will
explore the construct of adult play and playfulness as represented in current literature
and the connections with fun, particularly in the workplace.

Definitions of play

The Online Oxford Dictionary defines play as “engaging in games or other
activities for enjoyment rather than for a serious or practical purpose” and “to take one’s
turn in a game” (http://www.askoxford.com/concise). The Penguin Dictionary of
Psychology (Reber, 1995) notes

..that somehow play involves diversion or recreation, an activity not necessarily
to be taken seriously…however it would be a mistake to conclude that such
things are not taken seriously by the participants (p. 575).
Glynn and Webster (1992) devised a scale to explore playfulness as an individual characteristic in adults, and its application for organisational contexts. They conceptualised adult playfulness as:

...a propensity to define or redefine an activity in an imaginative, non-serious or metaphorical manner so as to enhance intrinsic enjoyment, involvement and satisfaction” (p. 85).

Therefore, some of the key phrases in the defining of play are; diversionary, non-serious, imaginative, and game-like activities which produce enjoyment.

*Types of play*

Reber (1995) noted that Piaget categorized children’s play into three general areas: games of mastery, games with rules, and games with make-believe and fantasy. Dr Bettelheim (cited in Banker, 1987) distinguishes between play and games:

Play is: Activities characterized by freedom from all but personally imposed rules [which are changed at will] by free-wheeling fantasy involvement and by the absence of any goals outside the activity itself. Games however are usually competitive and characterized by agreed upon, often externally imposed, rules, by a requirement to use the implements of the activity in the manner for which they are intended and not as fantasy suggests (Banker, 1987. p. 55).

*Characteristics of play and playfulness*

Much of the research on play, playing and playfulness has focused around children, and indeed early research with adult play was based on findings related to children’s play. Research has identified five behavioural dimensions of playfulness in children: cognitive spontaneity, manifest joy, sense of humour, social spontaneity and physical spontaneity (Barnett, 1990). Playfulness in children has been found to be a stable personality trait, including dimensions such as creativity, imaginativeness,
positive affect, emotional expression and physical activity (Schaefer & Greenberg, 1997). Psychological research in relation to children’s play has identified that the adaptive functions of play are indirect; through play children receive important stimulation of both cognitive and social skills (Vandenberg, 1998).

Developmental theories describe children outgrowing their tendency to engage in fantasy play, and as adults developing their own version of play, embedded in humour and leisure activities (Colarusso, 1993). Central to the themes of play for both adults and children are the concepts of pretending and the altering of reality with the knowledge that the consequences are not real. Fox is able to contextualise this concept in an article on adults having fun;

Whether it’s bowling or Barbie collecting, play is an effective antidote to harried adult lives…because it allows us to completely lose ourselves in the moment. A productive distraction from worries about spreading waistlines and mounting bills, true play gives us the opportunity to put aside our egos and focus on pleasure rather than duty. Play also offers some very adult advantages…people who preserve their sense of fun are better equipped to solve problems, think creatively and manage stress (Fox, 1999, p. 12).

A recent study utilising grounded theory approach found the components of adult playfulness to be similar to, but not the same as, children’s play (Guitard, Ferland & Dutil, 2005). The five components identified consisted of creativity, curiosity, sense of humour, pleasure and spontaneity. Creativity included the ability to use one’s imagination and curiosity was related to the thirst for learning and experiencing new situations. Guitard et al., (2005) noted that an adult’s sense of humour was far more sophisticated than a child’s, and this needs to be taken into account when researching play with adults. The fourth component, pleasure, was described as an end result of the process of having fun. Finally, spontaneity referred to an event produced without
external intervention, including the notions of flexibility and the ability to change direction. These components of adult play provide valuable information in relation to the fun nomological net, highlighting the overlapping nature of the constructs.

**Context of play**

Even though the process of exploring adult playfulness has occurred, to date no studies have examined the context of adult play. Winnocott, (cited in Applegate & Bonovitz, 1995) described the circumstances required for children’s play to include the ability to trust and a stable environment. He also referred to play as the beginnings of cultural experience in the creation of shared meaning, raising the importance of play as a social process.

**Play at work**

While there has been some research on adult playfulness, early literature related to adult play failed to adequately define the construct (Graham, Sawyers, & DeBoard, 1989; Tegano, 1990). Kruger (1995) argued that utilising children’s playfulness scales in adult research did not take into account the cognitive and emotional maturity processes that define adulthood, which was similarly noted by Guitard et al., (2005) when researching adult sense of humour.

Glynn and Webster (1992) focused their interest on adult playfulness, citing evidence that it is a part of normal personality and life. While acknowledging playfulness exists on multiple levels such as interpersonal and social, Glynn and Webster devised a scale that was developed to explore playfulness as an individual
characteristic in adults, and have an application for organisational contexts. The Adult Playfulness Scale (Glynn & Webster, 1992) is a 32 item, visual analogue, self reporting measure. It was devised from a 63 item prototype, with the goal of distinguishing people with levels of high playfulness from those with low playfulness in the workplace. They argue that playfulness is a multidimensional construct, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural components, which together constitute a continuum along which individuals range from high to low.

Glynn and Webster (1992) found five factors that discriminated play from work: (1) spontaneity (unconstrained and voluntary), (2) expressiveness (evocative and enjoyable), (3) fun (humorous and fun loving), (4) creativity (inventive) and (5) silliness (nonsensical, frivolous, or irrational). Subscales were constructed from these factors resulting in reliable measures (all had Chronbach coefficient alpha’s above .70) to discriminate play from work in a work setting. Glynn and Webster deduced that these factors substantiate their conceptualisation of playfulness to include cognitive, affective and behavioural components and that their five factors correspond directly to Liberman’s (1977) factors in children (cited in Schaefer & Greenberg, 1997) and that the other two factors are linked by the framing processes involved in adult playfulness. They state that their five studies with over 300 subjects demonstrated good reliability of the scale. Subsequent to their original scale development, Glynn and Webster (1993) examined the concurrent validity of the scale with the constructs of innovative attitudes (Innovative intentions and behaviour scale), intrinsic motivations (Intrinsic motivation orientation scale of the work preference inventory), personal orderliness (Order scale of the personality research form scales) and social desirability. Positive correlations were
found with innovative attitudes \( (r=.26, p<.01) \) and intrinsic motivation \( (r=.29, p<.01) \) and negative correlation with personal orderliness \( (r=-.36, p<.01) \). No relationship was found for social desirability.

A semantic differential technique was used to discriminate the descriptive word item of *work* from that of *play* and it was this process, if critically analysed, which affects the construct validity of their work. They did follow the process of construct development in discriminating what play is not, but their results do not necessarily say what play is. Kruger (1995) in reviewing the paper describing the Adult Playfulness Scale was critical of Glynn and Webster’s definition of playfulness because it is not quantifiable and is highly subjective. He raises the notion that although the Adult Playfulness Scale is a reliable instrument to discriminate play from work in a work setting, it has questionable content and construct validity as a measure of general adult playfulness. He noted there are a number of other constructs in the general domain of adult playfulness including humour, joy, happiness, wit, cheerfulness, and gregariousness. Consistent with the aims of the present thesis, Kruger argued that “playfulness would need to be integrated into a nomological network with these, and many other constructs, to establish whether it is ‘playfulness’ that this scale measures” (Kruger, 1995, p. 37).

Not withstanding this criticism, the Adult Playfulness Scale (Glynn & Webster, 1992) has been utilised in further research. The Adult Playfulness Scale was administered to 265 computer students to measure anxiety related to computer use and its relationship to adult play. This study provided some support for the validity of the instrument, with the relationship between computer anxiety and playfulness correlating
negatively, “however the strength of these relationships (all correlation’s below .21) does not permit assertions and needs further estimates of validity” (Bozionelos & Bozionelos, 1997, p.957). Maxwell, Reed, Saker, and Story (2005) investigated the use of Glenn and Webster’s Adult Playfulness Scale in relation to the selection process for sales representatives. In their first study, they verified the construct validity of the scale in a sales context, identifying two dominant factors: fun-loving containing items such as bright, fun and exciting and frivolous containing silly, flippant, childlike and whimsical items. They established that the factor loadings of fun-loving and frivolous were stable for their entire sample; however, the results for the other factors in the Adult Playfulness Scale were not as stable, leading them to further testing for fun-loving and frivolous only. To test concurrent validity, Maxwell et al. (2005) correlated frivolous with conscientiousness (Costa & McCrea, 1987), establishing a negative correlation (-0.51, p<0.001). To test discriminate validity, fun-loving was compared to the hope score on the Learned Optimism scale (Seligman, 1990) and they were not correlated. It is argued here that while the Adult Playfulness scale appears to be a solid measure of distinguishing a person’s preferred mode of play at work, the development of the scale using a semantic technique does not take into account the overlap of play and work in areas such as being easygoing and playful or acting briefly out of character and does not, therefore, address the complexity of the construct.

Abramis (1990) explored the concept of play at work in detail. His research, utilising cross sectional surveys and interviews, gathered data from 589 adult participants. The sample was heterogenous with respect to organisations and occupations. The research focused on exploring whether adult play at work was uni-
dimensional, the causes of feelings related to play, and the consequences of play for individuals in an organisational setting. It is important to note that Abramis’ study did not attempt to formally distinguish constructs of play from fun or humour. For example, he stated “…the interviews contained open-ended questions about numerous aspects of play and fun in work’ (Abramis, 1990, p. 358).

Abramis (1990) found six clearly distinguishable elements represented in his data: (1) global fun/joy/excitement/enthusiasm (2) goofing, playing and clowning around (3) intrinsic, high-end fun (4) gaming/sporting/playing (5) presence of a prankster; and (6) joking. He then went on to distinguish the construct of play in the workplace by factor analysing only the questions directly related to play. This process elicited two factors: play as a game and play as goofing around. Play as a game was described as the feeling that work was similar to the challenge of solving puzzles, playing with toys or had a competitive edge. Goofing around was described as being more of an unstructured connecting process with others such as horsing around, teasing and being more childlike, with components of humour (this concept would be referred to as ‘mucking around’ in Australian colloquial language). Goofing around play was reported to be more common than play as a game in the workplace. Separating questions relating to fun and humour, Abramis found that play as a game was statistically significantly associated with having fun at work (r=.45), but less so, play as goofing around (r=.19). Play as goofing around was more strongly associated with humour (r=.59). Abramis concluded that play at work has two dimensions; it could be play as a game that engaged skill, autonomy and challenge, much like flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and play as goofing around with characteristics more related to humour.
Interestingly, play such as dressing up or acting out of character and using one’s imagination were not found to be a component of play at work, although this type of play is often prescribed in anecdotal literature as a vehicle for having fun. The absence of imaginative play in the workplace may add to the argument that there are some clear distinctions between adult and child play and these need to be noted in research related to adult play.

The results discussed in this section indicate that the construct of adult playfulness is represented by five components: creativity, curiosity, sense of humour, pleasure and spontaneity (Guitard et al., 2005). Research by both Abramis (1990) and Maxwell et al. (2005) suggest play at work has three identified dimensions: (1) goofing around/frivolous play that is silly, flippant or childlike and relational; (2) joking play that includes pranks, and (3) fun-loving/play as a game that is focused on challenges, is exciting and at times has rules and a competitive edge.

**Outcomes of play**

Play, for both children and adults, can provide a controlled forum for dealing with life’s frustrations and disappointments, while offering pleasurable alternatives (Colarusso, 1993). Abramis (1990) reported that goofing around play had little or no reported positive effects for individuals in organisational life beyond potentially improving mastery of one’s world. The negative effects that were noted consisted of both reduced performance and organisational involvement. In contrast, play as a game was noted as a way to increase mastery and organisational involvement and therefore influence job satisfaction. Blowing off steam or tension at work was found to be a
function of both types of play, but did not extend to a cathartic function in relation to depression-anxiety as a measured variable.

DesCamp and Thomas (1993), following on from Abramis (1990), conducted a study with 72 registered nurses to determine the effects of play at work, specifically the extent to which play at work reduced stress. Their research also interspersed the terms fun and play as if they were the same construct, with their article title describing reduction of “stress through play”, while their research question explored the “beneficial effects of fun at work (e.g. active physical play, gaming and humour use)”. In their study, the construct of play was divided into three discrete areas: active physical play (e.g. water fights with syringes or physical imitations of a grouchy patient), gaming (e.g. contests on who can do their paperwork more quickly) and humour as a coping mechanism. Active physical play was found to reduce levels of stress, and job and workload dissatisfaction, and also allowed nurses to vent their frustrations. No significant relationship was found between stress, gaming or humour. These results contrast with Abramis (1990) who found active physical play (goofing around) to have no significant effects on individual or organisational outcomes, whereas he found that gaming was related to higher levels of job satisfaction. However, DesCamp and Thomas note that the occupational groups studied were very different (nurses versus office and technical staff) and that their tools for measurement, particularly the Coping Humour Scale, may not have been appropriate in the medical setting.

Similarly to Abramis (1990), Maxwell et al (2005) found that fun loving play, like play as a game, created a learning orientation, allowing sales representatives to be more flexible and creative in response to their clients. A similar positive effect was
found in relation to job satisfaction among sales representatives who were better able to
distance themselves from stress by framing their job as a game, (e.g. you win some and
lose some). Acting in a frivolous manner, however, had a negative effect on sales
performance.

Summary of theory related to adult play

In summary, research into play and playfulness in the workplace has established
three distinct types of play: play as a game/fun loving, goofing around, and frivolous
play (Abramis, 1990; Maxwell et al, 2005) and five components of playfulness:
creativity, curiosity, sense of humour, pleasure and spontaneity (Guitard, Ferland &
Dutil, 2005). This review has, however, highlighted a significant gap in research related
to the context required for adult play, particularly in the workplace. It is also evident
when reviewing the research in relation to adult play that the construct has not been well
derfined, with play often being used interchangeably with the constructs of fun and
humour. It is argued here that the lack of construct differentiation may compromise
results relating to measurements of the impact of play in the workplace. The existing
confusion between constructs of play and fun once again provides support for the
establishment of a nomological net to differentiate fun, humour and play.
Theory of fun

Current definitions of fun

When we come away from an activity or an experience and say “that was fun!” what do we mean? We have all experienced fun at some point in our lives, yet our descriptions of why the event was fun are wide, varied, and at times difficult to articulate. Attempting to define fun introduces the complexity of the construct. The Oxford dictionary defines fun as “sport, amusement, jocularity, drollery; make fun of, poke fun at, fun fair devoted to amusements” (Coulson, Carr, Hutchinson & Eagle, 1987, p. 676) with the online Oxford Dictionary (http://www.askoxford.com/concise) describing fun as “light-hearted pleasure or amusement” and “playfulness or good humour”. The word fun is not listed in the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (Reber, 1995).

Podilchak (1985) in an etymological analysis of fun, began with dictionary definitions, leisure literature and common expressions of the word. From this position, Podilchak argued that fun consisted of three common factors: an activity, a state of mind and a qualitative dimension. He argued that the activities can be non specific, but the person(s) involved need to be active rather than passive, the activity needs to be free of obligatory demands and may contain elements of the experience of flow as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). The fun event needs an encompassing state of mind, conceptualising the activity as playful, enjoying or amusing, and must have a qualitative experiential dimension of amusement or enjoyment (Podilchak, 1985). He continues his analysis to suggest that the experience of fun contains a high level of interaction with others who have a mutual orientation and a common understanding of the moment.
interaction can also be defined by equal skill level and/or status and will occur in a setting that is not regimented or restricting. Furthermore, he argues fun creates a “euphoric state of sociability” (Podilchak, 1985, p.688) producing laughter and smiles.

The only other researcher to date to specifically explore fun did not cite Podilchak’s work, but defined fun at work as the process of “…engaging in activities not specifically related to the job that are enjoyable, amusing or playful and that enhance organizational performance” (McDowell, 2005, Appendix A). McDowell, similarly to Podilchak, defined fun as an activity-based construct that encompasses a qualitative dimension. McDowell’s definition, however, included some broad statements such as not specifically related to the job and enhancement of organisational performance as an outcome, potentially limiting the data field for her study. Results of McDowell’s study (2005) will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

As previously mentioned, part of construct definition is to articulate not only the construct under discussion, but also what the construct is not. Podilchak (1985) argued that four conditions would limit the experience of fun: the participant being a bystander rather than an active contributor, participants not interacting spontaneously or being cautious, inequality, and individual fatigue or high stress levels.

Anecdotal Accounts of Fun at Work

The notion that having fun in the workplace has positive benefits for organisations and their employees alike has been gathering momentum in the past two decades. Anecdotal information on having fun at work far outweighs the empirical research and provides a useful initial basis to explore the construct. Anecdotal evidence
that having fun at work is beneficial for many people is provided by a number of authors (Deal & Key, 1998; Hemsath & Yerkes; 1997; Weinstein, 1996; Lundin & Christensen, 2000). Hemsath and Yerkes (1997) and Weinstein (1996) have both published books prescribing how to have fun at work and have documented their experiences in using fun as an intentional management and organisational intervention. Weinstein describes his business, Playfair as a unique organisation focused on team building using laughter, fun and play. Playfair reports that the intentional use of fun at work can help build employee morale, increase productivity and create a more people-centred corporate culture (Weinstein, 1996). Weinstein shares his belief that happy smiling people create trusting relationships, gain greater job and life satisfaction and create a culture of caring. He claims that managing with fun places the primary value on people, and in response the work will get done more efficiently. Playfair’s company motto is “If you take yourself too seriously, there’s an excellent chance you will wind up seriously ill” (Weinstein, 1996. p. 12).

For too many companies, building a team means creating a high-powered, smoothly functioning organisation that has plenty of muscle, but not much heart. It is the absence of the human side of business that depletes employee morale, and contributes to job dissatisfaction and burnout. By adding an element of fun and celebration to a team-building program, you can take an important step toward humanizing your workplace, and creating a sense of heart and soul in your organization (Weinstein, 1996. p. 26).

Another assertion made by Weinstein (1996) is that adding fun and play to your management style will encourage your workers to make a long term commitment, because they will feel supported, stress and burnout will be lower and employees will like coming to work. He cites his company’s staff retention as evidence of the impact of
having fun at work on organisational commitment, with more employees having worked in the company longer than 10 years, versus those that have been there 5 years or less.

Hemsath and Yerkes preface their book with the statement, “Fun at work - is it an oxymoron or the newest business management trend?” (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997, p. viii) entering into the debate of the mutual exclusivity of work and fun. Their collection of stories and examples on how to have fun in the workplace was gathered from around the United States. They state that fun can be used strategically to create results that will take companies of all sizes and business orientations from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

A human resource survey measuring the use of humour and fun in the workplace identified data related to the organisational cultural context of fun at work. A sample of 286 executives from a range of organisations including government, profit and non-profit indicated 8% of respondents included a statement about having fun in their formal values or mission statement. Larger employers (5,000+) were twice as likely to note fun in this more formal manner than were smaller employers, and human service industries were more likely to encourage the use of humour. Although many organisations did not have a formal statement about fun, 29% said their organisation encouraged fun, with 63% saying they were neutral and only 8% saying it is formally or informally discouraged (Mercer USA Resource Centre, 1999). The Great Place to Work© Institute, a research and management consultancy company, collected data relating to a range of workplace features and describe their research as based on “tens of thousands of employees” (Gostick & Christopher, 2008, p. 13). They reported that of employees that responded from their top 100 best companies to work for, 81% stated they were working
in a fun environment compared to 61% of respondents from companies that did not make the top 100 list. Their position is made clear in the following quote;

> When companies make the leap from good to great, they must start addressing sophisticated trust issues. One corollary to developing strong bonds of trust is that people are able to also have a great deal of fun at work. (Gostick & Christopher, 2008. p. 15).

Hemsath and Yerkes (1997) cite Metcalf (1993), a humour consultant, who stated organisations that integrate fun into the workplace have lower levels of absenteeism, greater job satisfaction and increased productivity. Metcalf based these statements on a nine-month follow up of 20 middle managers who had attended workshops on fun and humour, and an unknown sample size of employees who viewed humorous training films. Clearly these assertions need to be interpreted within the contextual data available.

The significance of fun at work seems to be increasingly endorsed by the media. In the past decade, a number of stories have appeared at least every few years in the Australian media citing the importance of having fun and laughing at work. An advertising agency in Sydney installed a slippery slide as a means of transport from the 3rd floor to the first and the agency’s Chief Executive stated “If you can’t have fun at work, then why bother going to work”(Dennis, 1999, p. 3). The Sun Herald (18.7.99) ran a story called “Funny business in the office”, highlighting a company called Humorobics who have specialised in encouraging bosses to ‘instill a culture of de-stressing’ through use of humour boards, dress up days and respectful fun. The winner of the Brisbane Australian Institute of Management “Management Excellence award 1999” Ruth Gatehouse believes in fun in the workplace. She said she would use her award to promote fun in the workplace, because her belief is that happy employees are
more productive and managers should strive to create fun (Gilbey & Dudley, 1999). The Queensland Mental Health Association provided a range of tips for a ‘Mental Health Week ‘Stress-less Day’”, suggesting bosses commit random acts of kindness, smile more and encourage outdoor meetings. They stated that stress is a workplace health and safety issue and employers have a role in making the workplace a happy environment (O’Rouke, 1999). In 2002 a Fun at Work humour summit was held in Sydney for 2 days covering a range of humour and fun workshops (Customer Care solutions, 2002).

These and numerous other examples provide the anecdotal message that fun at work is an important ingredient for today’s workplace. The majority of these messages prescribe that having fun at work impacts positively on a range of organisational variables such as increasing job satisfaction, lowering stress and burnout, increasing organisational commitment and building team morale. It is claimed that as a result of fun at work customer service will improve and many other organisational outcomes will positively influence the efficiency and profits of organisations. Research related to these assertions will be explored in the following chapter.

**Extant empirical research relating to fun**

*Fun through a constructive lens*

Podilchak (1991), building on his earlier etymological paper, conducted a qualitative study with 49 young adults to explore the distinction between fun, enjoyment and leisure. His sample consisted of a split between university students and people at a street gaming arcade. Participants were chosen from the gaming arcade to compare solitary and interactive activities. Emergent themes identified that participants described
fun as an activity in which they have high levels of participation, freedom of conscious choice and a degree of absorption in the emotional basis of the interaction. His results suggest that the experience of fun is most distinguished from other constructs by its interactive, social nature. He argues solitary activities can be enjoyable, but it is the connection with another person that makes an activity fun. Podilchak describes fun as a type of relationship construction. He reports that fun occurs where there is reciprocity and attachment to others in an affective manner with an equal-to-other social bond, where the event is reframed into a good time with other participants as an inclusionary process.

The feelings of fun only emerge in this social bond and require an equality condition among members. I propose that in the interactants have temporarily deconstructed their biographical social inequalities. The establishment of a sharing friendship, where the ‘fun is spread’ is identified. Fun lasts only as long as these inequality and power differentials are negated (Podilchak, 1991, p145).

He also reports that as result of social construction of the reframe, pleasure for the individual is achieved through qualitative enjoyment or excitement. The process of fun can be playful, but is not strictly intended to be so. Podilchak reports situations were not described as fun when there were perceived or real inequalities for participants, or when individual psychological states of mind related to seriousness or being tense were carried into the activity (Podilchak, 1991).

As described in the previous section on play, Abramis (1990) collected a wide range of data in relation to play and fun in the workplace. Abramis (1989a) describes a qualitative study of 341 participants from various occupational backgrounds. The study utilised questionnaires and 40 interviews and focused on fun at work. Although the research could not be found in empirical format, a discussion of the results was
published (Abramis, 1989a). The study required participants to rate a list of 55 workplace activities developed by the researcher, such as parties, awards, working alone and performance appraisals, as fun or not fun. He reported that surprisingly every one of the activities was considered fun by someone. Results also noted that if organisations were fun resistant, individuals who were so disposed would make an effort to create fun. A positive correlation between fun and job satisfaction was also found. Reported lower anxiety and depression, higher motivation levels and creativity and ability to meet job demands were presented as the discriminating characteristics between those who found fun in their work and those that did not (Abramis, 1989a). While these results are significant, and particularly relevant to this thesis, it is disappointing that they were not published in a format that would allow critical analysis of methodological procedures. Adding to the confusion in relation to the methodological robustness of the study, is another article on building fun in organisations. In this article, Abramis (1989b) published research into fun at work based on a larger sample of 930 questionnaires and 300 interviews exploring similar questions related to fun at work. This study examined six different aspects of fun: excitement, humour & joking, entertainment & amusement, joy, play and enthusiasm. However, this appears to be the same research that was presented earlier in this thesis in the play section (Abramis, 1990). Therefore, as the results in both sets of data are exactly the same, they need to be interpreted with caution.

In more recent research, McDowell (2005) focused on fun at work utilising a classic scale development process. Given the similarities with this research program, her methodology and results will be presented in some detail. McDowell developed two scales: Fun at work climate Scale and the Fun person Scale. To develop her scales she
initially collected data from 60 participants in focus groups who were given a definition of having fun at work that included the statement that fun was not specifically related to the job and that the fun enhanced organisational outcomes. Given there has been no research to establish these criteria, McDowell may have been somewhat premature in including these two features as part of her operational definition. In essence, it is possible that she narrowed the potential domain of having fun at work. McDowell asked her focus group participants for their ideas on having fun at work: when did they have fun, and when they thought of fun at work? This process generated 48 items. On perusal of this list, she noted most items were activity-based such as socializing with co-workers, icebreaker functions and goofy stuff. Five items were relationship or contextual factors such as friendships at work, co-workers with a sense of humour, spontaneity and inspiring people. These items were then given to 50 organisational psychology graduate students to rate in relation to whether they thought these items were fun or not fun on a scale of ‘almost always’ to ‘rarely or don’t know’. These items were then reduced to 18 items by removing those items considered not fun by a majority of the group. Two additional items related to workplace culture were added to establish construct validity; this is a fun place to work and my direct supervisor seems to value fun. The scale was then administered to a convenience sample of 182, and an exploratory factor analysis identified four factors: (1) socialising with co-workers, (2) celebrating at work, (3) personal freedoms and (4) global fun. At this point the item dressing up for occasions was eliminated as it failed to load on any factor. Further scale development included expanding the factor items so that each factor contained six items. The scale was then administered and results were gathered from 577 staff at an oil company, with 71% of
respondents being male and 29% being female. The original four factor model was tested and required revisions. All items on the personal freedoms factor, which included items related to play, were removed. McDowell (2005) concluded that the three remaining factors; namely, socializing with co-workers, celebrating at work and global fun were the factors that were associated with having fun at work and developed The Fun at Work Climate scale. The Fun at Work Climate scale obtained construct validity correlating with the Job in General scale (JIG). When tested, the Fun at Work Climate scale was significantly positively correlated with organisational commitment and job satisfaction and negatively correlated with an employee’s intention to leave. A significant difference was found between scores for non-managers under 35 years of age and other groups, with this former group rating highest on the Fun at Work Climate scale.

The basis for McDowell’s (2005) Fun Person Scale was Glynn and Webster’s Adult Playfulness Scale. As previously discussed, this scale was developed to distinguish play from work, and while it has been found to have sound reliability it does not represent the domain of adult play. After modification, a three factor structure relating to a fun person was confirmed, represented by the terms spontaneous, expressive and amusing. These factors formed the basis of the Fun Person Scale; however, when these terms were tested they demonstrated a poor fit for the data. McDowell reported that the Fun Person Scale did not correlate at all to the Fun at Work Climate scale as would be expected, and she concluded for a number of reasons that the scale was flawed. Therefore, these factors need to be viewed with caution, but do provide preliminary data on the little known area of a fun person.
A number of studies, although not specifically focused on researching fun, have found fun to be an important factor in the workplace. De Voe, Kennedy, and Pena, (1998) found that one of the occupational attractors of having a career in health promotion was the opportunity to do work that is fun, supporting the anecdotal notion that having fun is an important feature for some employees. Additionally, a study of workplace health promotional activities found providing a fun atmosphere increased participation in the activities being promoted (Emmons, Linnan, Abrams & Lovell, 1996).

The largest group of workplace studies where fun has been recognised as a contributing feature are those associated with learning and development. A number of studies have demonstrated greater participation and learning if training is presented as fun, including such concepts as fantasy, challenge and immersion in the topic (Lenz, 1987; Nierenberg, 1998; Savage, 1998; Stoney & Oliver, 1998). Savage (1998) noted that for females, having fun and establishing interpersonal relationships were the most important reasons for participating in a training course.

Adventure training has many of the hall marks associated with the construct of fun. The process and outcomes of outdoor (Williams, Graham & Baker, 2003) and indoor (Broderick & Pearce, 2001) adventure training represent many of the features and characteristics of fun at work, as described in this thesis. The premise of adventure training is to provide workplace scenarios that are represented metaphorically using either physical challenges or drama as if it were reality, similar to adult play. The activities are devised specifically to disrupt work group dynamics, both structurally and interpersonally, enabling everyone to start from the same learning base and increasing
the need for interpersonal communication. Several features of fun highlighted by Podilchak (1991) such as the concept of equal-to-other and non-restricting environments are encapsulated here. The environment of simulation invites creativity and provides a community where learning can occur as a result of mistakes, without the negative workplace consequences (Williams et al., 2003). This lack of negative consequences is hypothesised as a feature of the process of fun. As a result of the simulated representations, it is argued that there are multiple opportunities for learning, both at an individual and group level.

The training uses activities to enhance team work and achieve other corporate goals – improve morale, manage change, boost creative thinking, cultivate trust, enhance communication and fortify planning and problem solving skills (Broderick & Pearce, 2001, p. 241).

Many of these outcomes are those described in the popular press as the outcomes of having fun at work. Adventure training has been directly nominated as a fun workplace activity, providing not only the benefits of having fun from an enjoyment perspective, but also as an indicator that the company is committed to employees (Shutte, Muktararsingh & Whettingsteel, 1999; Williams et al., 2003). This recognition of company commitment as a result of providing a fun culture was also noted by Fleming (2005) and will be discussed in the following section.

**Fun at work through a cynical lens**

In contrast to the studies on fun previously discussed, Fleming (2005) undertook a critical examination of the culture of a workplace where fun was highly orchestrated in an organisational attempt to alleviate boredom and increase staff retention. The eight-
month field study of an Australian call centre focused on identifying themes related to an imposed fun culture. With over 1000 employees, the fun approach used by the organisation concentrated on two areas, choosing the themes of school and family. Fleming described the school theme as taking part within a workforce of predominantly young staff (with an average age of 21) and supervisors and managers in their 30’s and 40’s with management encouraging events such as a school musical, having kindergarten figures such as Big Bird decorate desks and painting the centre in primary colours. The second theme was happy families, where a kindred spirit was created in internal documents referring to the organisation as the Sunray family. Caring acts such as a masseur being provided to ease tense necks and birthday parties were also described as family type interventions. In addition to these two major themes, partying was encouraged with events including alcohol and games providing energy and good times during training and team events. An informal dress code extended to fun appearances such as encouraging brightly coloured hair, and dress up days including come as your favourite superhero were organised on a regular basis.

Conducting multiple interviews of 30 employees during the field study, Fleming reported that the culture of the fun environment was interpreted in a variety of ways. Some participants described enjoying many aspects of the fun culture, believing that it demonstrated that the company really cared about them. However, around half of the employees interviewed displayed some degree of cynicism. Their cynicism was based on feeling that the culture was condescending, inauthentic, lacking honesty and was “plastic, fake and cheesy” (Fleming, 2005, p. 291). Fleming argued that the sense of condescension arose as a result of feeling like being treated as a child, engendered in
many of the school type interventions. The lack of authenticity was identified as an outcome of perceived staged rituals and the notion that employees were encouraged to “adopt shallow personalities” (Fleming, 2005, p. 295). The theme of freedom to consciously participate as identified by Podlichak (1991) was frequently noted by some participants, reporting that in such a fun culture not participating was viewed as negative to the organisational spirit and as a result, the cynics were spurned.

Based on these findings, Fleming argues that authentic fun workplaces are ones where workers create the fun themselves, suggesting that fun activities will usually occur independently of management, and sometimes despite management. Fleming notes that for workers to have job satisfaction they require dignity and self respect, with the condescension raised in a forced fun culture undermining these factors. This study raises a number of important issues relating to fun in the workplace, such as the true importance of creating a climate where choice to participate is respected and the use of prescriptive fun running a high risk of the development of a counter culture. It is unfortunate, however, that Fleming (2005) primarily presented data relating to the cynical view of this organisational culture, when he stated clearly that half of those interviewed did in fact find the fun culture engaging and supportive.

This study does raise an issue that was also identified by Abramis (1989a) that there appears to be a broad range of activities that some people think are fun and that others do not. It is argued here that, similar to humour, fun may have a disparaging side which makes the event fun for some, but not for all. The primary type of activity that can be identified in this arena is the practical joke. Abramis (1989c), in an article on how to build fun in the workplace, suggests “pull a practical joke on someone who can
take it” (p. 63), though leaving it to the joker to make the assessment correctly. Clearly, the disparaging side of fun requires further research.

In summary, the empirical research presented on both fun, and fun at work has identified some useful preliminary data. Both Podilchak (1985, 1991) and McDowell (2005) suggest that fun activities need to be playful, amusing and enjoyable. Podilchak argues that to have fun, one needs a state of mind that lacks seriousness or tension and McDowell’s fun person factors of spontaneous, expressive and amusing appear to be aligned with this relaxed state. Podilchak states that for fun to occur there needs to be a sense of contribution and a perceived equality with Fleming (2005) supporting this preposition. McDowell (2005) was able to identify key features of a fun climate including activities such as socialising with co-workers, celebrating and having global fun, supporting Podilchak (1991) in the argument that fun is social in nature and it is the connections with others that creates a reciprocal affective and a positive attachment that produce emotional rewards and are defining features of the experience.

Having fun at work has most strongly been inferred in empirical literature related to adventure training where the altered environment allows personal and team growth, impacting on a range of organisational outcomes including morale, creativity and team cohesion.

**Gaps in knowledge relating to fun at work**

Anecdotally and empirically there seems to be a good deal of evidence that supporting a climate of fun in the workplace can have a range of positive outcomes, both individually and organisationally. However, fun may be a paradoxical construct, where
fun for one may not mean fun for someone else, or alternatively the person may be the 
butt of someone else’s fun. This alternate view of the potential negative impact of fun is 
not presented in the popular press and rarely in empirical literature, with the exclusion 

Individually it stands to reason that fun like many other activities will be 
influenced by one’s disposition and natural ability to engage in the process. For some, 
the thought of having a playful joke or social time with their colleagues could bring high 
levels of anxiety and discomfort. This point raises a number of questions that are the 
focus of this research program. The question of disposition to fun cannot be empirically 
confronted until the construct of fun at work is more fully defined. The domain of fun at 
work needs to be more fully understood, as do the features that make the event fun, and 
if indeed there are certain prerequisites that allow the event to be interpreted as fun by 
those participating. Therefore, one of the central aims of this research program is to 
more fully identify not only the construct of fun at work, but also features associated 
with the process.

From an organisational perspective, there are also a potential number of pitfalls 
in prescribing or orchestrating an environment of fun. Several of these were outlined by 
Fleming (2005) in his study of the call centre that prescribed fun, who noted the 
cynicism of some in relation to imposed fun. He also described developments of counter, 
or sub, culture that worked actively against the fun culture. It seemed those employees 
who did not want to participate were perceived as deviant and resistant, and risked being 
subjectively labelled as such. This point links again to understanding not only the 
process of having fun, but also the context in which the fun intervention exists.
Questions related to contextual issues of fun events will be explored throughout this research program.

It may be possible to clearly identify features of positive fun activities, but building on humour research it seems logical to note that there may be types of fun that would fit into the category of superiority or disparaging fun. These are fun events that exclude others and in doing so engage in unsupportive power dynamics or conclude in unpleasant outcomes for those not considering the event fun. It is this territory that highlights the importance of defining the construct of fun more fully in order to effectively utilise fun as a reliable, valid workplace intervention.

Links between fun, humour and play

It is clear that fun shares many of the features, factors and elements of both humour and playfulness. Figure 5 Existing nomological net is a visual representation of a nomological net of fun, humour and play as presented in this literature review. Of all three constructs, humour has been the most widely researched and is therefore the most comprehensively mapped. Play and playfulness have also received substantial attention in the areas of defining features and outcomes, but less in relation to contextual features, particularly in the workplace. This review illustrates the lack of attention the general construct of fun has received and therefore identifying and validating defining features, context and outcomes have yet to occur. Fun at work has had equally diminutive empirical attention.

The literature related to fun, humour and play indicate that all three constructs are activity based and the context in which they occur influences the way they are
experienced and interpreted. Types of humour are discerned by the intent of the event such as incongruity, cognitive appraisal or superiority (Duncan et al., 1990) and the outcome is laughter, or lack of it, in the case of offensive humour. It is difficult to agree with Anton’s (2002) argument that humour has evolved into an *umbrella concept* in the workplace, with her definition of humour appearing to potentially represent the construct of fun rather than describing humour as an umbrella concept.

Figure 5: Existing nomological net of the constructs of humour, play and fun at work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humour</th>
<th>Presage</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Used for communication</td>
<td>Jokes, stories, wit, sarcasm, satire, black, goofing off, teasing, practical jokes.</td>
<td>Physiological – health benefits, pleasure, reduction in stress, adjust to new roles, reduces negative emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social functions - Culturally contextual, Inclusive/exclusion</td>
<td><em>Themes or dimensions</em></td>
<td>Positive – inclusion, socialisation of new group members, positive organisational climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual functions – power differentials, relief from boredom</td>
<td>Incongruity</td>
<td>Negative – exclusion, offensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
<td>Cognitive appraisal</td>
<td><strong>Superiority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repertoire</td>
<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
<td>Laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playfulness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive with power dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition of humour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciation of humour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Playfulness</th>
<th>Presage</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Not explicit in research</td>
<td>Make-believe, role play, games with rules, games of mastery, mucking/goofing around, teasing, games</td>
<td>Lower stress levels due to reduction in seriousness &amp; helps deal with frustration by blowing off steam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
<td><em>Themes or dimensions</em></td>
<td>Improved mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fun-loving</td>
<td>Fun-loving</td>
<td>Increased organisation involvement, increased job satisfaction, improved teamwork, socialisation of new employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silliness</td>
<td>Frivolous</td>
<td>Negative – frivolous/goofing around play; reduced performance, reduced organisational involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
<td>‘not real’ context or mutually agreed rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whimsical</td>
<td></td>
<td>silly, childlike, flippant, whimsical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun at work</th>
<th>Presage</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Non-coercive, choice of participation</td>
<td>48 activities- themes socializing with co-workers, icebreaker functions and goofy stuff. (McDowell, 2005)</td>
<td>Fun organisational climate linked to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxed environment</td>
<td><em>Dimensions</em></td>
<td>Lower turn over intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive management</td>
<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
<td>Increased organisational commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fun climate at work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Increased job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialising with co-workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Celebrating at work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Global fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Spontaneous, expressive, amusing, lack of depression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Events are experienced as playful when there is a personal disposition to engage in the play or to alter reality, and at work are more likely to be either fun-loving or frivolous in nature (Maxwell et al, 2005; Abramis, 1990). It appears the constructs of humour and play have distinctive types of activities that assist participants in identifying the type of activity they are engaged in. However, it seems that the activities that represent having fun at work may not only encompass both humour and play, but also have a social dimension (Podilchak, 1985 & 1991; McDowell, 2005) that has not been fully appreciated as a distinguishing feature of fun.

Both anecdotal and empirical reports indicate that fun is activity based, with Podilchak (1985, 1991) and McDowell (2005) suggesting fun activities need to be playful, amusing and enjoyable. Podilchak (1985) argues that to have fun one needs a state of mind that lacks seriousness or tension, and McDowell’s fun person factors of spontaneous, expressive and amusing appear to be aligned with this perspective. Information relating to the social or organisational context of fun is limited to Podilchak (1985) who states that for fun to occur the participant needs to feel a sense of contribution and equality, and research by Fleming (2005) supports this proposition. Podilchak (1985, 1991) also states that fun is primarily a relationship construct encompassing equality of the experience with positive emotional rewards as an outcome. He argued the type of activity engaged in was less important than the social context in which it occurred. McDowell (2005) was able to identify key factors of a fun work climate that included socialising with
co-workers, celebrating and having global fun. McDowell’s research supported Podilchak’s argument that fun is social in nature, although she did not explore the personal impact noted by Podilchak, that it is the connections with others that creates a reciprocal affective, positive attachment producing emotional rewards that define the experience as fun.

Anecdotal reports suggest that the positive outcomes of having fun at work are similar to those established for the use of humour including lowering stress, increased job satisfaction and enhanced efficiency to name a few and suggest that fun and work are not mutually exclusive. McDowell (2005) found positive correlations between job satisfaction and affective commitment and the Fun Climate Scale. Negative correlations were established between the Fun Climate Scale and job turnover (McDowell, 2005). However, Fleming (2005) argued that the process of imposing fun at work can have a dark side, engendering cynicism among those it is imposed on. It is argued here that like humour, some fun activities may have a disparaging dimension.

Therefore, the following questions remain. Is fun related to humour and play/playfulness, yet a distinct construct? What are the features that identify the construct of having fun at work, both in terms of the activities, the process and outcomes? What are the important contextual features that need to be understood in order to utilise fun as an organisational intervention?

To explore the uniqueness of the construct of fun at work, data will be gathered and analysed utilising the 3P process conceptual framework as previously discussed. Over a range of studies, information will be gathered in relation to (1) presage, both individual and organisational contexts in which fun occurs, (2) the process of having fun
at work including types of activities and unique features of fun and (3) the products or perceived outcomes of having fun. It is hypothesised that the activities that construct the experience of having fun at work will involve combinations of humour, play (to a lesser degree) and social activities. It is also expected that the experience of having fun at work will be contextually bound, both the individual’s state of mind and the organisational climate in which the fun occurs. It is anticipated that the products of having fun at work will influence a number of organisational variables, particularly job satisfaction, stress management and workplace relationships. The degree of direct influence of having fun at work on effectiveness is expected to be moderate rather than high. The following chapter will explore theory related to the organisational context of having fun at work.
CHAPTER 3: ORGANSATIONAL CONTEXT OF FUN AT WORK

Introduction

At the outset of this research program, the importance of defining and differentiating the construct of fun was discussed. In conjunction with adequate construct development, a critical feature in the utilisation of fun at work is to determine its organisational value. To fully understand the impact of having fun, it is vital to explore the construct in context, examining the processes that occur during fun events and the benefits for individuals and organisations. Given the plethora of anecdotal qualitative data in the form of stories and quotes (Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Sharp, 2008; Weinstein, 1996), the factors related to fun in the workplace have been a surprisingly neglected area of organisational research. The few studies that have been conducted in relation to fun and fun at work will be reviewed and the balance of the chapter will deconstruct anecdotal claims, connecting them with established researched factors identified in the organisational landscape. These factors will include psychological well-being, affect, job satisfaction, and stress management. Fun at work will also be explored in a team and social context, focusing on workplace relationships. The importance of exploring the construct from both process and outcome perspective will be integrated into the discussion and conclude with a review of the anecdotal link between fun, work performance and productivity.
Anecdotal literature

Having fun at work has been strongly promoted in the past decade as an effective organisational tool. A range of anecdotal literature relating to fun at work provides a collection of examples of fun and document a variety of management related perceptions of organisational outcomes of having fun, with the details of this literature having been more fully presented in Chapter 2 (Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Sharp, 2008; Weinstein, 1996). In brief, the outcomes presented in anecdotal literature in relation to utilising fun as a workplace intervention include perceptions that having fun at work increases job satisfaction, assists in managing stress, increases employee retention and improves job efficiencies, particularly in customer service applications. Improvement in these organisational factors is claimed to increase company profits (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). To date, these claims have not been empirically validated.

