

DISSERTATION

CLIMATE OF WORKPLACE FUN IN A RETAIL SETTING

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## ABSTRACT

### CLIMATE OF WORKPLACE FUN IN A RETAIL SETTING

Workplace fun is a relatively new topic of interest for organizations and researchers alike, and one that holds much promise given the reported positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes associated with individuals experiencing fun at work. However, no research to date has investigated shared perceptions of workplace fun, or a climate of workplace fun, within a team. A climate of workplace fun is particularly relevant in retail store settings where customer engagement and overall store performance are top priorities. Thus, the major goal of the present study is to contribute to the literature by proposing a new theoretical model of how a climate of workplace fun is fostered and what group-level outcomes result from this climate of fun.

Using self-report data from retail store employees and their managers, I proposed a theoretical model of climate for fun and examined the relationships between collective coworker trust and attitudes toward workplace fun in creating an overall climate of workplace fun. In addition, I examined the relationships between this climate of fun and the group-level outcomes of engagement, store organizational citizenship behaviors, and store performance. Results indicate that both employee and manager attitudes toward fun, as well as collective coworker trust, significantly relate to climate of fun at work. Additionally, climate of fun was significantly and positively related to the store employees' average group levels of engagement and individually-directed organizational citizenship behaviors. Climate of fun was not, however, significantly related to store performance. Results from this study highlight the potential value in creating a climate of fun in retail settings and as such, makes a significant contribution to the scientific literature on fun at work.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Workplace Fun.....	3
Climate of Workplace Fun.....	4
Antecedents of a Climate of Fun.....	7
Outcomes of a Climate of Fun.....	15
Summary.....	24
Chapter II: Method.....	25
Participants and Procedure.....	25
Measures.....	27
Chapter III: Results.....	33
Confirming Group-level and Climate Constructs.....	33
Preliminary Analyses.....	36
Measurement Models.....	37
Antecedent Model Hypotheses.....	40
Outcome Model Hypotheses.....	41
Chapter IV: Discussion.....	42
Implications for Future Research.....	46
Practical Implications.....	53
Study Strengths and Limitations.....	56
Conclusions.....	58
Tables.....	60
Figures.....	65
References.....	68
Appendix.....	89

## CHAPTER I

### **Introduction**

Workplace fun, defined as “engaging in activities not specifically related to the job that are enjoyable, amusing, or playful” (McDowell, 2005, p. 9), is a concept that has caught on in popular press articles and the consulting world (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009; Van Meel & Vos, 2001). Once considered a subversive practice used to undermine management, workplace fun is increasingly being used as a management tool to energize employees (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). In fact, some organizations go to great lengths to build fun into their physical offices. For example, the Kodak headquarters office features “humor rooms” where employees can take a “fun break” before heading back to work (Caudron, 1992). Several companies, such as Facebook, Google, and Groupon, are also receiving recognition for their attempts to create a fun work environment (Smith, 2013). It is no surprise that organizations care about fun given many authors have contended that workplace fun has the potential to enhance motivation and productivity, reduce stress, and increase customer satisfaction (Berg, 2001; Lundin, Christensen, Paul, & Strand, 2002; Mariotti, 1999; McGhee, 2000; Meyer, 1999; Ramsey, 2001; Weiss, 2002).

Despite the increased attention paid to workplace fun in practice, there exist few theoretical or empirical investigations as to what creates a fun work environment and what benefits derive from such an atmosphere. Furthermore, what little research has been done on the topic of workplace fun has only been studied at the individual level (e.g., Karl & Peluchette, 2006a; 2006b; Karl, Peluchette, Hall, & Harland, 2005; Karl, Peluchette, & Harland, 2007; Lamm & Meeks, 2009; Peluchette & Karl, 2005). Though these studies have been useful in delineating individual differences in how fun is experienced and what individual benefits are



gained from experienced fun at work, organizational initiatives aimed at increasing fun tend to focus on the group rather than the individual (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009). Thus, organizations are blindly moving ahead with group level interventions, while unclear as to their effectiveness in creating a shared sense of workplace fun amongst employees. Moreover, the lack of research on group-level fun means that there is a void in the literature on workplace fun owing to this discrepancy between fun scientifically studied at the individual level versus fun promoted in practice at the organizational climate level.

Therefore, I introduce the concept of a *climate of fun at work*, which refers to employees having a unified set of cognitions regarding their level of fun at work. Furthermore, I argue that there may be unique contributors and outcomes related to such a unified set of cognitions, as is the case with other climate variables (e.g., safety climate; Zohar, 1980). These antecedents and outcomes are qualitatively and quantitatively different from those occurring at the individual level, rendering climate of fun at work a separate concept from individually experienced fun at work. Potential antecedents and outcomes to climate of fun at work, however, have thus far remained unexplored in the workplace fun literature. Therefore, it is critical to understand how a shared perception of fun at work is formed, and how this shared perception relates to group-level outcomes.

The goals of the present study are twofold. First, based on existing literature and borrowing from several theories, I introduce the concept of a climate of workplace fun and present a new theoretical framework for describing its antecedents. Second, I hypothesize and test antecedents and several positive group-level outcomes of a climate of workplace fun in retail stores, providing evidence in support of the climate construct.

## **Workplace Fun**

Many trace the current popularity of workplace fun to the national best-selling book series “*Fish!*,” which was based on the Pike Street Fish Market in Seattle, Washington (Lundin, Christensen, & Paul, 2002; Lundin, Paul, & Christensen, 2002, 2003). The authors of this book series recount the legend of the *Pike Street Fish Market*, where employees work in dirty, smelly conditions of a fresh fish market yet still manage to create an atmosphere of fun and play. Human resource managers and organizational leaders alike were enticed by claims from authors such as Lundin and Christensen of “Fish!” that fun at work enhances employee motivation and productivity while reducing stress. The popularity of the “Fish!” series spawned a consultancy niche that has grown considerably over the years (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009), even though the marketed solutions are not necessarily informed by empirical evidence.

Another notable example of workplace fun and its popularity in practice has come from the successful attempts of large organizations at promoting cultures that value fun through engaging with customers in humorous ways (e.g., *Southwest Airlines* and *Cold Stone Creamery*; Peters, 1999; Guirguis, 2005). In fact, one of the distinguishing features of superior performing organizations, as explained in Fortune magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work For,” was their fun work environments (Joyce, 2003).