The consistency and abundance of anecdotal claims does, however, provide a basis for exploration in relation to the application of the construct. If anecdotal claims are at least somewhat accurate, it can be assumed that the opportunity and experience of having fun at work has a number of influences on the individual, both personally and contextually, positively impacting the quality of their work and work life. It seems logical to explore the possibility of the experience of having fun at work as having a cascading effect linked to well-being. Firstly, it is suggested that the experience of having fun may positively influence mood and emotions, contain the element of flow as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and produce reciprocal interactive attachments with work colleagues. If fun does indeed influence affect and workplace relationships in
a positive direction, it would also be logical to suggest that the shift in contentment may in turn have an effect on organisational measures such as job satisfaction, stress management and job efficiency as suggested by the anecdotal reports. The following sections will give an overview of relevant published reports anecdotally and hypothetically related to the application of fun at work. Firstly, there will be a focus on factors related to the individual such as psychological well-being, flow, job satisfaction, and workplace stress. Secondly, team and social conditions are explored, focusing on organisational climate and workplace relationships.

Individual perspective

**Psychological well-being**

The well-being of employees has been highlighted in recent years as a significant issue for organisations. Research has been focused in several areas encompassing the management of health issues including stress, and the positive approach. A portion of the positive approach is focused on engaging workers in meaningful work and workplace relationships in order to increase the frequency of positive emotions and influence psychological well-being (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002). Psychological well-being encompasses a group of constructs, including happiness, self-esteem, and optimism (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). It is thought measurable by both objective and subjective factors. Objective well-being is understood and measured by factors such as wealth, educational attainment, occupational prestige and health status (Andrews, 1991). However, such factors have only been found to be weakly related to an individual’s happiness (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Subjective well-being is a measure of an
individual's perception of their quality of life. It is reflected in factors such as purpose in life, personal growth, self acceptance, affect balance, satisfaction and happiness, with workplace well-being containing similar factors including positive relationships with others, and environmental mastery (Keyes, 1998). Andrews (1991) in a multiple classification analysis measuring subjective well-being as a social indicator linked data collected in 1972 and again 1988 and found that the ability to have fun was one of the strongest predictors of subjective well-being.

To date however, it is unclear which components of fun within these experiences contribute to creating a positive sense of well-being and the potential personal and organisational outcomes that may ensue. In order to explore this preposition, it is important to briefly review literature related to affect and happiness.

*Affect, mood and emotion.*

Affect balance refers to a subjective experience including assessment of one’s physical sensations, attitudes, moods and affective traits (Fredrickson, 2001). It is argued here that engaging in fun at work may have a direct impact on mood by eliciting positive emotions. There has been some debate in the literature in relation to separating mood and emotion, with mood being seen as a more enduring state and emotions more temporary. Unlike emotions, mood at work tends to be pervasive, not focused on any one particular thing, but rather gives “affective coloring for day-to-day events” (George & Brief, 1992. p. 314). Mood has been established as a multidimensional construct consisting of positive mood and negative mood (Diener & Emmons, 1984; Watson & Tellegen, 1985; Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). High positive mood is denoted by
words such as elated, enthusiastic and peppy, with the other extreme of the dimension, low positive mood described in such terms as drowsy, sluggish and dull (Watson & Tellegen, 1985). The positive mood terms are frequently used in conjunction with the construct of fun. Fredrickson (2006) argues the distinction of emotion and mood is more useful from an empirical position rather than a practical one, with identical techniques for inducing positive mood and emotion.

Fredrickson (2001), in developing the broaden-and-build theory, proposed positive emotions and affect not only provided people with momentary gains, but encompassed the potential to broaden people’s momentary thought-action repertoires, in turn, building enduring psychological resources. As a platform for this theory, previous research has demonstrated the link between thought processes, attitudes and behaviours (Isen & Shalker, 1982; Leventhal & Tomarken, 1986). Frederickson (2001) argues the unique effects of positive emotions encourage people to play, be creative and innovative and engage in relationships with others. In turn, they develop broad-minded coping skills which have been shown to influence resilience and provide personal resources for coping with adversity. Complimentary research validates these findings confirming positive emotions assist in building enduring personal resources (Harker & Keltner, 2001), create openness to new information (Estrada, Isen & Young, 1997), expand attention (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005) and have been found to build psychological resilience (Tugade & Fredrikson, 2004).

In addition, a range of earlier studies established that being in a good mood resulted in people seeing their experiences in a positive light (Clark & Teasdale, 1985, Forgas, Bower & Krantz, 1984; Rosenhan, Salovey & Hargis, 1981). Watson (1988)
reported a reciprocal positive relationship between positive moods and social interactions; hence, the more positive the person felt the more they would engage socially.

**Affect in the workplace.**

Fisher (2002) combined both mood state and feeling/emotion responses as affective reactions, measuring how people actually felt while working. Her study applying Weiss and Cropanzano’s (1996) *Affective Events Theory* (see Figure 6) confirmed that different features at work caused one to feel good rather than bad, mirroring the multi-dimensional construct of positive and negative mood. She suggested “..Managers who wish to increase affective commitment may have more success if they focus on creating more frequent positive events and feelings rather than reducing negative events and feelings” (Fisher, 2002, p. 24).

**Figure 6: Affective events theory**

As previously described, being in a positive mood assists people perceiving life in general in a positive light. A number of studies have shown that workers in good moods are more likely to feel positively toward co-workers, have an enhanced social outlook and are more likely to be social and helpful (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988). George (1991) found that positive mood as a state was a significant predictor of helpful behaviour toward customers, but positive mood as a trait was not. Put simply by George (1991) “individuals in positive moods were more likely to be helpful, regardless of whether the helpful behaviour in question was part of their job responsibilities or was above and beyond the call of duty” (p. 304).

Mood and behaviour have been linked in a range of organisational behaviour research areas, with job satisfaction and job stress having received substantial attention. Both job satisfaction and workplace stress will be reviewed in more detail at a later point in this chapter; however, it is important to note the relationships that have been established between affect/moods and organisational factors. Staw, Bell and Clausen (1986) provided ground breaking work on dispositional affect as a predictor of job satisfaction. This further stimulated research on trait affect as a variable in organisational research, and fuelled interest in the study of state affect (mood) (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000). A recent meta analysis found that positive affect was strongly positively correlated with both job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Thorensen et al., 2003). To date there is no known research in relation to the experience of having fun in the workplace and the interaction with emotions. Anecdotal literature would lead us to expect experiencing fun in the workplace will lead to participants
demonstrating and describing positive emotional states as described by Gostick and Christopher (2008) in their prescriptive workplace book, *The Levity Effect*.

**Happiness**

Anecdotal reports describe outcomes of fun workplace cultures to be happy employees. The construct of happiness has been researched with vigour in the past decade and happiness can be thought of as a specific mood, enduring over time (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon and Schkade, 2005). Universally, people describe themselves as more happy than unhappy (Lucas, 2007). The desire to be happy rated more highly than other well-being measures such as good health, high income or attractiveness (Lucas, 2007; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Perceptions of happiness appear to be stable over time and have been found to be strongly genetically determined and more related to particular personality traits than situational contextual factors. Lucus (2007) argues strongly “Although personality effects are often quite strong, they do not rule out the possibility for change” (p.169). Hence, it is possible to become happier if that is the desire. Recent research suggests that personal interventions designed to improve happiness such as journaling positive events, and reviewing strengths each day, lead to significant improvements in happiness levels compared to placebo controls (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). It is suggested that interventions designed to increase factors such as happiness perceptions need to align with personal goals. Through repeated behaviour they can become habits and are more likely to lead to long term sustained mood change (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).
Research to date suggests it is unlikely that experiencing fun events at work will contribute to overall happiness levels, but may well influence positive emotions. Therefore, it could be reasonably argued that if fun events are enjoyed, sustained and aligned with personal goals, a sustained positive shift in mood may contribute to personal happiness. Fredrickson (2001) argues that the reciprocal experience of positive emotions and broadened thinking influences mood and perceived happiness, leading in an upward spiral building resilience and coping mechanisms which in turn improve subjective well-being.

“The take-home message is that positive emotions are worth cultivating, not just as end states in themselves but also as a means to achieving psychological growth and improved well-being over time” (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 218).

*Flow*

A further construct to be explored in relation to the construct of fun at work is the notion of flow. The experience of flow provides people with the opportunity to have optimal experiences affecting their quality of life, and hence well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and is hypothesised in this research program as a feature of the experience of having fun. Flow is seen as an optimal experience that occurs when people engage in a task they choose and become so involved in the activity that nothing else seems to matter. This state is often described as being absorbed or in the zone and is identified by intense concentration, a sense of being in control, a loss of self consciousness and a transformation of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Research has established that flow is best achieved when the level of challenge of a task matches, or slightly exceeds, a person’s level of skill. If the challenge is too high they may feel
anxious and if the challenge is too low, they will feel apathetic or bored (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The experience of flow is argued to be the most widely cited explanation for the pleasure of leisure and sports activities (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). More relevant to this research program, flow has been reported to occur three times more often at work, than in leisure situations (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). Csikszentmihalyi (1997) suggests that much of the time, what passes for work is described within the parameters of a game, with clear goals and rules for performance and consistent feedback. He suggests that the fundamentals of business need to be focused on enhancing human well-being and engagement, with work benefiting from a playful component (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003). Much of Csikszentmihalyi’s initial research was linked to highly motivated individuals in relation to high skill, high challenge work, which he hypothesised would increase their positive mood (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Eisenberger et al. (2005) found experiencing the state of flow in work situations positively influenced the construct of organisational spontaneity which encompasses feeling positively toward co-workers, enhancing social outlook and being more helpful. Flow has also been nominated as a concept that can influence productivity by being engrossed in one’s work and therefore increasing output, but is yet to date to be empirically tested (Weakliem & Frienkel, 2006).

Although having fun at work may not always be construed as a high-skill, high-challenge activity, the comment *time flies while one is having fun* is well known. It is argued here that having fun is an engaging activity that is hypothesised to have features such as *loss of self consciousness* that is exhibited in play, where time is transformed
and is not described as boring. Therefore, it is argued that having fun at work may contain experiences of flow.

Job satisfaction

Improvement in job satisfaction has been anecdotally claimed as an outcome of having fun at work (Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). Job satisfaction can be defined as an individual’s evaluation of their perceptions of their work and employment environment (Parker et al, 2003; Sweeney, Hohenshil and Fortune, 2002). Research into job satisfaction is substantial and has linked the construct to productivity, absenteeism, turnover and life satisfaction (Harter, et al., 2002). It is not prudent here to provide an extensive review of the literature in relation to job satisfaction; however, it is important to highlight a number of relevant findings that relate to the anecdotal claims made in relation to the organisational impact of increasing job satisfaction by having fun. Research has found a consistent, weak relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, although the correlation is not high - usually less than 0.40 (Briner & Reynolds, 1999). A meta analysis conducted by Irvine and Evans (1995) however did reveal a strong negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions e.g. most people who are unhappy and dissatisfied with their job and who have the capacity to leave, will do so. A more recent meta-analysis found that job satisfaction was most strongly negatively associated with employee burnout (r = -0.478: Faragher, Cass & Cooper, 2005).

The importance of encouraging a content workforce is highlighted in a study of human service workers. Sweeney et al. (2002) found that the most prevalent components
of job satisfaction were having a chance to help people, being an agent of change, having autonomy, having respect for superiors and peers, and dealing with a variety of daily tasks. Having fun at work has anecdotally been reported to improve job satisfaction and it is argued here this may occur in response to fun events positively effecting workplace relationships and potentially adding respect. Being involved in fun activities may also add to the variety in one’s day. Mercer (1999), in a survey related to humour in the workplace, noted the respondents believed that one of the effects of fun and humour in the workplace was to increase job satisfaction.

Ultimately, if there is support for the argument that having fun at work positively influences job satisfaction, then the established relationships between job satisfaction, turnover, absenteeism and burnout may be taken into consideration, and the construct of having fun at work could be validated as a legitimate organisational intervention.

Workplace stress

Changes in the modern workplace influenced by large scale technological advances and organisational restructuring have highlighted the elevating levels of workplace stress (Conner & Douglas, 2005; Robinson & Griffiths, 2005). This increase in workplace stress has resulted in significant financial and human costs to organisations. In Australia, 7% of Workcover claims are related to psychological injury, commonly referred to as stress (Jackson & Clements, 2006). Anecdotal claims reported in popular media suggest that having fun at work has the capacity to lower workplace stress (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). It is argued here that having fun at work could lower stress in several ways; firstly by allowing a break from one’s daily routine
and the seriousness of work, and secondly, by positively influencing the relationships that exist in a workplace context.

Stress emerges from negatively perceived transactions between a person and his/her environment that are appraised as potentially challenging, threatening, adversarial or harmful (Lazarus, 1999). Studies have found that interpersonal relationships (Dua, 1994; Michie1 & Williams, 2003), conflict with colleagues (Jackson & Clements, 2006) organisational politics and general working conditions (Dua, 1994; Godin, Desmarez & Kittel, 2006; Michie1 & Williams, 2003) were the most significant stressors in the workplace. A statistical difference was found between genders in relation to organisational politics, with women finding this area of organisational life more stressful than men (Fotinatos & Cooper, 2005).

The psychological impacts of not managing stress include increased anxiety, job dissatisfaction, withdrawing and depersonalisation (Conner & Douglas, 2005). Job stress has been associated with poor physical health, poor emotional health, and high job dissatisfaction (Dua, 1994; Godin, Desmarez & Kittel, 2006). Several studies have demonstrated that experiencing excessive stress in the workplace increases absenteeism, lowers job performance, lowers morale, increases organisational turnover (Conner & Douglas, 2005; Dua, 1994; Michie1 & Williams, 2003).

It is beyond doubt that stress in the workplace has far reaching consequences for individuals and organisations, and to date, the relationship between fun and the management of stress at work is unknown. Investigations into the use of humour in the workplace have established short breaks from day-to-day tasks infused with positive humour can have a beneficial impact on stress management (Avtgis & Taber, 2006;
Collinson, 2002; Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 2005). With the interchange in terms between humour and fun in many studies, these results support the potential of fun at work to have a beneficial impact on stress management and, therefore, to contribute to positively influencing both health and related organisational factors such as absenteeism, job performance and employee turnover.

Summary of key individual influences of having fun at work

Research has found that happy people are healthier, more successful and more socially engaged (Seligman, 2004) and it is reported in anecdotal literature that having fun at work makes employees happier (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Weinstein, 1996; Lundin & Christensen, 2000). The ability to have fun was found to be one of the strongest predictors of subjective well-being (Andrews, 1991), indicating that the capacity to have fun is an important component of a quality life. It is argued here that fun may provide a vehicle to elicit positive affect and, therefore, contribute to perceived happiness. Positive affect has been found to be strongly positively correlated with both job satisfaction, organisational commitment (Thorensen et al., 2003) and a range of personal factors such as psychological resilience (Tugade & Fredrikson, 2004). Additionally, workplace stress is contra indicated in relation to well-being (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002) and anecdotal reports suggest having fun at work can assist in managing stress by allowing breaks from the seriousness of day-to-day work, and increasing the influences of positive workplace relationships. Relationships with work colleagues has been identified as a contributor to workplace stress (Dua, 1994; Jackson & Clements, 2006; Michie1 & Williams, 2003). The following section will explore
interpersonal and team issues in more detail and establish the multiple connections to
the construct of fun.

Team and interpersonal perspective

In the present research program, the process of having fun at work has been
conceptualised as both an individual phenomena and an artefact of the social and
organisational context within which the individual functions. As such, the proposed shift
in well-being through fun events may have a two fold effect, not only enhancing the
individual factors, but also influencing interpersonal issues such as workplace
relationships and team climate. However, the workplace climate may also have a direct
effect on the experience of fun, reflecting a systemic rather than lineal process. It is
argued here that having fun is a reflexive process occurring between the individual and
the organisational context in which they exist. Pivotal to the process is the individual
desiring and participating in the fun, and a workplace dynamic that supports and
encourages the process. The hypothesised interactions and benefits of having fun on an
individual level have been outlined and the following section will explore the
hypothesised relationship between having fun, and the team context in which it occurs.
This review will examine literature related to organisational climate and workplace
relationships.
Organisational climate

Historically, the terms organisational ‘climate’ and ‘culture’ have often been used indiscriminately. Organisational climate has been identified as consisting of two factors. Psychological climate encompasses employee perceptions of the psychological impact of work and organisational climate is represented by the aggregated employee perceptions of the policies (both formal and informal), practices and procedures in their organisation (Glisson & James, 2002; Schulte, Ostroff, & Kinicki, 2006). Organisational climate can also be understood in terms of the interaction between the context of the organisation and the behaviour of its members (King, de Chermont, West, Dawson & Hebl, 2007). Schulte et al., (2006) in a cross-level study of individual psychological climate and organisational climate found the aggregated climate accounted for a “small but significant proportion of the individual satisfaction above and beyond individuals’ perceptions” (p. 645). Just as organisational culture is the property of the organisation and is reflected in the values and behaviours prescribed by the organisation as a whole, organisational climate is the collective property of the social interactions, linking employee interaction processes and the organisational context (Parker et al., 2003). The climate in organisations is often established with new group members through both formal and informal communication and socialisation processes and can also be changed utilising these processes (Lindell & Brandt, 2000).

Recent research has established that workplace climates can be developed to encourage certain types of focused behaviour and perceptions, ultimately creating desired organisational outcomes. Glisson and James (2002) when reviewing climate and culture in a multilevel study, identified that factors of a positive climate consist of
achievement and motivation, the capacity for self actualisation and humanistic/support. These in turn were important predictors of work attitudes, service quality and turnover. A large study reviewing 131 health care organisations found innovative organisational climates where ideas, processes, products or procedures are novel and designed to yield positive outcomes were more able to alleviate the negative effects of work demands on organisational performance than those organisations who were less innovative (King et al., 2007). In addition, research has also established that climates focused on customer satisfaction have been found to increase customer service standards (Rogg, Schmidt, Shull, & Schmitt, 2001; Schnieder, White & Paul, 1998). Team level climate has been linked to individual job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions (Glisson & James, 2002; Schulte et al., 2006). At an organisational level, organisational climate has been correlated with effectiveness, leader’s ratings and organisational performance (Lindell & Whitney, 1995).

Martin (2005) identified several positive types of organisational climates. Organisations can have a motivating climate where people believe they can make a difference, resulting in employees feeling that they have value and a sense of belonging and/or cooperative climates where individuals strive to reach their goals through the support and joint focus of others in their workplace (Martin, 2005). Recent research in the area of mental health organisations revealed that organisations with positive organisational climates, defined by high functionality and low stress, had annual turnover rates of less than half of the rates found in organisations with poor climates (Glisson et al, 2008). The most recent research attesting to the value of a positive workplace climate has found supportive organisational climates positively impact on
employee attitudes and behaviour and have a direct positive relationship to employee satisfaction and commitment, in turn affecting both individual and organisational performance (Luthans, Norman, Avolio & Avey, 2008). “Conventional wisdom might conclude that the amount of support that individuals receive from their organization would directly lead to higher performance” (Luthans et al., 2008, p. 225).

Organisational climate appears to have a reflexive relationship with communication and social interaction. Schulte et al., (2006) reported that communication and repeated social interactions contributed to the evolvement of shared perceptions and meaning, which in turn influenced the perceptions of the organisational climate. They also reported that individual organisational experiences can be influenced by influential relationships and organisational norms and practices that occur as artefacts of organisational climate. Supporting this connection, a study on relationships between immediate supervisors and individuals and interactions in work teams found that both types of relationships had significant effects on organisational climate (Tierney, 1999).

Employee morale is an overarching term used to describe a person's perceptions of the positive aspects of their environment, including their type of work, co-workers and management (Hart, Griffin, Wearing, & Cooper, 1996). Research has found that organisational climate is the strongest predictor of staff morale (Martin, 2005) and in a study of organisational climate, team factors such as leadership and decision-making had a strong influence on workplace morale (Wilson-Evered & Griffin, 1998).

It is argued here that an organisation developing a climate which encourages fun may reap multiple benefits. Potentially, the impact for individuals, in addition to those already noted, could include feeling valued, motivated and having a greater sense of
belonging within the organisation. McDowell (2005) in the development of the *Fun at work climate Scale*, identified socialising with co-workers, celebrating at work and global fun as the factors associated with a fun work climate. Global fun consisted of six items: (1) This a fun place to work, (2) My direct supervisor seems to value fun, (3) This company has a fun atmosphere, (4) Most people here have fun at work, (5) The overall climate of my company is fun, and (6) My supervisor encourages fun. McDowell (2005) found strong correlations with the *Fun at work climate Scale* and affective organisational commitment ($r = .52$) and turnover intention ($r = -.59$) providing support to the argument that a fun work climate can have significant organisational impacts.

At a team level, having fun may contribute to shared meaning and therefore influence aggregated climate indicators, be a contributor to positive staff morale and influence both individuals and teams to be more effective. Anecdotally, the Fish© phenomena (Ludin et al., 2003) is potentially the most well known positive fun climate intervention. The Fish© intervention evolved from observations of an American fish market and the fun the employees seemed to being having in a potentially boring and repetitive environment. The authors documented the values of the workplace and developed a marketable organisational intervention. The premise of Fish© is the focus on developing an innovative and accountable workplace environment that assists people to love the work they do, even if it is not a job that they love. Fish© operates on four principles: play, make their day, choose your attitude and be present. The Fish© philosophy encourages workplaces to engage with these principles on a daily basis with the view to changing organisational climate and ultimately influencing workplace culture. Anecdotal reports to the author and internet testimonials (Footprint, 2008) from
organisations who have applied the Fish© interventions have reported substantive
changes in team climate, particularly influencing staff morale and turnover; however, no
empirical data appears to have been collected to substantiate these claims.

In conclusion, the research available in relation to workplace climate suggests
developing an organisational climate that is supportive of fun, may well have positive
outcomes for both individuals and organisations, and influence healthy team processes.

Workplace relationships

MEETINGS

Are you lonely?
Don’t like working on your own?
Hate making decisions.
Then call a meeting.
You can see people, draw flow charts,
feel important, and impress your colleagues,
all on company time.
Meetings,
the practical alternative to work
(Author unknown).

The sarcasm imbedded in this quote highlights the dichotomous nature of work
and workplace relationships. The primary reason people go work is to complete some
type of task or deliver a service and receive an income in return. However, there is a
secondary motivation for many; the need to affiliate is innate and universal and the
workplace provides an opportunity to meet this need (Argyle, 1991). Changing
organisational realities increasingly require individuals to operate in a socially complex
and challenging context. Individuals are expected to have at least competent
interpersonal and communication skills and to value individual differences to work in today’s team environment (Cole, 2005).

It is argued here that having fun at work is not only an event-based phenomena but a social construct that has systemic influences. Anecdotally, it is suggested that by having fun at work, informal encounters of fun assist in building relationships with both colleagues and management. It is suggested by a range of authors that have collected qualitative data on fun at work that having fun results in the building of quality, trusting relationships (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). Weinstein (1996) argues that having fun at work is an opportunity to practice both tasks and interpersonal skills in a framework of play in a work context, reducing the risks of costly mistakes and increasing the overall effectiveness of teams. Contextually, in an environment that is conducive for fun, Weinstein suggests that individuals can be more relaxed, allowing others to view them in alternative lights. In addition to the benefits of fun on an individual level as outlined, it is argued here that as a result of the camaraderie of having fun with others, a systemic influence operates affecting organisational factors such as workplace relationships and team functioning. Once again there is no empirical data to substantiate these claims.

Social aspects of work.

Social aspects of work, including feelings of relatedness, intimacy and interactions have been found to be important for well-being (Beehr, 1995; Dormann & Zapf, 1999), job satisfaction, motivation (Richer, Blanchard & Vallerand, 2002), organisational commitment (Major, Kozlowski, Chao & Gardner, 1995; Stinglhamber &
Vandenberghe, 2003; Tschan, Semmer & Inversin, 2004) and assisting in avoiding burnout (Kruger, Bernstein & Botman, 1994). A number of studies have reported that positive social exchanges between employees and organisations lowered turnover and increased job satisfaction (Hodson, 1997; Major et al., 1995; Seetoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996; Spector, 1997; Tschan et al., 2004). Schneider and Smith (1996) found a buffering effect between social support and job stress has been found to uniformly enhance job satisfaction (Hendersen & Argyle, 1985; Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Beh-Dayan & Schwartz, 2002; Bellman, Forster, Still & Cooper, 2003) and employee-experienced empowerment (Corsun & Enz, 1999). Overall, the research on social aspects in the workplace shows a strong link between socialising and a range of significant organisational factors. While social aspects of work encounters in general have been found significant, further research has highlighted different types of social encounters exist in the workplace and each has a different systemic influence.

**Workplace friendships.**

Kram and Isabella (1985) provide the most commonly cited system for distinguishing types of workplace relationships with three major workplace peer relationships. These are information peers who provide work related information, identified by low levels of trust and intimacy; collegial peer relationships identified by broader communication on both work-related and personal topics and defined by moderate levels of trust and intimacy and finally, special peer relationships that have an openness to both work and personal based content, high levels of emotional support, feedback and self disclosure creating high levels of trust and intimacy.
Workplace friendships are defined by regular contact over time, communicating and developing shared meaning (Jaina & Tyson, 2004). The attraction of developing a friendship is often based in similarity in occupation, authority and attitudes, values and interests. The deepening of these friendships is influenced by proximity, sharing common experiences and extra-organisational socialising (Sias & Cahill, 1998) as fun at work events would provide. Leisure sharing has been noted as an effective way to raise morale, positively affecting job satisfaction in a range of human services work settings (McNeely, 1998). Close and intimate relationships at work have been shown to be a valuable support when individuals are dealing with difficult issues both in their professional and personal life (Sias & Cahill, 1998). Several studies measuring cohesive workplace friendships found similar results to socialising in the workplace, with friendships providing increased job satisfaction, increased organisational commitment and decreased turnover intention (Morrison, 2004; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995). Markiewicz, Devine and Kausilas (2000) found that the quality of close friendships at work influenced both career success and job satisfaction. Research has identified that employees consistently communicate more frequently with, and give more information to, those whom they consider to be friends (Scott et al., 1999; Sias, Smith & Avdeyeva, 2003; Sias, 2005) therefore influencing the quality of organisational communication (Wheatly, 2001). This increase in information and a shared world view has a number of advantages in the work setting. Familiarity among members of teams has been found to increase decision-making effectiveness (Dubnicki & Limburg, 1991).

Hendersen and Argyle (1985) found that while social support does relieve stress globally, the nature of that support was significant. In intimate or close friendships at
work, stress was only lowered by either joking or discussing personal feelings, operating in opposite directions with more joking occurring in times of less stress and more personal conversations in times of high stress. With less intimate colleagues, friendly, but not personal conversations and network support (chatting, coffee, meals) were linked to a reduction in stress.

Social exchange theory.

A number of theorists have explored interpersonal exchanges since the evolution of social exchange theory from the 1960’s when it was referred to as psychological exchange. A very brief overview highlights both individualistic and systemic approaches. In 1961, Homans, a sociologist, provided the seminal individualistic self interest approach, suggesting that individual wants and desires are the key factor in social exchanges, and actions and rewards are direct outcomes of the exchange (Cited in Cole, Schaninger, 2002). Blau built on Homan’s individual exchange position in 1964, expanding on the notion that trust is required for exchange. Situations will begin with minor exchanges, and as confidence in the interaction builds so does trust of each actor, until major transactions can be engaged in and the process becomes self generating (cited in Cole et al. 2002).

In contrast to the individualistic approach, Levi-Strauss in 1969 (cited in Cole et al. 2002) premised an anthropological framework focused on a collective approach. He hypothesised that human social exchanges are embedded in the concept of univocal reciprocity. In other words, exchanges can go well beyond the dyad, with actor ‘A’ not necessarily benefiting from actor ‘B’, but who will, within time, benefit from some
future exchange from within the collective or community that defines the relationship. Further work originating from these foundations highlight that social exchanges are not just simple economic exchanges. Exchanges have both a cognitive and an affective relationship component that are not measured in equivalent values that are found in economic exchanges, with the parameters of the agreement often unspecified in emotional circumstances. The salience of the exchange for both parties will depend on the perceived value of the exchange, and the value of the currency will vary for each member. It is argued that exchanges occurring during a fun event will be particularly susceptible to the perceptions of the parties on the value of this transaction. If one does not value the event, it is unlikely to hold any currency value. Cole et al., (2002) suggest that each employee will have “varying levels of intrinsic, extrinsic, and affiliation needs that they hope to fulfil as a result of their social exchange relationships” (p 151). Accordingly, social exchange theory to date can be viewed from either an individualistic perspective or a systemic approach, both with inherent complexities (Cole et al., 2002).

A number of different theories have evolved exploring these differing organisational level exchanges. Employee-team exchange (TMX) explores the worker and their immediate work group (Jordan, Field & Armenakis, 2002). TMX is not focused on satisfaction with work colleagues or team cohesion, but focuses on the individual’s willingness to exert behaviour to help other team members, such as giving ideas, feedback, assistance and contribution of ideas. In return, members receive help, information and recognition. TMX is the antecedent, the helpful behaviours are the outcome and, unlike the construct of organisational citizenship or organisational spontaneity, TMX theory highlights the inherent exchange of currencies. TMX focuses
on the roles within the team and the impact of the exchanges on relationships affecting the team functioning (Jordan et al., 2002). Employee-supervisor exchange has been conceptualized as leader-member exchange (LMX) and organisational-employee exchange has been conceptualized as organisational support (POS) (Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997). The currencies for TMX and LMX include support, security, advancement, pay, benefits, social identity and information. Issues such as loyalty, affect and respect were noted as valuable items for social exchange for employees (Cole et al., 2002). Attitudinal currencies from employees toward organisations and supervisors include job satisfaction, liking for their work environment and trust of the supervisor and or organisation. Social exchange theory is clear that the salience of certain currencies is not fixed. Needs can be built around perceptions and the value of certain social exchanges in different circumstances may vary. Complimentary to this, Cole et al. suggest that individuals in organisations at any level can shape the salience of the currencies they offer and therefore influence the salience of the exchange with their employee.

In general, higher quality relationship are characterised by higher levels of trust, support and encouragement, operating more like a partnership where the mutual interest is held in higher esteem rather than individual positions (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In a meta-analysis of LMX, it was clear that high quality relationships between supervisors and employees yield a number of benefits to both parties, including increased overall satisfaction, higher organisational commitment and role clarity and low intentions of leaving (Gerstner & Day, 1997) and positively influence productivity (Seers, Petty &
Cashman, 1995). LMX and TMX have also been shown to significantly predict communal social capital investment behaviour (Smith, 2002).

There seems to be agreement within studies based on social exchange theory that currencies have different values for individuals and different capacities for exchange. The argument is made here that having fun at work provides a venue for the exchange of social currency such as support and the building of intimacy resulting in social capital. As a result of these exchanges, there is an opportunity to build trust, respect and loyalty between recipients and these are seen as valuable workplace currency particularly in the operation of teams.

**Team development.**

Workplace relationships, whether described in cognitive or affective terms, are reflexive interactions that through familiarity and support build trust, loyalty and respect between individuals. Team building is aimed at enhancing performance and/or interpersonal dynamics (Hardy & Crace, 1997). Hardy and Crace argue that “…team effectiveness is dependent on the development and nurturing of a team culture” (p. 9). Kinlaw (1991) suggests that team building, whilst important, is an intermittent process; on the other hand, team development should be ongoing. For team development to be ongoing, teams need both formal and informal processes in place in order to remain highly functioning. Informal processes, those most relevant to this research project, consist of inherent activities, rituals and culture in a team that helps the team operate and develop a positive team climate (Kinlaw, 1991). He describes four distinct informal processes that are possessed by superior work teams. These include communicating and
contracting, responding and adapting, influencing and improving, and appreciating and celebrating.

Schultz (1994) argues that the human factors of teams such as inclusion, openness, and acceptance contribute to self-efficacy of each member of a team, and thereby the team’s success. Campion, Papper, and Medsker (1996) found that team processes had a strong influence on productivity and employee satisfaction. These processes included building team spirit, social support, workload sharing, and communication and cooperation within the team. Team process was considered to be more important than job design, team composition, or the job itself. In a team intervention reported by Zamanou and Glasser (1994), informal activities such as organisationally sponsored dinners were found to improve employee morale.

The potential impact of fun in the team or interpersonal context

Overall, it is suggested that the functioning of teams or groups of colleagues have significant influences in the workplace. From the outset of this chapter, it was noted that anecdotally fun has been advanced as a modality to build relationships in the workplace and contribute to effective team functioning. The research reviewed has established that there are substantial organisational benefits as a result of employees engaging in social relationships including increased job satisfaction, motivation, organisational commitment and decreased turnover. The exchange of acts used as social currency includes helping behaviours and support, engendering loyalty and trust as a product. Workplace socialising has been found to be a contributor to improved well-being, particularly through workplace friendships. These friendships, in addition to the
impacts of general socialising, build greater shared meaning, sharing of information and have been found to improve decision making. Finally, positive team climates of inclusion, openness and acceptance have been linked to increased productivity, employee satisfaction and morale. This research provides compelling support for the notion that having fun at work, which is arguably a social process, may have substantial organisational benefits for both individuals and teams. It is hypothesised that fun at work is primarily a social activity that is perceived to benefit job satisfaction, assist in managing stress and improve workplace relationships.

Work performance and productivity and fun at work

A further claim suggested in popular media is that having fun at work improves workplace efficiency and performance, and thereby influences the overall productivity of organisations in the form of improved service outcomes and/or profit (Gostick & Christopher 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). Organisational analysis of business outcomes focuses on both individual and organisational contributions. Research has established several links between work performance and organisational factors. Using meta-analysis, a moderate correlation was found between job satisfaction and work performance ($r=.30$ : Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001) and positive psychological well-being and productivity (Harter et al., 2002). In line with these findings at a team level, perceived organisational support, defined by the perception of employees that their contributions are valued and their organisation cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986), was linked to job satisfaction and was associated with contextual performance such as completing tasks, interpersonal facilitation and job
dedication (Muse & Stamper, 2007). Results from a study of public hospital workers in America found social support at work had significant relationships with both psychological outcomes and performance outcomes (Ok Park, Wilson & Lee, 2004). Workplaces that focused on emotionally engaging employees with clear expectations, cognitive engagement, and caring and supportive relationships, particularly workplace friendships, had significantly lower turnover, more satisfied customers and were financially more productive and profitable (Harter et al., 2002).

In summary, this brief overview of relevant research outlines links between work performance and several workplace factors, namely job satisfaction and workplace relationships, which have been discussed here as being influenced by fun at work. It is unknown at this point in time the extent of influence having fun at work can have on efficiency and work performance and if indeed any links can be made in this area. It is argued here that having fun at work will be perceived to have a moderate impact on workplace efficiency; however, it is also likely to have an indirect influence on efficiency by improving job satisfaction, workplace relationships and therefore workplace climate.

The process of fun

To date no data exists either anecdotally or empirically in relation to the process of having fun at work. Podilchak (1985, 1991) argues that fun was primarily an interactive social experience. He describes solitary activities as the constructs of enjoyment or amusement, rather than fun. Podilchak describes fun as a process that occurs when there is a restructuring of the social setting to create a context for fun. The
fun process can evolve when there is reciprocity and attachment to others in an affective manner, when there is a sense of contribution and equality for participants and where there is a social construct for freedom of choice to participate in the making of fun. He states the process of fun can be playful, but is not strictly intended to be so. As an outcome of fun, “Empirically, the individuals will show emotions, particularly laughter and smiles” (Podilchak, 1985, p. 688). Podilchak (1991) suggests situations cannot be experienced as fun when there are perceived or real inequalities for participants, or when individual psychological states of mind related to seriousness or being tense are carried into the activity.

To date no studies have explored the organisational context or process related to fun events in the workplace, and therefore it is unclear if these events require certain criteria for individuals and teams including antecedents, processes and consequences. It is hypothesised in this research program that the context and process of having fun at work will be discerned by a number of features. Applying the 3P conceptual framework, it is expected in the presage phase the individual will be in an environment supportive of the concept of fun, and describe a relaxed state of mind (Podilchak, 1985; Fleming, 2005). The process phase will be defined by the participants entering into an engaging activity, influenced by humour and play, and reciprocal social interactions. The self in these social interactions will be described as cognitively engaged, have positive affective and experience a moderate to high degree of flow. The product phase of the experience can be interpreted from a systemic position. It is hypothesised having fun at work produces both positive affect in the form of laughter and mood shifts, and positive relationships with colleagues. In addition, it is expected that participants will perceive
having fun at work increases job satisfaction, efficiency and assists in stress management. Systemically, these positive outcomes are hypothesised to influence components of workplace climate, primarily in the form of improved relationships.

At the group level when the interdependence and interactions are high, it is suggested a collective viewpoint may emerge and the shift from *I* to *we* occurs, contributing to a positive workplace climate and culture that is more collective in nature (Schulte et al., 2006; Weick, 1995). Systemically, the shift in workplace climate and culture can in turn influence and enhance the environmental and personal context for having fun at work. Figure 7 outlines the hypothesised reflexive process of having fun at work, presented in the 3P framework.
Figure 7: Hypothesised reflexive process of having fun at work presented in the 3P framework

Presage

Environmental context

Enduring personal resources

Personal characteristics
- disposition
- state of mind

Positive organisation climate

Innovative, efficient, shared meaning

Process

Activity:
- engaging
- humour and play

Features:
- reciprocal interactions and attachments

Self
- cognitive and affective
- flow

Others

Product

Positive affective experience:
- laughter
- smiles
- happiness
- mood shift

The relationships

Perceived:
- increased job satisfaction
- increased efficiency

Improved climate and culture
Summary of the theoretical basis of research program

Creating fun at work has been presented in the popular media as a panacea for all workplaces, with little empirical data to substantiate these widely made claims. Several arguments have been developed as the foundations for this research program. Firstly, the construct of fun is ill defined and differentiated, with fun often anecdotally and empirically represented as humour and/or play. This lack of differentiation gives rise to confusion in relation to the application of fun in a workplace context. In order for fun at work to be applied as a work based intervention, it is imperative the construct is more fully demarcated. An element of defining the construct requires further exploration of the context, processes and products related to fun, and specifically for this research, fun in a workplace context.

It is argued here that fun at work resides in the systemic environment of a workplace, with both individual and team factors influencing the process and outcomes of having fun at work. Individual factors related to fun at work include the personal characteristics required to engage, the effects of the ensuing social context and interactions and the personal outcomes of laughter, levity and happiness. In turn, these outcomes are anecdotally described and hypothesised here to influence individual work aspects such as job satisfaction, efficiency and stress management. It is also argued that the team environment is influenced by the social nature of having fun, with the reciprocal attachments and interactions having positive effects on workplace relationships, and therefore positively influencing workplace climate and workplace culture. While the benefits of having fun at work have been have touted in popular media in the past decade, they are yet to be effectively quantified. It is the focus of this
research program, therefore, to more fully define and differentiate the construct of fun at work, to understand the context and processes related to applying the construct and to measure perceived benefits of engaging in fun at work.
CHAPTER 4: THE DOMAIN OF FUN ACTIVITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

STUDY 1

To date the types of activities that are perceived as fun at work have not been fully quantified given the lack of construct definition and the fact that examples primarily remain in the realm of anecdotal reports. Much of the popular literature published on the topic has sidestepped formally mapping the domain in favour of providing prescriptive examples. The examples reported were gathered from organisations and included activities ranging from large scale games and competitions, to small interpersonal connections, such as a progressive bunches of flowers acknowledging individual contributions to teams (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). The authors provide little feedback on how employees engage with different types of activities, and if indeed some activities are perceived as more fun than others.

Podilichak (1985) argued that a significant ingredient in a fun experience entailed participating in an engaging activity, but suggested that it was the interaction with others, rather than the type of activity, that defined the event as fun. His argument suggests that the activity, whilst a vehicle for fun, is not necessarily an important component to define or understand. This research program takes a contrary position, arguing that having a fuller understanding of activities that are considered fun in the workplace will enhance our overall knowledge of the construct and its usefulness as a workplace intervention.

McDowell (2005), when developing a fun climate scale, defines the experience of fun at work as “…engaging in activities not specifically related to the job that are
enjoyable, amusing or playful and that enhance organizational performance” (McDowell, 2005, Appendix A). It is argued in this study that McDowell’s definition may be somewhat limited. There is no evidence to date to suggest that activities related to one’s job are not considered fun, or if indeed fun activities need to enhance organisational performance to contribute to a fun workplace climate. An earlier study on play and fun at work asked participants to rate a list of 55 workplace activities, such as parties, awards, working alone and performance appraisals, as fun or not fun. Abramis (1989a) reported that every one of the activities was considered fun by someone, suggesting the domain of fun activities in the workplace may be very large. McDowell in her process of scale development reported 40 activities identified as fun at work. She then asked a sample of university students to rate the items either fun or not fun and the items were reduced to 18 and were used in scale development. The activities considered fun were thematically grouped: (1) socialising with co-workers, (2) celebrating at work, and (3) personal freedoms. With these results in mind, and without providing restrictive definitions, this study aims to map the domain of fun activities at work.

In addition to the defining the construct, it is also important to establish what the construct is not (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Information in relation to what is not fun is very uncommon. An organisational web site provided a list of rules for having fun at work; however, all of their tips included things not to do, rather than things to do. They suggested that it is not fun to use disparaging humour such as making fun of co-workers or management in the form of teasing or mocking, in telling ethnic/off-coloured jokes, and participating in practical jokes or pranks. They also prescribe it is not fun if the activity has sexual connotations, is deceptive, or makes fun of the organisation
(Vikesland, 2001-2007). To date there are no data related to what activities employees do not find fun at work.

Therefore, the overall focus of Study 1 is to identify the activities that participants perceive as fun, and not fun, at work. It was hypothesised that the domain of fun activities would reflect anecdotal and extant literature in this area. The broad types of activities reported would be those that involved humour and joking, playful games, dress up occasions and celebrations, and team building activities.

*Research Q1: What is the domain of activities that are considered to be fun at work?*

*Research Q2: What is the domain of activities that are considered not fun at work?*

**Method**

**Participants.**

One hundred and forty-two (142) Australian human service workers participated in this study. Human service workers were chosen as they most closely represented the descriptions of the workplaces in popular literature, in contrast to manufacturing or construction organisations. The sample consisted of thirty five males (M age: 40.8 years, SD: 9.87 years) and one hundred and seven females (M age: 41.3 years, SD: 10.8 years) working in both government (54.7%), community based (40.7%) and private (4.7%) organisational settings. Workers were involved in a range of occupations in the human service field including librarians, telephone counsellors, managers, psychologists, receptionists, administration workers, nurses and HR professionals. Eighty-six (60%) of the participants were not responsible for other staff, while fifty-six participants (40%) had responsibility for other staff ranging from 1 person to 25+. Ninety percent of
participants were from Queensland and the remainder of the group were from New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. The majority of the participants were educated at degree level or higher (62%) and identified themselves as coming from an Australian heritage (90%).

**Measures**

*Development of instrument.*

The Fun at Work questionnaire was designed specifically for this research program. The initial questionnaire was piloted in paper format with 10 volunteers from a range of employment backgrounds, ages and genders. The instrument was then revised and scaled down to remove repetitive data and a final document was produced (See Appendix A: Fun at Work questionnaire). At this point both an online and paper version of the questionnaire was developed. Research has found that there is equivalence between computer-based and paper-and-pencil based questionnaires in the quality of the data they collect. Vispoel (2000) found that there was a correlation of .92 or higher between subscales for paper and pencil and computer administered questionnaires. Supplementary to this, little difference between social desirability bias in computer-based and paper-and-pencil questionnaires has been found (Wilkerson, Nagao & Martian, 2002). The online questionnaire was linked to an access database and hosted with a paid provider to allow easy access and a larger database capacity. The site included professionally developed graphics, in an attempt to make the task of completing a questionnaire a little more visually palatable. The online questionnaire was then piloted with 10 additional participants using their own computers and internet access and refinements to the linked database were made.
Instrument.

Part A of the Fun at Work questionnaire was used for Study 1. Four open questions explored the domain of fun and not fun activities at work. Participants were asked to provide examples of activities that they perceived were (1) fun for them and everyone else at work; (2) activities that were not fun for them; (3) activities they thought were fun for themselves, but not fun for other people; and (4) activities that were fun for others, but not themselves. An open question grid format was used to encourage participants to nominate more than one response, with space for up to four examples in each section.

Procedure

To chose a sample representing the anecdotal literature, recruitment occurred in two areas; organisational and convenience sampling. To limit the data collection to one site would have compromised the breadth of information collected, however utilising convenience sampling may ultimately limit the capacity to generalise results. With this in mind, a third comparative sample was recruited completing key data.

The first round of recruitment focused on a local Government Council that employed a wide range of workers involved in human service such as librarians and human resource officers. In negotiation with the Council, a division of staff were nominated and contacted through organisational communication channels to participate in the study. All staff received an emailed copy of the questionnaire and a follow up email one week later. Those that participated returned the questionnaire by email or by post. It was not made clear to the researcher how many emails were initially sent,
therefore no data on return rates were available. Response rates were disappointing and ultimately much less than expected due to organisational constraints that became apparent during the data collection phase (N=33).

The second organisational recruitment process occurred during the delivery of a range of skill-based management and counselling workshops delivered by the researcher and an independent colleague. At both workshops, participants were invited to complete a hard copy questionnaire during the lunch break (N=29).

The balance of the sample was recruited as a convenience sample using radio interviews and email lists. A series of nation-wide radio interviews were undertaken by the researcher with listeners invited to complete data on-line by accessing the nominated web site or hard copy versions if required. Information about the research program was distributed through a number of large private email lists inviting on line or email responses. The only conditions required were that the participant needed to be, or have been, employed as a human services worker. Completed data were then emailed or posted to the researcher (N=80). In total, 79 participants (56%) completed the questionnaire online and the balance of participants completed the paper based version.

Because the participants in this study were all voluntary, it was important to establish that they represented a random sample as closely as possible and were not inordinately interested in the concept of fun at work. To establish the original group as a probability random sample, a smaller second sample was recruited. These participants were recruited during attendance at a Brisbane Health Expo and were approached directly by the researcher. The additional sample consisted of 14 men (M=36.1 years, SD=15.2 years) and 27 females (M=39.0 years; SD=11.6 years) who were also
employed in human services fields (N=41). This second sample was asked two of the same questions as the original sample, in relation to their attitudes of fun at work; *In general I have fun at work* and *Being able to have fun at work is really important to me.*

Results indicated that there was a high degree of similarity between the two samples, with the comparative sample recording higher preferences for both desiring to have fun and engaging in fun (see Table 2). While the comparative group recorded a larger span of responses (SD=1.42) than the primarily sample (SD=1.25) in relation to engaging in fun at work, the span was inversed in relation to being able to have fun [primary sample SD=1.00, comparative sample SD=0.64]. These results suggest that the primary sample although recruited through a convenience sampling methodology, were less interested in fun than were the random sample providing support to the validity and reliability of the data set.

Table 2

*Mean results of perceptions of frequency and desire in relation to fun at work; primary compared to additional sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Primary sample</th>
<th></th>
<th>Comparative sample</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N= 142</td>
<td></td>
<td>N= 41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general I have fun at work</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to have fun at work is really important to me</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Scaled 1 = not at all, 7 = lots.*
Methodology of analysis

It was hypothesised that the domain of fun activities would reflect anecdotal and extant literature in this area. The data were obtained in a 2x2 grid fashion asking participants to nominate examples of activities in the following categories: (1) fun for them and everyone else at work; (2) activities that were not fun for them; (3) activities they thought were fun for themselves, but not fun for other people; and (4) activities that were fun for others, but not themselves. Each of the four quadrants was thematically analysed applying the following methodology.

Owen (1984) used several coding criteria in his thematic analysis of response content, including developing interpretive themes from words or phrases. Where the words and phrases were repetitive in meaning they could be themed into categories. This process is similar to emergent theme analysis, where categories emerge from the data, rather than from a pre-existing coding schema (Weber, 1990). The recording of emergent themes was the first step in analysing each section with the researcher (a psychologist) and an assistant (a sociologist) examining participants’ responses to each of the four sections and nominating reoccurring themes utilising themes from extant literature and colloquial logic. The result of the investigation of fun for me and others was extended, and the methodology is presented along with the results.

Results

Electronic data for all surveys were collected and stored in Microsoft Access data bases. These data were then transferred to Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 14.5 and used for data analysis. Any substantially incomplete questionnaires
were removed from the data set. Data screening analysis revealed no substantial missing data in any surveys, with any missing data points being replaced by an individual mean score. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) stated that in the absence of other information the mean is the best approximation of the value of a variable. All data were checked for errors using frequencies and descriptives.

**Fun for me and others**

The responses of the entire sample in the fun for me and others section were themed, utilising the participants’ actual words, clustered according to literal content meaning, applying cut-off criteria to eliminate idiosyncratic items and to gain a selection of representative expressions. The two raters nominated six and eight categories respectively. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that thematic analysis can also be combined with a conceptual lens based on extant literature to further flesh out themes. Therefore, extant literature related to humour, playfulness and fun were included as a lens for the coding schemas as well as general themes that emerged. The raters then coded a sample of the same 30 responses with an inter-rater agreement (Cohen, 1988) of .85 being achieved. After discussion regarding disagreements in allocation, a revised and expanded coding schema was established with each category more clearly defined. The exploratory nature of this study invited a broader, rather than narrower, coding schema in order to expand potential data rather than restrict results (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The raters then rescored a second sample with an inter-rater agreement of .97. The complete sample (a total of 278 responses) was then categorised by the researcher with the revised coding schema (see Table 3). The rules of logical inclusiveness were
used to choose allocation to categories (Weber, 1990). For example, if an activity could have been coded under a number of areas, the one that seemed most appropriate, taking into account the other responses by the same participant, was used. Examples were not coded in multiple categories. If there was insufficient information given or the activity was not mentioned by other participants, it was coded in the section of *other*. As previously mentioned, idiosyncratic responses were eliminated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Label</th>
<th>Category description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>If the intent of the example included joke, humour, amusement. Telling funny or humorous stories.</td>
<td>“joking”, “dry sense of humour”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“stir each other up”, “telling funny stories”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“joking over problems”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>Mentioned emails and criteria for sharing jokes and humour.</td>
<td>“short, fun, inoffensive emails”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“reading funny emails”, “circulated emails”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>Acting or dressing in a silly or out of character manner. Playing children’s games.</td>
<td>“impersonations”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“exaggerating and imitating some of our clients”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“doing the dance of triumph when something has gone well for me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>An activity where there are some rules or guidelines to follow.</td>
<td>“computer games”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“pool competition at lunch time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy going work environment</td>
<td>Conditions that impact on working environment.</td>
<td>“when we have good music playing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“being able to take time out to recharge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social/celebratory events</td>
<td>When organising or planning event is mentioned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“organising social events”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“planning a social event”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>Informal conversations, including gossiping and telling stories.</td>
<td>“chatting and laughing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“talking about subjects of interest”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“having a chat or gossip with co-workers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the workplace</td>
<td>Away from their work and sharing food and drinks during working hours.</td>
<td>“having morning tea or lunch together”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“having lunch or coffee with one or two co-workers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“eating together in the board room”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“chatting over tea/coffee”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered Functions</td>
<td>Where mentioned or intimated that organisation is sponsoring the event.</td>
<td>“weekends away”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“staff functions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“free promotions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Retreats”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>Unstructured or spontaneous catching up after work.</td>
<td>“social drinks at the pub”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“impromptu late Friday drinks”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“after work catch up”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>A sporting/exercise/physical activity.</td>
<td>“barefoot bowling”, “round of golf or game of tennis”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“exercising with others”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised social activities outside of work time</td>
<td>Activities outside of work time that have some structure and or planning involved.</td>
<td>“dinner together after hours”, “staff social club BBQ’s”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“social club trivia night”, “family picnics”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>Where a specific reason for the socialising is mentioned.</td>
<td>“someone’s birthday, leaving or coming, promotions etc”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Birthday and Christmas celebrations”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Melbourne cup lunches”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Celebrating program achievements”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>Activities that focus on team functioning.</td>
<td>“team projects”, “warm up energisers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“team meetings”, “group development sessions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>The primary purpose of the activity is professional development.</td>
<td>“workshops”, “community workshops”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“interesting training”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Activities that were not able to be included in other categories or ‘one off’ examples.</td>
<td>“buying resources”, “running play groups”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“reading”, “being at work”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Frequencies of themed examples nominated as fun for me and others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency of total responses (N=278)</th>
<th>Total responses %</th>
<th>Item nominated by sample (N=142) %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the workplace</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised social activities outside of work time</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered Functions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy going work environment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social/celebratory events</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Frequencies of themed examples nominated as fun for me and others presents a summary in descending frequency of the activities nominated “Activities that are fun for others I work with and fun for me”. A mean of 1.9 responses per person were collected. The most popular type of activity, nominated by 36% of participants, was getting together in the workplace for morning tea, lunch or smoke breaks. This was closely followed by chatting and sharing experiences nominated by 29% of respondents. These results support findings by McDowell (2005), suggesting activities related to having fun at work have a strong informal social function. The two most other
frequently noted fun activities were *sharing jokes and humour* nominated by 22.5% of the sample and *team building activities* (nominated by 19% of the sample).

A number of differences between males and female frequency of nominations were observed. Males nominated on average 1.68 examples whereas females nominated 2.04 making it somewhat difficult to accurately compare the frequency of nominations for each type of activity (see Table 5). However, there were some trends to be noted. Both groups nominated *get togethers* and *chatting and sharing experiences* and *sharing jokes and humour* as the most frequent type of fun for everyone.

### Table 5

*Fun at work activities as nominated by gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency of male responses (N=59)</th>
<th>Male (N=35) responses %</th>
<th>Frequency of female responses (N=219)</th>
<th>Female (N=107) responses %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the workplace</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised social activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered Functions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy going work environment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social/celebratory events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were two substantial nomination differences between genders in relation to team building and office games. Women nominated team building more frequently, with 24.3% nominating this as a fun activity while only 2.9% of males did. Office games were nominated more frequently by males (11.4%) as compared to 3.7% of the female responses.

Data were also analysed to compare responses of supervisory and non-supervisory staff, with supervisors providing an average of 2 responses and non-supervisors 1.87 responses (see Table 6). Results were similar to the complete sample with both groups nominating get togethers in the workplace most frequently. There was a difference in nominations in relation to chatting and sharing experiences, with supervisors nominating this activity more often (32.1%) than non-supervisors (26.7%).

There were also several further differences between the groups in relation to nomination frequency of team building, special celebration events and easy going work environment as fun activities. Thirty percent (30.4%) of supervisor’s nominated teambuilding as a fun activity compared to 11.6% of non-supervisors. In contrast, non-supervisors nominated special celebration events (15.1% non-supervisors; 8.9% supervisors) and easy going work environment more frequently than supervisors (7% non-supervisors; 0% supervisors).
### Table 6

**Fun at work activities as nominated by supervisory status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency of supervisor responses (N=117)</th>
<th>Supervisor responses, %</th>
<th>Frequency of non-supervisor responses (N=161)</th>
<th>Non-supervisor responses, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the workplace</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised social activities outside of work time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered Functions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy going work environment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social/celebratory events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Results shown in descending frequency of supervisor responses.

**Fun for me, but not for others**

Eighty seven participants responded to the question nominating “Things that are not fun for others I work with and but fun for me” with a total of 94 examples. The most commonly noted activity as *fun for me, but not for others*, were task specific activities within their job. For example, attending church functions within a work context, shopping for clients, being a manager, working overtime and dealing with customers and clients (32% of total responses). One person nominated dealing with abusive clients as a fun activity for them, while aware that it is not fun for other people. The second
most popular activities noted in this category were socialising (15%) and humour (15%). Administration tasks were noted by 11% of respondents. Other areas recorded were similar to categories of fun for everyone including chatting (8%), sport and games (7%), and workshops and training (6%). Six percent of participants noted environmental features that made work more fun for them such as listening to their choice of music, putting their feet on the desk, or taking off their shoes in the office, but recognised others may not see this as fun.

*Not fun for me, but fun for others*

One hundred and six participants provided a total of 107 responses to *not fun for me, but fun for others*. The most frequently noted activity that was not fun for the participant, but may have been fun for others was socialising (32% of total responses). A number of participants noted that socialising allowed others to drink too much alcohol, involve them in uninteresting conversations, karaoke, discussing work politics and having to attend functions in order to be seen as part of the team. General interpersonal and team issues including disparaging humour (31%) were the next most represented group in *not fun for me, but fun for others*. Examples included gossip, not getting along, exclusion, sarcasm and silly awards being mentioned. More specific examples included having to be the staff member who stays to answer phones while the rest of the work group goes out for lunch, and staff members laughing and talking in foreign languages so they could not be readily understood. Receiving joke emails, playing computer games and having music on were also nominated as activities that others may enjoy, but not the participants (8%). The final group of activities nominated that were not fun for
them, but may have been for others, included bad jokes (6%), management (1%), administration work (5%), meetings (7%) and work related stress (10%).

*Not fun for anyone*

Ninety three participants nominated 121 examples of activities that were *not fun for anyone*. The activities fell into a number of broad categories: poor management (22% of total responses), administration/paperwork (17%), meetings (14%), specific work based stress (14%), interpersonal issues (12%) general stress (10%), bad jokes (6%) and other (5%). Ineffective or poor management headed the list of *not fun for anyone* activities. Issues such as lack of acknowledgement of work well done, being judged by management for having fun, and lack of workplace instrumental support were all nominated as events that were not fun. Additionally, a number of participants noted that compulsory social or team building activities encouraged by management were not fun for anyone, with an emphasis on *dress-up* occasions being the worst type of activity in this group. Administration and paperwork were nominated as not fun for anyone, with gathering statistics commonly mentioned. Attending too many meetings, particularly long and boring meetings, was noted as not fun. Specific workplace stress was nominated by a number of participants including having to listen to women’s and children’s experiences of being hurt, after hours’ calls, difficult and angry clients and boredom when systems are down. Interpersonal and team issues were represented with conflict, gossip and ‘politics’ being mentioned. General stress at work was noted with unrealistic deadlines and working beyond acceptable hours being recorded. Bad jokes were also nominated as not fun for anyone, including jokes that were deemed to be
sexist, cruel or in poor taste. Finally a number of idiosyncratic activities were noted such as running errands and cleaning up after others.

Table 7

*The domain of Fun and Not fun activities at work in ranked order*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun for me and others</th>
<th>Not fun for anyone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Get togethers in the workplace (morning tea, lunches, coffee)</td>
<td>• Ineffectual management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>• Administration/paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>• Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team building (to a greater extent for females and supervisors)</td>
<td>• Specific work-task stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpersonal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General workplace stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Distasteful jokes &amp; humour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun for me, but not others</th>
<th>Not fun for me, but fun for others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Specific tasks related to position</td>
<td>• Socialising (work politics, coercion in attending)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socialising</td>
<td>• Interpersonal &amp; team dynamics (gossip, disparaging humour, exclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Humour</td>
<td>• Email jokes/games/music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administration</td>
<td>• Disparaging jokes and humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easy going work environment (playing music, relaxed dress code, decorating desk)</td>
<td>• Management/meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workshops/chatting/games</td>
<td>• Workplace stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Summary of activities that are fun and not fun*

In summary, the activities participants nominated most frequently as fun for everyone in the workplace were get-togethers such as morning tea, chatting and sharing experiences, sharing jokes and humour and team building. Interestingly, some of the activities participants reported as fun for everyone were also described as being not fun, either for themselves or others. The activities described as not fun were poor management, being coerced into participating in social and team building events,
disparaging humour and silly playfulness, negative team dynamics, administrative tasks and excessive stress (see Table 7).

Discussion

The results of Study 1 identified fifteen activities that were considered fun for me and others. The most frequently nominated activities were having get-togethers (e.g. morning tea), chatting to colleagues, sharing jokes and team building. Several gender and supervisory differences were noted in frequency of nomination, with female and supervisory groups nominating team building as a fun activity more frequently than males, and non-supervisors. It was considered not to be fun to experience ineffectual management, to be coerced into social and team building events, negative or disparaging humour, excessive job stress, interpersonal issues such as conflict, exclusion or negative team dynamics, boring meetings and some administrative tasks.

It was hypothesised that the domain of fun activities would reflect anecdotal and extant literature in this area, such as humour and joking around, playful games, dress up occasions and celebrations, and team building activities. These results provide support for this hypothesis, with both humour and social functions being highly nominated as fun activities in the workplace. Interestingly, playful activities, such as dressing or acting out of character, were nominated less frequently than expected, given the abundance of examples in anecdotal literature. These results suggest that everyday fun at work is more social and humorous in nature than playful.
Table 8

**Similarities and differences: Nominated items in Study 1 and McDowell, 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similar fun items</th>
<th>Different fun items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>• Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Humorous emails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acting silly</td>
<td>• Teambuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Office games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easygoing work environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get togethers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chatting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Catered functions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social outings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Celebrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDowell (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joking with co-workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Playing around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relaxed dress code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal music allowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Taking breaks from work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Going out to lunch with co-workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socialising with co-workers at work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Camaraderie/friendships at work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing each others stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Company provided refreshments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socialising with co-workers outside of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observing birthdays and other events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Throwing parties to recognise\naccomplishments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Celebrations at work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Festivities during holidays and other times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities identified in this study are very similar to the 15 items obtained by McDowell (2005) (see Table 8) providing further face and content validity of the domain. Comparing nominated activities from both studies, however, some differences were noted, primarily with the current sample nominating teambuilding and workshops as fun activities. It is hypothesised that the difference in data between the two studies may be due to the question McDowell used to elicit her initial items. Sixty working adults were asked to provide examples of fun at work with the following definition in
mind: “Fun at work means engaging in activities not specifically related to the job that are enjoyable, amusing or playful and that enhance organisational performance” (McDowell, 2005, p. 44). Stating that the activity was not specifically related to your job potentially excluded activities such as team building and workshops from the nomination process.

When comparing responses for Study 1 on the basis of gender, women nominated chatting, team building and celebrations more frequently than males, whereas males nominated office games more than females. A difference in nominations was also found in relation to supervisor perspectives of fun activities, with substantially more supervisors nominating teambuilding as a fun activity, compared to those not in a supervisory role. The preferences of fun activities in relation to gender and supervisory status will be further explored in Study 4.

The second focus of this study was to explore what the construct of fun at work is not in order to aid construct definition. Data for this mapping consisted of three areas: activities that were considered not fun for everyone, activities that were the respondent’s preferences, and were not considered fun for others, or alternately activities that were not the respondent’s choice of fun, but may be considered fun for others. Activities nominated not fun for anyone were represented by a range of organisational factors and disparaging humour. Negative workplace issues, such as ineffectual management, difficult team dynamics, boring meetings and excessive stress were not considered fun. Many of these issues reflect environmental features that are the antithesis of a positive workplace climate (Luthans et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2003) suggesting the construct of fun at work and workplace climate are intertwined. The relationship between fun
activities and the context in which these activities occur will be explored in Study 3 of this research program.

Abramis (1989a) reported that when participants were asked to rate a range of workplace activities as fun or not fun, all of the activities were considered fun by someone. Similar results were reported here, with activities nominated as fun by some participants, but noted as not fun for others or vice versa. Workplace socialising, humour, easygoing workplaces, chatting and games were noted as the primary group of activities that could be both fun and not fun. These results provide support for Podilchak’s (1985) argument that it may not be the activity per se that is the defining feature of the experience of fun, but the combination of an engaging activity, the process and the context of these activities that influences the interpretation of the experience being described as fun.

In order to obtain further details for more definitive construct development, the activities nominated as fun for me and others were more closely examined in Study 2 of this research program to identify common factors or dimensions that may exist in the domain of activities. Study 3 explores the context and process of having fun in detail utilising a case study methodology. Finally, Study 4 takes the identified activities and tests the perceived enjoyment and impact of these activities.
CHAPTER 5: STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS OF FUN AT WORK

STUDY 2

One of the primary aims of this research program is to more clearly define the construct of fun at work. The previous study identified the domain of activities human service workers reported as fun at work. The next step to more comprehensive definition is to systematically identify the underlying structure of the construct. This will enable a fuller understanding of fun at work in relation to similar or related constructs and aid with application in the workplace.

Two quite different statistical processes can be used to explore relationships between objects (e.g. variables). Factor analysis, which displays the similarities between objects in the form of a correlation matrix, is most often used in scale development to measure the strength of the relationships between variables and reduce the number of items. Alternatively, multidimensional scaling (MDS) is used to investigate relationships between variables in phenomenological research, where correlated data will not provide the most meaningful picture. While factor analysis requires that the underlying data are distributed as multivariate normal, and that relationships are linear creating the correlation matrix, MDS imposes no such restrictions as long as the rank-ordering of distances (or similarities) in the matrix is meaningful (Borg & Groenen, 1997). Factor analysis utilises a process of exclusion to find good fit, where MDS provides a map of relationships between the activities without exclusion. MDS uncovers the represented structure of the proximity data and is used most often in psychological research to uncover perceptions of similarities and differences between items (Kruskal & Wish, 1978). MDS explains this proximity data by the least number of interpretable
dimensions, usually measured in Euclidean space. The dimensions identified are equivalent to the factors identified in factor analysis (Cox & Cox, 2001). MDS was deemed most appropriate for the present research program, given the phenomenological approach and exploratory nature of the investigation.

Research Q3: What are the defining features/dimensions of the construct ‘fun at work’?

Method

Participants

Forty six participants volunteered to participate in the study. Respondents were recruited through the researcher’s professional network. The sample consisted of 13 males (28%) and 33 females (72%) employed in a range of human service occupations including nursing, accounting, management and counselling. Thirty seven percent (N=17) of participants were in supervisory roles. Ages of participants ranged from 23 years to 59 years (M=40.6, SD=9.4).

Instrument

Given the exploratory nature of this study, it was decided in the interest of a full and inclusive analysis of potential relationships and themes to include the full domain of activities previously nominated in the domain in Study 1. A paired similarities questionnaire was constructed, coupling all pair wise combinations of the 15 stimuli producing a total of 105 randomised items (e.g. Office games paired with Acting silly, Sharing jokes and humour paired with Catered functions). Participants were required to rate the degree of similarity/dissimilarity between each pair on the scale from 1 to 9,
where 1 represented a judgement of very similar, 5 rated as moderately similar and 9 represented a judgement of very dissimilar (Appendix B: paired similarities questionnaire).

Procedure

Participants were informed in a covering letter (See Appendix B: Covering letter.) that the purpose of the study was to investigate their perceptions of different types of fun activities in the workplace. The participants were instructed to rate the degree of similarity between all pairs, completing the questionnaire in their own time and returning the document by email or mail.

Results

Participants’ responses to the questionnaire were analysed by means of classical multidimensional scaling (MDS) (Kruskal & Wish, 1978). Given participants were provided with all ordered comparisons and the data collected provided a proximity-matrix that was two-way and symmetrical, classical MDS utilising alternating least squares scaling (ALSCAL) was applied in order to provide group level profiling (Cox & Cox, 2001). During the MDS analysis, a function minimisation algorithm is used to evaluate different configurations of the investigated stimulus, performing iterations until the maximum goodness-of-fit is achieved. The most popular method to evaluate an eventual configuration of the observed distance matrix is the stress measure, with the smaller the stress value (<.15) the better the fit of the reproduced distance matrix to the observed distance matrix (Borg & Groenen, 1997). It is also important to be aware of
the proportion of variance of the scaled data with a squared correlation value (RSQ) of above 0.90 (Kruskal & Wish, 1978).

Analysis of the data from the whole sample (n=46) completed with four iterations, concluding with an S-stress value = .035, (stress= .05, RSQ = .98) and established the data as a two dimensional model. To test for gender or supervisory status based differences in construction of the domain, separate analyses were conducted for male (n=13) and female (n=33) and supervisory (n=17) and non-supervisory (n=29) status (see Table 9). These analyses produced virtually identical configurations to the combined data set, and therefore the sample as a whole will be discussed (see Figure 8).

Table 9

*Stress and RSQ values of complete sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>S-stress value</th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>RSQ</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete sample</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-supervisors</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. See Appendix C for representations of stimulus space for males, females, supervisors and non-supervisors.
Figure 8. Representation of stimulus space for dimensions perceptions of fun at work activities.
MDS can be interpreted utilising several different methods. Dimensional analysis is the most common form, with the projection of lines or axes in the space, such that logical differences between stimulus elements at appropriate poles are established. Complete pattern or neighbourhood clusters can also be interpreted to supplement and clarify dimensions adding to a fuller understanding of the identified relationships (Kruskal & Wish, 1978). A combination of neighbourhood clusters and dimensional analysis were used to aid interpretation of the findings in this study.

*Neighbourhood clusters.*

Interpretation by neighbourhood clustering is usually done subjectively, applying existing knowledge of the common characteristics of the groupings (Kruskal & Wish, 1978). The activities in this study fell into common neighbourhood clusters of playfulness and humour, easy going environment, informal and formal social activities and organisationally focused activities as represented in Figure 9.

Cluster A (viewing Figure 9 from the right hand bottom corner) was identified as a group of activities related to humour and playfulness, encapsulating *sharing jokes & humour, humorous emails, acting silly* and *office games*. Participants perceived *sharing jokes & humour* and *humorous emails* as very similar to each other, while differentiating *acting silly* and *office games* slightly. The differentiation of *office games* from *acting silly* supports previous research by Banker (1987) who notes, that while games are a part of adult playing, they can be distinguished by the development of rules or shared understandings and are somewhat different to general playing. Research by both Abramis (1990) and Maxwell et al. (2005) also noted the distinction between play as a
game such as solving puzzles, and ‘acting silly’ type of play, described by Maxwell et al. as ‘goofing around’.

Figure 9: Neighbourhood analysis of fun at work activities as represented in MDS

It is important to note that the activities included in the humour and play cluster are those primarily described by, and used interchangeably with, the term fun in both empirical and in anecdotal literature (Abramis, 1990; Gostick & Christopher, 2008). Their grouping as a cluster in relation to other activities, however, provides strong rationale for the argument that while play and humour are a part of the construct of fun at work, they do not represent the complete domain.
Cluster B primarily describes a set of informal social activities, encompassing *easy going environment, chatting, get togethers* and *helping organise events*. The activities in this cluster are similar to the ‘socialising with co-workers’ factor of fun established by McDowell (2005).

Cluster C was represented by more formal, organised socialising and celebrating events such as *celebrations, sporting events, social outings, catered functions, informal drinks* and *socialising after work*. Once again a range of very similar activities were identified in the ‘celebrating at work’ factor found by McDowell (2005).

Cluster D consisted of two activities with an organisational focus, *workshops* and *team building* that are distinct from the social focus of the other fun activities in the domain. Participants associated *teambuilding* more closely than *workshops* to the formal social activity cluster, perhaps suggesting that they perceive it as having a stronger social component.

*Dimensional analysis.*

A dimensional interpretation of the represented space establishes relational lines or axes that locate the logical differences between the stimulus elements at the appropriate poles (Kruskal & Wish, 1978).
Figure 10. Labelled dimensions 1 and 2 for representation of stimulus space of fun at work.
Dimension 1. The right hand pole of the first dimension (see Figure 10) was most clearly defined by the activity helping organise events and related activities that are social, informal and voluntary in nature such as get togethers and chatting. In this pole, participants grouped tasks that were focused on social connection.

The left hand pole of this dimension was defined most strongly by activities such as workshops and a little further along the continuum with team building. These two activities describe events that are related to organisational development and are usually initiated by the organisation rather than the participants themselves (e.g. participants are directed by the facilitator or management and the focus is ultimately on organisational needs). While both workshops and team building occur for organisational purposes, they usually involve a high level of interpersonal contact with participants or colleagues. This pole therefore represents activities that primarily have an organisational focus, but in contrast to other work related tasks, provide opportunities for social connection.

Overall, the first dimension appears to discriminate the context of the activities, and has therefore been labelled as contextual connection with others, with the poles defined by social and organisational.

From a dialectical position, these poles can be understood within multiple contrasts (Baxter & Montgomery, 1997). For example, organisationally focused activities can, and do, have social interpersonal components (e.g. chatting over lunch at a workshop). However, the focus of this overall activity is less on its social aspects and more on its contextual purpose, even though relationship development may be an outcome. Similarly, at events such as staff Christmas parties, work may still be a point of discussion, but it is the social nature of the occasion that is in the foreground.
Therefore, the first dimension, *contextual connection with others*, needs to be understood in dialectical terms.

The *contextual connection with others* dimension captures different aspects of interpersonal connections within a work context. Although the primary reason people go to work is to perform a range of tasks and services, the need to affiliate and connect with others is universal (Argyle, 1991). This social connection has been the focus of organisational research in the past several decades as discussed in previous chapters. Thus, this dimension represents a range of activities that can be used to facilitate social exchanges in the workplace.

*Dimension 2*. The right hand pole of the second dimension was most strongly defined by sharing jokes and humour, humorous emails, and closely related to acting silly and office games. In addition to these activities being identified as a discrete cluster, they can also be distinguished by the spontaneity and emotional intensity involved in the events. The experience of humour has been described as an interactive, succinct process of building tension and culminating in the release of spontaneous laughter (Lynch, 2002). Joking, play and games at work have been described as spontaneous social behaviour that is laconic by nature (Martin, 2006).

Emotional intensity exists on a continuum consisting of both positive and negative emotions. The positive emotional pole encapsulates emotions such as amusement or exhilaration and is expressed in behaviour by smiling and laughter, with the laughter increasing incrementally, dependent on the intensity of the perceived experience (Geuens & de Pelsmacker, 2002). Humour and play have been found to be common stimuli for the experience of exhilaration (Martin, 2006). Therefore, the right
hand pole of this dimension could be understood to represent succinct and emotionally intense events that produce feelings of exhilaration and result in spontaneous laughter.

In contrast, the left hand pole of the first dimension was most strongly defined by the activity of catered functions. Catered functions were defined as “occasions where you get together with work colleagues and eat and/or drink with the organisation picking up the bill”. These types of activities by their nature are usually planned and have organised elements. While there may be some degree of personal choice within the event, organisational dynamics often dictate attendance and pacing of the event. Given these events usually occur over a number of hours and are not succinct occasions, the context elicits a lower level of sustained emotional intensity. Once again this dimension can be understood in dialectical terms. The dialectical nature of the dimension would dictate that joking and laughter would occur at some points during the event, but the overall event was experienced as fun rather than just the discrete joke or interaction.

Overall, this second dimension appears to discriminate activities in terms of degree of planning involved and the experienced emotional intensity and was therefore labelled activity structure and intensity with the poles defined as spontaneous and planned. The spontaneous pole encapsulates high levels of emotional intensity combined with low levels of structure and the planned pole has lower levels of emotional intensity combined with high levels of structure.

The dimension of activity structure and intensity is reflected in a number of psychological concepts, both individual and organisational. These concepts include personality preferences for structure and organisational communication styles, and constructs of spontaneity. In the development of a spontaneity assessment inventory, it
was established that acting spontaneously can be measured on two separate continuums (Kipper & Hundal, 2005). The spontaneity continuum measured readiness to act in novel way whereas the non-spontaneous continuum represented degrees associated with routine behaviour. Spontaneous behaviour is understood as a combination of both personal energy that is available for the experience and the capacity to provide a novel response. Features of spontaneous behaviour include being open to the experience and a reduction in inhibitions. During the original development of the spontaneity scale, positive correlations were established between spontaneous behaviour and the self reported capacity for creativity and playfulness (Kellar et al., 2002). The location of play and games at the high end of activity structure and spontaneous dimension provides validity for the representation of this dimension as linked to the construct of spontaneity.

The second continuum of spontaneity representing engagement with routine (Kipper & Hundal, 2005) may also be present in the activity structure and spontaneous dimension in terms of preference for activities and levels of planning. The dimension of spontaneity versus planning as a psychological concept is explored most often in the personality literature. Without entering into the extensive literature and debate related to personality issues in psychology, Costa and McCrae’s (1987) five factor personality approach names a number of traits that are reflective of the concepts of spontaneity versus planning. Those high on the extraversion factor are described as more excitable, active and talkative, skilled in play and humour and have rapid personality tempo allowing them to behave in a more spontaneous manner. Those low on the extraversion scale are often more withdrawn, more comfortable with structured approaches (such as planned events) and seek less energetic interaction (Furnham, 2005). Clearly it is
beyond this study to link personality and preferences for fun, but it can be inferred that workers who prefer high levels of planning may well prefer fun events that are more structured and have lower levels of spontaneity. Therefore the *activity structure and spontaneous* dimension identified in this study may well be a representation of continuums of spontaneity, openness to novelty and degree of routine.

The *activity structure and intensity* dimension is also reflected in organisational contexts with organisational approaches differing from structured to more spontaneous approaches in both formal structure and interactions. Much has been written about organisational structure and communication and it is not appropriate here to cover these in detail; however, it is important to highlight the similarities in dimension 2 and current trends in organisations. McMillan (2004) noted that twentieth century organisational design principles included structured approaches to levels of authority, revered specialist knowledge and high levels of control, particularly in communication. Such organisational conditions are still a feature of many organisations and management styles today; however, new principles to address organisation complexity now focus on designs that facilitate higher levels of spontaneity in preference to control, and structure. Allen (2001) argues that for sustainability in new organisational and business climates, organisations will be required to use the principles of spontaneity that will allow them to engage in higher levels of learning and experimentation, co-operative adaptability and the development of shared values and experiences.

When documenting the induction of new teachers, Williams and Prestage (2001) noted that two different types of approaches to mentoring created different experiences for teachers. Structured collaboration assisted new teachers in the understanding of
existing processes and priorities and provided clear feedback and reviews, whereas spontaneous collaboration had a stronger focus on informal feedback and development oriented learning including innovative team teaching opportunities. These similar features raised by Allen (2001) suggest the structure - spontaneity continuum has a range of organisational functions and the structure and emotional intensity dimension in relation to having fun at work could possibly also have an organisational function. For example more planned events may provide greater avenues for relationship building, whereas spontaneous activities may well facilitate higher possibilities for creativity and innovation.

A brief review of both psychological and organisational theory provides support for the identified dimensions of contextual connection with others and structure and emotional intensity as a method of understanding the construct of fun at work.

Discussion

There has been considerable confusion in published reports in relation to the construct of fun, with the terms humour, play and fun often interspersed. It was hypothesised that while humour and play were associated with having fun, there were additional factors represented in the domain. Utilising previously identified activities nominated as fun at work from Study 1, this study focused on identifying the underlying structure of the construct. At the time the present study was conceived, no empirical research in relation to the construct of fun at work was available. However McDowell (2005) concurrently found a number of factors of fun at work in her development of a fun climate scale.
Utilising Multidimensional scaling (MDS), a number of neighbourhood clusters and two dimensions were identified in this study. The neighbourhood clusters consisted of four themed groups: (a) humour and joking, (b) informal socialising, (c) formal socialising and (d) organisational activities. As expected, humour and play were represented as a cluster in the construct of fun. The two dimensions identified were labelled *contextual connection with others* and *activity structure and intensity*.

Table 10 displays the clusters and dimensions identified in this study and factors and items from McDowell (2005). The table illustrates that while the each study labelled factors/clusters differently and placed a number of items under different headings, there were some strong commonalities and several distinct differences in the results. Both studies identified two broad themes: (a) socialising and (b) environmental/organisational context. This study labelled two clusters as social activities (formal and informal) and McDowell also identified two factors, *Socialising with co-workers* and *Celebrating* as features of fun at work. The environmental context was noted by McDowell in the factors of *Personal freedoms* and *Global fun* and would have been anticipated to be a feature of her work given the focus of her study was to develop a fun climate scale. Both this study and McDowell (2005) identified the need for a relaxed working environment (*easy going work environment; Personal Freedoms*) as a component of having fun at work and this feature of fun will explored in more detail in further studies in this research program. Additionally, the cluster of *organisational activities* identified here highlights that fun at work can also be represented by activities that are generated by the organisation and it is the organisation that creates and maintains this context similarly to *Global fun* (McDowell, 2005).
Table 10

Dimensions and factors of fun at work: Study 2 and McDowell (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of Study 2; items, identified clusters and dimensions. Clusters and dimensions are in bold</th>
<th>Items from Fun at work climate scale (McDowell, 2005). Factors identified by McDowell are in bold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Humour and Play**  
Sharing jokes and humour  
Humorous emails  
Acting silly  
Office games | Personal freedoms  
Relaxed dress code  
Personal music allowed  
Taking breaks from work  
Playing around  
Going out to lunch with co-workers |
| **Informal social activities**  
Easygoing environment  
Helping organise events  
Get togethers  
Chatting | Socialising with co-workers  
Socialising with co-workers at work  
Socialising with co-workers outside of work  
Camaraderie/friendships at work  
Sharing each others stories  
Sharing food with co-workers  
Joking with co-workers  
Celebrating  
Celebrations at work  
Office parties  
Observing birthdays and other events  
Throwing parties to recognise accomplishments  
Celebrations at work |
| **Formal social activities**  
Catered functions  
Sporting events  
Informal drinks  
Celebrations  
Social outings  
Celebrations  
Celebrate | Celebrating  
Celebrations at work  
Office parties  
Observing birthdays and other events  
Throwing parties to recognise accomplishments  
Festivities during holidays and other times  
Company provided refreshments  
Global Fun  
This is a fun place to work.  
My direct supervisor seems to value fun. My company has a fun atmosphere.  
Most people here have fun at work.  
The overall climate of the company is fun.  
My supervisor encourages fun at work. |
| **Organisational activities**  
Team building  
Workshops |  
Dimension 1: Contextual connection with others  
– social / organisational  
Dimension 2: Activity structure and intensity – spontaneous / planned |

The rationale for these two major themes of socialising and context was strongly demonstrated in the two identified dimensions. The dimension of contextual connections with others focuses on socialising at work ranging from informal social interactions to those in more formal organisational settings, suggesting that a core component and structural element of having fun is the interpersonal connection created as a result of participating in a fun activity. Poldilchak (1991) in his study focused on the sociological features of fun, described the primary function of having fun as its interactive capacity.
designed to create a human bond through socialising, providing support for the validity of this dimension in relation to having fun at work.

The dimension of *activity structure and intensity* unfolds dialogue related to both personal and organisation context and preference in relation to engaging in fun the workplace. This dimension is two fold in recognising individual preferences for different energetic types of fun and context in which events occur. Individuals may have a personal disposition to the type of fun they enjoy the most, which in turn may be influenced by the context of the event both interpersonally and organisationally. At times, a quick joke will be enjoyed and at other times a planned social or training event will be the activity of choice. A second tier of context also exists in relation to the organisational milieu in which the event occurs and the potential or intended outcome of the activity. Organisational culture and climate may influence the activity structure in relation to the types of activities that are encouraged, or potentially the desired outcome as previously discussed, such as relationship building or innovation may be the main influencing factor.

While there was a considerable amount of similarity in the findings of this study and McDowell (2005), there were also several distinct differences. Humour and play were more strongly identified in this study, as were a cluster of organisational activities that included workshops and team building. Both humour and play and teambuilding are well represented in the literature presented as anecdotal and empirical features of fun. It is argued here that the difference in results of each of these studies may be artefacts of both the focus of the original item generation and of the analytic processes used. McDowell generated items in her study with the focus on developing two scales: a fun
climate scale and a fun person scale. She provided participants in her item collection phase the following definition of having fun at work; “Fun at work means engaging in activities not specifically related to the job that are enjoyable, amusing or playful and that enhance organizational performance” (McDowell, 2005. Appendix A). Utilising the term *not specifically related to the job* may well have excluded the cluster of items related to the organisational context. In contrast, the focus of item generation in Study 1 was to map the domain with items that were both fun for people at work and not fun in order to fully map the domain. As a result of this process, a broader range of activities were noted and maintained in this current study. Further distinctions also occurred with contrasting statistical analysis. The process of factor analysis in itself removes items in order to create best fit for factors in scale development. Given McDowell’s focus on developing a climate of fun and disposition scale, McDowell deleted items related specifically to play early in her analysis process therefore removing items that may legitimately belong in the construct domain of fun at work, but necessarily as a feature of climate or disposition. While there was considerable overlap, MDS utilised in this study has appeared to provide a more fine grained analysis of the broad domain of fun at work.