Although organizational leaders are excited by these visible stories of fun at work, research on the topic of workplace fun has lagged behind its implementation in the field. However, a small but growing body of literature contributes to a reduction in the knowledge gap between the applied and research worlds on the topic of workplace fun. For example, researchers have shown that workplace fun is positively related to job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, and negatively related to employee turnover intentions (McDowell,

2005). Likewise, Fluegge (2008) found positive relationships between fun and positive affect, work engagement, and three performance outcomes: task performance, creative performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Additionally, researchers have demonstrated that fun is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to emotional exhaustion (Karl & Peluchette, 2006a; Karl et al., 2007).

Even fewer studies still have dealt with the precursors to fun. The first was Karl et al. (2005), who found that coworker and supervisor trust were positively related to one's attitudes toward fun. The second was also conducted by Karl and colleagues (Karl et al., 2007), who supported the supposition that experienced fun was positively related to employees' attitudes toward fun, as well as their levels of extraversion and agreeableness.

Despite the accumulated findings from this small group of studies, there remains a sizeable gap between the practice of fun at work and the empirical study of workplace fun. Consultants and human resource managers who implement fun initiatives strive to impact the social dynamics of the work group with the hopes of eliciting positive organizational outcomes (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009). In stark contrast, researchers have dealt instead with individual perceptions of what is considered fun, and how these perceptions impact individual attitudes and behaviors. What is lacking, and would help to advance the literature and shrink the gap, are studies on how shared perceptions of fun impact group-level outcomes. Shared perceptions of coworkers form a climate variable, which when targeted within empirical studies, would bring the research agenda closer to the organizational or practice agenda.

### **Climate of Workplace Fun**

Climate has been defined as “the shared perceptions of employees concerning the practices, procedures, and kinds of behaviors that get rewarded and supported in a particular

setting” (Schneider, 1990, p. 384). Of course, there are many types of practices, procedures, and rewarded behaviors that go on within any given organization. To account for the simultaneous existence of multiple climates within organizations, Schneider, Gunnarson, and Niles-Jolly (1994) recommended that climate constructs possess a specific referent, such as climates for service, support, or safety (Li, Chiaburu, & Kirkman, 2014; Schneider, White, & Paul, 1998; Zohar, 1980). Therefore, a climate represents agreement among organizational members regarding specific elements of the organization, while also reflecting the norms, attitudes, and values that occur within an organization (McMurray, 2003). Climate variables are a specific type of group-level or collective variables in the sense that climate variables represent shared perceptions of the environment. Other types of group-level or collective variables (e.g., group engagement or collective trust) need not reference environmental characteristics nor be shared to exist; they are simply aggregations of individual attitudes. The terms ‘group-level’ and ‘collective’ are used interchangeably in the present study, whereas climate of workplace fun is defined as shared employee perceptions regarding the level of fun at work.

Despite that nearly all of the research on workplace fun, with the exception of McDowell (2005), has been conducted at the individual level of analysis, several authors have discussed the components of a fun workplace in a manner that resembles a climate variable. For instance, Ford, McLaughlin, and Newstrom (2003) described a fun work environment as one that “intentionally encourages, initiates, and supports a variety of enjoyable and pleasurable activities that positively impact the attitude and productivity of individuals and groups” (p. 22). The authors asked a sample of human resource (HR) managers what specific activities they use to create a fun work environment. The three most frequently practiced categories of activities were recognition of personal milestones (e.g., birthdays, hiring anniversaries), social events (e.g., picnics, parties,

social gatherings), and public celebrations of professional achievements (e.g., award banquets). Similarly, Peluchette and Karl (2005) asked health care workers what types of activities they consider to be fun at work with the aim of determining what creates an atmosphere of fun. The top answers in their study were food (e.g., cake and ice cream parties, potlucks), contests (e.g., guess the baby pictures), and awards. In both studies, the authors investigated fun in the context of a group or team of employees, which is more consistent with the concept of a climate variable.

Also inherent in both studies was the assumption that the activities encouraged by organizations are enjoyed or considered fun by most employees. However, the work environment is not an objective reality – it is, instead, highly dependent upon the employees’ appraisal of the workplace setting. For example, according to social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), employees adapt their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors based on their interpretation of the immediate social context. Thus, as those around them engage in fun activities, they use this information to infer how they should behave with the same context. Climates develop from the social interactions at work that lead to shared meaning. Continued reinforcement of various actions, such as fun at work, encourages a norm for that behavior and leads to a shared perception that the workplace is fun. Employees working as part of the same team may vary greatly in how fun they view their workplace; however, because they share the same workspace, experiences, and leadership, over time they come to develop group-level cognitions regarding the workplace, including workplace fun. By understanding group attitudes toward fun and shared perceptions of workplace fun, organizations and researchers can better understand the effectiveness of their attempts to create and support an atmosphere of fun, as well as the outcomes associated with these attempts.

Understanding climate of fun is particularly relevant in retail store settings that place a heavy emphasis on customer service. In support, Karl and Peluchette (2006a) found that workplace fun was positively related to employees' willingness to help customers and provide individualized attention to shoppers. Climate researchers have routinely demonstrated that organizational climate is an important mechanism linking organizational factors to desired outcomes (see the meta-analytic review by Christian, Bradley, Wallace, & Burke, 2009). Thus, retail stores that incorporate fun at work may benefit from increased customer satisfaction and sales.

### **Antecedents of a Climate of Fun**

One of the major goals of the present study is to understand the antecedents to a climate of workplace fun. Figure 1 displays the model guiding the present study specific to this goal. This model illustrates the proposed role of collective coworker trust and manager attitudes toward fun in the previously-established relationship between employee attitudes toward fun and experienced fun. The model departs from existing frameworks in that it illustrates these relationships at the group rather than the individual level, a significant contribution of the proposed study.

**Group-level attitudes toward fun.** One finding that consistently emerges from the extant research is that employees' attitudes toward fun are associated with the amount of fun they experience at work (Aldag & Sherony, 2001; Choi, Kwon, & Kim, 2013; Karl et al., 2005, 2007; Peluchette & Karl, 2005). According to Karl et al. (2005), attitudes toward fun are composed of feelings regarding the importance and appropriateness of having fun at work, as well as the perceived consequences associated with having fun at work. Aldag and Sherony (2001) argued that several factors, such as early socialization experiences, work history, and

personality, play key roles in shaping one's attitudes toward fun at work, which has a direct connection with one's experienced fun at work. Karl et al.'s (2007) finding of significant, positive relationships between experienced fun and the personality traits of extraversion and agreeableness seems to support Aldag and Sherony's assertion that employees have pre-existing attitudes toward fun that they bring into their workplace.