The value of identifying the underlying dimensions of fun at work lay in the application to organisations. Business consultants in the past decade have been extolling the virtues of having fun at work primarily through the use of humour and play techniques (Fry, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997). Martin seems to encapsulate this theme eloquently:

Most of these presentations take the form of motivational sessions that involve humorous hands-on activities designed to loosen up the audience and overcome
their serious inhibitions, such as having them juggle scarves or balloons, wear red clown noses, balance pennies on their foreheads, or tell each other amusing personal anecdotes (Martin, 2006, p. 361).

In light of current results, indications are that the construct of fun at work is more than hats, balloons and jokes.

Results of the present study indicate that the underlying dimensional structures of fun are reflected not only in the clusters of activity types, but also in the dimensions that describe both social and contextual features of the events. This study gives support to the notion that fun at work, while encompassing humour and play, is a distinct construct. This study supports McDowell’s (2005) findings in relation to some of the characteristics required for a climate of fun at work, recognising in addition to humour and the play, the strong focus on social interactions.

Further operationalisation of the dimensions identified in this study could occur if they were used as a tool to assess organisations on their current climate and desired levels of fun. The levels of socialising already existing and their position along the organisational spontaneity continuum could be assessed. This information would provide a platform to match organisational style and desired outcomes with appropriate fun interventions rather than the blanket approach that currently exists.

The results of this study provide support for the hypothesis that the construct of fun at work is distinct from the constructs of humour and play, while still being related. Encompassing both humour and play, fun at work has a much stronger focus on socialising and environmental components than extant literature suggests and the identification of the two dimensions contextual connections with others and activity
structure and intensity assist in providing a greater understanding to operationalise the construct of having fun at work.

Results from this study will be integrated with additional studies in this research program to provide a more comprehensive description of the construct of having fun at work.
CHAPTER 6: EXPLORING THE CONTEXT AND PROCESS OF HAVING FUN AT WORK

STUDY 3

This study aims to further understanding of the construct of fun at work by extending knowledge of the unique features, characteristics and conditions of the phenomena of having fun at work. Previous research (Abramis, 1989a; Podichak, 1985&1991; McDowell, 2005; Fleming, 2005) has identified a range of theoretical propositions, characteristics and variables related to the construct of fun. Study 1 in this research program identified the domain of workplace fun activities and Study 2, the underlying dimensional structure of fun at work. Both studies noted not only the importance of understanding the activities that generate the experience of having fun, but the context in which these experiences occur. To date there is a lack of empirical data that clearly define the contextual features of, and the process of having fun at work. The objective of this study is to extend knowledge of the context in which fun at work occurs using both survey and case vignette methodology to unfold the process of having fun at work. The following four research questions will be addressed:

Research Q4: What are the contextual conditions required for fun to occur in the workplace?

Research Q5: What features contribute to the process of having fun at work?

Research Q6: What are the products or outcomes of having fun at work?

Research Q7: To what degree are humour and play represented in the reported examples of fun at work?
Existing research and hypotheses

Existing research has provided some insight into the individual and social experience of having fun. Podilchak (1985) identified three dimensions of a fun experience: an engaging activity, an open state of mind and an emotionally qualitative dimension of excitement and sociability. Podilchak (1985) argued that it is not necessarily specific activities that can be described as fun, but it is the interactive, social connection between participants that is the defining feature. He later reported the experience of fun is encompassed by participants’ high levels of engagement, conscious choice to engage in the activity, a degree of emotional absorption created by the social interaction similar to the experience of flow, and the context of momentary equality (Podilchak, 1991). The outcomes of having fun were reported as emotional excitement resulting in laughter and smiles. Podilchak argued situations were not described as fun when there were perceived or real inequalities for participants, or when individual psychological states of mind related to seriousness or being tense were carried into the activity (Podilchak, 1991).

To date only three other empirical studies have been published in relation to fun at work, McDowell (2005), Abramis (1989 a,b,c) and Fleming (2005), with each research project considering different aspects of fun at work. McDowell’s research program was focused on developing the Fun at work Climate scale and The Fun Person scale. Three factors were established for the Fun at work Climate scale; socializing with co-workers, celebrating at work and global fun. Global fun was represented by organisational climate indicators such as this is a fun place to work, my supervisor encourages fun and my company has a fun atmosphere (McDowell, 2005, p121). McDowell’s research
supported Podilchak’s argument and findings, indicating that fun is socially contextual. She added to the understanding of the construct of fun at work, reporting the experience of fun is supported by a fun organisational climate.

Abramis (1989 a,b,c) published a series of articles in relation to having fun at work. Limitations with Abramis’s research have already been discussed in chapter 2; however, his results indicated that people who were having fun at work, in contrast to those who had little fun, reported lower levels of anxiety and depression, and higher levels of motivation, creativity and capacity to meet job demands (Abramis, 1989a). He also reported that those that do want to have fun at work will go out of their way to create it, suggesting that having fun at work for some is almost an innate desire.

Fleming (2005) critically examined a workplace where fun was highly orchestrated and integrated into the organisational culture. He reported that while many participants enjoyed aspects of the fun culture, around half of the employees interviewed displayed some degree of cynicism, feeling that the imposed culture was condescending, inauthentic, lacking honesty. These findings raise the important issues in relation to the context and process of fun at work and provide a strong rationale for exploring the context of the construct in greater detail. Fleming concludes that fun should not be imposed by the organisation, but be left to staff to develop, providing an environment where choice to engage is respected.

With the aim of the present study to enhance understanding of having fun at work, it is expected the results will reflect many of the extant features as presented in previous theory and research. Overall, it is expected that having fun at work will be reported as activity based phenomenon, set in a supportive organisational climate, where
an open, positive state of mind will allow participants to be highly engaged and socially
connected. In addition, as an outcome of the fun experience, a state of levity will be
created, positively affecting a number of key organisational variables such as
management of stress and workplace relationships. Each of these phases of fun will be
decomposed and relevant hypothesis presented utilising the conceptual framework.

The 3P conceptual framework described in Chapter 1 consisting of three phases:
presage, process and product (see Figure 22: 3P conceptual framework, p.12). In brief,
the presage phase documents perceptions of organisational context in which fun occurs
(e.g., workplace climate) and the characteristics of the participant (e.g., attitudes and
frame of mind). Exploring the process of having fun at work included desire to and
purpose of having fun, entry and exit criteria for an event, the features and structure of
fun activities (based on case vignettes) and inputs such as participation levels and roles.
Finally, the product phase examined the outcomes of the reported fun event such as
transitions in mood, and perceived individual and organisational effects. The following
sections outline the relevant literature for each phase and any accompanying hypothesis,
numerically linked to the relevant research question.

Presage

The presage phase documents perceptions of organisational context in which fun
occurs and the characteristics of the participant including the overall desire to have fun.
The presage phase will address research question 4: What are the contextual conditions
required for fun to occur in the workplace?
Context for fun at work

Both Podilchak (1991) and McDowell (2005) argue the importance of recognising the context or climate required in order for fun to occur with Podilchak reporting the context of fun needs to be free of regimentation or restrictions. In addition, McDowell reported 3 factors encouraged a climate of fun at work; socializing with co-workers, celebrating at work and global fun. The global fun factor reported by McDowell included items such as supervisor encouragement and valuing of fun, and the organisation being perceived as a fun place to work. Based on previous research it is hypothesised the organisational climate for fun will have several features;

Hypothesis 4a; Participants will report fun occurring in a non-regimented, relaxed environment, free of imposed restrictions.
Hypothesis 4b; Participants will report conditions that create fun at work will include a climate that encourages social interaction and celebration, supervisor/management condoning of fun, and the organisation culture supporting the notion of having fun.
Hypothesis 4c; There will be a negative association between frequency of reported fun, and the level of formal organisational structures such as policies, procedures and communication structures.

Personal characteristics

The question ‘Do people want to have fun at work?’ provides a foundation for this research program. If indeed having fun at work is not an important issue to employees and employers alike, then measuring its value as a workplace intervention has less validity. To date, there appears to be little data on attitudes to having fun at work, although a positive response is assumed, particularly in anecdotal literature (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Weinstein, 1996). SHRM (2002) in their survey of HR managers asked several questions in relation to attitudes toward fun in the
workplace. Only 1% of respondents (N=574) nominated that employees should never have the opportunity to experience fun in the workplace, with the balance suggesting fun should happen occasionally (21%), frequently (59%) and very often (19%). They also reported that 75% of respondents indicated that the level of fun in their organisation is less than what they think it should be. Based on these results and anecdotal literature the following hypothesis was developed;

Hypothesis 4d: Participants will report moderate to high levels of desire to have fun at work.

McDowell (2005) found a significant difference between those who were under 35 years of age and were not in management roles, and the balance of her sample in relation to scores on the Fun at Work Climate scale, with younger non-managers rating the scale more highly. She suggested these results indicate that those in non-career positions may gain more from a fun environment than those in management positions, who perhaps get more satisfaction from the tasks of their jobs. It is anticipated, based on McDowell (2005);

Hypothesis 4e: Those in non-supervisory roles will describe the culture of their workplace as encouraging fun to a greater extent, than those in management roles.

When exploring the personal characteristics required of a participant to engage in fun at work, Podilchak (1985) argues a fun experience encompasses a state of mind that is able to conceptualise an activity as playful, enjoying or amusing. McDowell (2005) also used the terms playful, enjoyable and amusing in her definition of fun at work. Podilchak (1991) reports situations are less likely to be experienced as fun when
psychological states of mind related to being serious or uptight are carried into the activity. Therefore it is hypothesised that;

Hypothesis 4f; Participants will report pre-existing positive states of mind represented by low levels of seriousness, tension and anxiety.

Abramis (1989a) reported participants who have high levels of desire for fun at work will concurrently go out of their way to make fun happen at work. Therefore, the following hypothesis will be addressed:

Hypothesis 4g; Participants who report high levels of desire to have fun at work, will report high levels of intention to make fun happen.

*Process*

While the overall occurrence of having fun at work is described in the 3P conceptual framework, this section focuses less on the context in which fun occurs and more on the evolution of the process. A process can be deconstructed to include entry criteria, inputs required for the process to evolve, exit criteria, roles and any special considerations that are pertinent to the process at hand (DiBasio, 1999). This section addresses research Q 5; *What features contribute to the process of having fun at work?*

*Entry criteria*

Podilchak (1985) argues there are at least two entry criteria required for participants to regard an event as fun. He states that a relaxed state of mind is required to engage in a fun event as discussed in relation to personal characteristics. In addition, he argues fun only occurs when there is an existing social setting that allows the actor the freedom of conscious choice to participate in the event, in contrast to feeling coerced.
The choice to participate in fun at work was also raised by Fleming (2005) in his study of cynicism related to fun at work, reporting that some participants felt coerced into participating in the events or risked exclusion and ridicule. Consequently it is expected that;

Hypothesis 5a; When reporting case vignettes participants will report low levels of experienced coercion.

Structure of activities

Study 1 in this research program identified 15 activities that were considered fun for everyone, and these were then located in Study 2 in five neighbourhood clusters; humour and play, informal socialising, formal socialising and organisational activities. Study 1 also identified activities that are were fun for some participants, but not all, including disparaging types of humour, such as practical jokes and impersonating other staff. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed;

Hypothesis 5b; The majority of participants will report examples of fun activities in the case vignettes that are consistent with the 15 activities identified in Study 1, with the addition of examples of disparaging humour.

In order to more fully understand the connection between the underlying dimensions of fun activities and the process of fun, the reported case vignettes will be explored using the dimensions established in Study 2 of this research program; contextual connection with others and structure and emotional intensity. It is anticipated that different types of dimensional activities will have different features and influences.

One of the underlying dimensions of fun activities established in Study 2 was the structure and emotional intensity dimension, with spontaneity as a pole. Spontaneity has been found to have two distinct continuums: a spontaneity continuum measuring
readiness to act in novel way and a non-spontaneous continuum representing routine behaviour (Kipper & Hundal, 2005). In the present context it is argued that the dimension identified in Study 2 is more strongly representative of the spontaneous continuum rather than the non-spontaneous continuum, given incidences of fun at work by nature would not usually be considered routine work behaviour. Kipper and Hundal (2005) argue features of spontaneous behaviour include both being open to the experience and a reduction in inhibitions, encapsulating emotions such as amusement or exhilaration. The experience of exhilaration is expressed by smiling and laughter, with the laughter increasing incrementally, dependent on the intensity of the perceived experience (Geuens & de Pelsmacker, 2002). Humour and play have been found to be common stimulus for the experience of exhilaration (Martin, 2006) and positive correlations were established between spontaneous behaviour and the self reported capacity for creativity and playfulness (Kellar, Treadwell, Kumar & Leach, 2002). Therefore it is anticipated that:

Hypothesis 5c; Events described as spontaneous, in contrast to planned, will report higher degrees of contribution of humour and/or play, creative frame of mind, and reported amusement and laughter.

Contextual connection with others was the second identified structural dimension of having fun at work in Study 2. This dimension is reflective of the context in which the fun occurs and in this study it is argued that the context will influence a number of interpersonal and process variables. Social exchange theory suggests exchanges that occur during an event will be particularly susceptible to the perceptions of the parties on the value of the transaction, and if one does not value the event, it is unlikely to hold any currency value (Jordan, Field & Armenakis, 2002). Cole et al.
(2002) suggest that each employee will have “varying levels of intrinsic, extrinsic, and affiliation needs that they hope to fulfil as a result of their social exchange relationships” (p. 151). Based on social exchange theory it is argued that being involved in a fun event will have a range of transactions of varying values, and the type of event such as social or organisational may influence the primary currency utilised (e.g., team inclusion versus friendship). Workplace friendships are defined by regular contact over time (Jaina & Tyson, 2004) with the deepening of workplace friendships being influenced by factors such as proximity, sharing common experiences and extra-organisational socialising (Sias & Cahill, 1998). Relationships within teams however, have slightly different dynamics, whether described in cognitive or affective terms, are reflexive interactions that through familiarity and support, build trust, loyalty and respect between individuals. Schultz (1994) argues that the human factors of teams such as inclusion, openness, and acceptance contribute to self-efficacy of each member of a team, and thereby the team’s success. However, participation in teamwork is not always voluntary and as such, participation in team fun events may not always suit each individual. It is anticipated that the difference between the socially contextual events and organisationally contextual events will be participants reporting different interpersonal dynamics, values and outcome features occurring as a result of social or organisational events. The following outlines several suggested hypotheses;
Hypothesis 5d; Socially contextual events will report shared humour, personal friendships and playful mucking around as the key features more frequently than events described in organisational contexts.

Hypothesis 5e; Events that are organisationally contextualised will have features described such as inclusion, building relationships and a sense of team being more frequently than socially contextualised events.

Hypothesis 5f; Participants reporting organisationally contextual events will report higher levels of participatory observation and higher levels of coercion compared to social occasions.

An additional focus of the structure of activities was to explore the degree in which humour and playfulness were evident in the case vignettes, providing further data to aid in construct definition and addressing research question 7; To what degree are humour and play/playfulness represented in the reported examples of fun at work?

Humour has been prescribed as a common vehicle in contributing to the experience of having fun at work (Martin et al., 2004; Tracy et al., 2006), and humour is therefore expected to be evident in many of the case vignettes, but not necessarily all. In addition, Podilchak (1985) argues fun, by definition, is equal to other processes where power differentials are negated. Applying this theory in relation to the use of humour, it is expected that participants will describe their experience as primarily devoid of destructive or gallows humour where power is exercised in the form of having fun at someone else’s expense.

Hypothesis 7a; Humour will be reported to a high degree in some case vignettes, but will not be reported even to a moderate degree, in other events.

Hypothesis 7b; Having fun at someone else’s expense will be reported to a minimal degree in case vignettes.

While Podilchak (1991) reported fun can at times be playful, it is not necessarily so. McDowell (2005) identified several playful activities when developing items for her Fun at Work Climate scale; however, they were removed when consolidating the factors...
for the scale, concluding they were not vital ingredients for a fun climate. Both of these researchers suggest, therefore, that while fun may have elements of play, play like humour, will be identified as a component in some cases, rather than a feature in all.

Research by both Abramis (1990) and Maxwell et al. (2005) reports play at work has two identified dimensions: fun-loving/play as a game that focuses on challenges, is exciting, at times has rules that are developed during the event; and goofing around/frivolous play that is silly, flippant, childlike or acting out of character. It is the goofing around play that appears to be most often interspersed with the construct of fun.

Hypothesis 7c; Features of play will be recorded at a high level for some activities, but not even to a moderate degree, for other activities.
Hypothesis 7d; Both fun-loving and frivolous play will be represented in the play based case examples, with frivolous types of play more highly represented.

Inputs

Clear inputs into the process of having fun at work have not been established in any empirical research to date; however, in this present context it is argued that several variables contribute to the process of having fun including the role of being a participant rather than an observer, the experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and social connections that are reflexive in nature.

In any process there are a range of roles that can be identified. In related constructs such as humour or play, the role of the participant is clearer than it appears to be for fun events. For example, in the experience of humour, one can either be the joker/comedian, or a recipient of the humorous message. During play, the primary role is that of an active participant in the recreation of an altered reality. Podilchak (1985)
argued that fun was partially defined by the experience of participating in an activity rather than being an observer, therefore it is anticipated that;

Hypothesis 5g; Respondents will report high levels of contribution to the fun event reported in their case vignette.

Abramis (1990) suggested that play in the workplace had strong features of flow and Podilchak (1991) also suggested the experience of flow appeared to be a component of a fun. Therefore it is anticipated that;

Hypothesis 5h; Participants will identify the experience of being lost in the moment, therefore reporting a moderate to high degree of flow.

The social component of having fun at work was established by McDowell (2005) identifying socialising and celebrating as factors of a fun work climate. Podilchak (1991) describes fun as an interactive process that creates reciprocity and an affective attachment to others and he argues that it is this social feature, rather than the activity per say, that defines the event as fun. It is therefore hypothesised that;

Hypothesis 5i; Participants will report socially connecting with others as a main qualitative feature of the reported fun event.

Exit criteria

For a process to end there are often precipitating factors that provide the exit criteria for the process to cease. No research or anecdotal accounts have documented any information relating to the reasons fun events end; however, SHRM (2002) report the most frequent reason fun is not experienced in the workplace is due to time constraints. During fun events it is anticipated the exit criteria will be a combination of workplace variables and the event reaching a natural conclusion;
Hypothesis 5j: Participants will report fun events ending primarily due to time constraints or the natural end of the social event.

Products

Products of a process include the outcomes as a result of the process occurring. In this present context the measuring of outcomes of fun at work will encompasses both positive and negative outcomes, specific outcomes related to nominated activity types, and personal and organisational products, addressing research question 7: To what degree are humour and play represented in the reported examples of fun at work?

Overwhelmingly anecdotal literature (Abramis, 1990; Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; SHRM, 2002; Weinstein, 1996) and some empirical literature (McDowell, 2005) report positive outcomes of the experience of having fun at work. At a rudimentary level, outcomes of having fun result in amusement and laughter (Podilchak, 1991). Gostick and Christopher have coined this as the levity effect, indicating that there is a positive shift in mood for participants as a result of having fun at work. Therefore, it is expected that:

Hypothesis 6a; Participants will overwhelmingly report there were positive outcomes of having fun at work.
Hypothesis 6b; Participants will report high levels of amusement and laughter as outcomes of their fun example.
Hypothesis 6c; Participants will report a positive shift in frame of mind from prior, to post the fun event.
Hypothesis 6d; Participants will report that, as an effect of having fun at work, their mood improves in a positive direction.
Anecdotal personal outcomes in relation to having fun at work include relief from day to day seriousness, managing stress, increased effectiveness and improved relationships (Hemsath & Yerkes; 1997; Weinstein, 1996; Lundin & Christensen, 2000). Empirical research has found positive associations between having fun at work and reported job satisfaction (Abramis, 1989 a), organisational commitment, and negative associations with employee’s intention to leave (McDowell, 2005). At an organisational level, anecdotal reports suggest having fun at work has been utilised to obtain outcomes such as effective team building, increased worker cooperation, improved customer service, building morale, greater employee retention, engagement and improved profits. While the relationship between fun and a number of these organisational constructs will be more fully explored in Study 4 of this research program, it is expected in this process study that:

Hypothesis 6e; Participants will report relationships with others improve as an effect of having fun at work.
Hypothesis 6f; A negative association will be found between participants who report high frequencies of fun and reported job stress.
Hypothesis 6g; A positive association will be found between participants who report high frequencies of fun and reported job enjoyment.
Hypothesis 6h; Respondents will report that some of the effects of having fun at work include assisting stress management and working more effectively.

Given the outcomes of having fun argued in this research program include laughter, amusement and positive mood shifts, it is expected that very few negative outcomes or constraints would be reported in relation to the nominated fun events. Fun events that include disparaging features such as practical jokes are expected to have negative outcomes for those that are targeted or excluded; however, it is unlikely that they will be reported in the case vignettes given these are respondents’ own examples of
when they had the most fun. It is anticipated, given Fleming’s study (2005), some participants may have felt coerced into participating in an organisational event, even if they subsequently had a lot of fun at the event. SHRM (2002) reported the three most common personal issues related to managerial resistance to employees having fun included fears of feeling silly, lack of control and fears of offending someone and these may be able to be generalised to personal constraints or negative outcomes. It is therefore hypothesised that;

Hypothesis 6i; Very few negative outcomes or consequences will be reported as products of the fun event.
Hypothesis 6j; Negative outcomes of the case examples most frequently reported will be feeling coerced into organisational events, personal discomfort such as being asked to act in a manner outside one’s usual role and contextual issues such as disrupting others.

Research Questions

This study is seeking to answer the following research questions:

Research Q4: What are the contextual conditions required for fun to occur in the workplace?

Hypothesis 4a; Participants will report fun occurring in a non-regimented, relaxed environment, free of imposed restrictions.
Hypothesis 4b; Participants will report conditions that create fun at work will include a climate that encourages social interaction and celebration, supervisor/management condoning of fun, and the organisation culture supporting the notion of having fun.
Hypothesis 4c; There will be a negative association between frequency of reported fun, and the level of formal organisational structures such as policies, procedures and communication structures.
Hypothesis 4d: Participants will report moderate to high levels of desire to have fun at work.
Hypothesis 4e: Those in non-supervisory roles will describe the culture of their workplace as encouraging fun to a greater extent, than those in management roles.
Hypothesis 4f: Participants will report pre-existing positive states of mind represented by low levels of seriousness, tension and anxiety.
Hypothesis 4g; Participants who report high levels of desire to have fun at work, will report high levels of intention to make fun happen.

Research Q5: What features contribute to the process of having fun at work?

Hypothesis 5a; When reporting case vignettes, participants will report low levels of experienced coercion.

Hypothesis 5b; The majority of participants will report examples of fun activities in the case vignettes that are consistent with the 15 activities identified in Study 1, with the addition of examples of disparaging humour.

Hypothesis 5c; Events described as spontaneous, in contrast to planned, will report higher degrees of contribution of humour and/or play, creative frame of mind, and reported amusement and laughter.

Hypothesis 5d; Socially contextual events will report shared humour, personal friendships and playful mucking around as the key features more frequently than events described in organisational contexts.

Hypothesis 5e; Events that are organisationally contextualised will have features described such as inclusion, building relationships and a sense of team being more frequently than socially contextualised events.

Hypothesis 5f; Participants reporting organisationally contextual events will report higher levels of participatory observation and higher levels of coercion compared to social occasions.

Hypothesis 5g; Respondents will report high levels of contribution to the fun event reported in their case vignette.

Hypothesis 5h; Participants will identify the experience of being lost in the moment, therefore reporting a moderate to high degree of flow.

Hypothesis 5i; Participants will report socially connecting with others as a main qualitative feature of the reported fun event.

Hypothesis 5j; Participants will report fun events ending primarily due to time constraints or the natural end of the social event.

Research Q6: What are the products or outcomes of having fun at work?

Hypothesis 6a; Participants will overwhelmingly report there were positive outcomes of having fun at work.

Hypothesis 6b; Participants will report high levels of amusement and laughter as outcomes of their fun example.

Hypothesis 6c; Participants will report a positive shift in frame of mind from prior, to post the fun event.

Hypothesis 6d; Participants will report that, as an effect of having fun at work, their mood improves in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 6e; Participants will report relationships with others improve as an effect of having fun at work.

Hypothesis 6f; A negative association will be found between participants who report high frequencies of fun and reported job stress.
Hypothesis 6g; A positive association will be found between participants who report high frequencies of fun and reported job enjoyment.

Hypothesis 6h; Respondents will report that some of the effects of having fun at work include assisting stress management and working more effectively.

Hypothesis 6i; Very few negative outcomes or consequences will be reported as products of the fun event.

Hypothesis 6j; Negative outcomes of the case examples most frequently reported will be feeling coerced into organisational events, personal discomfort such as being asked to act in a manner outside one’s usual role and contextual issues such as disrupting others.

Research Q7: To what degree are humour and play represented in the reported examples of fun at work?

Hypothesis 7a; Humour will be reported to a high degree in some case vignettes, but will not be reported even to a moderate degree, in other events.

Hypothesis 7b; Having fun at someone else’s expense will be reported to a minimal degree in case vignettes.

Hypothesis 7c; Features of play will be recorded at a high level for some activities, but not even to a moderate degree, for other activities.

Hypothesis 7d; Both fun-loving and frivolous play will be represented in the play based case examples, with frivolous types of play more highly represented.

Method

Data for this study were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methodology in the form of a general survey instrument and a structured case vignette. The foundation rationale for this approach was informed by the scarcity of information available in relation to fun in general, and having fun at work specifically. The theoretical rationale for choosing this methodology was based on the degree to which the experience of participants in relation to fun at work could be described and reported (Neuman, 1991) in order to respond to the nominated research questions. Combining both qualitative and quantitative questions allows the development of the unknown experience to be identified (Yin, 2003), within a structure of existing knowledge and
theory. An alternative to survey methodology and structured case vignettes would have been to develop detailed case studies. Case study methodology at this point in the evolution of understanding the construct, while providing substantial detail, would not have provided the breadth of data required to further contribute to construct development and differentiation. In addition, the nomination of activities in this study could also be used for triangulation purposes, comparing the data to Study 1 and Study 4 (Saunders et al., 2007).

A specific data collection instrument was developed for this study and focused on three associated areas of the fun experience. Initially, general questions eliciting information related to attitudes regarding fun at work, perceptions of workplace culture, and particular organisational variables were explored. This was followed by a case vignette that gathered structured, yet detailed, information relating to the process of fun at work in a specific case example. Finally, the survey concluded with questions relating to general perceptions of the effects of fun at work.

Participants

A total of 142 human service workers completed Part B of the Fun at work questionnaire; however, due to missing data 136 complete responses were collected providing the sample for this study. The sample consisted of thirty two males (M age: 40.4 years, SD: 9.61 years) and one hundred and four females (M age: 40.7 years, SD: 10.5 years) working in both government (55%), community based (41%) and private (4%) organisational settings. Workers were involved in a range of occupations in the human service field including librarians, telephone counsellors, managers, psychologists,
receptionists, administration workers, nurses and HR professionals. Eighty one (59.6%) of participants were not responsible for other staff, while fifty-five participants (40.4%) had responsibility for other staff ranging from 1 person to 25+. Ninety percent of participants were from Queensland and the remainder of the group were from New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. The majority of the participants were educated at degree level or higher (62%) and identified themselves as coming from an Australian heritage (90%).

Instrument

The instrument for this study was based on existing knowledge and theory published at the time and developed to respond to the research questions nominated in this study. Briefly, to reiterate known theory, Podlichak (1985) developed a qualitative social theory of fun suggesting the dimensions of fun are represented by being freely engaged in an amusing activity, in a playful state of mind that has a qualitative dimension of amusement and reciprocal affective attachment to others. He argued three conditions facilitate fun: being a participant, being spontaneous, and not being stressed. The survey was also influenced by humour and play research that interchanged or integrated the construct of fun (Abramis, 1990; DesCamp and Thomas, 1993; Meyer, 1997; Thornson and Powell, 1993; Smeltzer & Leap, 1988; Wanzer & Booth-Butterfield, 1999). Finally, the format for the questionnaire was developed to test perceptions related to many of the aspersions raised in the anecdotal literature, primarily on the perceived outcomes of having fun. This information provided the foundation for the instrument with a protocol developed to guide participant’s descriptions of the context of fun at
work, features and processes involved in relation to nominated examples and perceptions of the general effects of fun on specifically identified workplace variables.

To explore contextual conditions, participants were asked to read and rate their perceptions utilising a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very important) in relation to items describing their workplace context, their experience of having fun at work and their experience of their own job. Two items focused on general workplace context (e.g., The culture of my workplace encourages me to have fun), one item on the frequency of fun in their environment and another item on the level of formal policies and procedures. Three items were used to rate participant’s experience of having fun (e.g., Being able to have fun at work is really important to me) and three items were used to assess participants experience of their own job and related stress levels (e.g., I would described my job as very stressful). Finally participants were asked utilising an open question, to nominate the conditions they perceived as important in order to have fun at work.

In order to deconstruct the process of having fun at work, a structured case vignette was developed requiring participants to nominate an example where they had fun at work in the past year. A 12 month time frame was requested to obtain a broad sample of fun activities, rather than collecting examples limited to unique occasions and in order to more fully represent the domain of activities that are generally considered fun at work on a day to day basis. To provide contextual details and identify the activity, participants were directed to describe the experience of having fun at work providing enough detail for someone who was not there to understand the focus of the event,
including location, other participants and enough details of the event to outline why the incident was fun for them.

Several process features of fun were identified by Podilchak (1985), including variables such as flow, coercion contribution, frame of mind, and laughter and amusement. Using a 7 point Likert-type scale perceived levels of coercion, contribution and flow were rated by participants. The experience of flow was measured by asking to what extent the participant felt lost in the moment, enjoying themselves and not thinking about what would happen next. Frame of mind prior to the event was captured in a detailed question consisting of eight matched pairs using terms based on extant literature such as serious-playful and detached-engaged. These pairs were scored on a 10 point Likert-type scale with one of the paired terms at each pole. A 10 point scale was used, rather than a 7 point scale to take into account smaller increments in shift of frame of mind. Four of the eight paired items were reversed in order to address agreement acquiescence (Rogelberg, 2002). Post event frame of mind was measured utilising the same group of paired sample questions and asking participants how they felt after the event. Levels of laughter and amusement during the event were measured on a Likert scale. An open question was provided to identify the three main perceived features of the event.

A series of questions relating to humour and play as reflected in the literature were also included in the case vignette survey. The frequency of humour in each case vignette was measured both in two separate items; one measuring perceptions of contribution of general humour such as jokes, and secondly perceptions of power use (e.g., We had fun at someone else’s expense). In order to measure the contribution of
play/playfulness to the fun construct, participants were asked a range of 4 questions representative of play in the literature at the time the instrument was developed representing three areas of play. Play at work as imaginative, non-serious and out of character/altered reality as described by Glynn & Webster (1992) and Colarusso (1993) (e.g., As part of the event I acted in a frivolous or fanciful manner which I would consider as out of character from my usual work role), goofing around (mucking around- Australian colloquial) (e.g., Described the level of silliness and mucking around that happened during the incident) and finally play as a game, where the rules are developed as the play progresses (Abramis, 1990) (e.g., To what extent did you make up the event as it went along, with others contributing and sharing the understanding about what would happen next?).

The products or outcomes of fun were measured both within the case vignette and in the survey section of perceived effects of having fun at work. For the case vignette, positive and negative perceived outcomes were recorded in open questions. A further open question requested nomination of hindrances and constraints to the described event. The instrument concluded with seven items measuring perceived effects of fun at work based on select areas of existing literature. Participants were instructed to respond to the items describing how fun at work effects them on a 7 point Likert-type scale 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot). One item reflected the effect of having fun on the participants mood, and two items related to workplace relationships (e.g., I feel like I am part of a team when I have fun at work). Two items were used to assess perceptions relating to the impact of fun on managing stress (e.g., Having fun at work helps me deal with stress) and one item measured fun and perceived job effectiveness.
Procedure

The study consisted of the same sample of Australian human services workers that participated in Study 1 of this research program. Human service workers were chosen as they most closely represented the descriptions of the workplaces in popular literature, in contrast to manufacturing or construction organisations. The sample was recruited employing two primary methods: organisational recruitment and convenience sampling with recruitment details outlined in study 1. Participants were informed the purpose of this study was to contribute to further defining what it means when we talk about having fun at work and how fun at work affects them personally. Participants received either an emailed copy of the questionnaire or a paper copy. The questionnaire was returned either in person or by email/post. In total, 79 participants (56%) completed the questionnaire online with the balance of participants completing the paper based version.

Results

Structure of analysis

While the four research questions are the main focus of this study, it also seemed prudent to utilise the dimensions identified in Study 2 in order to explore the impact of different types of fun on presage, process and products. As such, the four dimensional poles identified in Study 2 using the MDS analysis of the domain of fun activities were used as a coding schema in this study. While acknowledging each dimension was dialectical in nature, the case vignettes were categorised based on the poles of each
dimension. This categorisation process elicited four categories: organisational/spontaneous (OS), social/spontaneous (SS), organisational/planned (OP) and social/planned (SP) and is discussed more fully in the following section.

Electronic data were collected and stored in Microsoft Access data bases. These data were then transferred with the analysis performed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 14.5. Missing data appeared to be infrequent and a random occurrence; however, where there was missing data these points were replaced by an individual means score. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest that in the absence of other information, the mean is the best approximation of the value of a variable. Analysis exploring gender and supervisory status using independent samples t-tests and ANOVA’s where appropriate were applied and reported where group differences were found to be statistically significant.

**Dimensional allocation of case examples**

A coding schema was developed in relation to each pole of the two dimensions identified in Study 2 as represented in Table 11. Because of the dialectical nature of the dimensions, several stages were used in the coding. Two raters (the researcher and an assistant) coded a random sample of 23 responses with an inter-rater agreement (Cohen, 1988) of .96 achieved on the spontaneity dimension and .91 on the organisational focus dimension. The discrepancies were discussed and were related to the dimensions’ dialectical nature. An example of a discrepancy was whether a special pizza lunch when the bosses were away for the day was more planned (it would have taken some organisation) or more spontaneous because managers were unexpectedly away. It was
decided that for the spontaneity dimension, the results of question 6 from the questionnaire which asked participants whether they regarded their example as more spontaneous or planned prior to the event, would be the deciding criterion.

Table 11

*Coding criteria for case vignettes using dimensional structure from Study 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding Criteria – case vignettes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension <em>Structure and emotional intensity</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poles: <em>Spontaneity / Planned</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Spontaneous</strong> - High energy, spontaneous interactions, high emotional intensity ,eg Telling jokes, acting out of character, playfulness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Planned</strong> - Low key activity, planned event, low level energy/input required. ,eg catered function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension <em>Contextual connection with others</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poles: <em>Organisational / Social</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Organisational</strong> - Activity Primarily a bi-product of a work task, team building or professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Social</strong> - Primarily social focus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the organisation/social focus dimension the discrepancy was also a dialectical one. For example, playing a joke on a colleague over lunch by impersonating the boss during a phone call could be either organisational in light of workplace roles, or social because it occurred at lunch time. In this example, the participant’s language “at work playing a joke” as the first descriptor of the event, indicated that the participant perceived this activity as part of their workplace day and was organisationally embedded,
rather than the lunch being the event. Hence, the order of information and language became the primary criterion for the categorisation in the organisational/social dimension. Based on the coding criteria each example was then allocated into one of four categories: organisational/spontaneous (OS), social/spontaneous (SS), organisational/planned (OP) and social/planned (SP). Table 12 provides frequencies of nominations for each category, descriptive statistics for the sample. Table 13 provides a selection of examples that were coded in each category.

Table 12

*Dimensional activity category as reported in case vignette; Frequency of gender and supervisory status.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organisational/ Spontaneous(OS)</th>
<th>Social/ Spontaneous(SS)</th>
<th>Organisational/ Planned(OP)</th>
<th>Social/ Planned(SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Supervisor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-supervisor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Supervisor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-supervisor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13

Examples of nominated fun activities allocated to each dimensional category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational/Spontaneous (OS)</th>
<th>Social/Spontaneous (SS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Energisers during work day/meetings</td>
<td>• Christmas party playing lawn bowls and CEO was hopeless player and everyone laughing at him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jumping into a swimming in pool at team building day</td>
<td>• Crazy whist card game at lunch time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funny caller</td>
<td>• Running up the down escalator on a night out with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘in joke’ with colleague re computer problem</td>
<td>• Phone call from ex wife discussed with colleagues over lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funny email about stress</td>
<td>• Before work gossiping and catching up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dance of triumph after hearing positive news</td>
<td>• Friday night drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Playing on escalator while setting up a work display</td>
<td>• Social lunch with a contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eating and gossiping during a boring mail out</td>
<td>• Colleagues redundancy party- funny award presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Story relayed from a phone call</td>
<td>• Having lunch and shopping with a co-worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational/Planned (OP)</th>
<th>Social/Planned (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pass bunch of flowers around at beginning of year meeting and talked about plans for the year</td>
<td>• State of origin morning tea – come in your true colours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team review day – casual dress with games</td>
<td>• Christmas party with skits for each team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sending email cards as part of internet training</td>
<td>• Guess who the baby is competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team put on music while doing a boring job</td>
<td>• Lunch of pizzas ordered in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Swapping unpleasant job with another for a joke</td>
<td>• Friday drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Colleagues making prank call to another colleague while on the help desk</td>
<td>• Wine launch with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff presentation to CEO themed on wizard of OZ</td>
<td>• Lunch at colleagues house to celebrate birth of a baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Themed (Roy &amp; Hg) staff meeting</td>
<td>• Corporate weekend away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Happy new year theme at staff meeting</td>
<td>• Celebratory catered breakfast with other libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Going away party for colleague – presented with a book of memories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context and process of having fun applying the 3P conceptual framework

Presage

Research Q 4: What are the contextual conditions required for fun to occur in the workplace?

Hypothesis 4a; Participants will report fun occurring in a non-regimented, relaxed environment, free of imposed restrictions.
Hypothesis 4b; Participants will report conditions that create fun at work will include a climate that encourages social interaction and celebration, supervisor/management condoning of fun, and the organisation culture supporting the notion of having fun.

As part of exploring the organisational context of having fun at work, participants were asked to nominate the conditions they felt needed to be present for a fun event to evolve. Using thematic analysis (Owen, 1984), the researcher (a psychologist) and an assistant (a sociologist) grouped responses utilising common sense logic to identify emergent themes. The four most common conditions of having fun at work were, in ranked order: supportive management, supportive colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non-stressed working environment supporting both Hypothesis 7d and 4c. Participants noted that the support/acceptance/participation of management in creating and maintaining a culture that fun could occur in, was vital. The participation, and positive frame of mind, of colleagues was also seen as important using descriptions such as simpatico, connection, compatibility, happy, easygoing, and common sense of humour. The evidence of positive team dynamics such as trust, non-judgemental attitudes, respect and cooperation were also identified as important conditions. Finally, the general working environment was seen as an important element in creating conditions for fun, with having a relaxed atmosphere most commonly noted. Additional
environmental issues were having acceptable time frames for tasks, some down time, and flexible work programs.

Hypothesis 4c: There will be a negative association between frequency of reported fun, and the level of formal organisational structures such as policies, procedures and communication structures.

The relationship between *In general I have fun at work* and *To what extent does your workplace have formal policies, procedures and communication structures?* was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Results showed a small positive non significant correlation between these two variables \( r=0.086, n=136, p<.05 \) indicating little relationship between frequency of fun and formal policies for this sample.

Hypothesis 4d: Participants will report moderate to high levels of desire to have fun at work.

Participants reported the importance of being able to have fun at work as very high (*Scale 1=not all, 7=a lot*; \( M=6.07, SD=1.02 \)) supporting Hypothesis 4d, that being able to have fun at work was important to this group of employees. Participants described moderately high levels of participating in having fun at work \( (M=4.98, SD=1.25) \). Independent samples t-tests established that there were no significant differences between males and females or supervisors and non-supervisors in relation to any either of these questions. Results suggest, however, that males in non-supervisory positions \( (M=6.41, SD=0.79) \) placed the highest emphasis on the importance of having fun at work,
with both genders in non-supervisory positions reporting the highest levels of participating in having fun at work (see Table 14).

Table 14

*Mean reported ratings of contextual questions in relation to having fun at work displayed by gender and supervisory status.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual item</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to have fun at work is really</td>
<td>35 (25%)</td>
<td>107 (75%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important to me</td>
<td>M=6.08</td>
<td>M=6.00</td>
<td>M=6.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD=0.99</td>
<td>SD= 0.99</td>
<td>SD= 1.00</td>
<td>SD= 1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general I have fun at work</td>
<td>M=4.30</td>
<td>M=4.43</td>
<td>M=4.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD=1.29</td>
<td>SD= 1.29</td>
<td>SD= 1.24</td>
<td>SD= 1.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The culture of my workplace encourages</td>
<td>M=4.22</td>
<td>M=4.12</td>
<td>M=4.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me to have fun...</td>
<td>SD=1.44</td>
<td>SD=1.62</td>
<td>SD= 1.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 4e: Those in non-supervisory roles will describe the culture of their workplace as encouraging fun to a greater extent, than those in management roles.

Quantitatively, participants reported the culture of their workplaces encouraged fun to occur to a moderate degree (M =4.29, SD =1.56). Independent samples t-tests indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between gender or supervisory status in relation to reported levels of workplace culture encouraging fun (see Table 14). McDowell (2005) reported a statistically significant difference between managers and non-managers, with non-managers reporting their workplace culture as more encouraging of fun than do managers. With the mean of non-supervisors higher
than those of supervisors in relation to the perception of culture (supervisors; $M=4.15$, $SD=1.56$, non-supervisors; $M=4.48$, $SD=1.68$) they did not reach any significant level, therefore not supporting McDowell’s findings.

**Personal characteristics**

Hypothesis 4f; Participants will report pre-existing positive states of mind represented by low levels of seriousness, tension and anxiety.

It was hypothesised that participants would need to feel personally ready to engage in the fun event by having a positive frame of mind that was not serious or uptight to any great extent. Participants were asked to complete eight items consisting of paired samples (e.g., mischievous = 1, conservative =2) rating their frame of mind prior to the reported fun event. Results from case vignettes support Hypothesis 4f with participants reporting a happy, playful, relaxed state of mind prior to the fun event more often than an unhappy, serious, stressed state of mind (See Table 15). Overall the highest ratings were reported in relation to the word pair *happy vs unhappy* (*Scale 1=happy, 10=unhappy; $M=7.25$, $SD=2.28$) and *engaged vs detached* (*Scale 1=detached, 10=engaged; $M=7.06$, $SD=2.37$*). Independent samples t-tests indicated that there were no significant differences in gender or supervisory status in reported prior frame of mind ratings. The standard deviations of approximately 2.50 indicate that there was quite a degree of variance between individuals in relation to their pre-existing frame of mind, suggesting that while a happy, relaxed, engaged state of mind is more common, it may not necessarily be a prerequisite for having fun at work.
Table 15

Reported frame of mind prior to nominated fun event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame of mind</th>
<th>Prior to event</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mischievous vs. conservative</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playful vs. serious</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed vs. stressed</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative vs. structured</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untroubled vs. tense</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carefree vs. anxious</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy vs. unhappy</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged vs. detached</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1 = mischievous, 10 = conservative etc.

An additional hypothesis tested in this study was that the features and context of fun events may vary according to the type of reported activity. A series of separated one-way ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and each frame of mind item rating as the dependent variable to explore if any were differences between the activity categories in relation to reported prior frame of mind. Only one frame of mind pairing item, engaged vs detached reached statistical significance in relation to the activity categories ($p<.05$ [$F(3,132)=2.81$, $p=.042$]) with a medium effect size ($\eta^2 = .06$). Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the reported mean scores for OP ($M=9.1$, $SD=1.06$) and SP ($M=7.94$, $SD=2.08$) were significantly different from each other. These results indicate that participants describing organisational/planned events reported being significantly more highly engaged prior to the event than were respondents reporting planned/social events. The common denominator in these two groups is the planning
component, with the difference being the context of the event, either social or organisational. One explanation for these results could be the commitment by the participant to reporting and attending an organisational event versus a social event. If this type of event appealed to a participant enough to report it as an example of fun, it seems logical to conclude that they he/she would be very engaged with the idea prior to the event.

Hypothesis 4g: Participants who report high levels of desire to have fun at work, will report high levels of intention to make fun happen.

Abramis (1989a) reported that participants who desire high levels of fun at work will report that they are highly prepared to go out of their way to make fun, even if the context is not supportive. The relationship between being able to have fun at work and the desire to create fun if it is restricted was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between the two items in the general survey. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Results support Hypothesis 4g, with a medium size correlation found between these two variables \( r=0.31, n=136, p<0.01 \), indicating that if having fun at work is important to employees, they will contribute a moderate effort to create fun if it is not available to them. This relationship, however, varied according to both gender and supervisory status. No correlation was found between importance of fun and desire to make fun happen for males, but the relationship was significant for females \( r=0.34, n=136, p<.01 \) indicating that the women in this study were more likely to make fun happen if it were absent from the workplace. Results also indicated a stronger
relationship between importance of having fun and desire to make it happen for non-supervisors \( r=0.43, n=136, p<0.01 \) compared to supervisors \( r=0.23, n=136, p<0.05 \). Further analysis splitting both gender and supervisory status identified that the relationship between being able to have fun and the desire to make it happen was strongest for female non-supervisors \( r=0.47, n=136, p<0.01 \).

**Research Q 5: What features contribute to the process of having fun at work?**

**Entry criteria**

Hypothesis 5a: When reporting case vignettes participants will report low levels of experienced coercion.

Previous research into fun (Podilchak, 1991) and fun at work (Fleming, 2005), indicated that the freedom to choose to participate in a fun activity is a significant feature of the event. It was therefore hypothesised that conscious choice and lack of coercion was a key condition for participants engaging in fun at work. Participants were asked to respond to an item asking if they felt pressured or coerced into participating in their nominated case vignette (Scale 1=not all, 7=a lot). Results support Hypothesis 5a, with respondents reporting very low mean ratings \( M=1.73, SD=1.50 \) in relation to feeling coerced. Independent samples t-tests did not identify any significant differences between gender or supervisory status in relation to feeling coerced in to participating the reported event. A series of between group one-way ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and level of coercion item rating as the dependent variable to explore if any were differences between the
activity categories and reported coercion, with no statistical differences found (see Table 16).

Table 16

Reported levels of coercion and contribution while participating in the fun event based on dimensional activity groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organisational/Spontaneous (OS)</th>
<th>Social/Spontaneous (SS)</th>
<th>Organisational/Planned (OP)</th>
<th>Social/Planned (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of coercion to participate</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of contribution</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot

Activity types

Hypothesis 5b; The majority of participants will report examples of fun activities in the case vignettes that are able to be themed into the 15 activities identified in Study 1 with the addition of examples of disparaging humour.

All case vignettes were coded using the coding schema developed in Study 1 (see Table 17). Overall, as hypothesised, the fun events nominated as examples in the case vignettes were very similar to those nominated as fun for everyone in Study 1 with only one case vignette unable to be coded into the existing categories (see Table 17). The participant described having fun watching children dance during her work day.

Hypothesis 5b anticipated examples of humour would include not only positive types of humour, but also disparaging or gallows humour such as making fun of another person, or practical jokes. This hypothesis was supported by eight (6%) of the total sample providing examples of disparaging humour. The case examples included
mimicking a sales person after they had left, a participant making jokes about his ex-wife and the replacement of an autocorrect feature on a colleague’s computer with an indecent word.

Table 17

*Frequencies of activities nominated in case vignettes as fun at work in the past 12months*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity type (as identified in Study 1)</th>
<th>Frequency of responses (N=136)</th>
<th>Percentage of responses Study 3 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Office games</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive humour</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disparaging humour</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised social activities outside of work time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the workplace</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy going work environment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social/celebratory events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered Functions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, the top four most frequently nominated types of examples captured activities from three of the four neighbourhood clusters established in Study 2; namely, humour and play, formal socialising and organisational activities. Examples of informal types of socialising, the fourth cluster identified were represented in the case examples, but not as frequently.

Hypothesis 5c; Events described as spontaneous, in contrast to planned, will report higher degrees of contribution of humour and/or play, creative frame of mind, and reported amusement and laughter.

It was anticipated that events that are described as spontaneous would differ from events described as planned in three ways: reported levels of humour and play, greater levels of reported creativity and levels of and laughter. Respondents were asked to describe whether they perceived their nominated case vignette activity was more spontaneous or planned (Scale 1= spontaneous, 7=planned prior to event). Responses were then coded to form three groups; spontaneous = responses 1+2, neutral = responses 3, 4, 5, and planned = responses 6+7. In order to discern if there were any differences between the spontaneous and planned events, the participants who reported their activity as spontaneous (N= 44) were compared to those that reported their activity as planned (N=63) on 13 items (see Table 18).

Five items represented humour and play, one item assessed levels of laughter, and one item assessed reported creativity/structure levels prior to the nominated event. Rather than limit the analysis to Hypothesis 5c, 3 additional items (coercion, contribution and flow) described as significant features of the experience of fun were also analysed.
Table 18

**Items in the process of having fun; Spontaneous versus planned events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Spontaneous events</th>
<th>Planned events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you feel pressured or coerced into participating in this event?</td>
<td>M 1.20 SD 0.87</td>
<td>M 2.15 SD 1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale 1 = not at all, 7 = a lot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt like I was a direct contributor to the fun rather than an observer</td>
<td>M 5.66 SD 1.72</td>
<td>M 5.33 SD 1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale 1 = not at all, 7 = a lot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much laughter was there during this event?</td>
<td>M 5.95 SD 1.42</td>
<td>M 6.30 SD 1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale 1 = not at all, 7 = a lot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humour and play items</strong> (Scale 1 = not at all, 7 = a lot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did jokes, funny stories or sarcasm make this event fun for you?</td>
<td>M 4.65 SD 2.01</td>
<td>M 4.65 SD 2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As part of the event I acted in a frivolous or fanciful manner which I would consider as ‘out of character’ from my usual work role.</td>
<td>M 3.13 SD 1.91</td>
<td>M 3.38 SD 2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did you use your imagination during this event?</td>
<td>M 4.25 SD 2.13</td>
<td>M 4.57 SD 1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did you make up this event as you went along, with others contributing and sharing the understanding of what would happen next?</td>
<td>M 4.15 SD 1.95</td>
<td>M 4.14 SD 2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the level of silliness and mucking around that happened during the incident.</td>
<td>M 5.09 SD 1.66</td>
<td>M 5.39 SD 1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find yourself lost in the moment, just enjoying yourself and not thinking about what might happen next…</td>
<td>M 5.06 SD 1.88</td>
<td>M 5.17 SD 1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frame of mind items</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative (Scale Structured = 1, Creative = 10)</td>
<td>M 5.63 SD 2.63</td>
<td>M 6.28 SD 2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carefree (Prior frame of mind item ; Scale Anxious = 1, Carefree = 10)</td>
<td>M 6.52 SD 2.42</td>
<td>M 6.67 SD 2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playful (Prior frame of mind item ; Scale Serious = 1, Playful = 10)</td>
<td>M 5.93 SD 2.64</td>
<td>M 6.65 SD 2.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ ratings were analysed using independent samples t-tests for each item. Hypothesis 5c anticipated events nominated as spontaneous would report higher levels of humour and/or play, creativity, and laughter than those reported as planned events. Results did not support hypothesis 5c; in fact, mean trends were the antithesis of expectations, with reported mean ratings for the planned events being higher for laughter and a creative and playful state of mind. Independent samples t-tests indicated these differences were not significant. However, one significant difference between perceived spontaneous and planned activities was found. Independent samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference between reported levels of coercion, with those nominating spontaneous events feeling less coerced than participants who reported planned events [spontaneous M = 5.31, SD= 1.73; planned M = 6.38, SD= 0.92; \( t(134)=-3.47, p<.001\)]. The effect size was moderate (eta squared .08).

Hypothesis 5d; Socially contextual events will report shared humour, personal friendships and playful mucking around as the key features more frequently than events described in organisational contexts.

Data in relation to features such as shared humour and personal friendships was drawn from an item in the structured vignette survey asking participants to nominate the features that made the event fun for them. Playful mucking around was measured with the play item *Describe the level of silliness and mucking around that happened during the incident.* The features of the fun event were analysed using thematic analysis (Owen, 1984), and grouped identifying common emergent themes for each category (OS, OP, SS, SP). Features of the theme working together as a team included comments such as “being a team”, “all staff involved”, “support of team” and “trusted colleagues”.

184
Comments such as “sharing”, “getting people together”, “inclusive colleagues” and “camaraderie” provided the thematic category of sharing the experience. Complete categories results are presented in the Inputs section, Hypothesis 5i, with results here representing combined social and organisationally contextual groups. These groups were established by combining the two social categories (SS + SP = socially contextual group) and the two organisational categories (OS + OP = organisationally contextual group) to form two groups representing nominated Social and Organisational events (see Table 19). Results indicated that a shared experience was the most frequently nominated feature of a social event which may include shared humour and personal friendships providing some support to Hypothesis 5d.

Table 19

Features of fun in reported in case vignettes for Organisational and Social events ranked in order frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 60 (86 responses =100%)</td>
<td>N= 76 (145 responses =100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Together as a team (24%)</td>
<td>• Shared experience (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relaxed atmosphere (15%)</td>
<td>• Stress relief (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Laughter (10%)</td>
<td>• Laughter (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being playful/silly (9%)</td>
<td>• Together as a team (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spontaneity (9%)</td>
<td>• Being playful/silly (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared experience (9%)</td>
<td>• Relaxed atmosphere (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making others laugh (7%)</td>
<td>• Good will and light hearted participation (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Common sense of humour (6%)</td>
<td>• Time out from office (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stress relief (4%)</td>
<td>• Spontaneity (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creative and challenging (2%)</td>
<td>• Food and drinks (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Led from the top down (2%)</td>
<td>• In on the joke (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build up stimulating (2%)</td>
<td>• No expected outcomes (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food (1%)</td>
<td>• Healthy competition (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creativity (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Well prepared (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Chance to meet new people (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Independent t-tests were used to compare social and organisational groups on the item representing mucking around/silly play (Scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot) in the structured case vignette survey. Little difference was found in mean scores for the two groups in relation to reported mucking around play (organisational; \( M = 5.38, \ SD = 1.81 \): social; \( M = 5.30, \ SD = 1.40 \)) therefore not providing support for Hypothesis 5d.

Hypothesis 5e; Events that are organisationally contextualised will have features described such as inclusion, building relationships and a sense of team being more frequently than socially contextualised events.

Hypothesis 5e anticipated features such as inclusion, building relationships and a sense of team to be the most frequently nominated features of the fun event for organisational contexts with results somewhat supporting this. Together as a team (24% responses) and relaxed atmosphere (15% responses) were the two most commonly reported features of an organisational event compared to social events that did nominate being together as a team but only by 10% of participants.

Hypothesis 5f; Participants reporting organisationally contextual events will report higher levels of participatory observation and higher levels of coercion compared to social occasions.

It was anticipated that participants reporting social events would have higher levels of participation in the event than those reporting organisationally contextual events. An independent t-test compared the mean scores of the reported social group and organisational group on an item measuring levels of contribution to the event (Scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot: organisational; \( M = 5.72, \ SD = 1.51 \); social; \( M = 5.24, \ SD = 1.79 \)).
Although the mean trend was in the hypothesised direction, no significant differences were found, therefore failing to support Hypothesis 5f.

In summary, the most frequently reported events were based in play, humour and special celebrations. Spontaneous and planned events only differed from each other in reported levels of coercion, with those nominating planned events feeling more coerced. Events nominated in social contexts reported higher levels of shared experience as a feature of the event than did organisational events; however, organisational events reported higher levels of togetherness as a team as the most frequently nominated feature.

**Inputs**

It was hypothesised that inputs into the process of having fun at work may be measured by participation levels, flow and the sense of social connection.

Hypothesis 5g: Respondents will report high levels of contribution to the fun event reported in their case vignette.

Participants were asked to respond to an item asking if they felt like they were direct contributors rather than observers in relation to their nominated case vignette (Scale 1=not all, 7=a lot). Participants reported feeling like they were direct contributors to the fun rather than in the role of observer to a moderately high level, providing support for Hypothesis 5g (M=5.48, SD=1.65). Independent samples t-tests did not reach significance in relation to perceived levels of contribution for either gender or supervisory status. A between group one-way ANOVA was conducted with activity
categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and level of contribution item rating as the dependent variable to explore differences between the activity categories and reported participation found no significant differences (see Table 16).

An additional measurement relating to perceived contribution was an item measuring reported state of mind in the structured case vignette survey. A matched pair, detached-engaged \((scale \ 1=\text{engaged}, \ 10=\text{detached})\) was rated both prior and post the nominated fun event. Prior to the reported event, respondents rated feeling highly engaged \((M=3.85, \ SD=2.28)\) and even more so after the event \((M=2.75, \ SD=1.96)\). A paired samples t-test indicated there was a significant positive shift in engagement ratings \([t(135)=5.24, \ p<.0005]\) with a small effect size \((\text{eta squared} .17)\). Overall, these results provide support to the hypothesis that fun is more of a participative activity, than non-participative. Two separate between group one-way ANOVA were conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and frame of mind item rating (engaged-detached) prior and post the event as the dependent variables to explore differences between the activity categories and reported engagement levels. Results indicated no significant differences between the groups. These results indicate that regardless of gender, supervisory status or activity type participants reported a significant positive shift in being engaged in the fun activity from prior to post event.

Hypothesis 5h; Participants will identify the experience of being *lost in the moment*, therefore reporting a moderate to high degree of flow.

Flow (Csikszentmihalyi’s, 1990; Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999) is seen as the optimal experience when people are doing something they choose and get so
involved in the activity that nothing else seems to matter, often described as being *absorbed* or *in the zone*. Hypothesis 5h anticipated that participants would report moderate to high levels of flow during fun at work events nominated. Participants were asked to what degree they found themselves *lost in the moment, just enjoying themselves and not thinking about what would happen next* (Scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot) in their reported case vignette.

Table 20

*Mean flow rating for dimensional activity categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flow item</th>
<th>Organisational Spontaneous (OS)</th>
<th>Social Spontaneous (SS)</th>
<th>Organisational Planned (OP)</th>
<th>Social Planned (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the event to what extent did you find yourself lost in the moment, just enjoying yourself and not thinking about what would happen next</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot.

Participants reported feeling lost in the moment during the fun event to a high degree, with eighty percent of respondents rating their experiences as a 5 or higher supporting hypothesis 2n. Independent samples t-tests for both gender and supervisory status did not reach significance. A between group one-way ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and level of flow item rating as the dependent variable to explore differences between the activity categories and reported participation flow found no significant differences between the groups.
Hypothesis 5i; Participants will report socially connecting with others as a main qualitative feature of the reported fun event.

It is argued in this research program a significant part of the experience of fun at work is the desire for social connection. It was hypothesised that social interaction and connecting with others would be represented as a main feature of the fun event described in the case vignettes (see Table 21).

Table 21

Features of fun events as reported in case vignettes; represented in dimensional categories and ranked in order of frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational/Spontaneous (OS)</th>
<th>Social/Spontaneous (SS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 29 (40 responses =100%)</td>
<td>N = 23 (35 responses =100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Together as a team (17%)</td>
<td>• Shared experience (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being playful/silly (12%)</td>
<td>• Stress relief (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Laughter (10%)</td>
<td>• Together as a team (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spontaneity (10%)</td>
<td>• Laughter (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared experience (8%)</td>
<td>• Being playful/silly (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stress relief (7%)</td>
<td>• Spontaneity (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relaxed atmosphere (7%)</td>
<td>• In on the joke (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making others laugh (14%)</td>
<td>• No expected outcomes (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Common sense of humour (12%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food (2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational/Planned (OP)</th>
<th>Social/Planned (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=31 ( 46 responses =100%)</td>
<td>N=53 (110 responses = 100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three significant features were reported in all dimensional categories (OS, OP, SS, SP); high levels of being together as a team, sharing the experience and laughter. These results bolster support Hypothesis 5i that desire for social connection is a discernable feature of the experience of fun at work.

In summary, inputs into the reported case vignettes resulted in participants reporting moderate to high levels of participation, high levels of flow and high levels of social connection.

**Exit criteria**

Hypothesis 5j; Participants will report fun events ending primarily due to time constraints or the natural end of the social event.

Factors hindering, constraining or stopping the fun event were analysed using thematic analysis (Owen, 1984) and grouped according to identifying common emergent themes. Forty-four participants provided examples of hindrances and constraints in relation to their example. Time constraints or ending the event as a result of competing work were the most commonly noted exit criteria, with comments such as “we had to keep answering the phone”, “not enough time to really get into it without sacrificing work” and “it came to a natural end”. Additional constraints to the fun events reported
by participants were the need to maintain a level of professionalism and keeping noise down, with one participant noting the negative effects of too much alcohol. Inclusion was also a constraint for some, with new people finding it harder to join in and some participants noted management were reluctant to join in or events only happened because they were away. Disparaging humour was also mentioned as a constraint with the fear that the humour was misinterpreted. Finally, several respondents noted personal circumstances as a limitation due to illness or state of mind.

Products

The products or outcomes of having fun at work being explored in this study are based both on research and anecdotal literature. These encompass general outcomes of having fun at work, both positive and negative, specific outcomes related to activity types, and personal and organisational products.

Research Q6: What are the products or outcomes of having fun at work?

Hypothesis 6a; Participants will overwhelmingly report there were positive outcomes of having fun at work.

Anecdotal literature (Abramis, 1990; Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; SHRM, 2002; Weinstein, 1996) and the limited empirical literature available (McDowell, 2005) both report positive outcomes of the experience of having fun at work. Participants were asked if there were any positive outcomes of the reported event, stating either yes or no. Ninety eight percent of participants reported a **yes**
response. Participants were also invited to nominate specific examples of these outcomes, with 91% of participants nominating qualitative positive outcomes.

Using thematic analysis (Owen, 1984) responses were grouped to identify emergent themes. Overall, the most frequent personal positive outcomes of the nominated fun event were perceived as the fun event lowering stress, adding balance to the day and improving one’s mood as outlined in Table 22. Interpersonal factors focused on improved morale, building friendships, inclusiveness, support from team and positive team environment.

Hypothesis 6b; Participants will report high levels of amusement and laughter as outcomes of their fun example.

Podilchak (1985) argued that laughter and amusement were not only an integral part of the experience of fun, but also an outcome of the event. Hypothesis 6b was supported with participants reporting high levels of laughter (Scale 1=none at all, 7=a lot; \( M=6.13, \text{SD}=1.22 \)) and amusement (Scale 1=amused, 10=bored; \( M=2.98, \text{SD}=1.62 \)) in their case vignettes. Subsequent analysis did not discern any differences between gender, supervisory status or activity type (OS, OP, SS, SP).
Table 22

Reported positive outcomes of fun events and mean reported levels of laughter:
Represented in dimensional activity categories in ranked order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation/spontaneous (OS)</th>
<th>Social/spontaneous (SS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 89.7% respondents reported at least one positive outcome</td>
<td>• 91.3% respondents reported at least one positive outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improved relationships within workgroups</td>
<td>• building and reconnecting with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lowered stress</td>
<td>• lowered stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• added balance to day</td>
<td>• increased positive mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• laughter lead to a more positive mood</td>
<td>• support for team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much laughter was there during the event?</td>
<td>How much laughter was there during the event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M=6.17$, SD=1.31</td>
<td>$M=6.26$, SD=0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation/planned (OP)</th>
<th>Social/planned (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 93.5% respondents reported at least one positive outcome</td>
<td>• 92.5% respondents reported at least one positive outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships improved focusing on including others or feeling included</td>
<td>• social component of meeting old and new friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team morale improved</td>
<td>• improved team spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (increased level of friendliness/caring)</td>
<td>• Higher morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improved mood</td>
<td>• Positive work environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less stressed</td>
<td>• Mood enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much laughter was there during the event?</td>
<td>How much laughter was there during the event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M=5.93$, SD=1.41</td>
<td>$M=6.16$, SD=1.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 6c; Participants will report a positive shift in frame of mind from prior, to post the fun event.

The positive state of mind created as a result of having fun at work is presented most frequently in the popular press (Ford et al., 2004; Management issues, 2006) and anecdotal literature (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Lundin & Christensen, 2000; Weinstein, 1996). Based on these anecdotal claims, it was hypothesised that participants would describe a positive shift in mood as a result
of participating in fun events. Data was collected using a prior and post frame of mind rating of 8 matched pairs of feeling words based on existing humour, play and fun literature such as serious-playful and detached-engaged. Each word pair consisted of a positive frame of mind term such as happy and its polar opposite unhappy. Participants were required to rate their feeling both prior to the nominated event and post the event on a 10 point likert scale. A series of one way repeated measures ANOVA’s was conducted was comparing pre and post frame of mind ratings for each matched pair. There were significant effects found for all pairs, with large effect sizes (see Table 23). Results support Hypothesis 6c indicating a positive shift in the reported mean frame of mind ratings from prior the reported event to post the event for all pairs of feeling words. The largest shifts reported were for the word pairs representing happiness and a relaxed state, with participants reporting becoming happier and more relaxed after the nominated event.

Table 23

Mean reported frame of mind prior and post fun event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame of mind</th>
<th>Prior to fun event</th>
<th>Post fun event</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>wilk’s lambada</th>
<th>Eta squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mischievous vs. conservative</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>31.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playful vs. serious</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>27.89*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed vs. stressed</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>38.52*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative vs. structured</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>19.49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untroubled vs. tense</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>31.80*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carefree vs. anxious</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>13.77*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy vs. unhappy</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>43.95*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged vs. detached</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>23.89*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p <.0005
With the trend for participants to report a consistently positive increase in a positive frame of mind, it seemed worthwhile to explore the underlying structure of the paired feeling words to identify if the paired items represented a smaller group of variables. The 8 items rating prior and post frame of mind were subjected to a Principle Component factor analysis utilising the pre fun frame of mind data. Prior to performing the factor analysis, a correlation matrix revealed most coefficients to be above .3. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olklin value was .81, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) and the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Results revealed the presence of two factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1. The first factor (eigenvalue, 4.16) explained 51.9 percent and the second factor (eigenvalue, 1.02) 12.7 percent of the variance respectively. An inspection of the scree plot revealed a clear break after the first component. Given the border line eigenvalue of the second factor, the analysis was then performed on the post frame of mind data with very similar results (factor 1, eigenvalue 3.49 and factor 2, eigenvalue 1.29). Once again the scree plot had a strong elbow with only the first factor prior to that elbow. Utilising the scree plot and the evidence of all items loading on the first factor, it was reasonably concluded that the items could be condensed into one factor, a global mood.

The reported mood item was created by summing individual frame of mind scores creating a range of possible scores from 0 to 80. The positive mood item was then subjected to a paired sample t-test to compare the reported mood of the participants prior and post the event. Results indicated a positive, statistically significant, increase in mood scores from prior ($M = 52.0$, $SD = 14.0$) to post the event ($M = 61.9$, $SD = 10.2$), [t
The eta squared statistic (.35) indicated a very large effect size providing substantial support to Hypothesis 6c that participants would report a positive shift in mood as a result of the nominated fun event.

A mixed between-within ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and the pre and post mood rating as the dependent variables to test for differences within and between groups. The results did not yield any significant variances between any of the activity types on either pre or post ratings. Paired sample t-tests were also conducted to test for any differences between gender and supervisory status with no significant differences found. These results indicate that the increase in positive state of mind after the fun event, described as the levity effect (Gostick & Christopher, 2008) occurred consistently regardless of gender, supervisory status or type of fun event.

Hypothesis 6d: Participants will report that, as an effect of having fun at work, their mood improves in a positive direction.

Using data reported in the survey section on the general effects of having fun at work, participants were asked to rate the following question on a 7 point scale (1=not at all, 7=a lot); my mood improves and it is easier to get along with others. Participants indicated that the effects of fun improve one’s mood and make it easier to get along with others (M=6.14, SD 0.85), therefore providing additional data to support hypothesis 6c. Independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences between groups based on gender or supervisory status.
Hypothesis 6e; Participants will report relationships with others improve as an effect of having fun at work.

A further hypothesis based on anecdotal literature suggests having fun at work improves workplace relationships. Two questions in the effects of fun survey provided assessment items in this area; *Relationships with others improve in my workplace after we have fun* and *I feel like I am part of a team when I have fun at work* (scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot). Participants reported both a high level of perceived relationship improvement (M=6.05, SD 1.20) and feeling like they were a part of a team as an effect of having fun in the workplace (M=6.11, SD 1.13). Independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences for supervisory status among either of these items; however, there were some differences found in relation to gender, with females reporting they felt more like part of the team when they had fun at work to a greater extent than did males (males M=5.72, SD 1.22, females M=6.23, SD 1.08); t (133)=2.27, p=.025. Eta squared=.037, small to medium effect size). These results bolster support for Hypothesis 6e that relationships with others are perceived to improve as an effect of having fun at work, and more significantly for women.

Hypothesis 6f; A negative association will be found between participants who report high frequencies of fun and reported job stress.

Hypothesis 6g; A positive association will be found between participants who report high frequencies of fun and reported job enjoyment.

Anecdotal and empirical researchers have found associations between fun at work and job satisfaction (Abramis, 1990; McDowell, 2005). In this study an association between respondents who report having moderate to high levels of fun at
work and job stress levels was anticipated (Hypothesis 6f). It was also hypothesised that those people who enjoyed their job would report higher levels of having fun at work (Hypothesis 6g). The relationship between perceptions of job stress, feeling stressed, job enjoyment and frequency of engaging in fun at work were investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Several statistically significant relationships were found. Results indicated a medium correlation between reported job enjoyment and the reported extent of feeling stressed \( r = .35, n=136, p<.01 \) and a strong correlation between reported job stress and the extent to which the participant reported feeling stressed \( r = .70, n=136, p<.01 \). A strong relationship was also found between reported frequency of having fun at work and reported job enjoyment \( r = .63, n=136, p<.01 \) indicating the more one enjoys one’s job, the more one is likely to have fun at work. A moderately strong negative relationship between reported job stress \( r = -.37, n=136, p<.01 \), reported extent of feeling stressed \( r = -.46, n=136, p<.01 \) and reported fun levels also provides support to Podilchak (1985) the argument that fun and stress are negatively related. These results provide support to Hypothesis 6f and 6g, supporting the argument that those employees who enjoy their job and are not feeling overly stressed are more likely to have fun at work more frequently. These results raise the question of inference and cause, with further research required to explore whether it is the enjoyment of the job that leads to fun or vice versa and whether having fun can influence perceived stress.

Hypothesis 6h; Respondents will report that some of the effects of having fun at work include assisting stress management and working more effectively.
Anecdotal reports suggest that having fun at work assists with the management of stress and improves workplace efficiency (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Lundin & Christensen, 2000; Weinstein, 1996). Participants were asked as a general effect of having fun at work (scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot); To what extent does fun at work give you relief from the seriousness of day to day matters? Having fun at work helps me deal with stress and Having fun at work helps me function in my job more effectively.

Respondents reported that they perceived having fun at work provides relief in daily activities to a high level (M=6.32, SD=0.80) and assists them in dealing with stress to a high level (M=6.15, SD=0.92). In addition, the effects of having fun at work were also perceived to assist in more effective job functioning (M=5.84, SD=1.12). These results support hypothesis 6h that having fun at work is perceived to have substantial personal and organisational effects. Independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences for supervisory status among any of the items; however, there was one difference in relation to gender responses. Results show females reported more relief from fun in relation to the seriousness of day to day activities, than did males (males M=6.06, SD=0.84, females M=6.41, SD=0.78); t (133)=2.1, p=.034). Eta squared (.032) indicated a small to medium effect size.

Hypothesis 6i: Very few negative outcomes or consequences will be reported as products of the fun event.

Hypothesis 6j: Negative outcomes of the case examples most frequently reported will be feeling coerced into organisational events, personal discomfort such as being asked to act in a manner outside one’s usual role and contextual issues such as disrupting others.
Given the positive anecdotally reported outcomes of fun, including laughter and amusement, it was anticipated that few negative outcomes would be reported in the case vignettes. Providing some support to hypothesis 6i, few negative outcomes or consequences were nominated, with 19% of participants recording 25 comments. The comments were able to be themed into three clear categories presented in ranked order. The most common situation reported was general anxiety or embarrassment in participating in some type of performance. The second type of negative outcome was feeling mocked or judged, being the recipient of negative humour or inappropriate behaviour, or receiving negative feedback. The third area of negative outcomes or consequences were organisationally focused, such as other’s work being disturbed, gossip eventuating from the event, or the requirements of the work task not being met.

When analysed using a comparison of dimensional activity categories, spontaneous activities (OS, SS) had negative outcomes relating to personal feelings of anxiety or discomfort, whereas the planned events (OP, SP) had negative outcomes or constraints relating to a mixture of personal, interpersonal issues such as feeling judged or being annoyed that others did not fully participate.

**Research Q7: To what degree are humour and play represented in the reported examples of fun at work?**

Hypothesis 7a; Humour will be reported to a high degree in some case vignettes, but will not be reported even to a moderate degree, in other events.

Several items in the case vignette survey were directly related to the construct of humour. When reporting general humour, an item reported to what extent did jokes,
funny stories or sarcasm make the event fun? Providing support for hypothesis 7a, results indicated that while many participants reported humour in their vignette, 32% of respondents reported a 3 or less indicating humour was not the feature that made the event fun for them (see Table 24). Examining the mean ratings, participants reported spontaneous/social events having the highest levels of general humour influencing their activity ($M=5.04, SD=2.09$), with the planned/organisational ($M=3.93, SD=2.08$) events reporting the least. A one way between group ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and the humour item rating as the dependent variable indicated no significant differences in responses between the activity categories (see Table 26).

Table 24

*Frequencies of responses relating to general humour item as reported in case study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent did jokes, funny stories or sarcasm make this event fun for you?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all 1.00</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot 7.00</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 7b; Having fun at someone else’s expense will be reported to a minimal degree in case vignettes.
Testing Podilchak’s (1985) theory that fun is an equal-to-other experience, rather than an experience where power over another is exercised, a question specifically related to power dynamics of humour was developed; *we had fun at someone else’s expense*. On a scale of 1= not at all, 7=a lot, 12% of respondents reported a rating of 5 or above providing supporting hypothesis 7b that having fun at someone else’s expense was not a significant feature of the fun case examples (See Table 25). Of the examples that were coded as disparaging humour, all but one participant rated 7 on the variable we had fun at someone else’s expense. These results indicate that having fun at someone else’s expense was a conscious feature of the fun event for those participants.

**Table 25**

*Frequencies of responses relating to disparaging humour item in case examples*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do you agree with the following statement “We had fun at someone else’s expense”</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all 1.00</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>83.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot 7.00</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 136 100.0

A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and the disparaging humour item rating as the dependent variable found the Levene’s test of homogeneity of variance to be violated,
indicating that within-group scores varied between the groups. A revised alpha of .01 for significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) indicated no differences between the activities on ratings of disparaging humour with this sample \([F(3,132)=2.80, p=0.042]\) (See Table 26). Mean scores indicated that having fun at someone’s expense occurred most frequently during spontaneous/social events \((M=2.69, SD=2.09)\) and less frequently during planned/organizational activities \((M=1.48, SD=1.31)\). The large standard deviation in the ratings highlights the variations in perception of the construct of humour evident in the fun events reported.

Table 26

Mean ratings of disparaging and general humour items displayed in dimensional categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Organisational Spontaneous (OS)</th>
<th>Social Spontaneous (SS)</th>
<th>Organisational Planned (OP)</th>
<th>Social Planned (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We had fun at someone else’s expense…</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did jokes, funny stories or sarcasm make this event fun for you</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, these results support the three hypotheses: humour was evident in many examples of fun at work, but was not evident in all of the examples; disparaging humour was reported by a minority of participants as a vehicle for fun; and the process of fun rarely occurred at someone else’s expense.
Hypothesis 7c; Features of play will be recorded at a high level for some activities, but not even to a moderate degree, for other activities.

Hypothesis 7d; Both fun-loving and frivolous play will be represented in the play based case examples, with frivolous types of play more highly represented.

To explore the presence of playfulness in the case examples, participants were asked four questions developed from extant literature on adult play including items in relation to acting in a fanciful manner, use of imagination, game development and being silly (Abramis, 1990; Glynn & Webster, 1992).

When participants were asked if they acted in a frivolous or fanciful manner that they would consider out of character to their usual work role during their fun event, 29% stated they did not act in a fanciful manner \textit{at all}, and cumulatively 59% chose ratings of 3 or less (See Table 27) indicating that acting frivolously or out of character was not common in the examples. A one-way, between group ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and acting frivolously item rating as the dependent variable did not discern any significant differences between the activity categories (See Table 28).

Table 27

\textit{Responses to play items in fun process; Representing frequencies of 1 = not all to 3=limited}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (Scale 1=not at all, 7=a lot)</th>
<th>Frivolous or out of character</th>
<th>Imagination</th>
<th>Game construction</th>
<th>Mucking or goofing around</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative total</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants reported that they used their imagination somewhat to a lot during the event, with 70% rating a 4 or higher. A one-way between group ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and use of imagination item rating as the dependent variable. Levene’s test of homogeneity of variance was violated indicating that within activities the ratings varied, between the four groups. A revised alpha of .01 for significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) resulted in significant differences between the activity types \([F(3,132)=4.62, p=0.004]\). Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test determined a significant difference between the reported level of imagination use in reported OP events \([M=5.35, SD =1.37]\) and imagination use in reported SP events \([M=3.94, SD =1.92, p= .006]\). The effect size calculated using eta squared (.07) indicated a moderate effect. These results indicate that imagination was used significantly more in organisational/planned events, than in social/planned events.

Table 28

*Mean responses to play items as reported in fun examples; represented in dimensional categories.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Organisational Spontaneous (OS)</th>
<th>Social Spontaneous (SS)</th>
<th>Organisational Planned (OP)</th>
<th>Social Planned (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a part of the event I acted in a frivolous or fanciful manner which I would consider out of character from my usual work role.</td>
<td>M =2.65, SD =2.25</td>
<td>M =3.56, SD =1.99</td>
<td>M =3.32, SD =1.92</td>
<td>M =3.16, SD =1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the level of silliness and mucking around that happened during the incident.</td>
<td>M =5.44, SD =1.95</td>
<td>M =5.56, SD =1.44</td>
<td>M =5.32, SD =1.68</td>
<td>M =5.05, SD =1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To what extent did you use your imagination during this event?

| Scale | 4.86 | 2.13 | 3.95 | 2.05 | 5.35 | 1.37 | 3.94 | 1.92 |

To what extent did you make up the event as it went along, with others contributing and sharing the understanding about what would happen next?

| Scale | 4.17 | 2.25 | 4.21 | 2.31 | 4.51 | 1.85 | 3.66 | 1.85 |

Research by both Abramis (1988, 1990) and Maxwell et al., (2005) suggest play at work has two identified dimensions: fun-loving/play as a game that focuses on challenges, is exciting and at times has rules and a competitive edge. Goofing around/frivolous play, in contrast, represents silly, flippant or childlike behaviours that are more likely to involve relational bantering and joking than fun/loving play. The assessment of reported levels of fun loving play was recorded by the question; *To what extent did you make up the event as it went along, with others contributing and sharing understanding about what would happen next?* and goofing around/frivolous play was reported using the question; *Describe the level of silliness and mucking around that happened during the incident.* The term *mucking around* replaced *goofing around* to more strongly represent Australian colloquial language.

When participants were asked to rate their event in terms of game construction they indicated that they made up the event as it went along to a moderate degree. A one way between group ANOVA was conducted with activity categories (OS, OP, SS, SP) as the independent variable and game development item rating as the dependent variable game with no significant differences between activities reported. Reported mean ratings indicated OP events rated the highest on this measure ($M=4.51$, $SD=1.85$) and SP ($M=3.66$, $SD=1.85$) events the lowest (See Table 28).
Respondents rated their behaviour to a high degree for silliness and mucking around when reporting their case vignette ($M=5.28$, $SD=1.59$). The mean reported ratings for mucking around and the activity categories (See Table 27) did not vary to any observable or statistically significant extent when tested with a one way, between group ANOVA. These results indicate that mucking around or being silly is quite a consistent part of having fun, regardless of the type of the event. These results support hypothesis 7d and Abramis (1990) and Maxwell et al., (2005) that while both fun loving and frivolous play are evident in the reported examples, frivolous play was more highly reported.

An independent samples t-test did not reach significance in relation to gender or supervisory status for any of the questions representing play, indicating that the experience of play in relation to fun is consistent across gender and supervisory status.

These results indicate that varying features of play are evident in fun activities in the workplace. Hypothesis 7c, that anticipating play would be reported to a high degree for some events, and not even to a moderate degree for others was partially supported, dependent on the type of play. Mucking around play was the most commonly reported type of play reported to a high degree (rating over 5) by 77% of participants. Acting out of character play was the least reported with 30% of participants rating the frequency of this type of play at 5 or over. Use of imagination, as a feature of play, was found to be statistically different depending on the reported activity type, with organisationally planned events reporting much higher levels of imagination than socially planned events. These results suggest that different types of adult play contribute to the construct of fun
at work, but raise an interesting facet in the discussion of construct differentiation. While mucking or goofing around play appears to be the most closely related to the construct of fun at work, these results bolster support for the argument that the general constructs of play and fun are indeed distinct.

Discussion

The focus of this study was threefold: to explore the context and process of having fun at work, to assess the contribution of humour and play to the process in order to aid in defining the construct of fun at work, and to examine the perceived outcomes of having fun. Both chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis outlined the substantial gaps in knowledge in relation to these questions and the existing knowledge was revisited in order to develop the detailed hypothesis tested in the present study. In brief, Podilchak (1985) preposed a theory of fun that has received limited attention, particularly in a work context and this study aimed to explore his propositions. Several other researchers have provided some details on contextual information relating to having fun at work (Abramis; 1989 a,b,c; McDowell, 2005; Fleming, 2005); however, there was no framework available to explore the phenomenon of fun in a work setting. The 3P framework was applied in this study to explore the presage, process and products associated with having fun at work to not only gather data related to context and process of having fun at work, but to also contribute further information in the journey of ascertaining the validity of fun as unique construct.

The following sections will outline the results from this study and contextualise them with existing knowledge; however, a more in depth examination of the
implications of this study in relation to theoretical and practical application will occur in chapter 8 *Integrated discussion*.

**Context and process of fun**

Results from this study support anecdotal literature (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Weinstein, 1996) in suggesting having fun at work is important to employees and that women in particular will go out of their way to create fun. In order for employees to have fun at work, systemic theory tells us the context needs to be considered. Results here suggest the four most common conditions required in order to have fun at work consist of supportive management, supportive colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non-stressed working environment. These results support findings of previous research (Podilchak, 1991; McDowell, 2005) that the conditions required for fun, particularly at work are primarily social in nature and require support and interactions with both colleagues and management as vital contextual factors.

Very little is known about the personal characteristics required to engage in the process of fun, with Podilchak (1985) suggesting an open mind is a key feature. The results of this study indicated that participants entered into the reported event with an open state of mind, consistently reporting being happy, engaged, carefree and playful prior to engaging in their fun event. Additional results found participants describing organisational/planned events reporting to be more highly engaged prior to the event than were respondents reporting planned/social events, suggesting the planning phase for some participants may be an important contribution to the fun process. In addition, a significant shift in engagement levels were reported from prior to the reported event to
post the event, confirming Podilchak’s (1985) proposition that having fun is an engaging process. Complimentary to this, participants reported being more in the role of contributor rather than observer during their nominated event.