Thus far, the relationship between attitudes toward fun and experienced fun has only been studied at the individual level. However, because workplace fun is an inherently social phenomenon (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009), it stands to reason that if a team of individuals come into the workplace with positive attitudes toward fun, they are more likely to perceive and experience fun at work, together. The relationship between attitudes toward fun and experienced fun at both the individual and group levels can be explained using Fishbein and Azjen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and later, Azjen's (1985) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). According to TRA, individuals advance from attitudes toward specific behaviors that reflect those attitudes, and the theory explains under what conditions peoples' attitudes predict or determine their behaviors. Included in the TRA are three major pieces: specific attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions. Subjective norms are one's perceived expectations from other people about whom they care. Thus, people ask themselves, "what do people important to me expect of me in this situation?" A behavioral intention is dependent upon one's attitude regarding the consequences of performing the behavior and one's intentions to comply with subjective norms. Put together, peoples' voluntary behavior is determined by their attitude toward that behavior and how they think others will view them if they engage in that behavior (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). Azjen (1985) updated this model to the TPB by including the concept

of perceived behavioral control, which refers to confidence in one's ability to perform a behavior after considering the environmental factors that either facilitate or impede the behavior.

In applying the TPB to workplace fun, we can see how employees move from general attitudes toward fun at work, to actual experienced fun at work. To illustrate, employees enter a workplace with predetermined attitudes toward fun; attitudes that have been established over time (Aldag & Sherony, 2001). However, before engaging in behaviors that would lead to workplace fun, they first determine whether the workplace allows for such behaviors by understanding how important others (e.g., boss, coworkers) would react to behaviors indicative of workplace fun (subjective norms). Lastly, employees assess their ability to act in a fun manner (behavioral control) by considering the various environmental factors that may assist or obstruct their efforts to act fun.

**Boundary conditions.** Much like the individual level, if a work team collectively holds positive attitudes toward fun, it follows that its members should experience fun at work (i.e., a climate of fun). However, there are potential boundary conditions that may mitigate this relationship. For example, workplace fun might not occur if team members do not trust each other (Karl et al., 2005). Distrustful environments are fundamentally inconsistent with the vulnerability and positive emotions that coincide with workplace fun (Fluegge, 2008; Karl et al., 2005). Likewise, a team with a manager who does not agree with or support a fun workplace may dampen the team's ability to have fun. Although this assertion has not been studied before, results from several leadership studies have shown that leader attitudes and behaviors impact their team's work experience, particularly in creating team climates (Christian et al., 2009; Jiang, Chuang, & Chaio, 2014; Rego, Reis Júnior, & Pina e Cunha, 2014). The effect of leadership may



be particularly salient in a retail store setting in which the store manager and team members work together frequently and sometimes intensely.

Schneider et al. (1998) introduced the concept of foundation issues, or contextual factors that influence workplace climates. These contextual factors can either facilitate or hinder the creation of a specific climate. Collective coworker trust and leader attitudes, discussed in detail below, make up two contextual factors particularly relevant in influencing a climate of fun.

***Collective coworker trust.*** The first boundary condition that potentially moderates the relationship between sales associates' attitudes toward fun and store-level climate of fun is collective coworker trust. In the present study, collective coworker trust is the average level of sales associates' trust in their coworkers aggregated to the group (store) level. Thus, collective coworker trust represents the extent to which all participating sales associates of a particular store trust one another. Employee trust in coworkers is related to several outcomes relevant in group settings, including team member cooperation, perceived team performance, and team satisfaction (Costa, 2003; Costa, Roe, & Tallieu, 2001). Because of its relationships with team-level constructs, one could expect that collective coworker trust could also play a role in influencing a climate of fun. In support, Tierney (1999) found that the relationships that coworkers have with each other significantly influenced their perceptions of organizational climate.

Trust, in particular, is a critical relationship component that has the potential to increase or decrease the likelihood of workplace fun. Inherent in both concepts of trust and workplace fun is vulnerability and risk-taking. In fact, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) definition of trust includes one's willingness to be vulnerable with others. Johnson-George and Swap (1982) asserted that "willingness to take risks may be one of the few characteristics common to all trust

situations” (p. 1306). Trust is not the same as risk-taking or vulnerability. Rather it is a *willingness* to take risks and to be vulnerable (Mayer et al., 1995); thus, it incorporates both risk-taking and vulnerability. Similarly, fun at work includes elements of risk-taking and vulnerability. Employees who act playful at work are taking a risk that their coworkers will laugh at them and not with them; hence, fun at work involves a certain level of vulnerability (Karl et al., 2005). In a trusting environment, employees are more likely to take risks like displaying humor or acting in a playful manner because they do not fear any negative repercussions for doing so (Lam & Lau, 2008). In contrast, employees who are surrounded by untrustworthy coworkers experience negative emotions, such as fear and hostility (Jones & George, 1998), which are both incompatible with the willingness to take risks and be vulnerable.

Additionally, trust has been shown to enable relational exchanges, such as socializing and cooperation, to occur between coworkers (Lam & Lau, 2008). Workplace fun is an inherently social phenomenon; in fact, all of the top nine most popular workplace fun activities (e.g., contests, awards) identified by Peluchette and Karl (2005) involved a significant amount of social interaction. However, in a team marred with distrust, fun and social activities feel forced and are met with cynicism from employees (Redman & Mathews, 2002). Conversely, a trusting environment supports the social interaction necessary in creating an atmosphere of fun at work.

In the case of the present study situated within a retail setting, a group of sales associates could have collectively positive attitudes toward fun but never have a chance to develop trusting relationships at work. Trust may not develop in teams for a number of reasons, but a common finding is that the teams’ quality of communication plays a large role in creating an atmosphere of trust (e.g., Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999). Specifically, Thomas, Zolin, and Hartman (2009) found that the timeliness, accuracy, and usefulness of information that is shared amongst team

members are all associated with the level of trust experienced in a team. If coworkers are unable to develop trusting relationships, due to low-quality communication or for other reasons, the potential for a climate of fun to exist could be lessened. In contrast, a team characterized by a high level of collective trust would have an increased likelihood of developing a climate of fun for the reasons outlined in the preceding paragraphs. In either case, the amount of trust within coworkers has the potential to influence the likelihood of a climate of fun; therefore, collective coworker trust is the first boundary condition considered in the present study.