The present findings support Podilchak’s (1985, 1991) argument and findings in relation to the generic construct of fun. Broadly, Podilchak argued that fun is represented by an engaging activity with an open state of mind, and the experience has an emotionally qualitative dimension of excitement with social interaction as its defining features. The engaging activities nominated in this study replicated activities identified in Study 1 of this research program representing fun activities for everyone, with the inclusion of a small representation of disparaging types of humour, such as practical jokes and impersonations and activities and also replicated findings identified by McDowell (2005) in her item development phase. The most frequently nominated type of engaging fun activity were those that involved mucking around play, positive humour and celebration. Based on dimensions established in Study 2, the fun activities were categorised into four groups: organisational/spontaneous (OS), social/spontaneous (SS), organisational/planned (OP) and social/planned (SP). While the similarities in the process and context issues for different activities were considerable, a number of differences were noted. Participants reported feeling more coerced when reporting planned activities in contrast to those reporting social activities. Complimentary to this, participants reporting examples of socially contextual activities nominated the features that made the event fun to be the shared experiences and stress relief involved, in contrast to those nominating organisationally contextual events identifying features of being together as a team and the relaxed atmosphere. While differences in the activity
types were statistically minimal, often due to large standard deviations indicating various personal perceptions, further research is required to confirm some of the trends found in this study. Potentially, different types of fun events may engender different experiences and it may be possible in the future to choose activities that are aligned with required team dynamics and organisational outcomes.

Three key features of fun have been suggesting in existing literature, including lack of coercion, flow and social connection. Both Podilchak (1991) and Fleming (2005) indicated that the freedom to choose to participate in an activity is a significant feature of a fun event. Participants in this study confirmed the lack of coercion involved in the process of fun, although respondents did report feeling more coerced when nominating planned, rather than social events. This data raises the issue of a potential coercion threshold (e.g. At what level is it possible to influence some people into participating) with further research required to establish the presence of a threshold, whereby coercion makes the event not fun. Or, as Fleming suggests, at what point do employees give in, in order not to run the risk of being ostracised because they are not participating.

The experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) was also suggested as a feature of a fun experience by both Podilchak (1991) and Abramis (1990). Results support these propositions with the experience of flow being reported in the case examples to a high degree, with spontaneous/social activities reporting the highest levels of flow. These results provide support to the argument that the experience of fun encapsulates many of the features of flow including intense concentration, a sense of being in control, loss of self consciousness and transformation of time (Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000). Further
research potentially exploring the importance of the relationship between flow and fun at work may contribute to understanding the process of fun at work in greater detail.

The final factor suggested as a feature of fun was the social nature of fun in creating reciprocal and affective connections with others (Podilchak, 1985) through the socialising and celebrating process (McDowell, 2005). The two main features of having fun at work reported in the present study were being together as a team and sharing the experiences providing support to the argument that the experience of fun in the workplace is primarily a social construct. Constraints or limitations reported in relation to nominated fun events were few, and those that were described focused on time limitations and acting in a professional manner.

The outcomes of fun have often been the focus of anecdotal literature; however, little empirical data has been reported to substantiate the plethora of claims (Abramis, 1990; Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; SHRM, 2002; Weinstein, 1996). Results from this study indicate that participants do perceive fun as having substantial positive outcomes and effects both in an individual and organisational capacity. Individually, the nominated experience of fun at work was reported to contribute to a statistically significant positive shift in mood, indicating that a noteworthy product of having fun is an increase in positive mood. The importance of moods in the workplace have received attention from researchers over the past several decades, with results reporting moods and feeling states having been demonstrated to influence thought processes, attitudes and behaviours (Isen & Shalker, 1982; Leventhal & Tomarken, 1986). Positive emotions created from being in a good mood have also been found to assist in building enduring personal resources (Fredrickson, 2001; Harker
& Keltner, 2001), creating openness to new information (Estrada et al., 1997), expanding attention (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005) and building psychological resilience (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Further research has found that being in good mood results in people seeing their experiences in a positive light (Clark & Teasdale, 1985, Forgas et al., 1984, Rosenhan et al., 1981), being more likely to feel positively toward co-workers, enhancing social outlook and, therefore, being more social and helpful (Carlson et al., 1988; Forgas et al., 1984). In addition, a Meta analysis found that positive affect was strongly positively correlated with job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Thorensen et al., 2003). With the positive shift in mood established in this study, results provide preliminary support not only for the merits of having fun at work, but the potential organisational flow on effects of the levity state as described by Gostick & Christopher (2008).

Complimentary to the positive shift in mood as a product of having fun, participants in this study reported additional positive effects of having fun at work including perceptions of improved workplace relationships, particularly for women, assistance in managing stress and working more effectively. Very few negative outcomes of the fun experience were noted and those that were focused on personal feelings of anxiety or discomfort, interpersonal issues, and feeling judged or being annoyed that others did not fully participate. More specific effects of fun at work will be explored in chapter 7 (Study 4) and the results of both sets of data will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 8.
Evidence of humour and play in fun at work

Results from this study suggest that play and humour are strong contributors to the experience of fun. The most frequently reported case studies were playful in nature, followed by humorous examples. As hypothesised, a number of case studies reported having little humour or play contributing to the fun experience, providing support for the argument that fun is a related, yet distinct construct. The contribution of humour to the fun experience was consistent with moderate levels reported across all types of fun activities. Disparaging humour, although strongly evident in some case studies, was reported at very low levels across the examples and few participants reported having fun at someone else’s expense. Research has demonstrated a negative impact of disparaging humour including exclusion (Vinton, 1989; Lynch, 2002; Berger et al., 2004), emotional exhaustion and creation of negative cultures (Taylor & Bain, 2003). Given the lack of disparaging humour in the fun examples, it is suggested that these impacts are less likely to coexist when a context of fun at work is encouraged rather than the focus being on the use of humour. It seems that having fun at work is most closely associated with positive humour and may, therefore, share similar types of outcomes such as the physiological and organisational benefits of humour and laughter that have been extensively established (Aultman et al., 2006; Bennett, 1991; Tracy et al., 2006; Wear et al., 1993; Verger & MacRae, 1993).

Results relating to the contribution of play to the fun events were somewhat surprising. All types of dimensional fun activities rated highly on mucking around and being silly type play, and varying types of activities used degrees of imagination, particularly organisationally planned events, yet none of the activities rated even
moderately high on frivolous type play such as acting out of character from the usual work role (Maxwell et al., 2005). These results provide a platform to suggest that the experience of fun at work is most closely related to the experience of playful mucking around. A full discussion of fun in the nomological net of humour and playfulness will be presented in chapter 8.

The aim of this study was to further understand the concept of having fun at work by examining the contextual conditions and processes related to the construct. The 3P framework was developed and has been utilised in this study to aid the mapping of a complex construct and the data from this study will contribute to the complete framework presented in chapter 8.

Summary

This study has reported findings that support Podilchak’s (1985, 1991) propositions that fun at work encompasses an experience of being engaged in an activity that has an emotionally qualitative dimension and is highly socially interactive. The organisational context for fun appears to be embodied in supportive management and colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non stressed environment. The participant experiencing the fun is usually in the role of contributor rather than observer, is highly engaged, experiencing amusement, laughter, flow, social connection and a resultant increase in positive mood. Activities involving play, humour and celebration can occur in organisational or social settings, either spontaneously or in a planned manner. While humour and play contribute to the experience of fun, fun appears to be a distinct construct. General perceptions of the impact of the process of having fun at work
include assisting positively with stress, increased effectiveness, improved relationships,
and feeling like one is part of a team.

The next study in this research program will explore perceived enjoyment levels
and impacts of a range of fun activities that were established as fun at work for everyone
in Study 1 contributing to the final research chapter of this program.
CHAPTER 7: MEASURING THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF HAVING FUN AT WORK

STUDY 4

The claims in popular media and anecdotal literature related to the benefits of having fun in the workplace have been compounding in the past decade, providing a positive yet surface argument for the case of fun. However, to date no rigorous empirical data has been made available to substantiate these assertions. In brief, popular press reports (Ford, et al., 2004; Management issues, 2006) and anecdotal literature (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Weinstein, 1996; Lundin & Christensen, 2000) suggest engaging in fun activities at work has a number of organisational flow-on effects. Having fun is purported to increase job satisfaction and assist in the management of stress, therefore contributing to increased employee retention and improved job efficiencies (particularly in customer service applications) resulting in overall profits for companies. While the dual focus of this research program has been to more fully define and differentiate the construct of fun at work, and to locate the construct in an organisational context, this study endeavours to begin to investigate these broad aspersions. On cursory reading, popular media studies on this issue may seem to be sufficient; however, any investigation into specific organisational factors shows that they are not only multifaceted individually, but there are also complex systemic relationships between them that appear to have not yet been fully understood in organisational settings. Therefore, from the exploratory position of this research program it seemed prudent to investigate the perceived impact of fun in relation to several key organisational constructs; namely, job satisfaction, stress management and
workplace effectiveness. In addition, the perceived impact of having fun on workplace relationships will be explored, given the established connection with organisational commitment and turnover intention (Dick & Metcalf, 2001; Dockel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006). Investigating the perceived impacts of fun on these specific organisational constructs may provide a foundation in the future to explore the influence of fun in the complex organisational landscape.

Previous studies in this thesis have explored what fun at work is, identifying the domain of fun activities, and uncovering the underlying dimensions of the construct. Complimentary to these results, Study 3 examined the context and process of having fun. This final study in the research program utilises the previous results to investigate the perceived implications of participating in the fun activities identified as representative of the domain of having fun at work, examining key organisational factors. Specifically, perceptions of enjoyment and the impact of having fun will be measured in relation to job satisfaction, stress reduction, effectiveness and workplace relationships both from an employee perspective and their perceptions of management views.

In brief, job satisfaction can be defined as individual’s evaluation of their perceptions of their work and employment environment (Parker et al, 2003; Sweeny et al., 2002) and has been strongly linked to employee turnover (Ahuja et al., 2007). McDowell (2005) linked job satisfaction to the climate of fun at work and improvement in job satisfaction has been anecdotally claimed as an outcome of having fun at work (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). As previously suggested, job satisfaction is not an isolated organisational variable, and while having fun may directly impact on job satisfaction, it also stands to reason being able to have fun at work may indirectly
influence perceived job satisfaction. Study 3 in this research program identified a significant positive shift in employee mood after being involved in a fun event and this in itself may contribute to feeling more satisfied at work. It is argued in this thesis that improvement in job satisfaction as a result of having fun may be facilitated by a number of variables, not restricted to but including the increase in positive mood engendered by the fun events themselves, the contribution of having fun in managing stress and improving workplace relationships as established as general perceptions of the outcome of having fun in Study 3. In turn, the impact of increased job satisfaction through having fun at work may increase organisational commitment and have a positive influence on organisational turnover (See figure 7, p.106).

A further claim suggested in popular media is that having fun at work improves workplace efficiency and performance, thereby influencing the overall productivity of organisations in the form of improved service outcomes and/or profit (Gostick & Christopher 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). Organisational analysis of business outcomes focus on both individual and organisational contributions, and therefore it is more possible that engaging in having fun at work, while not likely to be perceived as directly having an influence on effectiveness, may well be linked to other organisational constructs. Previous research has established several links between work performance and job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001) and positive psychological well-being (Harter et al., 2002). In addition, workplaces who have focused on emotionally engaging employees and fostering workplace friendships, had significantly lower turnover, more satisfied customers and were financially more productive and profitable (Harter et al., 2002; Ok Park et al., 2004).
Portraying fun at work as a vehicle to improve workplace relationships may potentially link the effects of having fun at work with workplace relationships and other organisational variables may be fruitful. Managerial and supervisor support, and forming significant workplace relationships, have been found to be significant facets of organisational commitment (Dockel et al., 2006) and research has established affirming workplace relationships positively influence team climate (Glisson et al, 2008). Supplementary to this, team level climate has been linked to individual job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions (Glisson & James, 2002; Schulte et al., 2006).

In contrast to the positive impacts of healthy workplace relationships, previous research has found that interpersonal relationships (Dua, 1994; Michie1 & Williams, 2003), conflict with colleagues (Jackson & Clements, 2006) organisational politics and general working conditions (Dua, 1994; Godin et al., 2006; Michie1 & Williams, 2003) were the most significant stressors in the workplace. The effect of stress is organisationally global with several studies demonstrating that the experience of excessive stress in the workplace increases absenteeism, lowers job performance, lowers morale, increases organisational turnover (Conner & Douglas, 2005; Dua, 1994; Michie1 & Williams, 2003). Therefore, if fun is perceived to influence the management of stress, either directly or indirectly through more positive relationships, its value as an organisational intervention is important.

The systemic nature of these organisational factors suggests the construct of fun at work may have a number of reflexive benefits for both individuals and organisations. This brief overview highlights the interplay between these organisational factors;
however, to date employee perceptions, specifically in relation to the impacts of certain types of fun and the nominated organisational variables, have not been measured.

If fun is ultimately to be used as a valid organisational intervention, in addition to understanding the perceived impact of having fun at work on various organisational constructs, it seems prudent to have a rudimentary knowledge of what activities employees enjoy. Study 3 identified employees want to have more fun than they are currently experiencing. Therefore, utilising the domain of fun activities identified in Study 1, the specific types of fun employees enjoy can be investigated. In addition, it is unknown whether organisational status, such as being a manager, influences preferences for types of fun or perceived organisational impacts of participating in fun events and therefore this will be a supplementary investigative area.

The current study aims to investigate employees’ perceived enjoyment and outcomes of participating in the fun activities identified in relation to job satisfaction, stress reduction, efficiency and workplace relationships. This exploration will encompass both the attitudes of the participant, and their perceived manager’s attitudes.

Research Questions

Research Q8: What activities from the domain of having fun at work are perceived as most enjoyable?

The frequencies obtained in Study 1, chapter 4 in this research program indicated that females reported team building as fun activities more frequently than males, and males reported office games as fun events more frequently than females. Thus, consistent with these results it is predicted that;
Hypothesis 8a; Females will report enjoying team building to a greater degree than male participants.
Hypothesis 8b; Males will report enjoying office games to a greater degree than female participants.

The influence of supervisory status is unknown at this point; however, levels of responsibility experienced in organisations by those in management roles would suggest that having fun at work may be more important to those with less responsibility, therefore;

Hypothesis 8c; Participants will report greater enjoyment of fun activities than they perceive their manager to.

Research Q9: Is participating in fun activities perceived to positively influence stress management, job satisfaction, workplace effectiveness and workplace relationships?

As previously discussed, anecdotal reports suggest having fun at work has a highly positive impact in a range of areas including job satisfaction, stress management, workplace effectiveness, often as a result of improved workplace relationships. Results presented in Study 3 of this program indicated that having fun at work is generally perceived to benefit workplace relationships particularly for females, assist in managing stress to a high degree and contribute to workplace effectiveness to a moderately high degree. Furthermore, given the additional responsibilities and expectations of those in management roles, it is anticipated that having fun at work will be perceived to have a more positive impact on the nominated organisational variables by employees, in contrast to their perceptions of their managers. Therefore, it is hypothesised that;
Hypothesis 9a; Participants will report participating in fun activities assists in managing stress to a high degree.
Hypothesis 9b; Female participants will report the management of stress being influenced by fun to a greater degree than male participants.
Hypothesis 9c; Participants will report fun activities assist in managing stress to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.
Hypothesis 9d; Participants will report fun activities increasing job satisfaction to a high degree.
Hypothesis 9e; Participants will report fun activities increasing job satisfaction to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.
Hypothesis 9f; Participants will report all fun activities assist getting work done more effectively to a moderately high degree.
Hypothesis 9g; Participants will report fun activities assist in getting work done more effectively to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.
Hypothesis 9h; Participants will report all fun activities contribute to positive workplace relationships to a high degree.
Hypothesis 9i; Female participants will report workplace relationships being influenced by fun to a greater degree than male participants.
Hypothesis 9j; Participants will report fun activities impact on positive workplace relationships to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.

Method

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 36 males and 103 females (N=139). Their ages ranged from 22 years old to 63 years old (M=42.2, SD=9.41). One hundred and eleven of the participants (77%) nominated they supervised other staff in their day to day role. Three groups of participants were recruited for this study. One group were recruited during management training courses conducted in geographical settings along the east coast of Australia in a private health care setting (n=100). All participants were human service workers including nurses, administrators, ward assistants and human resource personnel. A second group of participants were recruited during counsellor training (n=10) consisting of psychologists, welfare workers and social workers. The final group were recruited utilising collegial contacts (n =29). The occupations of these
participants were all human service workers including psychologists, accountants and administration workers.

Instrument

Utilising the 15 items identified as representing the domain of fun at work for everyone in Study 1 of this research program, a new survey instrument was developed. Using a 7 point Likert-type rating scale (1=not at all, 7=very much), the questionnaire investigated participant’s perceived enjoyment and perceived impact of the domain of fun activities on organisational variables identified in anecdotal literature, specifically;

1. This activity lowers my stress.
2. This activity increases my job satisfaction.
3. This activity helps get the work done more effectively.
4. This activity adds to positive workplace relationships (see Appendix D; Impact of fun at work questionnaire).

The constructed questionnaire had a dual focus, collecting data from two perspectives; the first was the participant’s perceptions of enjoyment and impact of the prescribed activities (Part A) and the second section (Part B) recorded the participant’s perceptions of their supervisor’s attitudes to fun at work.
Procedure

Three separate processes were utilised to collect data for this questionnaire. In the management training course, the questionnaire was administered by a pencil and paper survey as a voluntary activity, completed by participants within the training context and returned to the facilitator, resulting in a return rate of 100%. The facilitator returned the completed questionnaire to the researcher. The second group of participants, who were attending counselling training, completed the questionnaire at lunch time with a return rate of 90%. The third group were emailed the questionnaire, completed a word document and emailed results to the researcher. All participants received an instructions document outlining that the focus of the study was to investigate different experiences in order to understand the types of activities people perceive are fun at work and their subsequent impact. Only respondents who completed both sections of the instrument were included in the sample (See Appendix D; Instructions for Impact of fun at work questionnaire).

Results

Structure of analysis

Electronic data for all surveys was collected and stored in Microsoft Access databases. This data was then transferred to Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 15.0 which was used for data analysis. Any substantially incomplete questionnaires, such as Part B not being completed, were removed from the data set. Additional data screening analysis revealed no substantial missing data in any surveys, with any missing data points being replaced by an individual mean score. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001)
stated that, in the absence of other information, the mean is the best approximation of the value of a variable. All data were checked for errors using frequencies and descriptives.

Given the exploratory nature of this research program, it was decided to analyse fun activity data both individually (15 variables) and in neighbourhood clusters established in Study 2 of this research program. Table 29 presents the 15 activities grouped into neighbourhood clusters. Analysis on an individual activity basis, while allowing for greater detail, also introduced greater likelihood of inflation of the overall Type I error rate when exploring differences between groups. In order to control for Type I error a two fold approach was used; significance levels of p<.01 were applied when all 15 activities were used as independent variables.

Table 29

Fun at work activities grouped in neighbourhood clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood cluster</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Humour and play</td>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour, humorous emails, acting silly, office games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Informal socialising</td>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences, helping organise events, get-togethers, easy-going environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Formal socialising</td>
<td>Catered functions, sporting events, informal drinks, social outings, and celebrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Organisational events</td>
<td>Teambuilding, workshops.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, independent t-tests were used as the initial analysis in relation to gender and supervisory status, as discrete dependant variables in order to allow the largest data set possible. If differences between groups were reported as significant, then
between group ANOVA’s were performed to provide more detailed results, once again using a significance level of p<.01, taking into account the uneven cell sizes.

The rationale for utilising the neighbourhood clusters as descriptors in this study, in contrast to the dimensional categories used in Study 3 was three fold. Firstly, the neighbourhood clusters were efficient in reducing the 15 fun activities to four items with the cluster being equally representative of the type of fun activity; secondly, the neighbourhood clusters more commonly represent types of activities described in anecdotal literature, potentially aiding in both the application of these results in the workplace and the comparison of findings with those described in anecdotal literature; and finally, the dialectical nature represented in the two dimensions would have made it difficult to accurately represent the uniqueness of activity type when reporting the impact of each organisational variable.

Enjoyment levels of fun at work

Research Q8: What activities from the domain of having fun at work are perceived as most enjoyable?

In general, participants described their enjoyment of engaging in fun activities at work to a moderately high degree (M=4.52, SD=.85; See Table 30). The individual responses ranged from 1-7 for most activities, indicating that some participants reported they did not like specific activities at all, in contrast to those participants who rated the same activity as their favourite. The activities that participants reported as enjoying the most were Easy going work environment (M=5.80, SD=1.24), Sharing jokes and humour (M=5.60, SD=1.32), Workshops and training (M=5.37, SD=1.28) and Chatting
and sharing experiences ($M=5.36$, $SD=1.23$). The activities reported by participants to be enjoyed the least were Sporting activities with work colleagues ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.73$) and Office games ($M=3.31$, $SD=1.76$).

Table 30

Levels of enjoyment; mean ratings in relation to fun activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I enjoy participating in...</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=139</td>
<td>N=36</td>
<td>N=103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Non-supervisor</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easygoing work environment</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social and celebratory events</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get together in the workplace</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered functions</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised socialising outside of work time</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1= not at all, 7= very much
Independent samples t-test were conducted to compare reported levels of enjoyment of each activity for gender, with results indicating two of the activities reaching significance. There was a statistically significant small to moderated main effect for gender in relation to *Special celebration events* with females reporting significantly higher enjoyment of participating in special celebrations than did males [male $M = 4.45, SD = 1.46$; female $M = 5.15, SD = 1.59$; $t(137) = -2.66, p = 0.009$; partial eta squared $= 0.049$ (Cohen, 1988)]. A second statistically significant difference was found in relation to reported enjoyment of *Helping organise events*, once again with females reporting higher levels of enjoying this activity [male $M = 3.48, SD = 1.29$; female $M = 4.25, SD = 1.79$; $t(137) = -2.72, p = 0.008$]. The magnitude of these differences were medium (eta squared $= 0.08$). These results, therefore, do not support hypothesis 8a or 8b.

Independent samples t-test were conducted to compare reported levels of enjoyment of each activity for supervisory status, with results indicating one fun activity reaching significance. The difference in reported enjoyment of *Office games* was statistically significant between supervisors and non-supervisors, with non-supervisors reporting enjoying *Office games* more than supervisors [supervisor $M = 3.10, SD = 1.77$; non-supervisor $M = 4.29, SD = 1.52$; $t(137) = -2.86, p = 0.006$]. The magnitude of difference was large (eta squared = 0.15).
Table 31

*Mean ratings of enjoyment of domain of activities presented in neighbourhood cluster groupings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I enjoy participating in..</th>
<th>Total sample N=139</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood cluster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour and play</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal socialising</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal socialising</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational events</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale 1= not at all, 7=very much*

When activities were combined into neighbourhood clusters, a visually clear pattern emerged indicating that *Organisational events* and *Informal socialising* were reported as the most enjoyed types of activities with *Humour and play* reported as the least enjoyed (See Table 31). Independent samples t-tests for gender and supervisory status identified a statistically significant small to medium main effect for supervisory status in relation to the humour and play cluster, with non-supervisors reporting significantly higher enjoyment of participating in humour and play activities than did supervisors [supervisor $\bar{M}= 4.10$, $SD= 1.17$; non-supervisor $\bar{M}= 4.65$, $SD= 1.25$; $t(137)=-2.21$, $p=.028$; Eta squared = .034].
Perceived managers enjoyment of fun activities

Hypothesis 8c: Participants will report greater enjoyment of fun activities than they perceive their manager to.

The mean reported scores of participants’ perceptions of their manager’s views on activities that are fun at work, were consistently lower than their own views. A paired sample t-test of the summed reported ratings for all the activities, comparing participants reported enjoyment of activities and their perceptions of their managers’ enjoyment, reached significance at a p<.05 level with a small to moderate effect size [participants M=4.60, SD=0.73; perceptions of their manager M=4.43, SD=0.90; t(138)=2.37, p<.019; Eta squared =.04]. These results provide support for Hypothesis 8c that workers perceive that their managers enjoy fun at work activities less than they do.

Furthermore, the sample was split into supervisors and non-supervisors in order to explore whether more senior managers are perceived to enjoy fun less than those with less supervisory status. A paired sample t-test of summed activity ratings indicated that those in supervisory roles had statistically significantly more negative views of their managers’ enjoyment of fun activities (participants M=4.55, SD=0.71 perceptions of their manager M=4.35, SD=0.91; t(110)=2.77, p=.007). These results may indicate the more senior you become in management, the less you perceive your manager to enjoy engaging in fun at work. In contrast, those in non-supervisory roles did not perceive their immediate supervisors to enjoy fun less than themselves [participants M=4.77, SD=0.76; perceptions of their manager M=4.74, SD=0.82; t(27)=-.05 p=.959], adding some merit to the previous suggestion that higher level managers are perceived to enjoy fun at work less.
A series of paired sample t-tests, testing each neighbourhood cluster separately indicated the only significantly perceived differences in enjoyment of fun at a cluster level was in the *Humour and play* cluster, with participants rating their enjoyment of humour and play (M=4.21, SD=1.21) at a higher level than they perceived their manager to (M=3.80, SD=1.28). A small effect size was calculated [ t(137)=3.15, p=.002; Eta squared = .01].

To investigate the data fully, further paired samples t-tests in relation to perceptions of supervisors were conducted using the individual activities, with several activities reaching significance. The differences between participants enjoying *Sharing jokes and humour* [participants M=5.58, SD=1.33 perceptions of their manager M=5.02, SD=1.35 t(138)=.488, p<.001], *Acting silly* [participants M=3.88, SD=1.63 perceptions of their manager M=3.43, SD=1.72 t(138)=2.99, p=.003] and an *Easygoing environment* [participants M=5.79, SD=1.25 perceptions of their manager M=5.35, SD=1.25 t(138)=3.87, p<.001] all reached significance. Further analysis indicated no statistically significant differences were identified between the groups in relation to gender or supervisory status on any of the 15 activities.

In summary, these results indicate that fun activities were reported to be enjoyed by participants at a moderately high level, in particular being able to have an *Easy going work environment*, *Sharing jokes and humour* and attending *Workshops and training*. The activities reported by participants to be enjoyed the least were *Sporting activities with work colleagues* and *Office games*. Female participants reported enjoying *Special celebrations* and *Helping organise events* more than males, and those in non-supervisory roles enjoyed *Office games* more than supervisors. When exploring participants’
perceptions of their manager’s enjoyment of the fun activities, participants indicated that they enjoyed the fun activities more, specifically Sharing jokes and humour, Acting silly and having an Easygoing environment, than their managers did, particularly if they were supervisors themselves.

Research Q9: Is participating in fun activities perceived to positively influence stress management, job satisfaction, workplace effectiveness and workplace relationships?

Managing stress; Impact of fun at work

Hypothesis 9a; Participants will report participating in fun activities assists in managing stress to a high degree.
Hypothesis 9b; Female participants will report the management of stress being influenced by fun to a greater degree than male participants.

Overall the fun activities were perceived as lowering stress at a moderate level (M=4.29, SD=.81), providing some support to Hypothesis 9a, but not to the high degree expected (See Table 32). The activities that were reported to lower stress levels to a high degree were Easy going work environment (M=5.79, SD=1.38), Sharing jokes and humour (M=5.58, SD=1.38), Workshops and training (M=5.41, SD=1.26) and Chatting and sharing experiences (M=5.39, SD=1.23). Office games (M=3.26, SD=1.86) were reported as having the least impact on stress. Separate independent samples t-tests conducted on all activities indicated that there was no gender or supervisory differences in relation to the reported effect of managing stress therefore not providing support Hypothesis 9b.
### Table 32

**Participants mean responses of fun activities effects in lowering stress.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lowers my stress levels...</th>
<th>Total sample N=139</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor N=24</td>
<td>Non-supervisor N=12</td>
<td>Supervisor N=86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>5.58 1.33</td>
<td>5.12 1.67</td>
<td>5.33 1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>4.07 1.88</td>
<td>3.54 2.04</td>
<td>3.33 1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>3.88 1.63</td>
<td>3.87 2.32</td>
<td>4.00 1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>3.31 1.77</td>
<td>3.25 2.00</td>
<td>2.83 1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easygoing work environment</td>
<td>5.79 1.25</td>
<td>5.70 1.26</td>
<td>5.91 0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social and celebratory events</td>
<td>4.05 1.71</td>
<td>3.08 1.71</td>
<td>2.83 1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>5.39 1.23</td>
<td>5.20 1.44</td>
<td>5.16 1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the work place</td>
<td>4.87 1.35</td>
<td>4.66 1.60</td>
<td>4.00 1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered functions</td>
<td>4.71 1.55</td>
<td>3.95 1.78</td>
<td>3.91 1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>4.18 1.73</td>
<td>4.08 1.97</td>
<td>3.83 1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>3.03 1.75</td>
<td>2.95 1.60</td>
<td>3.00 1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised socialising outside of work time</td>
<td>3.67 1.81</td>
<td>3.16 1.65</td>
<td>3.16 1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>4.97 1.36</td>
<td>4.70 1.92</td>
<td>3.75 1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>4.97 1.58</td>
<td>4.91 1.38</td>
<td>4.75 0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>5.41 1.26</td>
<td>4.58 1.44</td>
<td>4.75 0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale 1= not at all, 7=very much*

Combining activities into cluster groups, the most frequently reported fun activity type was *Informal socialising* ($M=4.78$, $SD=0.97$). Independent samples t-tests indicated that there were no significant differences between gender or supervisory status in relation to the reported impact on management of stress and type of clustered activity (See Table 33).
Table 33

Mean ratings of fun cluster activities impact on capacity to lower stress levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lowers my stress levels</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Non-supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=139</td>
<td>N=24</td>
<td>N=12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood cluster</td>
<td>M=4.24</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour and play</td>
<td>SD=1.34</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal socialising</td>
<td>M=4.78</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD=0.97</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal socialising</td>
<td>M=3.82</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD=1.41</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational events</td>
<td>M=4.62</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD=1.44</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1 = not at all, 7 = very much

Hypothesis 9c; Participants will report fun activities assist in managing stress to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.

A paired sample t-test compared the participants’ summed perceptions with the summed perception of their managers’ views in relation to all of the prescribed fun activities’ impact on lowering stress. Although participants reported their supervisors perceived the fun activities as assisting with managing stress slightly more than they did, results indicated there were no significant differences [participants M=4.37, SD=0.94; perceptions of their manager M=4.44, SD=1.03; t(138)=-.610, p=.543]. Results of separate, repeated paired t-tests utilising the neighbourhood clusters also indicated no significant differences in reported views of participants and their perceptions of their managers in relation to lowering stress.

Examining the activities at an individual level, however, did reveal several significant differences. Paired sample t-tests on individual activities indicated significant
differences between the participants’ reported view and their perception of their manager in relation to the impact of an *Easygoing work environment* [participants $M=5.92$, $SD=1.15$; perceptions of their manager $M=5.42$, $SD=1.30$; $t(138)=3.41$, $p<.001$] and *Helping organise events* [participants $M=3.46$, $SD=1.64$; perceptions of their manager $M=4.20$, $SD=1.53$; $t(138)=-3.70$, $p<.001$] on lowering stress. These results indicate that participants perceived an Easy going work environment had more impact on lowering stress than they perceive their manager to believe. In contrast, participants reported Helping organise events had less impact on lowering stress than they perceived their manager to believe. In light of these results, perceptions are that managers may need to be aware of the importance of an easy going work environment, but that having employees help organise events may not add to stress management. No significant differences were found in relation to gender or supervisory status between participants’ reported views and perceptions of their managers’ beliefs.

Summing up, fun work activities were reported to lower stress to a moderate degree. The group of activities reported to lower stress to the highest degree were *Informal socialising*. Individual activities rated highly to lower stress were having an Easygoing work environment, being able to Share jokes and humour, attend fun Workshops and training and Chatting and sharing experiences with colleagues. These results were consistent across gender and supervisory status. Perceptions relating to management attitudes of the impact of fun activities were similar to participants’ own, with the exception of an Easygoing environment being perceived by participants as more significant than they believed their managers thought. Inversely, participants
reported managers thought helping organise events had more impact on lowering stress than they did themselves.

*Job satisfaction; Impact of fun at work*

Hypothesis 9d; Participants will report fun activities increasing job satisfaction to a high degree.

Overall, fun at work activities were reported to have a moderate impact on increasing job satisfaction ($M=4.12, SD=0.91$), bolstering support for this hypothesis but not quite meeting expectations. *Easy going work environment* ($M=5.89, SD=1.21$) and *Workshops and training* ($M=5.41, SD=1.26$) were reported to increase participants’ job satisfaction in the high range.

*Sporting activities* with work colleagues ($M=2.81, SD=1.84$) and *Office games* ($M=2.97, SD=1.94$) were perceived to have the least influence on job satisfaction.

Independent samples t-tests in relation to gender and supervisory status found no significant differences between the groups at a $p<.01$ level for any of the prescribed fun activities in relation to increasing job satisfaction.

When activities were combined into neighbourhood clusters, a clear visual pattern emerged indicating *Organisational events* were the group of activities that reported the highest impact in relation to increased job satisfaction ($M=5.08, SD=1.43$) (See Table 35). Independent samples t-tests for gender identified a statistically significant small to medium main effect in relation to the *Informal socialising* cluster, with females reporting significantly higher perception of the impact of informal socialising on increased job satisfaction than did males [female $M=4.70, SD=1.12$; male $M=4.22, SD=1.33$; $t(137)=-2.11, p=.037$; Eta squared = .030] (See Table 34). No
statistical differences were found in relation to supervisory status and the neighborhood clusters for the job satisfaction variable.

Table 34

**Participants mean responses in relation to the impact of fun activities on increasing job satisfaction.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increases my job satisfaction</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=139</td>
<td>N=36</td>
<td>N=103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=24</td>
<td>N=12</td>
<td>N=86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>4.83 1.86</td>
<td>4.65 2.05</td>
<td>3.66 1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>3.23 1.95</td>
<td>3.34 1.79</td>
<td>3.75 2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>3.48 1.83</td>
<td>3.43 1.82</td>
<td>3.66 2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>2.97 1.94</td>
<td>3.04 1.94</td>
<td>3.66 2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easygoing work environment</td>
<td>5.89 1.21</td>
<td>5.91 1.08</td>
<td>6.33 1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social and celebratory events</td>
<td>3.76 1.83</td>
<td>2.86 1.60</td>
<td>3.83 1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>4.90 1.55</td>
<td>3.95 2.14</td>
<td>4.25 1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the work place</td>
<td>4.58 1.58</td>
<td>3.39 1.61</td>
<td>3.91 1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered functions</td>
<td>4.09 1.71</td>
<td>3.73 1.93</td>
<td>4.08 1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>3.67 1.83</td>
<td>2.69 1.91</td>
<td>2.33 1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>2.81 1.84</td>
<td>3.17 1.94</td>
<td>2.16 1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised socialising outside of work time</td>
<td>3.31 1.82</td>
<td>3.91 1.99</td>
<td>3.58 1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>4.36 1.81</td>
<td>5.13 1.74</td>
<td>4.50 2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>4.89 1.65</td>
<td>5.30 1.25</td>
<td>5.50 1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>5.41 1.26</td>
<td>4.65 2.05</td>
<td>3.66 1.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale 1= not at all, 7=very much*
Table 35

Participants mean perception ratings of fun cluster activities impact capacity to increase job satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increases my job satisfaction</th>
<th>Total sample N=139</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor N=24</td>
<td>Non-supervisor N=12</td>
<td>Supervisor N=86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood cluster</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour and play</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal socialising</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal socialising</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational events</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1 = not at all, 7 = very much

Hypothesis 9e; Participants will report fun activities increasing job satisfaction to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.

Results of a paired samples t-test on the participants’ summed activity scores in relation to both their perceptions of fun activities increasing job satisfaction and their perception of their managers views found no significant differences between the two groups [participants M=4.29, SD=0.97; perceptions of their manager M=4.34, SD=1.01].

Using the neighbourhood categories, separate paired samples t-test between self rating and perception of manager attitude in relation to increased job satisfaction found a significant difference, with a small to moderate effect between the two ratings for both Informal socialising and Formal socialising activity groups. Participants reported their own perception of the impact of Informal socialising [participants M=4.58, SD=1.19; perceptions of their manager M=4.79, SD=1.24, t(138)=−2.07, p=.040; Eta squared =
and Formal socialising \( \text{participants } M=3.65, \text{SD}=1.45; \text{perceptions of their manager } M=3.91, \text{SD}=1.33, t(138)=-2.51, p<.01; \text{Eta squared } = 0.40 \) in relation to increasing job satisfaction was lower than they perceived their managers’ attitude to be. These results indicate that participants believe managers think that both Informal and Formal socialising have a greater capacity to increase job satisfaction than they themselves believe.

Overall, these results suggest that increases in job satisfaction are reported to occur when employees are able to have an *Easygoing work environment*, be able to attend fun *Workshops and training* and engage in *Chatting and sharing experiences*. Being able to engage in informal types of fun were significantly important in relation to job satisfaction for females, in contrast to males. Complimentary to this, it appears that employees perceive that managers think both formal and informal socialising have more of an impact on increased job satisfaction than employees do.

**Impact of having fun at work on getting work done more effectively**

Hypothesis 9f: Participants will report all fun activities assist getting work done more effectively to a moderately high degree.

Overall, ratings from participants indicated that their perception of participating in fun activities had a slightly more than neutral impact on getting work done effectively \( M=3.90, \text{SD}=0.98 \) therefore not providing support for Hypothesis 9e. However, some individual activities were perceived as having a very positive impact on getting work done effectively (See Table 36).
Table 36

Participants mean responses in relation to the impact of fun activities on getting work done more effectively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helps get the work done more effectively,…</th>
<th>Total sample N=139</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easygoing work environment</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>6.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social and celebratory events</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>4.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the work place</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered functions</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised socialising outside of work time</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1= not at all, 7=very much

Participants rated an *Easy going work environment* (M=5.59, SD=1.35)

*Workshops and training* (M=5.58, SD=1.23) and *Team building activities* (M=5.28, SD=1.45) all as highly contributing to the participant in getting work done more effectively. In general, more socially focused activities were less highly rated, but *Chatting and sharing experiences* (M=4.61, SD=1.62) and *Get together in the work*
place (M=4.48, SD=1.58) were still above the median. Humorous emails (M=2.97, SD=1.70) and Office games (M=2.84, SD=1.64) were seen to have little influence on getting work done more effectively. Independent samples t-test for gender and supervisory status in relation to the individual activities did not find any significant differences between groups in relation to the impact of fun activities on getting work done more effectively.

When activities were compressed into neighbourhood clusters, results clearly indicated that fun Organisational events were the most highly rated as impacting on getting work done more effectively (M=5.46, SD=1.19) and Humour and play activities were rated as having the least impact (M=3.39, SD=1.26; See Table 37). Separate independent t-tests indicated no significant differences between either gender or supervisory status in relation to perceptions of fun activity clusters impacting on working more effectively.

Table 37

Mean participant rating of getting work done more effectively grouped in neighbourhood cluster activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood cluster</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=139</td>
<td>N=36</td>
<td>N=12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Non-</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=24</td>
<td>supervisor</td>
<td>N=86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps get the work done more effectively...</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour and play</td>
<td>3.39 1.26</td>
<td>3.23 1.28</td>
<td>3.79 1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal socialising</td>
<td>4.59 1.10</td>
<td>4.43 1.07</td>
<td>4.87 0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal socialising</td>
<td>3.42 1.27</td>
<td>3.32 1.27</td>
<td>3.00 1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational events</td>
<td>5.46 1.19</td>
<td>5.36 1.09</td>
<td>5.16 1.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1= not at all, 7=very much
Hypothesis 9g: Participants will report fun activities assist in getting work done more effectively to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.

When reviewing participants’ perceptions of managers’ attitudes in relation to the impact of fun activities on getting work done more effectively, results provide support for Hypothesis 9f, finding participants perceived their managers think engaging in fun activities contributes less to getting the work done more effectively than participants believed themselves, but not to a significant level [participants \(M=4.22\), \(SD=0.87\); perceptions of their manager \(M=4.15\), \(SD=0.95\)].

A series of paired samples t-test utilising neighbourhood cluster groupings identified two significant differences between participant attitudes and their perception of their manager’s attitude in relation to getting the work done more effectively. Participants self-report of the use of *Humour and play* [participant \(M=3.39\), \(SD=1.26\); perceptions of their manager \(M=3.14\), \(SD=1.28\) \(t(138)= 2.62, p<.01\); Eta squared = .047] and *Formal socialising* [participant \(M=3.64\), \(SD=1.26\) perceptions of their manager \(M=3.42\), \(SD=1.27\) \(t(138)= 2.30, p=.023\); Eta squared = .036] were lower than their perceptions of their managers in relation to the impact of getting the work done more effectively. Further testing reported no significant differences between gender or supervisory status on this paired variable. These results suggest that participants believe that humour and play activities and formal socialising have more of an impact on getting work done more effectively than they perceived their manager to.

In summary, perceptions relating to the impact of having fun and getting work done more effectively suggest that the *type* of fun activity is a key component. Organisational activities were reported to have the highest impact on getting work done more effectively, in contrast to the other neighbourhood cluster activities that were
perceived to have little more than a neutral effect. Individual activities such as the opportunity to have an *Easy going work environment*, attend fun *Workshops and training* and *Team building activities* were all rated as having a highly positive impact on working effectively. Current results also suggest participants believe their managers think fun activities contribute to getting the work done more effectively to a lesser extent than they do, particularly in the area of humour and play activities and formal socialising.

**Workplace relationships; Impact of having fun at work**

Hypothesis 9h: Participants will report all fun activities contribute to positive workplace relationships to a high degree.

Current results indicate participants’ reported workplace relationships as being moderately positively influenced by participating in fun activities ($M=4.79$, $SD=0.77$), providing partial support for Hypothesis 9h (See Table 38). However, a number of activities were nominated as having a high impact on positive workplace relationships, including having an *Easy going work environment* ($M=5.89$, $SD=1.03$), *Sharing jokes and humour* ($M=5.61$, $SD=1.25$), *Team building activities* ($M=5.61$, $SD=1.25$), *Special celebrations* ($M=5.51$, $SD=1.16$), *Organised socialising out of work time* ($M=5.38$, $SD=1.31$), and *Sporting activities* ($M=5.12$, $SD=1.41$). The activities perceived to add least to workplace relationships were *Office games* ($M=3.54$, $SD=1.82$) and *Catered functions* ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.75$)
Table 38

Participants mean responses to the effect of fun activities on workplace relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adds to positive workplace relationships</th>
<th>Total sample N=139</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor N=24</td>
<td>Non-supervisor N=12</td>
<td>Supervisor N=86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easygoing work environment</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>5.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social and celebratory events</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and sharing experiences</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get togethers in the workplace</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catered functions</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised socialising outside of work time</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building activities</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops and training</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale 1 = not at all, 7 = very much

Hypothesis 9i: Female participants will report workplace relationships being influenced by fun to a greater degree than male participants.