***Store manager attitudes toward fun.*** Store managers' attitudes toward fun represent a second key boundary condition or moderating variable in the creation and promotion of a climate of fun. Being at the helm, the leader has a tremendous impact upon the dynamics of a work team (De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog, 2015; Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, & Hu, 2014; Morgeson, 2005). Despite the common finding that individuals enter the workplace with pre-established attitudes toward fun (Aldag & Sherony, 2001), leaders have the potential to influence their actual experience of fun at work. Support for this contention follows from decades of research showing that leaders influence their followers' job attitudes, emotions, experiences, and behaviors (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011; Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009), particularly in settings that allow for frequent communication (Gajendran & Joshi, 2012). Retail stores offer such a setting because sales associates and store managers often complete the same or similar tasks side-by-side. Store managers are frequently responsible for training new hires, which creates a strong level of influence over the employees. Lastly, store managers are responsible for creating and distributing shift schedules for their employees, which also involves a great deal of interaction with employees. Consequently, retail store managers have a unique opportunity to influence their stores' climate of fun, even if the store employees have relatively

positive or negative collective attitudes toward fun to start. In support, Amabile and Kramer (2007) found that managers positively influenced their followers' workplace experience by making the workplace environment fun and relaxing. Also, Zohar and Luria (2004) found that consistent supervisory practices, such as support and simplicity of messages, facilitated the emergence of group safety climate perceptions.

The reason why store managers' attitudes toward fun occupy a key role in shaping their employees' perception of a climate of fun can be explained using Social Learning Theory (SLT; Bandura, 1977). SLT explains how individuals modify their behavior based on their observation of others, or via direct instruction from others (Manz & Sims, 1981). With SLT, Bandura expanded traditional behavioral theories by stating that learning is a cognitive process that has a strong social component. Bandura asserted that learning can occur simply by observing others, extracting information from that observation, and eventually mimicking those behaviors deemed to be positive. This process is known as modeling or observational learning and is a key component of SLT. SLT has also been used to explain how leaders pass abstract concepts such as values, attitudes, and beliefs on to their followers (Lam, Kraus, & Ahearne, 2010; Weiss 1977, 1978). Specifically, because of their position as authority figures, leaders are often seen as social referents who are worthy of imitation (Weiss, 1977).

As stated previously, a key assumption of the present study is the idea that employees come in to their workplace with pre-established attitudes toward fun and that the extent to which these shared attitudes are positive, ultimately dictates the perception of a climate of fun at work (Aldag & Sherony, 2001). However, and as discussed above, store managers' attitudes toward fun can also impact their employees' perception of a climate of fun at work. For example, a group of sales associates could have collectively positive attitudes toward workplace fun, but

work under a store manager who does not believe that fun is important or appropriate at work. In this situation, the store manager would likely negatively reinforce behaviors that he or she viewed as perpetuating a fun workplace environment. Due to their store manager's influence, this group who a priori viewed workplace fun in a positive light would ultimately not experience much fun at work. In contrast, a store manager who shares in his or her employees' positive attitudes toward fun would positively reinforce and model fun behaviors at work, thus increasing the likelihood that sales associates would perceive a climate of fun.

Store managers also have the potential to increase their employees' perceptions of a climate of fun at work even when their employees do not share in such positive attitudes. In a retail setting, store managers are the primary authority figures of their respective stores. As such, their actions carry a heavy weight when viewed by sales associates. This assertion is supported by SLT, which describes how authority figures are typically viewed as important social referents who role model appropriate behavior (Weiss, 1977). Store managers who value workplace fun may act as referents for their sales associates by speaking positively about fun, displaying fun behaviors, or creating fun activities at work (Fineman, 2006). Retail store managers with positive attitudes toward fun can model fun behavior for their employees, which encourages these employees to likewise integrate fun into work, helping to create an overall climate of fun at the store level when one may not have existed without the managers' actions.

**Antecedent model for climate of fun.** Figure 1 displays my hypothesized model for the antecedents for climate of fun. In sum, consistent with Azjen's (1985) TPB and Bandura's (1977) SLT, this model reflects how a team of retail sales associates progress from attitudes about fun towards behaviors that would foster a climate of fun. Included in this model and consistent with TPB are boundary conditions or moderating variables that would increase or

decrease the likelihood of sales associates' progression from positive attitudes toward the experience of fun behaviors at work. In the present study, these boundary conditions include collective coworker trust and store manager attitudes toward fun. Collective coworker trust creates a social atmosphere where employees are able to take risks and be vulnerable, which would increase the likelihood that a group of employees would share in their perception of a climate of fun. Lack of coworker trust leads to negative rather than positive emotions, which would lessen the possibility that a climate of fun would exist due to decreased positive interactions. Likewise and consistent with SLT, managers who value fun can model fun behavior. In contrast, managers who do not value fun will not foster a fun environment, resulting in a low store level perception of climate of fun.

Hypothesis 1: Sales associates' attitudes toward fun are significantly related to climate of fun.

Hypothesis 2: Sales associates' collective coworker trust moderates the relationship between their attitudes toward fun and climate of fun.

Hypothesis 3: Store managers' attitudes toward fun moderate the relationship between sales associates' attitudes toward fun and climate of fun.

### **Outcomes of a Climate of Fun**

The second major goal of the proposed study is to investigate the group-level outcomes of a climate of fun at work, illustrated in Figure 2. This goal is in response to two concerns: (1) claims regarding the positive effects of fun at work have relied upon anecdotal evidence (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009), and (2) most empirically examined outcomes of workplace fun have been at the individual level of analysis. First, in refutation of the reliance on anecdotal evidence, there exists a handful of empirical studies providing support for relationships between various job attitudes

and workplace fun, albeit at the individual level. For example, job satisfaction (e.g., Karl et al., 2005, 2007; Karl & Peluchette, 2006a; Peluchette & Karl, 2005), organizational commitment (McDowell, 2005), and engagement (Fluegge, 2008) have all been positively associated with workplace fun. Additionally, Karl et al. (2007) determined that employees in a healthcare setting who experienced fun at work had low levels of emotional exhaustion and emotional dissonance at work.

In terms of clear behavioral outcomes, the research on workplace fun is also scant, though it does exist. For instance, Fluegge's (2008) findings indicate that one's experience of workplace fun is directly related to one's organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), or discretionary behaviors that are not explicitly recognized by a formal reward system but promote the effective functioning of one's organization (Organ, 1988). Fluegge also found indirect relationships between an individual's experienced fun and his or her task performance and creative performance. Lastly, Choi et al. (2013) revealed positive relationships between experienced workplace fun and an individual's task performance, as well as OCBs directed toward coworkers.