Independent samples t-test were conducted to compare reported levels of the positive effects of workplace relationships of each activity for gender. Two activities reached significance, with females reporting significantly higher impact of *Helping organise events* on positive workplace relationships than did males (males $M=3.91$,
There was also a statistically significant small to moderate main effect for gender in relation to *Special celebration events* with females reporting special celebrations as events impacting on positive workplace relationships to a greater extent than males [males $M=4.60$, $SD=1.57$; females $M=5.30$, $SD=1.32$; $t(137)= -2.60$, $p<.01$; $\eta^2=.04$].

Two separate 2X2X1 (gender X supervisory status) two-way ANOVA’s failed to reach significance at a $p<.01$ level in relation to *Helping organise events* and *Special celebration events*. Overall, these results, while providing some degree of support for Hypothesis 9i, fail to support it.

Examining supervisory status, independent samples t-tests indicated a statistically significant moderate main effect in the reported perceptions of the impact of *Office games* [supervisors $M=3.31$, $SD=1.82$; non-supervisors $M=4.42$, $SD=1.59$; $t(137)= -2.95$, $p=.004$; $\eta^2=0.06$] on workplace relationships, with results indicating non-supervisors perceived office games as having a greater impact on positive relationships than did supervisors. A 2x2x1 (gender X supervisory status) ANOVA failed to reach significance at a $p<.01$ level in relation to Office games.

When activities were combined into neighbourhood clusters, results indicated both *Organisational events* ($M=5.44$, $SD=1.08$) and *Informal socialising* ($M=5.31$, $SD=0.87$) were reported to have a high level of impact on adding to positive workplace relationships (See Table 39). Separate independent samples t-test comparing gender and the four neighbourhood activity clusters indicated one difference between the groups in relation to perceptions of impact on positive workplace relationships. There was a statistically significant small to moderate main effect between gender in relation to
reported perceptions of the impact of Informal socialising activities on positive workplace relationships, indicating females felt informal socialising had a more positive effect on workplace relationships than males [male $M=4.35$, $SD=1.11$; females $M=4.85$, $SD=1.17$; $t(137)=-2.20$; $p=.029$; Eta squared = .03]. Independent samples t-test results indicated no significant differences in supervisory status in relation to the impact of the neighbourhood activities and perceived positive workplace relationships.

Table 39

Effect of positive workplace relationships in relation to neighbourhood cluster activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adds to positive workplace relationships</th>
<th>Total sample N=139</th>
<th>Male N=36</th>
<th>Female N=103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor N=24</td>
<td>Non-supervisor N=12</td>
<td>Supervisor N=86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour and play</td>
<td>$M=4.30$, $SD=1.20$</td>
<td>$M=4.10$, $SD=1.12$, $M=4.58$, $SD=1.85$</td>
<td>$M=4.23$, $SD=1.19$, $M=4.71$, $SD=0.65$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal socialising</td>
<td>$M=5.31$, $SD=0.87$</td>
<td>$M=5.00$, $SD=0.73$, $M=5.50$, $SD=0.85$</td>
<td>$M=5.28$, $SD=0.90$, $M=5.75$, $SD=0.74$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal socialising</td>
<td>$M=4.48$, $SD=1.18$</td>
<td>$M=4.35$, $SD=1.05$, $M=3.75$, $SD=1.44$</td>
<td>$M=4.56$, $SD=1.19$, $M=4.80$, $SD=0.84$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational events</td>
<td>$M=5.44$, $SD=1.08$</td>
<td>$M=5.39$, $SD=1.25$, $M=5.25$, $SD=1.33$</td>
<td>$M=5.48$, $SD=1.02$, $M=5.50$, $SD=1.06$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note; Scale 1= not at all, 7=very much

Hypothesis 9j: Participants will report fun activities impact on positive workplace relationships to a greater degree than they perceive their manager to.

A paired samples t-test of participants’ summed activity perceptions and summed perceptions of their managers’ attitudes in relation to fun activities adding to positive workplace relationships reported a statistical difference with a moderately large effect size [participants $M=4.88$, $SD=0.79$; perceptions of their manager $M=4.65$, $SD=1.06$].

248
SD = 0.85; t(138) = 4.27, p < .000; Eta squared = 0.11]. These results indicate participants
believe fun activities add to positive workplace relationships more than they perceive
their managers believe them to.

A series of paired samples t-test utilising neighbourhood cluster groupings
identified one significant difference between participant attitudes and their perception of
their manager’s attitude in relation to the impact of fun on positive workplace
relationships with a very large effect size. Participants’ self-report in relation to impact
of Humour and play on the effects of positive workplace relationships was significantly
higher than they perceived their managers attitude to be [participant M = 4.30, SD = 1.20;
perceptions of their manager M = 3.73, SD = 1.28 t(138) = 5.9, p < .000; Eta squared = 0.20].

In summary, participants reported that taking part in fun activities had a
moderately high degree of impact on positive workplace relationships. Activity
groupings that were identified as having substantial impact were Organisational events
and Informal socialising, with a number of specific activities also rating highly. These
included an Easy going work environment, Sharing jokes and humour, Team building
activities, Special celebrations, Organised socialising out of work time and Sporting
activities in ranked order. Females reported Informal socialising activities, Helping
organise events and Special celebrations contributed to positive relationships in the
workplace more than males. To conclude, participants reported that engaging in fun
activities added to positive workplace relationships substantially more than they
perceive their managers believe them to.
Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the perceived enjoyment and outcomes associated with participating in fun activities specifically in relation to job satisfaction, stress reduction, efficiency and workplace relationships. Previously reported claims in anecdotal literature (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Weinstein, 1996; Lundin & Christensen, 2000) suggest there is a global positive impact of engaging in fun activities in the workplace. While the present findings lend direct support to these aspersions, particularly in relation to building positive workplace relationships, claims of having fun at work being perceived to impact highly in relation to job satisfaction, lowering of stress and workplace effectiveness have not been substantiated. Complimentary to this, current results confirm different types of fun activities are not only enjoyed more, but have different outcomes in relation to the organisational variables measured.

Overall, this study found the prescribed 15 fun activities were enjoyed by participants at a moderately high level, with a selection of activities reported as very highly enjoyed. The opportunity to have an *Easygoing work environment* was rated as the most highly enjoyed fun activity (e.g. having music playing, not being micro-managed, decorating one’s desk) closely followed by *Sharing jokes and humour*. The importance of the capacity to have control over one’s immediate work environment has been an important feature identified in this study. Although no specific links to previous research have been identified encompassing the physical environmental issues with autonomy and management issues, physical work spaces have been examined (Lindahl, 2004; May, Oldham, & Rathert, 2005), as have broad autonomy issues and their impacts.
(McShane & Travaglione, 2007). Potentially, the relationship between these issues of physical comfort and autonomy could be explored in further research. In addition to the highly rated levels of enjoying an easygoing work environment, these results provide support for the developing argument in this research program. This argument can be based on findings in Study 3 that suggest a relaxed, easy going environment is a very important component of the construct of having fun at work. In addition, it is possible that the item *Easygoing work environment* may have been interpreted to encompass an environment free of conflict.

Supplementing results of Study 3, where joking and bantering with colleagues was found to be an important feature contributing to the process of having fun, participants in this study reported highly enjoying sharing jokes and humour. These results can be interpreted in the light of previously established research in relation to the functions of humour in the workplace. Humour has been found to play a role in interpersonal connections, socialising new-comers and creating more trust between parties (Tracy et al. 2006) by providing ease of entry into groups and creating a sense of being part of the crowd (Vinton, 1989). The activity of humour and joking as a potential social lubricant has been identified in this study as highly enjoyable fun, possibly in light of the enjoyable social connections created during the process.

In contrast to these results, the *Humour and play* neighbourhood category was reported as the least enjoyed group of activities. These results suggest that while humour and play activities are perceived as similar types of activities as established in Study 2, they are not enjoyed to the same extent when having fun at work, with *Office games* and *Acting silly or playful* reported as not being particularly enjoyed.
A number of gender and supervisor status preferences were identified in relation to the enjoyment of some particular fun activities. Current results suggest females preferred *Special celebrations* and *Helping organise events* in contrast to males and future research may need to explore gender differences in more detail.

Supervisors were also found to enjoy office games less than non-supervisors, potentially a fairly predictable result given the responsibility of managers’ roles. Contrasting with these results, *perceptions of management attitudes* to the enjoyment of fun identified a number of significant differences, with staff perceiving they enjoy *Jokes and humour, Acting silly* and having an *Easygoing environment* more than their managers do. In addition, those in a management role, perceived their managers to enjoy fun significantly less than they did. However, comparing perceptions of management with actual supervisor ratings suggests there were very few differences between supervisors and non-supervisors in relation to their reported enjoyment of fun. These results in relation to perceptions of management attitudes toward the enjoyment of fun raise an additional area for future research.

Overall, *Organisational activities* and *Informal social events* were reported as the most enjoyable types of fun events. Previous research suggests greater participation and learning occurs if training is presented as fun (Lenz, 1987; Nierenberg, 1998; Savage, 1998; Stoney & Oliver, 1998) and workplace relationships have been found to be an important component of team climates (Schulte et al., 2006).

The enjoyment of informal socialising links clearly with current results indicating the perceived impact of engaging in fun activities overall was the most substantial for workplace relationships. The interplay of having fun and workplace
relationships is an important finding for this study. The impact of positive workplace relationships has been established in numerous studies (Broderick & Pearce, 2001; McNeely, 1998; Morrison, 2004; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995; Markiewicz et al., 2000; Sias & Cahill, 1998) and current findings suggest having fun is perceived as a highly effective way to contribute to the enhancement of workplace relationships. In addition, informal socialising has been recognised in the past decade as an important component in the organisational landscape. The social aspects of work, including feelings of relatedness, intimacy and interactions have been found to be important for well-being (Beehr, 1995; Dormann & Zapf, 1999) job satisfaction, motivation (Richer et al., 2002), organisational commitment (Major et al., 1995; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghhe, 2003; Tschan et al., 2004) and avoiding burnout (Kruger et al., 1994). Therefore, having fun at work may have systemic organisational impacts, beyond simply building better relationships.

While experiencing fun was perceived to make direct contributions to workplace relationships, the impact of fun on the additional organisational variables measured here were strongly mediated by the type of activity. These results provide some challenge to Podilchak’s (1991) argument that activity type is not necessarily an important feature of a fun event, suggesting at a minimum that activity type is a salient feature in relation to workplace outcomes. Current results suggest participating in Organisational events contributed most highly to job satisfaction, workplace relationships and getting work done more effectively. While the global merits of team building are still under scrutiny (McShane & Travaglione, 2007), the current results concur with Broderick & Pearce (2001) who reported creative, fun training enhanced team work and contributed to
achieving a range of other organisational goals such as improving morale, building trust and enhancing communication.

Complimentary to this, *Informal socialising* (i.e. chatting and sharing experiences, easy-going work environment) was perceived in this study to have the greatest impact on assisting with stress management and contributing to workplace relationships. These results support previous research that suggests socialising at work can contribute to the overall management of stress (Henderson & Argyle, 1985; Kruger et al., 1994) and that informal socialising potentially allows the opportunity for workplace relationships to be enhanced (Markiewicz et al., 2000; Morrison, 2004; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995; Sias & Cahill, 1998).

At an individual activity level, the opportunity to have an *Easygoing work environment* and attend fun *Workshops and training* were consistently reported as highly positively impacting all four organisational variables. As previously noted, the importance of a relaxed environment in the workplace was noted, and the benefits of fun training have previously been discussed providing support for previous research by Broderick and Pearce (2001).

*Sharing jokes and humour*, in conjunction with being reported to be enjoyable, was also identified as a strong contributor to lowering stress and adding to positive workplace relationships at a high level. These results support previous research findings suggesting positive humour can contribute to reducing burnout and lowering stress (Avtgis & Taber, 2006; Bennett, 1991; Tracy et al., 2006; Verger & MacRae, 1993; Wear et al., 2006). The influence of jokes and humour as a fun activity that enhances workplace relationships supports previous research findings suggesting positive and
expressive humour was used frequently by managers and subordinates to enhance their overall work environment and was found to influence organisational citizenship behaviours among peers (Martin et al., 2004). In addition, Rizzo et al. (1999) and Meyer (1997) found humour could play an important role in maintaining a positive organisational climate.

The final individual activity reported to have a consistently high impact on lowering stress and contributing to job satisfaction was *Chatting and sharing experiences*, identifying the feature of informal socialising that particularly contributed to these variables. Current results provide support to Henderson and Argyle (1985) who found in intimate or close friendships at work, stress was lowered by discussing personal feelings, with more personal conversations in times of high stress. Complimentary to this, they found with less intimate colleagues, friendly chatting and network support, but not personal conversations, were linked to a reduction in stress. In addition to literature on this topic, current results suggest that chatting as a form of fun to increase job satisfaction reflects extant research. Numerous previous studies have related positive social exchanges and the social aspects of work to job satisfaction (Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002; Bellman et al., 2003; Henderson & Argyle, 1985; Hodson, 1997; Major et al., 1995; Seetoon et al., 1996; Spector, 1997; Tschan et al. 2004).

The salience of gender was significant in relation to several organisational variables investigated. The impact of informal socialising in relation to both increasing job satisfaction and adding to positive workplace relationships was reported to a higher degree by females compared to males. Complimentary to this, females reported the
impact of helping organise events and special celebrations on workplace relationships to a higher degree than did males, providing further support for the inclusion of gender issues in further research.

When investigating supervisor status, there was only one significant difference between supervisors and non-supervisors for all four organisational variables, with non-supervisors perceiving office games to have a greater impact on workplace relationships than they perceived their supervisors to believe. These results suggest supervisory status is not a particularly salient feature in relation to the perceived impact of engaging in fun activities.

While supervisory status did not appear to influence perceptions in relation to the impact of fun activities, participants perceived management to have significantly different views to themselves in relation to certain types of events. By and large, participants reported management to have significantly more negative perceptions of the impact of fun activities in relation to getting work done more effectively and workplace relationships. In line with previous results, staff perceptions of management attitudes varied in accordance with specific activities. Staff perceived managers to have a significantly more negative view of the impact of an Easy going work environment on stress, and Humour and play activities and Formal socialising on getting work done more effectively than they did, indicating that staff view management as underestimating the positive impact of these activities. In contrast, staff perceived managers to have a more positive view of the impact of Organisational events on lowering stress, and Formal and Informal socialising on job satisfaction, suggesting that management view these activities as having a more positive outcome than do staff. In
contrast to these views, results here indicated very few significant differences between perceptions of supervisors and non-supervisors. In addition, it needs to be considered that there may well have been additional differences between supervisors and non-supervisors that were not identified due to the p<.01 significance level.

Taken as a whole, these results provide support to anecdotal accounts of fun at work having organisational influences, particularly in the area of improving workplace relationships. However, the claims of highly significant impacts of the organisational variables under scrutiny in anecdotal literature appear to be excessive in light of current results, particularly in relation to the direct impact of getting work done more effectively. Having said this, it is possible, as suggested in the introduction of this chapter, that the reflexive systemic interplay between the organisational variables measured here are above and beyond the individual impacts measured for each variable. The links between workplace relationships and job satisfaction are well established (Richer et al., 2002), as are the flow on effects to organisational commitment (Major et al., 1995) and employee turnover (Ahuja et al., 2007). In addition, there are also established links between workplace relationships and workplace performance (Harter et al., 2002; Ok Park et al., 2004). It seems, therefore, the impact of engaging in fun in the workplace may have interactive flow on effects and the effect of fun on work performance may have been under represented by only measuring the individual level of direct perception.

A main feature of these results is the important influence of the type of activity in association with the perceived enjoyment and organisational impact. Consistently, fun organisational events and informal socialising were found to have the most impact on the organisational variables investigated, in particular the opportunity to have an
easygoing work environment, share jokes and humour with colleagues, be able to chat and share experiences and attend fun workshops and training. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that generally activities that are considered fun at work are likely to have positive impacts on individuals and the workplace, with specific activities being enjoyed to differing degrees and different activities impacting on organisational variables to assorted degrees.

While the results in this study are statistically sound, valid, and closely representative of activities described in anecdotal literature, they provide only part of the picture of the impact of fun at work. Limitations in this current study are two fold in relation to sampling. While Study 2 established activity clusters that are useful common descriptors of fun activities, this research highlights that certain activities can have a variety of organisational impacts. Therefore, it is of value to conduct analysis at this detailed level to identify the minutiae existing between variables. Utilising a large volume of activities (15) in this current study, however, necessitated a significance level of $p<.01$ in order to avoid a Type 1 error. Given the medium sample size, this significance level may have excluded data that could have identified and potentially differentiated gender and supervisory status as groups. In addition, the current study was composed of a large number of female human service managers. While the sample is representative of the gender balance in the human service industry (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001), and each cell was large enough to report significant differences between gender and supervisory status (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), they were not large enough to accurately discern statistical differences between the four cells (i.e. male non-supervisors compared to female supervisors). Therefore, a contrasting sample consisting
of either more males and/or a larger balance of each group with participants employed in a variety of industries, may elicit further data to aid in a fuller understanding of the impact of fun at work.

The aim of the present study was to investigate the perceived enjoyment and outcomes associated with participating in fun activities, specifically in relation to job satisfaction, stress management, effectiveness and workplace relationships. This study found the prescribed 15 fun activities were enjoyed by participants at a moderate to high level, with a selection of activities reported as very highly enjoyed. Overall, organisational and informal social events were reported as the most enjoyable types of fun events, with the opportunity to have an easygoing work environment being rated as the most enjoyable discrete fun activity, closely followed by sharing jokes and humour. Results suggest participating in organisational events such as team building and fun training were perceived to contribute highly to job satisfaction, positive workplace relationships and getting work done more effectively. Informal socialising was perceived to have the greatest impact in relation to stress management and building workplace relationships. The opportunity to have an Easygoing work environment and attend fun Workshops and training were consistently reported as highly positively impacting all four organisational variables investigated. Sharing jokes and humour was also reported to impact on lowering stress and adding to positive workplace relationships and chatting and sharing experiences was perceived to have a consistently high impact on lowering stress and contributing to job satisfaction. The salience of gender was significant in relation to several organisational variables investigated, with females tending to prefer some activities in contrast to males. These results will be
compiled with Studies 1, 2 and 3 as the foundation for the integrated discussion in the following and final chapter.
CHAPTER 8
INTEGRATIVE DISCUSSION

The aim of this research program was two fold: to further define and differentiate the construct of fun at work, and to explore the perceived impact of having fun in the workplace. This final chapter will briefly outline the theory, knowledge and anecdotal aspersions that were present at the outset of this research program, present the results of the four studies encompassed here, and discuss the theoretical and practical relevance of these findings. Results from each research question will be addressed, linking relevant theory in order to construct a revised nomological net, locating fun in relation to humour and play in a work context in order to define and differentiate the construct of fun at work. Integrated in this discussion are the perceived implications of having fun at work. Implications for theory and practice will be discussed in the light of present results, and the strengths and limitations of this research program will be presented. This thesis will conclude with suggestions and implications for future research.

Fun at work; past to present in brief

My initial interest in the area of fun in the workplace was motivated by reports in the popular press suggesting prescriptive ways to have fun at work, coupled with claims of highly positive individual and organisational outcomes (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Hemsath, 2001; Lundin & Christensen, 2000; Sharp, 2008; Weinstein, 1996). It became clear these extensive claims, while regularly presented in the media, had never been empirically investigated. When reviewing the concept of fun in organisational contexts,
much of the existing research used three related constructs—humour, play and fun—interchangeably. The lack of differentiation between the constructs often resulted in fun being represented as a component or outcome of humour and/or play, rather than identifying fun as a construct with its own distinct features and process. Therefore, at the outset of this research program the construct of fun, let alone fun at work, had yet to be adequately differentiated and defined. The sole existing framework in relation to fun was located in sociological theory (Podilchak, 1985 & 1991). While several empirical studies have examined contextual issues relating to having fun at work (McDowell, 2005; Fleming, 2005) to date no published study has fully investigated the construct in an organisational setting. This gap in empirical literature provided the first aim of this study, which was to investigate the construct of fun in the workplace in order to distinguish fun from humour and play/playfulness. In order to begin to address this deficit, a range of research questions aimed at identifying the domain and underlying structures of fun were investigated, and subsequently the process of fun at work was examined utilising a 3P (presage, process and product) conceptual framework. The second aim of this research program was to locate fun in an organisational setting linking fun to a range of organisational constructs and variables. Exploring anecdotal literature related to having fun at work led to the development of the final research question which focused on investigating the perceived impact of having fun at work in relation to job satisfaction, stress management, workplace relationships and effectiveness.

The results from four studies conducted in this thesis, applying the 3P framework in order to deconstruct the process of fun and to develop a revised
nomological net, have provided data to more comprehensively understand the construct of fun at work. The present results found the domain of fun at work activities consisted of 15 distinct items, with a structural underpinning of four activity clusters and two contextual dimensions, contextual connections with others and activity structure and intensity. Applying the 3P framework to the process of fun, the present results suggest the experience of fun at work consists of being engaged in an activity that has an emotionally qualitative dimension, and is highly socially interactive. The organisational context for fun includes supportive management and colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non stressed environment. The participant reporting the fun event is usually in the role of contributor rather than observer, is highly engaged, and experiences amusement, laughter, flow and social connection. A significant increase in positive mood was one of several positive outcomes of having fun at work. While humour and play were at times reported as contributors to the experience of fun at work, this was not uniformly the case, bolstering the argument that fun appears to be a distinct construct. Finally, reported results in relation to the perceived products of having fun at work, provide partial support to anecdotal claims of the positive impacts on job satisfaction, managing stress, workplace relationships and effectiveness. However, these impacts were strongly mediated by the specific organisational variable being measured and the type of fun activity. In general, the impact of having fun at work on these organisational variables was perceived as moderate and not reported to the high levels claimed in the popular press.
Defining and differentiating the construct of fun at work

In order to study and appreciate the facets of fun in the workplace, a clear understanding of the domain and processes related to the construct is vital. Results from the studies in this research program have made considerable contributions to this quest, providing data to further define what fun is, including the domain of activities considered fun in the workplace, more fully understanding the features of the process of fun, and distinguishing what is not fun at work. In addition, results presented here inform the discussion in relation to the contribution of humour and play to reported experiences of fun in the workplace, providing support to the argument that fun is a related yet distinct construct. The following discussion outlines the findings of the present research program, integrating them with extant empirical and anecdotal literature.

What is considered fun at work?

Study 1 of this research program identified fifteen discrete fun activities nominated as fun for everyone and were found to be similar to many of the items derived by McDowell (2005). The identified domain of activities was replicated in Study 3 when exploring case vignettes of fun at work, with the addition of disparaging humour. The nominated fun activities were identified to be structurally represented by four neighbourhood clusters in Study 2: humour and play, informal socialising, formal socialising and organisational events. These clusters generally reflected activities commonly described in anecdotal literature as fun at work (Deal & Key, 1998; Hemsath
and provide a succinct group of activities to represent the domain.

The most frequently reported examples of fun activities in the workplace were informal get-togethers (e.g. morning tea, lunch), chatting and sharing experiences, sharing jokes and humour and team building activities. Mucking around play, humour, special celebrations and team building were the most frequently reported examples provided for case vignettes. In addition to these results, activities most frequently enjoyed were those in the neighbourhood clusters of organisational and informal social events. Therefore, the results of this series of studies suggest that having enjoyable fun at work for human service workers consists of informal socialising, plenty of mucking around and sharing of jokes. Stand out fun occasions were often special celebrations such as birthdays or Christmas parties, or organisational events such as team building days and fun workshops.

McDowell’s (2005) list of 48 items generated to represent fun activities at work when developing the Fun Climate Scale were very similar to the items generated in this study, with the exception of organisational activities such as team building and workshops. As previously suggested, the lack of inclusion of organisational activities in McDowell’s sample may have been due to the question she used to elicit the activities, with her study defining fun at work as; “…engaging in activities not specifically related to the job that are enjoyable, amusing or playful and that enhance organizational performance” (McDowell, 2005, Appendix A). Suggesting activities that are fun at work can not be specifically related to the job and that they require enhanced organisational performance may have prematurely provided an artificial boundary in relation to the
construct that was not presented in the current study. In contrast to McDowell’s (2005) results, two separate studies in this program established organisational activities as consistent contributors to the domain of fun at work. Organisational activities were frequently nominated as examples of fun in Study 1, were reported as the most enjoyed type of fun activity in Study 4, and were reported to add highly to both getting work done more effectively and workplace relationships. These results argue strongly for fun workshops and teambuilding occasions not to be overlooked as a valid mode of creating fun in the workplace, building in opportunities to socialise, play a little and share humour, with this series of studies suggesting organisational activities have a valid place in the domain of fun at work.

Gender was at times a salient feature of activity preference with females in Study 1 reporting team building activities as fun substantially more than males. In addition, Study 4 reported statistical differences between preferences of males and females in relation to special celebrations and helping organise events, with females enjoying these events to a higher degree in contrast to males. While similarities of preferences substantially outweighed differences, the salience of gender in relation to certain fun activities needs to be kept in mind for further research and application of current results. If indeed gender preferences for certain types of fun are significant, this could have important implications in the design of fun interventions in workplaces to ensure effective outcomes.

The relatively high standard deviations in relation to the individual activities throughout this series of studies indicate the variety of attitudes in relation to fun events. Present results replicate Abramis’ (1989a) findings that while specific fun events can be
highly enjoyed by one person, the same activity can equally be disliked by another, and vice versa. Overwhelmingly, the activities perceived as fun at work were interpersonal activities, although occasionally fun was reported to be experienced by a participant without another present, such as planning or playing computer games, suggesting fun is an interactive construct, but not necessarily always with other people. In light of current results, activities that can be considered fun at work consist of four clusters of events: humour and play, informal socialising, formal socialising and organisational events. Overall, informal and organisational events were found to be the most enjoyable types of fun at work activities.

**Underlying structural dimensions of fun at work**

To more comprehensively define the construct of fun at work, in addition to identifying the domain activities, it was also deemed important to systematically identify the underlying structure of the construct. Identifying dimensions or clusters would enable a fuller understanding in order to map one construct in relation to similar or related constructs, and potentially aid with application in the workplace.

The resultant neighbourhood clusters identified in Study 2 utilising MDS have already been noted as those that grouped the 15 activities into four clusters. In addition to these clusters, two distinct contextual dimensions were identified. The first dimension was represented by *contextual connections with others* and the second represented by *activity structure and intensity*. Hence, fun events can occur with social or organisational focus along one dimension, and be informed by planned or spontaneous context along a second dimension, with both dimensions’ dialectical nature. What does
this information indicate? Firstly, these dimensions could be used as an alternative to prescribing specific individual activities or clusters, viewing fun at work as contextual contrasts constituting four different types of contextual activities: socially spontaneous, socially planned, organisationally spontaneous, and organisationally planned. Additionally, viewing the fun experience through the dimensional lens incorporates the importance of contextual features, rather than simply prescribing discrete activities. The application of these dimensions was illustrated when the four categories were utilised in Study 3 to analyse case vignettes in relation to the process of fun. Results from this study suggested that while the four types of events shared similar processes, several differences were noted. Statistical differences were noted in relation to reported levels of coercion, with those nominating planned events feeling more coerced into participating, in contrast to those nominating spontaneous events. Complimentary to this, events nominated as either socially spontaneous or planned reported higher levels of shared experiences as a feature of the event, in contrast to those nominating organisational events where feeling together as a team was the most frequently nominated feature. Viewing fun through a dimensional lens allows the development of activities within organisational contexts to be informed by a combination of a contextual focus such as social or organisational frame, and an activity focus ranging from spontaneous to planned. In light of current results, one needs to be specifically mindful of organisational events potentially engendering higher levels of coercion and social and organisational events having features of different organisational outcomes for participants.
Understanding the process of having fun in the workplace

The overall process of fun at work was examined in this research program applying the 3P framework. The presage phase explored the organisational contextual conditions reported as facilitating the experience of having fun and the personal characteristics identified to engage in the fun event. The detailed process phase of the framework explores the activities identified as fun that have previously been discussed and the unique features of the fun event. The final phase of the framework explores the products of having fun at work including the impact on mood and a range of workplace variables investigated in Study 4.

Contextual conditions required for fun at work

Emerging themes from present results suggest the four most common environmental conditions required in order to have fun at work consist of supportive management, supportive colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non-stressed work environment. These results are both confirming and enlightening when compared to McDowell’s (2005) study on the development of a Fun Climate Scale. McDowell, using factor analysis as the methodology for scale development, and combining items containing environmental factors and fun activities, derived a three factor model of a fun workplace climate consisting of: (1) socialising with co-workers, (2) celebrating at work, and (3) global fun. McDowell’s items for the global fun factor consisted of: (1) This a fun place to work, (2) My direct supervisor seems to value fun, (3) This company has a fun atmosphere, (4) Most people here have fun at work, (5) The overall climate of my company is fun, and (6) My supervisor encourages fun. In line with McDowell, both
socialising and celebrating with colleagues were identified in the present studies within the domain of fun activities, with informal and formal socialising identified as neighbourhood clusters. The present findings suggest supportive management is a vital environmental feature for a positive context of fun, appearing to be similar to McDowell’s items of my supervisor values fun and my supervisor encourages fun in the factor of global fun. Current findings, however, expand features of a climate of fun to include the support of colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non-stressed work environment. These features may be embedded in McDowell’s results encompassed in items such as this is a fun place to work, this company has a fun atmosphere and the overall climate of the company is fun, but nonetheless, do need to be extrapolated to adequately understand the minutiae of fun workplace climates.

Current results describing the context of fun at work as supportive and occurring in a non-stress environment concurs with previous research by Podlichak (1985) who described fun as occurring in the context of relationship construction, where the event is reframed into a good time with other participants creating reciprocity and attachment to others in a relaxed, affective manner. Additionally, Abramis (1989b) suggests commitment by management, such as the condition identified as supportive management, is vital to the process of fun in the workplace. Finally, present results also align with factors that have been suggested in past literature identifying group cohesion, perceptions of belonging and trusting relationships as key contextual variables contributing to an environment conducive to fun at work (Fleming, 2005).

Overall, these results suggest conditions required to engage in fun in the workplace, such as collegial and management support, positive dynamics and a non-
stressed environment where socialising and celebrating can occur, reflect both extant research and popular literature in relation to fun climates as outlined. These conditions are also reflective of positive team climates (Luthans et al., 2008) and the relationship between positive team climates and the construct of fun at work will be discussed in detail further in this chapter.

**Personal characteristics of the fun participant**

An open state of mind, being happy, engaged, carefree, and playful were the reported characteristics of the participant prior to engaging in fun event, supporting Podilchak’s (1985) suggestion that an open mind is a key feature in engaging in fun. Participants describing organisational/planned events reported to be more highly engaged prior to the event than were respondents reporting planned/social events, suggesting the planning phase for some participants may be important in contributing to the fun process. In addition, a significant shift in engagement levels were reported from prior to the reported event to post the event, confirming Podilchak’s proposition that having fun in an engaging process. Supplementary to this, participants reported being more in the role of contributor rather than observer during their nominated event.

The contextual pattern emerging seems to suggest that the experience of fun requires features of a positive environment to occur, both at a team level and a personal level. In line with this, for some employees, participating in planning increases engagement prior to the event and merely participating in the fun engages others.
Features of fun events in the workplace

Three features emerged in existing literature as key factors in relation to the experience of fun, and fun at work; lack of coercion in participation (Fleming, 2005; Podilchak, 1991), flow (Abramis, 1990; Podilchak, 1991) and social connection (Podilchak, 1985). Participants in this study confirmed the importance of lack of coercion when engaging in the process of fun, although respondents did report feeling more coerced when reporting the process of planned, rather than social events.

Support was provided for the argument of flow being a feature of a fun experience. Flow was reported in case examples to a high degree, with spontaneous/social type activities reporting the highest levels. These results provide support to the argument that the experience of fun encapsulates many of the features of flow including intense concentration, a sense of being in control, loss of self consciousness and transformation of time (Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000).

The final factor suggested as a feature of fun was the social nature of fun in creating reciprocal and affective connections with others (Podilchak, 1985) through the socialising and celebrating process (McDowell, 2005). The distinct features of fun at work identified in this research program include high levels of laughter and amusement engendered by participating in a shared experience encompassed by being together as a team and sharing the experiences. The development of relationships as a feature of fun will be discussed in more detail as an outcome of the fun experience.

These findings provide support to the argument of fun in the workplace being an experience that is voluntary in nature, highly engaging at times creating moments of flow and is primarily a social process constructed by laughter and amusement.
Products of fun at work

The positive outcomes of fun, such as improved workplace relationships, managing stress, increasing job satisfaction and improved effectiveness have often been the focus of anecdotal literature (Abramis, 1990; Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; SHRM, 2002; Weinstein, 1996). Results from this series of studies, while providing support to the argument that there are a range of perceived benefits in engaging in fun activities at work, do not globally directly validate the high levels of organisational outcomes reported in the popular press; however, the indirect influences of some organisational variables may also be at play. Present results suggest the impact of having fun produces a range of perceived outcomes, varying from neutral to moderately high, with the type of activity being a strong mediator.

The impact of fun at work on mood

Individually, the experience of having fun at work was reported to contribute to a statistically significant positive shift in mood. These results can be seen not only as one of the most important features of the experience of fun, but need to be interpreted as a significantly noteworthy product of having fun. The importance of moods in the workplace was previously discussed in Chapter 6 in detail. In summary, positive moods have been found to influence thoughts and behaviours, build personal resources and contribute to psychological resilience (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988; Fredrickson, 2001; Harker and Keltner, 2001; Tugade & Fredrikson, 2004). Further to this, research has found that being in a good mood results in people seeing their experiences in a positive light, being more likely to feel positively toward co-workers, enhancing social
outlook and therefore being more likely to be social and helpful (Clark & Teasdale, 1985; Carlson et al., 1988; Forgas et al., 1984; Rosenhan et al., 1981). With the positive shift in mood established in this study, results provide preliminary support not only for the merits of having fun at work as a contribution to building positive affect, but to the potential organisational flow on effects of the levity state as described by Gostick and Christopher, (2008).

Workplace relationships and fun

Given social connection emerged as a theme in the process of having fun, it was not unexpected to note perceptions of improved workplace relationships were a key product of the process of having fun. These results provide support for anecdotal arguments that having fun results in the building of quality, trusting relationships (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Gostick & Christopher, 2008; Weinstein, 1996). Being part of a relaxed work environment where there is opportunity for joking and chatting during get-togethers, celebrations, and team building were described as being the strongest contributors to positively influencing workplace relationships. The features nominated during the investigation of the process of having fun were sharing, laughing and being creative. The qualitative outcomes of events were then described as being mutually shared and having good will directed toward others and participants reported that having fun contributed to them feeling like part of a team to a high level.

When exploring perceptions of the impact of having fun on workplace relationships, participants reported engaging in fun activities had a moderately high impact on positive workplace relationships. Organisational events and Informal
socialising were identified as having substantial impact on workplace relationships, with Easy going work environment, Sharing jokes and humour, Team building activities, Special celebrations, Organised socialising out of work time and Sporting activities also being perceived as highly influential.

It appears that the experience of having fun at work is perceived to have strong influences on workplace relationships both as an artefact of the process, and as an outcome, mediated at times by gender and the type of activity the participant was engaged in. These findings suggest having fun at work is perceived to have a direct significant influence on workplace relationships; however, there may also be additional organisational outcomes that occur above and beyond those directly experienced at the time. Prior research in the area of workplace relationships may assist in mapping the potential cascading effects of fun. On an individual level, previous research suggests the social aspects of work, including feelings of relatedness, intimacy and interactions have been found to be important for well-being (Beehr, 1995; Dormann & Zapf, 1999) job satisfaction, motivation (Richer et al., 2002), organisational commitment (Major et al., 1995; Stinglhamber & Vandenbergh, 2003; Tschan et al., 2004) and assisting in avoiding burnout (Kruger et al., 1994). Close and intimate relationships at work have been shown to be a valuable support when individuals are dealing with difficult issues both in their professional and personal life (Sias & Cahill, 1998). Additionally, a number of studies have reported positive social exchanges between employees lowered turnover and increased job satisfaction (Hodson, 1997; Major et al. 1995; Seetoon et al. 1996; Spector, 1997; Tschan et al. 2004). Research has also identified that employees consistently communicate more frequently with and give more information to those
whom they consider to be friends (Baldwin, Bedell & Johnson, 1997; Kilduff, 1992; Sias et al., 2003; Sias, 2005), therefore influencing the quality of organisational communication (Wheatley, 2001). Clearly, positive workplace relationships have a pivotal place in the well-being of individuals by providing support and increasing a range of workplace satisfaction measures, but the story does not end there.

The overall effect of positive workplace relationships has also been found to strongly influence team climate measures (Glisson et al, 2008; Schulte et al., 2006). The most recent research attesting to the value of a positive workplace climate has found supportive organisational climates positively impact on employee attitudes and behaviour, and have a direct positive relationship to employee satisfaction and commitment, in turn affecting both individual and organisational performance (Luthans et al., 2008).

In light of current results, that suggest having fun at work is perceived to have a moderately high impact on workplace relationships, in combination with extant research on workplace relationships, it seems there is a place for management to create opportunities for staff to have fun at work. This may provide a vehicle to both directly and indirectly build positive workplace relationships and contribute to healthy organisational climates. It can be argued that as a product of the process of having fun, not only can individual workplace well-being be positively influenced in a direct way through improved relationships, but also engaging in fun events may have a cascading, multi-level organisational impact.
Contribution of fun to managing stress in the workplace

With workplace stress resulting in significant financial and human costs to organisations (Michie1 & Williams, 2003), the potential positive impact of the benefits of having fun at work in relation to stress management as claimed in anecdotal literature (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996) could be substantial. During Study 4, it was hypothesised that having fun at work could lower stress in several ways: firstly by allowing a break from one’s daily routine and the seriousness of work; and secondly, by positively influencing the relationships that exist in a workplace context, with both of these hypotheses being supported to a degree.

Addressing the latter hypothesis initially, the influence of fun on workplace relationships has already been established as a positive feature of the process of having fun. In addition, results from Study 4 suggest fun work activities were perceived to lower stress to a moderate degree. The neighbourhood cluster of activities reported to lower stress to the highest degree was informal socialising. Having an Easygoing work environment, being able to Share jokes and humour, attend fun Workshops and training and Chatting and sharing experiences with colleagues were all individually perceived to reduce stress to a high level. These results support several earlier studies which found that workplace social support mitigates effectively against stressors and strains of daily work, and improves general well-being (Bennett & Lehman, 1999; Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). Additionally, Henderson and Argyle (1985) found while social support relieved stress globally, it was the nature of support that was significant. In intimate or close friendships at work, stress was lowered by joking and discussing personal feelings, operating in opposite directions with more
joking occurring in times of less stress and more personal conversations in times of high stress. With less intimate colleagues, friendly, but not personal conversations and network support (chatting, coffee, meals) were linked to a reduction in stress.

The first hypothesis in relation to stress suggested that, in addition to the support of relationships contributing to the management of stress, fun as a mode of day to day relief is an additional stress management resource. Respondents in Study 3 reported having fun at work provided relief in daily activities and generally assisted them in dealing with stress, both contributing to a high level. These results provide support for the argument that fun, like humour (Avtgis & Taber, 2006; Collinson, 2002; Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 2005), may provide momentary relief in the workplace. Engaging in fun as a stress management resource could also potentially produce benefits associated with more positive affect such as resilience (Tugade & Fredrikson, 2004) and positive affect driven behaviour (Fisher, 2002).

The effect of having fun and job satisfaction

Results presented in Study 4 suggest engaging in fun activities at work increases job satisfaction to a moderate degree. However, some specific activities were perceived to directly impact job satisfaction to a high degree, and there may well be a case to argue further factors influenced by engaging in fun contribute to job satisfaction indirectly. The impact of having fun on job satisfaction was reported to occur most often when employees were able to be in an Easygoing work environment, attend fun Workshops and engage in Chatting and sharing experiences. Being in an easy going work environment was described as a combination of having control over one’s
environment such as decorating one’s desk and having free dress days and not being 
\textit{watched} by management. While job satisfaction can be defined as an individual’s 
evaluation of their perceptions of their work and \textit{employment environment} (Parker et al, 
2003; Sweeny et al., 2002), it stands to reason being in an easygoing environment would 
highly contribute to job satisfaction. As previously discussed, features of an easy going 
environment may contribute to a sense of autonomy and enhance job enrichment by 
providing a sense of independence and discretion, with job enrichment having been 
previously linked to job satisfaction (McShane & Travaglione, 2007). Current results 
that suggest attending workshops contributes to job satisfaction to a high degree are also 
in line with previous research by Lowry, Simon and Kimberley (2002) who concluded 
employees who receive training score significantly higher on job satisfaction surveys 
than those who do not.

The results of chatting and sharing experiences positively influencing job 
satisfaction provides support to past research, with numerous studies reporting social 
support and workplace relationships uniformly enhance job satisfaction (Cummins, 1989; 
Ganster, Fusilier & Mayes, 1986; Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Schneider & Smith, 1996). 
Being able to engage in informal types of fun was found to be significantly more 
important for females than males in relation to job satisfaction, with these results raising 
an area for exploration of gender differences in future research.

Complimentary to results here suggesting fun contributes moderately to job 
satisfaction, it is argued at this point that fun may also indirectly contribute to job 
satisfaction. Current results from this series of studies found a significant positive shift 
in mood after experiencing fun in the workplace, with previous research suggesting the
amplification of pleasant emotions in the workplace increases job satisfaction (Cote & Morgan, 2002). In addition, while chatting and sharing experiences as friends was found to highly influence job satisfaction in Study 4, the developing argument in this paper suggests improved relationships achieved through fun experiences may positively influence workplace climate, and positive workplace climates have also been found to influence job satisfaction (Luthans et al., 2008). Additionally, Morrison (2004) found positive correlations between group cohesion and friendship, and job satisfaction. Therefore, it is suggested here that it may not only be possible that having fun at work has a direct moderate impact on job satisfaction, but it may also have an indirect effect on job satisfaction through positive emotional enhancement and relationship building.

Workplace effectiveness and having fun

A further claim suggested in popular media is that having fun at work improves workplace efficiency and performance, particularly in the area of customer service (Hemsath & Yerkes, 1997; Weinstein, 1996). Current results suggest participating in fun activities had a slightly more than neutral impact on getting work done effectively; however, some specific activities were perceived as having a very positive impact on getting work done effectively. As previously argued in relation to job satisfaction, there may be indirect additional links between engaging in fun and workplace performance outcomes.