Thus, although research exists on the outcomes of workplace fun, the extant work has been limited to the individual level, despite that interventions designed to increase fun ultimately occur at the group or team level (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009). The oversight of team-level research on workplace fun has stifled the translation of empirical findings on fun to the workplace, thereby creating a divide between science and practice on the topic of workplace fun. This divide is not new in the social sciences, and has been attributed to fundamental differences in focus between academic researchers and non-academic practitioners (Cober, Silzer, &

Erickson, 2009). In regards to workplace fun, the science is focused on the individual-level concept, whereas practice is focused on the team-level concept.

By studying the shared perceptions that ultimately create a climate of fun at the group level, researchers and academics can better align their work with practice, and eventually upon publication of their results, vice-versa. Because organizational climate is an important mechanism linking workplace factors to desired outcomes (Christian et al., 2009), it is necessary to understand the outcomes associated with a climate of fun. Therefore, the present study includes several group-level outcomes of interest in a retail store setting. First, employee engagement is included as an outcome variable because of its association with retail service performance (Menguc, Auh, Fisher, & Haddad, 2013). Engagement is generally studied at the individual level, but for the purposes of the present study, I used store employees' average level of engagement aggregated to the store level. This will provide an understanding as to whether a climate of fun is related to an overall level of engagement within a group of store employees. The second and third outcome variables, OCBs and store performance, are two components of the overall store performance domain and as such, offer a glimpse as to whether fun at work is associated with the successful functioning of a retail store. These two performance outcomes are included to verify claims made by non-academic authors that workplace fun enhances organizational performance (e.g., Lundin, Christensen, & Paul, 2002). Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between a climate of fun and the three outcomes of store-level engagement, store-level OCBs, and store performance.

**Group-level employee engagement.** Employees are engaged when they personally invest themselves into their work roles (Kahn, 1990). This personal investment occurs when employees perceive their work environment to be meaningful, safe, and containing the resources



they need to immerse themselves into their work (Kahn, 1990; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010). These perceptions, known as psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability, respectively, form immediate precursors to engagement (Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement has become a hot topic for researchers and organizational leaders alike, likely driven by findings regarding the financial implications of having an unengaged workforce. For example, the Gallup Organization (2012) estimated this cost in the United States to be between \$450 and \$550 billion per year. Past research has shown associations between employee engagement and many positive outcomes at both the individual and organizational level, such as job satisfaction, job involvement (Macey & Schneider, 2008), organizational commitment (Kanste, 2011), customer satisfaction, safety, and productivity (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Given the associations between employee engagement and these positive outcomes, it is no surprise that engagement is becoming increasingly recognized as crucial to organizational success (Woodruffe, 2006).

There are two theoretical explanations as to how a climate of fun at work encourages employees to invest themselves in their work roles and become engaged: (1) by providing a positive job resource, and (2) by acting as a recovery mechanism. The former explanation relies upon the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), a model that suggests resources from multiple levels of the organization can provide a motivational boost to employees by counteracting the negative drain of job demands. Job resources include any physical, interpersonal/social, or organizational aspects of the job that stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). A considerable stream of research has shown job resources positively predict employee engagement (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007).

The highly interactive nature of fun at work satisfies workers' basic need of belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and as such, may place workplace fun within the social category of job resources (Fluegge, 2008). Belongingness refers to a need to form and maintain interpersonal relationships within particular domains of life (e.g., family, friendships, and work). In their seminal paper in which they introduced belongingness theory, Baumeister and Leary (1995) purported that social connections and belonging are fundamental human needs. Workplace fun may indirectly satisfy this need due to the strong social aspect inherent in fun activities (Peluchette & Karl, 2005). Indeed, in their qualitative study investigating the outcomes associated with workplace fun, Ford et al. (2003) found friendships at work and group cohesiveness increased as a result of a fun work environment. Belongingness has also been incorporated into the literature on social support at work (e.g., Scott, Zagenczyk, Schippers, Purvis, & Cruz, 2014), suggesting that work activities involving a great deal of social interaction can satisfy the fundamental need of belongingness and, therefore, act as a job resource. Social support resulting from job resources has been found to enhance work engagement (Christian et al., 2011; Saks, 2006). Accordingly, a climate of fun at work involving socializing and interacting with others should satisfy employees' need for belongingness at work, leading to the groups' accumulation of interpersonal and social job resources, resulting in a high group-level of engagement.

The second potential explanation as to how a climate of fun relates to group engagement is the role of workplace fun as a recovery mechanism that allows the group to become more engaged. Insufficient recovery while at work can lead to negative outcomes indicative of low engagement levels, such as decreased concentration and reduced alertness (Hobfoll, 1998; Krueger, 1989). In contrast, recovery periods have been found to positively influence employees'

engagement levels (Sonnentag, 2003). Workplace fun has, in the past, been conceptualized as a method of recovery, most notably in Roy's (1959) research on how fun at work breaks up monotonous and stressful conditions. In his study of factory workers, Roy found that fun and playful off-task activities helped provide employees with recovery periods after which they returned to work more physically engaged than when they left. The recovery effects of fun may be explained by fun's connection with laughter. Many of the organizationally-sponsored fun activities described in the fun literature are humorous in nature (Ford et al., 2003). As an outcome of humor, laughter has been shown to cause a release of psychological tension, which can have a buffering effect on the otherwise negative impact of stressful events (Bennett, Zeller, Rosenberg, & McCann, 2003). At a physiological level, laughter can lead to changes in blood pressure, pulmonary ventilation, and brain activity, which may improve overall well-being (Fry, 1994). In a store with a strong climate of fun, employees may benefit from the frequent recovery periods that fun activities and laughter offer, which has the potential to positively influence their engagement (Sonnentag, 2003).

**Group-level OCBI.** Organ (1997) defined OCB as behavior that “supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place” (p. 95). OCBs are considered beneficial in a workplace setting, but Williams and Anderson (1991) narrowed the concept by proposing a conceptualization of OCB that specified *who* benefits from the citizenship behaviors. According to Williams and Anderson, OCB can be directed toward the organization (OCBO) or individuals within the organization (OCBI). This conceptualization provides an alignment with fun at the group level, making it the preferred framework over others such as Organ's (1998) that includes up to five dimensions.

Once almost entirely studied at the individual level, recent work on OCB has expanded to the team-level to understand how OCBs affect group- or organizational-level outcomes (see Podsakoff, Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Maynes, & Spoelma, 2014 for a review). Inherent in Organ's (1988) original definition of OCB is the idea that although OCBs are performed at the individual level, they impact the organization only when they are aggregated over time (Podsakoff et al., 2014). Indeed, research has shown that a climate that encourages OCBs can occur because of the group developing norms for these types of behaviors (Ehrhart & Nuamann, 2004).

Frederickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions offers a compelling explanation as to how a climate of fun could result in group-level OCBs. According to Frederickson, positive emotions such as joy, interest, contentment, and love have the capacity to broaden one's scope of attention and build one's personal resources (including physical, intellectual, social, and psychological resources) through widening the array of one's thoughts and actions. The theory holds that whereas negative emotions bring about narrowed and hostile actions (e.g., escape, attack, expel), positive emotions are more likely to elicit urges to share or help others (Lewis, 1993). Such behaviors are akin to the individually-directed OCB outlined by Williams and Anderson (1991).

A climate of fun is ideally suited to elicit positive emotions that would lead employees to perform OCBI. At a physiological level, laughter (a common outcome of fun) has been shown to increase endorphin release, and endorphin release has been theorized to lead to social bonding between individuals due to the positive emotions that endorphins elicit (Dunbar et al., 2012). Workplace fun may have the greatest impact on employee affect, which has been identified as a key emotion that results in social bonding and helping behavior (Spoor & Kelly, 2004). Indeed, Fluegge (2008) found that workplace fun is strongly related to positive affect ( $r = .57$ ;  $\beta = .62$ ).

Additionally, Ford et al.'s (2005) survey of human resource managers concluded that fun work environments brought about increased voluntary helping behaviors as a result of the positive emotions and states (e.g., enthusiasm) that it created. Other researchers have shown that when individuals are in a good mood, they tend to be more altruistic and more likely to help others (Karl & Peluchette, 2006a), in part because helping behaviors tend to prolong their good mood (Clark & Isen, 1982). These behaviors, which occur because of the positive feelings associated with workplace fun, should be reciprocated because they create feelings of obligation (Gouldner, 1960), and encourage others to imitate (Bandura, 1977). Thus, a climate of fun may set up a self-propagating cycle of OCBI's due to the positive emotions inherent in the environment. Specific to the current study, a climate of fun could be related to OCBI's at both the individual and store levels, but the store level is of greater interest because of the greater organizational benefits (e.g., profitability, sales, and revenue) deriving from OCBI's in the aggregate (Podsakoff et al., 2014).

**Store performance.** I propose that a climate of fun may also relate to the overall performance of the store, mainly through its previously established positive impact on customers. As noted, an employee's experience of fun at work elicits positive emotions, such as happiness and joy (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009). Employees working in a fun environment could pass positive emotions to customers through a contagion process (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006). Emotional contagion refers to a process through which emotions are transmitted from one individual to another, with the receiver catching the emotions that the sender displays (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). Emotional contagion is a common area of research in service environments like retail stores, with findings indicating that the positive emotions of service employees are frequently passed on to customers via a ripple effect (Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002; Verbeke, 1997). Emotional contagion theorists suggest that the frequency of an

emotional display is a key determinant in solidifying the passing of positive emotions – the more frequent the emotional display by senders, the greater the emotional contagion in the receiver (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). Thus, a team with a majority of members who frequently display positive emotions (i.e., a team with a climate of fun) might have a greater impact upon customers than one in which only one or two team members expresses fun or displays positive emotions.

Customers positively affected by the emotional contagion process generally report being satisfied with their shopping experience (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). Customer satisfaction, in turn, relates to several key retail performance measures, including financial performance (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 2003; Schneider & White, 2004). The chain of events progressing from store service employees to customers to store financial performance is known as the value-profit chain (Heskett et al., 2003). Research utilizing the value-profit chain model frequently includes contagion processes as key explanatory mechanisms as to how employees influence customer attitudes and, eventually, customer behavior (Netemeyer, Maxham, & Lichtenstein, 2010). Other researchers (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Isen, Shalke, Clark, & Karp, 1978; Westbrook, 1980) suggested a direct link between positive moods and consumer decision making (i.e., to purchase or not), particularly in retail or service encounters, due to the interpersonal nature of the shopping process. Swinyard (1993) provided evidence for these claims in an experimental study in which participants in a good mood reported greater involvement and higher shopping intentions than those who were in a bad mood. The interactive and social nature of workplace fun, as well as the positive emotions that fun elicits, likely work towards improving customer mood and purchasing intentions, which increases store performance. Therefore, using employee-customer emotional contagion and the value-profit

chain as guiding theoretical models, I propose that a climate of fun is positively related to store performance.

**Outcome model for climate of fun.** Figure 2 displays my theoretical suppositions for outcomes of a climate of fun. This model displays the primary outcomes of group-level employee engagement, group-level OCBI, and store performance. To summarize, a climate of fun should be associated with group-level engagement due to workplace fun's role as an important job resource and as a recovery mechanism. A climate of fun should be related to group-level OCBI because of the altruism and helping behaviors that are generated from experienced fun at work. Such behaviors should establish norms for OCBI that occur at the store level. Lastly, the value-profit chain and emotional contagion provide theoretical justification as to how a climate of fun should result in store employees passing on positive emotions to customers. This emotional contagion process theoretically influences store performance via its effects on customers' satisfaction. Based on these arguments, I propose:

Hypothesis 4: Climate of fun is positively related to sales associates' group-level engagement.

Hypothesis 5: Climate of fun is positively related to sales associates' group-level OCBI.

Hypothesis 6: Climate of fun is positively related to store performance.

## **Summary**

In tandem, the models depicted in Figures 1 and 2 display the antecedents and outcomes associated with a climate of workplace fun, and as such, illustrate my proposed theoretical framework. From this framework, I begin the scientific study of a climate of workplace fun, beyond the lens of the individual.

## CHAPTER II

### Method

#### Participants and Procedure

The sample used in the present study is archival. Data were collected in May 2014, as part of a consulting project with a local organization, with the agreement that the employee survey data would be used for both the practical purposes of the organization as well as research purposes.

**Sales associates.** Participants included 798 sales associates working at 154 retail footwear stores across North America. Sales associates voluntarily participated in the study after receiving an email with a link to the survey, which was hosted on the survey website Qualtrics. Sales associates were given ten business days to complete the survey and a reminder email was sent after seven days. Stores with the highest sales associate survey completion rate were sent a gift card for coffee that could be redeemed by the store manager for store employee use. Store managers were not given specific information regarding which sales associates completed the survey, only that their store qualified for the gift cards on account of a high response rate. There were no measures taken to prevent ballot stuffing (i.e., answering the survey more than once), but there were no instances in which the number of sales associate responses was greater than the number of employed sales associates at that store. The emails were sent to 206 stores, reaching 1,704 sales associates in total for recruitment. Sales associates were asked to complete the survey alone and during business hours using their store's computer. The sales associates' survey response rate was 49%, which is above the average organizational response rate cited in Baruch and Holtom (2008).