Participants reported attending fun Workshops and training and Team building activities as contributing highly to getting work done more effectively. These results suggest fun, organisationally focused events are perceived as having a highly positive
influence in relation to getting work done more effectively and may be interpreted in light of several related areas of research. Providing adequate training and development has been a factor in perceived organisational support, which is defined by the perception of employees that their contributions are valued and that their organisation cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Perceived organisational support, in turn, has been found to have positive associations with contextual performance measures such as completing tasks, interpersonal facilitation and job dedication (Muse & Sample, 2007) potentially linking the organisational factor of effectiveness to workplace relationships and organisational commitment.

Having an Easy going work environment was rated as a strong contributor to getting work done more effectively, with Chatting and sharing experiences and Get togethers in the work place rated above the median. Having the opportunity to organise and have control over one’s work environment, and being able to chat and share experiences are clearly strong contributors to a positive work environment and results here align with previous research where social support at work was found to have a significant relationship with performance outcomes (Ok Park, et al., 2004). In addition, workplaces that focused on emotionally engaging employees with clear expectations, cognitive engagement, and caring and supportive relationships, particularly workplace friendships, had significantly lower turnover, more satisfied customers and were financially more productive and profitable (Harter et al., 2002).

It seems logical to assume at this point that the link between having fun at work, effective work practices and organisational performance may not be altogether linear, and may potentially be influenced by a range of organisational constructs. There appear
to be multiple relationships between the organisational constructs focused on in this research series and in previous research in relation to organisational effectiveness and performance. Current results suggest the perceived impact of engaging in fun at work positively influences workplace relationships, with extant research previously presented here linking positive workplace relationships to feelings of relatedness to others, improved well-being, motivation, organisational commitment, decreased turnover, increased communication and the larger constructs of job satisfaction, stress management and team climate. Complimentary to this, positive psychological well-being has been linked to productivity (Harter et al., 2002) and social support at work was found to have significant relationships with performance outcomes (Ok Park et al., 2004). The positive influence of having fun was also perceived in this series of studies in relation to job satisfaction, which in previous research has been linked to workplace motivation, organisational commitment and perceived organisational support. Overall, a moderate correlation has been established between job satisfaction and work performance (Judge et al., 2001). Managing stress was also perceived to be positively influenced by having fun, with previously presented research connecting this construct with decreased turnover and positive organisational affect. Finally, workplaces that focused on emotionally engaging employees were found to have significantly lower turnover, more satisfied customers and were financially more productive and profitable (Harter et al., 2002). It seems the multiple interrelationships between organisational constructs as established in previous research and those measured here appear to provide support to the argument that having fun at work could potentially have global performance impacts on a range of multi-level organisational variables.
While organisational events and informal socialising were perceived to have positive impacts on getting work done effectively, humour and play and formal socialising were perceived to have the opposite effects, with these results contrasting with anecdotal reports. While mucking around play was found to be a strong component of the case vignettes, workplace *playing* was not perceived to directly contribute to effectiveness, lending further support for the argument that fun, humour and play, are distinct constructs. One explanation for the perception that formal socialising does not assist in improving effectiveness is these types of events may be seen as taking employees away from their work, whereas informal socialising is an opportunity to potentially discuss work dilemmas.

*Perceptions of management beliefs*

When exploring perceptions of management attitudes to the fun activities investigated, results were inconsistent. At times, employees perceived that management overestimated the impact of having fun; for example, participants perceived that managers thought formal and informal socialising impacted on job satisfaction to a higher level than they did. In contrast, participants perceived engaging in fun activities, particularly humour and play had a more significant impact on building relationships than they thought their managers believed. Finally, participants reported enjoying humour and play more than they thought their managers did, particularly if they were in management themselves. These results suggest the salience of management attitudes to having fun needs to be explored further, particularly middle and upper management.
Given the importance recognised in this series of studies in relation to management support as a condition for fun to emerge, a greater understanding of this area is required.

Summary of the process of having fun at work

The findings from this research program suggest that human service workers do want to have fun at work. In order to do this, they require both personal conditions of a happy, playful relaxed state of mind, the choice to participate and an organisational context that supports having fun at work, including supportive management, supportive colleagues, positive team dynamics and a non-stressed work environment. Three key features in relation to the experience of fun, and fun at work, were confirmed supporting previous research: lack of coercion in participation, the experience of flow and social connection. There were a range of activities which workers found to be fun, encompassing humour and play, formal and informal socializing, and teambuilding/workshop events, with two underlying contextual dimensions consisting of contextual connections with others and activity structure and intensity identified. The perceived direct products of having fun at work while substantial, did not necessarily reflect the high levels represented in popular media. Results from this program of research suggest the products of having fun at work evolve from being part of a relaxed work environment as reflected in supportive organisational climates. It is suggested positive workplaces provide opportunities and time to allow joking and chatting, get-togethers, celebrations, and attendance at fun organisational professional development events. In turn, participating in fun events significantly increased the positive moods of employees, and had a perceived positive influence on workplace relationship dynamics,
particularly feeling like part of a team and to a slightly lesser degree, job satisfaction. Being able to engage in informal types of fun were particularly important in relation to job satisfaction for females, in contrast to males. The value of workplace relationships was also represented here by the magnitude of informal socialising, noted as the most important contributor to managing stress. Fun activities were perceived to assist in providing relief from day to day stress, particularly for females. Finally, attending fun workshops and team building activities were reported to highly contribute to getting work done more effectively.

What is not fun at work?

As previously noted, engaging in an activity may be for fun for one, but not always fun for someone else. However, activities described as not fun for anyone at work were represented by two major thematic areas; distinctions in specific fun activities and the process of fun, and organisational climate variables. An issue relating to the process of fun that was not considered fun was being coerced into participating into social and team building events in particular, providing support for previous research (Podilchak, 1985; Fleming, 2005). The theme of coercion has been identified a number of times in this research program and the message seems to be clear; employees need to have a perception that they can choose to participate without penalty. Additionally, the use of disparaging humour and silly playfulness was also reported as not fun. Coercion, use of humour that excludes or denigrates others, and playfulness or silliness that was not enjoyed were the most frequently nominated examples of these. Further results suggest experiencing poor management, negative team dynamics such as
interpersonal conflict, *administrative tasks* and *excessive stress* were also seen as *not* fun. Many of these issues reflect environmental features that are the antithesis of a positive workplace climate (Luthans et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2003) suggesting the construct of fun at work and the workplace climate in which it exists are intertwined. These results provide support for the existence of fun as a construct that primarily emerges within a positive work climate.

*Fun, humour and play in a nomological net*

Results from the studies in this research program suggest while play and humour are strong contributors to the experience of fun, fun appears to be a discrete construct. In Chapter 2, an initial nomological net using the 3P conceptual framework, located existing knowledge of the construct of fun in relation to the constructs of humour and play. In this discussion, the results from this research program will be integrated into this nomological net, constructing a revised nomological net as represented in Figure 10 covering Presage and Process, and Figure 11 representing the Products of having fun at work. This revised nomological net highlights similarities and differences between fun, humour and play in order to differentiate and distinguish the constructs.
Figure 10: Revised nomological net of humour, play and fun constructs; Presage and Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humour</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Used for communication</td>
<td>• Jokes, stories, wit, sarcasm, satire, black, goofing off, teasing, practical jokes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social functions - Culturally contextual, Inclusive/exclusion</td>
<td><strong>Themes or dimensions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual functions – power differentials, relief from boredom</td>
<td>• Incongruity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal characteristics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sense of humour</td>
<td>• Laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Repertoire</td>
<td>• Spontaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creativity</td>
<td>• Interactive with power dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Playfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognition of humour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appreciation of humour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Playfulness</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not explicit in research</td>
<td>• Make-believe, role play, games with rules, games of mastery, mucking/goofing around, teasing, games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal characteristics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Themes or dimensions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sense of humour</td>
<td>• Fun-loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fun-loving</td>
<td>• Frivolous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Silliness</td>
<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Informal</td>
<td>• ‘not real’ context or mutually agreed rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• whimsical</td>
<td>• silly, childlike, flippanent, whimsical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun at work</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive team dynamics</td>
<td>• Humour and play e.g. Shared humour and positive story telling, particularly mucking around play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non stressful environment</td>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-coercive participation</td>
<td>• Spontaneous – planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relaxed atmosphere</td>
<td><strong>Organisational – social focused</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fun climate at work</strong></td>
<td><strong>Features</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socialising with co-workers</td>
<td>• Lack of coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Celebrating at work</td>
<td>• Experience of flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Global fun</td>
<td>• Socially connecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Happy, playful relaxed state of mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highly engaged (particularly organisational events)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role of contributor rather than observer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11: Revised nomological net of humour, play and fun constructs; Product

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Positive outcomes</th>
<th>Negative outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Humour     | - Individual – increased pleasure, reduces negative emotions, health benefits  
- Social - inclusion, socialisation of new group members  
- Organisational - adds to positive organisational climate, reduction in stress, assists with adjustment to new roles | - exclusion, can be offensive |
| Playfulness| - Individual - Improved mastery  
- Social - socialisation of new employees  
- Organisational - increased job satisfaction, improved team work, | - (Frivolous / goofing around play)  
- reduced performance  
- reduced organisational involvement |
| Fun at work | - Individual - Statistically significant increase in positive mood  
- Social - moderate to high levels of perceived positive impact on a range of workplace relationships including team cohesiveness  
- Organisational - Perceived to assist in managing stress, improving job satisfaction and workplace effectiveness in positive directions ranging from medium to high impact; moderated strongly by type activity  
- Fun organisational climate linked to - Lower turn over intention, increased organisational commitment and increased job satisfaction (McDowell, 2005) | - Personal anxiety or discomfort  
- Feeling judged  
- Organisational disruption |

Presage of fun at work

In the presage phase, it appears that all three constructs, while interpersonally based, have slightly different social functions and conditions in which they operate. Given minimal literature exists on the contextual dynamics of play/playfulness, comparisons are difficult; however, fun can be compared to the known context and function of humour. While humour and fun are used to communicate in social settings, humour is described to have a distinct power differential operating, allowing for inclusion or exclusion and utilising play on words. Results in this study indicate that
while positive humour is at times part of a fun experience, fun is described as a more egalitarian process identified by *being together* and *sharing* laughter, rather than laughing *at* something or someone, as is the case with humour.

Given the lack of existing construct definition, exploring the personal characteristics required for fun was performed at a surface level. Results suggest here that engaging in fun requires a happy, playful, relaxed state of mind that is highly engaged in the emerging process, creating a participatory role rather than one of observation. However, it could be plausible that both the conditions required for humour and play/playfulness, such as a sense of and appreciation of humour, creativity and whimsy, may also be features of fun personal characteristics, with McDowell identifying three factors of a *fun person*: spontaneous, expressive and amusing. Further research is required in this area, being mindful of McDowell (2005) and the difficulties she had attempting to develop a Fun Person scale.

*The process of fun at work in comparison to humour and play/playfulness*

When investigating the underlying structure of fun activities, results reported the domain of fun at work consisted of four neighbourhood clusters: humour and play, informal socialising, formal socialising and organisational events. These results alone suggest that while the constructs of humour and play/playfulness are contributors to fun, other activities are also represented in the domain of fun at work.

Humour was nominated frequently as an example of a fun activity, particularly telling jokes and stories, and was found to be a consistent contributor to fun events, with disparaging types of humour being reported at minimal levels. The disparaging humour
reported in case examples appeared to be similar to prankster humour, as described by Abramis (1990). While two thirds of respondents’ case examples nominated jokes and funny stories as contributing to making the event fun, one third did not report humour as being a contributor to their experience at even a low level. These results bolster support for the argument suggesting humour is a contributor to the fun process, but fun is distinct from humour in a work context.

While several types of play were nominated as examples of fun when mapping the domain, and engaging in playful activities was reported frequently as fun events for case studies, the construct of play was not represented across the series of studies consistently. *Acting silly or playful* and *Office games* were the two distinct examples of play given when mapping the domain of fun. These activities loosely represent two of the three distinct types of play identified in previous organisational research. The three previously identified types of play were: *play as a game, goofing around* (i.e. horseplay, teasing) and *frivolous play* (i.e. silly, flippant, childlike) (Abramis, 1990; Maxwell, et al., 2005) with this study equating *Acting silly or playful* to *frivolous play* and *Office games* to *play as a game*. Overall, acting silly or playful was not found to be enjoyed to any great extent, nor contributed to any positive organisational variable outcomes. Office games fared even more poorly, being the second least enjoyed fun activity and were not considered a positive contributor to organisational variables.

In contrast, playful activities were the most commonly nominated types of case study examples; for example, doing a dance of triumph after an important presentation, running up escalators backwards, dressing in red or green for the day. Four elements or types of play were investigated in relation to the process of fun in this current research;
frivolous or out of character play, mucking around (goofing) and being silly play, game construction and use of imagination. Mucking around and being silly play was reported as being highly represented in the case studies, in contrast to Abramis (1990) who found only a small correlation between goofing around and fun. Frivolous play, such as acting out of character from the usual work role as identified by Maxwell, et al. (2005) was not highly represented in the fun examples with very few activities rating even moderately high on this type play. However use of imagination was reported to a high degree in the case vignettes, with imagination used significantly more in organisational/planned events, than in social/planned events. Finally, game construction was reported to a moderate degree, combined with the experience of flow as described by Abramis (1990) as a part of play as a game, also reported at a high level during the events, suggesting fun loving/play as a game was somewhat evident as a contributor to the process of fun. Themes from these results suggest, in contrast to Abramis (1990), goofing/mucking around play was the strongest contributor to the experience of fun, combined with imagination used in planning organisational events and finally the game like construction of the event as it unfolded. In light of these results it seems the experience of fun at work is most closely related to the experience of playful mucking around, with imagination and creativity used in the planning stage. Further examination is required to more fully define the features of goofing/mucking around play in contrast to acting silly and playful in the context of having fun at work, given the contrasting results of reported case experiences compared to reported enjoyment of play/playfulness.

Similarly to humour, results exploring the contribution of play to the process of fun suggest while mucking around play, and imagination contribute to the experience of
having fun at work, the construct of fun consists of additional features identified in the process. Features of fun identified in this research program consist of choice to participated founded in lack of coercion, experiencing the engaging nature of the event represented in levels of flow, and most importantly the social connections created by the experience of having fun with others.

Summary of products of fun at work

In summary, the products of having fun at work that have been established in this study are a significant shift in positive mood when experiencing a fun event and the perceived positive global impact on workplace relationships, particularly team cohesion. Being involved in fun events was also perceived to impact positively on managing stress, improve job satisfaction and workplace effectiveness, to various degrees dependant on the type of activity one was engaged in. It seems important to note here that both humour and goofing around play have been found as strong contributors to the construct of fun, and it is therefore likely that the outcomes noted for these constructs in previous research are also likely outcomes for the experience of fun, to an unknown degree.

Implications for theory and practice

This research program, in systematically investigating the construct of fun in the workplace, has contributed to organisational psychology by more fully defining and locating the construct of fun at work in an organisational context. By identifying the domain of fun activities (humour and play, informal socialising, formal socialising and organisational activities), and the underlying dimensions of fun activities in a work...
context (contextual connections with others and activity structure and intensity) and the process of fun, it is now possible for future research to define and measure the construct more effectively. Investigating the process of fun has not only provided support for Podilchak’s (1985) theoretical framework for fun, but has contributed to distinguishing fun from the related and often interspersed constructs of humour and play/playfulness in a work context. In addition, as a result of this research program, the construct of fun has been located in the organisational context, spanning the individual, the team and the organisation. Figure 12 illustrates the multilevel impact of having fun for individuals, teams and organisations identified in both this research, and McDowell (2005).

Included in Figure 12 are addition constructs (in bold) discussed in this research program; well-being, organisational climate and productivity. While these constructs were not examined specifically in detail here, the results of the studies presented here provide links to these broader organisational constructs. Engaging in fun activities in a work context was found in this present research program to have a positive influence on mood, job satisfaction, the management of stress, workplace effectiveness and workplace relationships to varying degrees. The implications of these results suggest the opportunity to have fun at work could globally impact on a range of psychological well-being factors in the workplace. Complimentary to this, the impact of having fun on improving workplace relationships suggests fun could potentially be explored as a team climate variable affecting the social cohesion of the group. To date, it is unknown whether fun occurs in response to a positive team climate or whether a positive team climate can be engineered through fun interventions. The anecdotal popularity of the Fish© program (Ludin, Paul & Christensen, 2003) suggests fun as a prescriptive
intervention may well be effective in increasing positive workplaces, however there has
only been one study exploring the climate of prescribed fun (Fleming, 2005),
unfortunately with this study only presenting the cynicism related to fun and not the
benefits. Finally the present research, combined with results from McDowell (2005),
suggest certain types of fun activities have a perceived impact on effectiveness and
potentially organisational performance, with the fun work climate being linked to
reduced employee turnover and organisational commitment.

Figure 12: Multilevel impact of having fun for individuals, teams and organisations
combining current research and McDowell (2005).

NB: Bold CONSTRUCTS identify potential cascading organisational impacts. Perceived impacts are illustrated in italics.
In practical terms, this research provides a foundation for more effectively defining fun at work in order to assist organisations develop relevant interventions. The neighbourhood clusters of fun activities provide four clear categories of fun events, with the present research presenting data to assist in linking activities to specific organisational outcomes such as the positive effects of organisational events on workplace effectiveness. Supplementary to this, the dimensions identified could be used as a tool to assess organisations on their current climate and desired levels of fun. The levels of socialising already existing and their position along the organisational spontaneity continuum could be assessed. This information would provide a platform to match organisational style and desired outcomes with an appropriate fun interventions rather than the blanket approach that currently exists. An applied example of this application could be related to outcomes required such as focusing on planned events if team building is required, in contrast to more social events if shared experiences are to be used to reduce stress.

Finally the practical implications of two major findings associated with this research program should not be overlooked, positive mood shift and improved workplace relationships as products of the experience of having fun. This research has established that employees’ moods do in fact move in a positive direction as a result of experiencing fun. Previous research suggests a positive shift in mood can have cascading effects in organisations, both personally and interpersonally permeating the team and the organisation (Fredrickson, 2001; Harker & Keltner, 2001; Tugade & Fredrikson, 2004). Therefore the global benefits of the positive mood shift created by having fun can be viewed in light of Weiss & Cropanzano’s (1996) Affective Events
Theory (See p. 72) and the perspective of both Fisher (2002) and Fredrickson (2001) are particularly relevant in relation to utilising positive moods in the workplace;

Managers who wish to increase affective commitment may have more success if they focus on creating more frequent positive events and feelings rather than reducing negative events and feelings (Fisher, 2002, p. 24).

The take-home message is that positive emotions are worth cultivating, not just as end states in themselves but also as a means to achieving psychological growth and improved well-being over time (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 218).

Overwhelmingly the improved relationships reported here as perceived outcomes of experiencing fun at work provide a solid foundation for management to acknowledge the potential of fun as a legitimate workplace intervention. Previous research providing evidence of the effects of improved workplace relationships has been presented in detail, however the key feature here is that having fun has been established in this research as a legitimately perceived vehicle to improve workplace relationships, taking into account the conditions and processes identified in supporting the experience of fun. The domain of activities identified in this study program could potentially make fun activities more palatable, utilising activities such as team building and providing opportunities for informal socialising where organisational outcomes are clearly identified or organisational investments are not significant. Mercer USA Resource Centre (1999) reported the primary reason managers provide for not engaging in fun activities is lack of time, with this research providing a foundation to challenge the efficacy of this position, in light of assessing overall organisational outcomes, particularly those associated with the care and well-being of staff. Finally, establishing the perceived impact of having fun on a range of organisational variables not less than, job satisfaction, stress management, effective work practices and organisational climate, suggests
management may further consider the validity of incorporating fun as a valid ingredient in the organisational cultural mix.

Limitations and implications for future research

The limitations of this program of study offer direction for future research in areas of sample selection, methodological breadth and organisational multilevel theorising (Klien, Tosi, & Cannella, 1999). One of the focuses of this study was to investigate anecdotal claims of the effects of having fun presented in the popular press. Much of the information provided in the popular press was focused on human service workers and therefore they were the population chosen for this series of studies. The limitations of focusing on this population are twofold; firstly human services have a strong gender imbalance with women overly represented, and secondly, human services are focused on customer service and effectiveness, rather than producing items and productivity. The impact of gender as a salient issue in construct and impact investigation needs to be taken into account, given there were the occasional significant differences found between males and females in relation to activities nominated, enjoyment levels and the impact of some activities. Future research is required to explore alternative occupational groups, potentially those that are male dominated and those occupations that represent production industries.

A strength of this research program has been the utilisation of a multi-study, exploratory methodology, to investigate both the domain of activities considered fun at work and the processes associated with having fun. This approach invited the construct of fun at work to emerge, rather than using anecdotal preconceptions, with results
validating this process by identifying a domain of fun at work beyond its previously recognised boundaries. Defining and differentiating the construct in connection with the related constructs of humour and play has provided data to recognise the uniqueness of fun. A methodological limitation of this research program is the uni-modal method of data collection through questionnaires alone. While questionnaires have the strength of gaining large amounts of data they also have limitations. Limitations evident in questionnaires used here include usual inconsistencies in interpretation of questions and answers based on those interpretations. Attempts were made to minimise interpretations by piloting all questionnaires and providing example explanations for the activities in Studies 2, 3 and 4. Finally, issues focusing on recall errors particularly in relation to feelings have been raised in relation to the validity of survey findings, however recent research has established that healthy people in fact underestimate their mood on recall (Riis et al., 2005). This research provides a foundation to suggest the significant shift in frame of mind found in Study 3 is valid.

Further research in relation to the construct and impact of fun at work could greatly benefit from a selection of methodological approaches, including organisational observations and detailed case studies. Additionally, studies focused on measuring specific impacts of the domain of activities when used as interventions in the workplace would considerably add to the body of knowledge. Multilevel theorising (Deazin et al., 1999), a tool for mapping the relationships between individuals, group and organisational levels, could be applied in various ways to fully appreciate the intricacies and complexities of the construct of fun. Future research could explore from an individual perspective, dispositions to fun with links to personality literature and
motivational literature, with this present research reporting employees want to have more fun than they are currently experiencing. From a team perspective, the reflexive relationship of fun and team climate could be investigated. This process could potentially address the chicken or egg question, exploring whether there is a functional team climate threshold required in order for fun to achieve the positive outcomes noted here, or if alternately, creating a climate of fun can improve levels of team functioning. Additionally, exploring management attitudes to fun as noted in this study could be fortuitous in understanding the social complexities of the construct. From an organisational perspective the ramifications of a culture of fun or not fun could be examined and the extensive ripple effects of this social analysis, being mindful of Fleming’s (2005) findings on the cynicism associated with prescribed fun cultures. Ultimately, the mapping of these interwoven organisational areas in relation to fun would take the investigation of the construct from its current status of academic infancy, to advanced knowledge, providing further real-world application of the construct.

Conclusion

The aspersions found in popular media in relation to the impact of having fun at work provided the impetus for this research program. Reviewing the academic literature identified a field of study that had been substantially overlooked and therefore the platform was provided to investigate the construct of fun at work in an exploratory manner. This research program has not only added to the body of knowledge relating to having fun at work by more fully defining what fun at work is and is not, but the process of fun has been mapped in the workplace and perceived impacts of fun have been
measured. Having fun at work clearly has an emotionally qualitative dimension and is highly socially interactive. The organisational context required for fun appears to mirror many features of positive workplace climates. While humour and play were at times reported as contributors to the experience of fun at work, this was not uniformly the case bolstering the argument that fun appears to be a distinct construct. Finally, reported results in relation to the perceived products of having fun at work, provide some support to anecdotal positive claims of the positive impacts on job satisfaction, managing stress, workplace relationships and effectiveness. These impacts however were strongly mediated by the specific organisational variable being measured and the type of fun activity. In conclusion, fun at work has been found to be a construct distinct from humour and play in the workplace, and is an experience that provides both psychological and organisationally benefits. With much of our adult life spent in paid work, life really is too short not to have fun!
REFERENCE LIST


305


Gilby, L., & Dudley, J. (1999, August 31). Firms can laugh all the way to the Bank. *Courier Mail.*


This questionnaire is the first in a series of studies related to fun in the work place in an Australian Human Services context. The quality of the later research depends directly on the quality of the information we receive in this study, so we would encourage you to answer the questions as openly and fully as possible. It is also important to note that there are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your experiences and perceptions.

This information gathered in this questionnaire will assist in further defining what we mean when we talk about ‘fun at work’. Your feedback will provide important data in an endeavour to identify healthy work practices and organisations.

When asked to describe people participating in events, please describe them by their role in the organisation or in relation to yourself e.g. my supervisor, colleague, etc. rather than by name.

The questionnaire has two main areas of focus; your general experience of fun for yourself and others at work and also a specific incidence of fun are explored in detail.

It is estimated the questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Please answer all questions as fully as possible.

Your responses to this research questionnaire are of course entirely anonymous and confidential. While we do not need to know your name we do need some basic information about you.
Some General Questions to begin with…

What is your age? Years __________

What is your gender? (Circle one) Male Female

What is the highest level Education you have completed? (Circle one)
  Primary School
  Secondary School
  Vocational or trade Qualifications
  Tertiary Degree
  Other (specify)_______________________________________

What is your Nationality? □ Australian Other (Specify)
_______________________________________

What is your cultural heritage? (e.g. Indigenous Australian, Spanish)
_______________________________________

What State in Australia do you work?______________________

How long have you been in the paid workforce? (years)_______________

What type of organisation do you work in?
  Government
  Community Based (Government funded)
  Community Based (Non -Government funded)
  Private
What is your job title?_________________________________________

Are you responsible for any paid staff or voluntary personnel?
  □ No  □ Yes  How Many? ________________
PART A

In this section we are interested in identifying the types of activities that you and your work colleagues do or do not regard as fun. We ask you to tell us about 4 different categories of activities or interactions when you are either at work or are socialising with work colleagues:

a) Activities or interactions that are fun for both you and most other people you work with,
b) Activities or interactions that seem to be fun for others, but you don’t find fun,
c) Activities or interactions that you find fun, but most others don’t seem to,
d) Activities or interactions that most people, including you, don’t consider fun

Could you provide one or more examples when you are either at work or are socialising with work colleagues that fit in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Fun for ME</th>
<th>(b) NOT Fun for ME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Things that are Fun for OTHERS I work with</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>*</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Fun for ME</td>
<td>(d) NOT Fun for ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things that are NOT FUN for OTHERS I work with</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. My mood at the moment is (circle one)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
As bad as it gets average best I have ever felt

3. In general I have fun at work …
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

4. Being able to have fun at work is really important to me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all very important

5. In my work environment fun happens….
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

6. The culture of my workplace encourages me to have fun….
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

7. If my work place restricts fun I go out of my way to make fun.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

8. To what extent does your workplace have formal policies, procedures and communication structures..
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

9. I would describe my job as very stressful
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot
10. To what extent do you feel stressed by your work?
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at all a lot

11. In the main, I enjoy my job
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at all a lot

12. For most of us have fun at work, certain conditions need to be present. Can you list some conditions that need to be present for you to have fun?

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–

–
Part B: Specific Example of fun at work

In this section we ask you to describe 1 time when you have had fun at work or with work colleagues in the past 12 months. This example could be a small incident involving just you, or it could be a larger event such as a work function. We are interested in all sorts of events that people find fun at work. Some examples include playing computer games, humorous awards, group celebrations, casual or dress up days, funny communication incidences or things you simply found fun to do.

All of the following questions relate to the example you give.

1. Briefly describe your experience of fun in a way that someone who was not there would have an idea of why the incident was fun for you. Including such information as:

   • (a) Where were you and what were you doing?

   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________________
• (b) Briefly what happened? (Dot points are ok)

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• (c) Please include any other information or details that may be relevant to help us understand what happened before, during or after the event that made this time such fun for you.

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_____________________________________________________________________________________
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2. Approximately when did this fun incident occur? (e.g. 2 months ago)
3. Who was present during the fun incident? (please circle)

(a) Self only  Men only  Women only  Both men and women
(b) Managers only  Staff workers only  Both managers & workers
(c) All staff  Some staff

4. What was your frame of mind prior to the fun event? (Please circle a number for each pair of words)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mischievous</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Playful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untroubled</td>
<td>Tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Carefree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Unhappy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Detached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the team</td>
<td>Isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Who started the fun? (please circle)
   I did  Someone else  We ‘bounced’ off each other  Not sure

6. What were the 3 main features that made this event fun for you?
   1.________________________________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________________________
   2.________________________________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________________________
   3.________________________________________________________________________________
      _____________________________________________________________________________

7. Were there any positive outcomes of this event for you?
   Yes / No

8. If yes to the above question, what were the positive outcomes of this fun event for you?
   _____________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________
9. Were there any negative or unpleasant consequences of this fun event for you during the event?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________________________
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10. Were there any negative or unpleasant consequences of this fun event for you after the event?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
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11. Were there any factors that hindered, constrained, or stopped this fun event? (For example you may have stopped out of consideration for others, or someone told you to stop)
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

12. Did you feel pressured or coerced into participating in this event? (Circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot
13. Was this event ..... 

Spontaneous          Partially planned          Planned prior to occurrence

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

14. In relation to the fun event you are describing, how closely do you agree with the following.
   “We had fun at someone else’s expense”? 

Not at all          a lot

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

15. To what extent did jokes, funny stories or sarcasm, make this event fun for you?

Not at all          a lot

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

16. I felt like I was a direct contributor to the fun, rather than observer?

Not at all          a lot

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

17. As part of the event I acted in a frivolous or fanciful manner which would I would consider as ‘out of character’ from my usual work role.

Not at all          a lot

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

18. To what extent did you use your imagination during this event?

Not at all          a lot

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

19. To what extent did you make up the event as it went along, with others contributing and sharing the understanding about what would happen next?

Not at all          a lot

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

20. Describe the level of silliness and mucking around that happened during the incident.

None at all          a lot

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
21. During the event did you find yourself ‘lost in the moment’, just enjoying yourself and not thinking about what might happen next….

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at all          a lot

22. How much laughter was there during this event?

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Not at all          a lot

23. What was your frame of mind after the fun event? (Please circle a number for each pair of words)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mischievous</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Relaxed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>

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<th>Carefree</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Unhappy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the team</td>
<td>Isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. How would you describe your experience of this event?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amused</th>
<th>Bored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part C: Effects of fun at work

In this section we are interested in how you think fun at work effects you. Think in general about the fun you have at work and answer the following questions.

1. To what extent does having fun at work give you relief from the seriousness of day to day matters in your work place?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

2. My mood improves and it is easier to get along with others

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

3. Relationships with others improve in my work place after we have fun?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

4. I feel like I am part of a team when I have fun at work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

5. Having fun at work helps me function in my job more effectively.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot

6. Having fun at work helps me deal with stress

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all a lot
7. If I owned the organisation I would encourage people to have as much fun at work as they want to …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>absolutely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

8. Are there any other effects of having fun at work for you that have not been mentioned?

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you
For completing this questionnaire.
APPENDIX B

FUN AT WORK THEMES

Instructions

Please take the time to read these instructions as they ‘set the scene’ and explain the purpose of this phase of the research. All of your responses will be confidential and your name at no time will be linked to the data collected. Please feel free at any time to discontinue your participation in this project.

In this particular study we are investigating the different ways people experience fun at work. We believe this study will assist in understanding the types of activities people think are fun at work. It is anticipated that this information will have use in workplaces by assisting people to become more aware of the variety of ways people can have fun at work.

A number of people have, in a previous study, identified a range of activities that they thought were fun at work. This phase of the research is concerned with identifying patterns in these activities and the results will assist in describing the concept ‘fun at work’.

In this study we are asking you to tell us how similar or different certain activities are to each other:
You will be presented with a pair of activities and you are required to indicate on a scale of numbers from 1-9, just how similar in meaning you think the two activities are. If you think they are very similar activities, you would rate them either 1, 2 or 3, or if you think they are moderate in similarity you would rate them either 4, 5 or 6. If you think they are very dissimilar activities you would circle either 7, 8, or 9.

For example, we will present you with activities such as “sharing jokes and humour” and “helping organise social events” and ask you to indicate on the scale how similar or different you think they are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing jokes and humour</th>
<th>Very similar 1 2 3</th>
<th>Moderate 4 5 6</th>
<th>Very dissimilar 7 8 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping organize social events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you think the activities are very alike you would type number 1,2 or 3 in the ‘very similar’ box, depending on the degree of similarity. If you think they are not alike, but not very different you would type 4,5 or 6 in the moderate box. If you thought they were not at all the same then you would type 7, 8 or 9 in the ‘very dissimilar’ box ……there are no right or wrong answers, so please rate them as you interpret them, rather than how you think you “should” answer.

The task takes approximately 30 minutes. If you become tired, find your mind wandering or your attention waning, please take a break and come back to the task a little later. This will make the task more enjoyable for you, and help to provide us with quality data.

We really appreciate your efforts in being involved in this research. The importance of this questionnaire may not be readily apparent at this stage, but you can be assured that your careful attention will be put to good use.

As an incentive we are offering a lucky draw Prize (accommodation or shopping voucher) valued at $150. When you return your questionnaire you can nominate to enter the draw. So keep reading….
The following is list of the activities that will be included in the questionnaire and could assist you in understanding the meaning of the activity. Please take a moment to read the list prior to commencing the questionnaire. You may also like to print this list to refer to while answering the questions...

1. **Sharing jokes and humour** …this is when you tell jokes or funny stories to others you work with or they tell them to you

2. **Humorous emails** …the jokes, funny lists and pictures we get in our inbox, sometimes forward on or print off…

3. **Acting silly or playful** …fun awards with your team, doing the ‘dance of triumph’, wearing a silly hat, or generally letting go of your serious adult self.

4. **Office games** …office cricket with scrunched-up paper, computer games, cards over lunch, footy tipping etc.

5. **Easy going work environment** …having your desk decorated they way you want it, music playing if it suits, not having every move watched by your supervisor…

6. **Helping organise social and celebratory events** …sometimes you can have more fun organising the events than at the events, so organising is the key feature here.

7. **Chatting and sharing of experiences** …the ‘catch up’ conversations any time during your working day.

8. **Get togethers in the work place** …morning tea, lunch, smoke/coffee breaks…activities where you are away from your work, but you are with colleagues.

9. **Catered functions** …these can include occasions where you get together with work colleagues and eat and/or drink and the organisation picks up the bill.

10. **Informal drinks or socialising after work** …Friday drinks or any unstructured/ spontaneous social get together…

11. **Sporting activities with work colleagues** …a round of golf, a game of tennis, sailing or rowing…

12. **Organised socialising outside work time** …social club type activities, trivia nights, going out for a meal as a group, watching sporting activities…

13. **Special celebration events** …birthday morning teas, lunches, Christmas Party, Melbourne Cup Lunch.

14. **Team building activities** …these are get-togethers of any sort where the purpose is to improve team functioning.

15. **Workshops and training** …where you are with colleagues, gaining addition skills or knowledge.

Now it is time to open the word document called “Paired similarities” and complete the questionnaire. Thank you

If you have any concerns or questions related to this research you can contact Kerryann Lawson on k.lawson@griffith.edu.au ph 0408 700 612 or Alf Lizzio on a.lizzio@griffith.edu.au or phone 3378 9267.
Paired similarities questionnaire

If you have not read the “instructions” document, please do so prior to starting this questionnaire.....

This research questionnaire is part of a PhD research program on Fun at work conducted through Griffith University, Department of Applied Psychology. All of the information in this document will be considered confidential. At no time will your responses be identified and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time, if you should choose to do so.

This questionnaire can be completed as a word document or printed off and completed manually. To complete as a word document use your mouse to locate the cursor in the chosen table grid and type in the number.

Some details before we begin...

1. What is your age?  Years
2. What is your sex?    Male  Female  (delete one)
3. What is your occupation?
4. Do you supervise any staff?  Yes  No  (delete one)
   If yes …how many?

1. Please rate how similar or dissimilar each of the following pairs of workplace activities are to each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning tea/lunch get-togethers</th>
<th>Sporting activities with work colleagues</th>
<th>Very similar</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Very dissimilar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office games</td>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping organise social events</td>
<td>Catered functions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
<td>Team-building activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning tea/lunch get-togethers</td>
<td>Helping organise social events</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very similar</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Very dissimilar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special celebration events</td>
<td>Office games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal drinks/socialising after work</td>
<td>Morning tea/lunch get-togethers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping organise social events</td>
<td>Organised social activities outside work time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td>Catered functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team-building activities</td>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting and Sharing experiences</td>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised social activities outside work time</td>
<td>Informal drinks/socialising after work</td>
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<td>Workshops and training</td>
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<td>Organised social activities outside work time</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Chatting and Sharing experiences</td>
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<tr>
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Thank you for completing this questionnaire. To return the completed questionnaire, save the word document and then “forward” this document to k.lawson@griffith.edu.au. Or alternately save as word document and send as an attachment to the above email address. If you have completed a printed copy, post to Kerryann Lawson 7/34 Lowerson St Lutwyche 4030
Figure 12: Representation of stimulus space for female perceptions fun at work activities.
Figure 13: Representation of stimulus space for male perceptions fun at work activities.
Figure 14: Representation of stimulus space for non-supervisors perception of fun at work activities.
Figure 15: Representation of stimulus space for supervisor perceptions fun at work activities.
APPENDIX D

FUN AT WORK THEMES

Instructions

Please take the time to read these instructions as they ‘set the scene’ and explain the purpose of this phase of the research conducted by Griffith University. All of your responses will be confidential and your name at no time will be linked to the data collected. Please feel free at any time to discontinue your participation in this project.

In this particular study we are investigating the different ways people experience fun at work. We believe this study will assist in understanding the types of activities people think are fun at work. It is anticipated that this information will have use in workplaces by assisting people to become more aware of the variety of ways people can have fun at work.

A number of people have, in a previous study, identified a range of activities that they thought were fun at work. This phase of the research is concerned with uncovering the effects of certain fun activities at work.

You will be presented with a list of 15 activities and asked to rate them, on a scale of 1 to 7 against 5 separate criteria. The 5 criteria ( I enjoy participating/doing, adds to positive workplace relationships, helps get the work done more effectively, lowers my stress) are proposed factors related to the impact of having fun at work.

There are two questionnaires. The first is related to YOUR experience of the listed activities and criteria, the second is related to what you think your MANAGER would think. Your manager is the person you answer to directly in your workplace, even though they may have a different title such as supervisor, coordinator or team leader.

The task takes approximately … minutes. We really appreciate your efforts in being involved in this research. The importance of this questionnaire may not be readily apparent at this stage, but you can be assured that your careful attention will be put to good use.

The following is list of the activities that will be included in the questionnaire and could assist you in understanding the meaning of the activity. Please take a moment to read the list prior to commencing the questionnaire. You may also like to print this list to refer to while answering the questions…

16. Sharing jokes and humour …this is when you tell jokes or funny stories to others you work with or they tell them to you

17. Humorous emails… the jokes, funny lists and pictures we get in our inbox, sometimes forward on or print off…

18. Acting silly or playful…fun awards with your team, doing the ‘dance of triumph’, wearing a silly hat, or generally letting go of your serious adult self.

19. Office games …office cricket with scrunched-up paper, computer games, cards over lunch, footy tipping etc.

20. Easy going work environment …having your desk decorated the way you want it, music playing if it suits, not having every move watched….
21. **Helping organise social and celebratory events**…..sometimes you can have more fun organising the events than at the events, so organising is the key feature here.

22. **Chatting and sharing of experiences**…the ‘catch up’ conversations any time during your working day.

23. **Get togethers in the work place** …morning tea, lunch, smoke/coffee breaks…activities where you are away from your work, but you are with colleagues.

24. **Catered functions**..these can include occasions where you get together with work colleagues and eat and/or drink and the organisation picks up the bill.

25. **Informal drinks or socialising after work**…Friday drinks or any unstructured/spontaneous social get together...

26. **Sporting activities with work colleagues**…..a round of golf, a game of tennis, sailing or rowing….,

27. **Organised socialising outside work time**…social club type activities, trivia nights, going out for a meal as a group, watching sporting activities…

28. **Special celebration events**….birthday morning teas, lunches, Christmas Party, Melbourne Cup Lunch.

29. **Team building activities**…these are get-togethers of any sort where the purpose is to improve team functioning.

30. **Workshops and training**…where you are with colleagues, gaining addition skills or knowledge.

**Now it is time to complete the questionnaire. Thank you**

If you have any concerns or questions related to this research you can contact Kerryann Lawson on k.lawson@griffith.edu.au ph 0408 700 612 or Alf Lizzio on a.lizzio@griffith.edu.au or phone 3378 9267.
Impact of fun at work questionnaire

If you have not read the “instructions” document, please do so prior to starting this questionnaire.....

This research questionnaire is part of a PhD research program on Fun at work conducted through Griffith University, Department of Applied Psychology. All of the information in this document will be considered confidential. At no time will your responses be identified and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time, if you should choose to do so.

Some details before we begin...

5. What is your age? Years

6. What is your sex? Male  Female  (please circle)

7. What is your occupation?

8. Do you supervise any staff? Yes  No  (please circle)

If yes …how many?
Please rate the following activities as they relate to the 5 criteria. In this first step use the scale from 1 to 7 to indicate the extent to which **YOU** feel or think each of these activities impacts on you at work. We ask you to consider each activity and rate it for the 5 different criteria. For each activity write the number that best reflects your opinion in the appropriate space. Most people find it easier to complete each column, rather than moving across the page.

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In this second step, using the same scale below please rate the following activities against the 5 criteria as they relate to Your direct line Manager...what you think the manager would think or feel, and the effect of these activities for them...write your chosen number in the box..

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<th>7</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>moderate</th>
<th>Very much</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Manager enjoys participating/doing</th>
<th>Adds to positive work place relationships</th>
<th>Helps get the work done more effectively</th>
<th>Lowers stress</th>
<th>Increases job satisfaction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing jokes and humour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humorous emails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting silly or playful</td>
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<td>Office games</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy going work environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping organise social and celebratory events</td>
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<td>Chatting and sharing of experiences</td>
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<td>Get togethers in the work place</td>
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<td>Catered functions</td>
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<td>Informal drinks or socialising after work</td>
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<td>Sporting activities with work colleagues</td>
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<td>Organised socialising outside work time</td>
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<td>Special celebration events</td>
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<td>Team building activities</td>
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<td>Workshops and training</td>
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