The majority of sales associate participants worked for the organization for 1-3 years ( $n = 265$ , or 33%). Twenty-six percent of participants had a tenure of 6 months to 1 year ( $n = 203$ ), 18% ( $n = 145$ ) from 0-3 months, 13% ( $n = 104$ ) more than 3 years, and 10% ( $n = 77$ ) worked for the organization between 3-6 months. The final sample was 69% female ( $n = 537$ ) and 31% male ( $n = 246$ ), with 15 participants electing to not respond. The average age of participants was 27 ( $SD = 9.95$ ) years old. Participants were predominately Caucasian (42%; 33% Hispanic, 10% were African American, 8% were two or more races, 4% were Asian, 1% were American Indian, and 2% declined to respond).

**Store managers.** The store managers of the same initial list of 206 retail stores were sent links to the store manager survey through their company email addresses. Like the sales associate survey, store manager participation was voluntary. Store managers were given ten business days to complete the survey, with a reminder email being sent to those who had not completed it after a seven day period. The survey was hosted on the survey website Qualtrics. Out of the 195 potential survey respondents (several stores either shared a store manager with another store or had no store manager), 142 filled out the survey for a response rate of 73%. The number of cases in which sales associates' responses were matched with their respective store manager was 105.

The majority of participating store managers worked for the organization for 1-3 years ( $n = 46$ , or 32%). Twenty-eight percent of participants had a tenure of 3-5 years ( $n = 39$ ), 20% ( $n = 28$ ) worked less than 1 year, and 20% ( $n = 28$ ) worked for the organization more than 5 years. The final sample was 57% female ( $n = 81$ ) and 37% male ( $n = 52$ ), with 9 participants electing to not respond. The average age of participants was 37 ( $SD = 10.43$ ) years old. Participants were predominately Caucasian (67%; 15% Hispanic, 6% were two or more races, 3% were African

American, 1% were Asian, 1% were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 7% declined to respond).

## **Measures**

**Attitudes toward fun.** Sales associates' and store managers' attitudes toward fun were assessed using Karl et al.'s (2005) 17-item measure. Karl et al. created this measure by combining three example items from Aldag and Sherony (2001) and the remaining 14 from Karl and Harland (2005). In previous studies, researchers have estimated adequate reliability of scores ( $\alpha = .87$ ; Karl et al., 2005). Responses were captured using a Likert response scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, to 7 = *Strongly Agree*. The scale is divided into three dimensions: appropriateness, salience, and perceived consequences. Items in the appropriateness dimension assess how acceptable individuals perceive fun to be in the workplace. An example item from the appropriateness dimension is "Having a good time and doing a good job are incompatible achievements (reverse-coded)." Items in the salience dimension assess how important individuals deem fun to be in the workplace. An example item from the salience dimension is "I prefer to work with people who like to have fun." Items in the perceived consequences dimension assess how positively individuals view the outcomes of workplace fun. An example item from the perceived consequences dimension is "Fun at work can help reduce stress and tensions." Despite the presence of subscales, Karl et al. (2005) supported the use of a composite or averaged score. In the present study, reliability estimates for the overall attitudes toward fun scale were  $\alpha = .87$  for the sales associates sample and  $\alpha = .84$  for store managers.

**Trust in coworkers.** Sales associates' trust in their coworkers was assessed using Gillespie's (2003) 10-item behavioral trust inventory. Researchers have obtained adequate test-retest reliability of scores and also provided evidence of high levels of predictive validity with

extra-role performance ( $\beta = .65$ ), and interactional justice ( $\beta = .74$ ; Gillespie, 2012; Lam, Loi, & Leong, 2013). Sales associates were asked how willing they are to display ten behaviors indicative of a trusting relationship with their coworkers. Example items include “How willing are you to rely on your coworkers to represent your work accurately to others?” and “How willing are you to share your personal feelings with your coworkers?” Responses were captured using a scale of willingness from 1 = *Not at All Willing*, to 7 = *Completely Willing*. The reliability estimate for the trust in coworker measure was  $\alpha = .88$  for this sample.

**Experienced workplace fun.** Sales associates’ experienced fun at work, which was aggregated to form climate of fun, was assessed using four items from Karl et al.’s (2007) 5-item scale. The last item of the measure, “Sometimes I feel more like I’m playing than I’m working,” was not used in the present study because this item assesses one’s personal experience and not that of the team, and as such does not reflect a climate variable. Karl et al. (2007) provided convergent validity evidence of the workplace fun scale with measures of job satisfaction ( $r = .56$ ) and attitudes toward fun ( $r = .28$ ). The authors also provided evidence of divergent validity with Big 5 personality subscales, in addition to reporting estimates of adequate internal reliability ( $\alpha = .86$ ). Responses were captured using a Likert response scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, to 7 = *Strongly Agree*. Example items include “This is a fun place to work,” and “Managers encourage employees to have fun at work.” The reliability estimate for the adapted workplace fun measure was  $\alpha = .87$  for this sample.

**Group-level OCBs.** Managers were asked to rate their sales associates’ individually-focused OCBs using six items from Williams and Anderson’s (1991) 13-item measure. The original 13-item measure included seven items that also assessed OCBs benefitting the organization; however, I focused only on assessing individually-targeted OCBs (OCBIs), thus

excluding items assessing organizationally-targeted OCBs. Responses were captured using a Likert response scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, to 7 = *Strongly Agree*. The prompt for the survey items read “The employees of my store...” to allow the store managers to rate OCBI across all sales associates at their store, rather than rating one or two employees. This method is similar to using manager-rated team performance, which is often used in the team literature (e.g., O'Connell, Doverspike, & Cober, 2002; Peters & Karren, 2009). One item, “The employees of my store take a personal interest in other employees,” was not included by request of the organization. An example item from the OCBI scale is “The employees of my store take time to listen to coworkers’ problems and worries.” Williams and Anderson (1991) provided evidence of divergent validity between the OCBI subscale and other types of performance including organizationally-directed OCB (OCBOs) and in-role behavior. The reliability estimate for the OCBI measure was  $\alpha = .87$  for this sample.

**Employee engagement.** Sales associates’ perceptions of engagement were assessed using Rich et al.’s (2010) 18-item measure of employee engagement, the Job Engagement Scale (JES). Responses were captured using a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. The measure contains three dimensions corresponding to the respondent’s physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Kahn, 1990). The three dimensions contain six items each and form a second-order factor of engagement. Rich et al. reported strong correlations ( $r = .63$  to  $.74$ ) between the three dimensions, supporting their aggregation to form an overall engagement scale. Therefore, scores on the three dimensions were averaged to form an overall engagement score. The authors reported an adequate reliability of scores estimate ( $\alpha = .89$ ) along with evidence of discriminant validity with measures of job involvement and perceived support, and predictive validity with supervisor ratings of discretionary effort (Rich et

al., 2010). An example item from the physical engagement dimension is “I devote a lot of energy to my job.” An example item from the emotional dimension is “I feel positive about my job.” Lastly, an example item from the cognitive dimension is “At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job.” The reliability estimate for the JES was  $\alpha = .95$  for this sample.

**Store performance.** Monthly performance for each of the participating stores was gathered from the organization’s records. Performance was measured as conversion rate, which is defined as the percentage of customers who have purchased an item. Each store has motion detectors that keep a running count of the number of people who walk out of the store. This number is known as “footfall,” and it represents the highest possible number of sales for a given store. The conversion rate is the number of sales divided by the footfall number. Successful sales, or conversions, are impacted by factors such as customer service, staffing, and store specials. The conversion rate offers an objective store performance measure because it takes into account the wide range in foot traffic between a more popular, urban store and a less-visited rural store. Other store performance records were not comparable from store to store because they included raw numbers, such as total sales or total number of transactions. For the purpose of the present study, store performance is conceptualized as the conversion rate from the month in which the data were collected. The average conversion rate across all participating stores is found in Table 1.

**Control variables.** Several control variables were considered for the proposed analyses to reduce the possibility that extraneous variables impact the results of this study. Below are descriptions of the variables that were used as controls.

**Store size.** Employees working in large stores may have more difficulty getting to know and trusting their coworkers than employees working in stores that are smaller in size. This

assertion is backed by research findings showing that information sharing is greater in small teams than in large teams (Lee, Gillespie, Mann, & Wearing, 2010). Also, teams with frequent knowledge and information sharing enjoy a high degree of trust among team members (Hashim & Tan, 2015). Thus, sales associates working at smaller stores may enjoy the additional benefit of frequent information sharing with their core group of coworkers, which could positively influence their collective coworker trust.

Store size was determined through the organization's internal employment records. The list of employees working in each store changes rapidly, as sales associates are hired on or terminated fairly often. However, these records were obtained when the surveys were initially administered, so they offer the most accurate picture of the store size at the time of the study. After running correlational analyses, however, it was found that store size was not significantly correlated with any of the study variables and therefore was not included in the analyses.

*Average tenure.* Organizational tenure has been associated with job performance and OCBs at the individual level (see the meta-analysis conducted by Ng & Feldman, 2010). When conducting research at the team level, however, the impact of organizational tenure becomes much more complicated, as researchers have attempted to tease apart whether to conceptualize tenure as an average, minimum or maximum, or diversity variable within a team. In any case, team tenure has been associated with individual- and team-level outcomes above and beyond individual tenure (Steffens, Shemla, Wegge, & Diestel, 2014). Specifically, teams that have worked together for long periods perform better than less experienced teams, but only up to a certain point (Steffens et al., 2014). Team tenure is also positively associated with the level of trust occurring within teams (Camelo-Ordaz, García-Cruz, & Sousa-Ginel, 2014). By reason of these key differences between experienced and nascent teams, the average tenure of participating

sales associates was included as a control variable. After running correlational analyses, it was determined that average tenure was significantly and positively correlated with sales associate attitudes toward fun and negatively correlated with employee engagement. Thus, average tenure was retained as a control variable in analyses corresponding with Figure 1.

*Average age.* Lamm and Meeks (2009) found that generational membership moderated the relationship between workplace fun and individual outcomes. Specifically, the authors found that the relationships between fun and satisfaction and fun and task performance were stronger for younger employees. Similarly, Choi et al. (2013) found that Generation Y workers (individuals born between 1977 and 1994; Paul, 2001) experienced a high level of fun at work. Choi and colleagues speculated that the United States' economic crisis would most likely cause college-aged individuals' to treat work with more seriousness because of the fragility of the labor market, thus resulting in a less positive workplace fun attitude. Indeed, average age of sales associates was significantly and positively correlated with their attitudes toward fun and, as such, I included the average age of sales associates as a control variable in the analyses corresponding with Figure 1. The organization did not provide access to employee records for all store employees; therefore, age information was only reported for those sales associates who completed the study survey.

## CHAPTER III

### Results

#### **Confirming Group-level and Climate Constructs**

The first step prior to testing my hypotheses was to ensure that data aggregation was justified. Specifically, because the constructs of sales associate attitudes toward fun, coworker trust, workplace fun, and employee engagement were group-level variables, employees' individual ratings on these constructs were aggregated to form the group-level variable. Chan (1998), recognizing the issues inherent in the aggregation of individual-level perceptions to the group- or organizational-levels, created a typology of composition models meant to guide researchers' reasoning behind the variables that they aggregate. I used Chan's additive model for sales associate attitudes toward fun, coworker trust, and employee engagement. According to Chan, additive models involve either a summation or an average of lower-level responses without consideration for the variance among these responses. The additive model is appropriate for the present study because in each of these three constructs, I was interested in the average rating on each construct among sales associates, as opposed to their level of agreement or shared perception of the construct (appropriate for a climate variable). For example, a high average level of sales associate attitudes toward fun should lead to a climate of fun, even if one or two employees do not share in these positive attitudes. In this example, I rely on the overall positive attitudes toward fun to override the minority of employees who do not share in these positive attitudes. Likewise, higher average levels are appropriate for collective coworker trust and group-level employee engagement, because higher averages represent the stores' overall standing on these constructs, rather than the extent to which these attitudes are shared between employees working in the same store. This aggregation does not require agreement between



employees because the referent is not shared across employees; in other words, the variables are not being conceptualized as climate variables (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Thus, in the case of sales associate attitudes toward fun, coworker trust, workplace fun, and employee engagement, the overall level of the construct at the group level is of more interest than the variability across all employees. Engagement and attitudes toward fun are not climate variables – they are, instead, personal attitudes that do not require any type of consensus to aggregate.

However, in the case of workplace fun, I was interested in understanding the outcomes associated with a *climate* of fun. A psychological climate variable is defined by the extent to which a perception about the workplace is shared among employees (Schneider, 1990). Hence, appropriately, the items I included in the workplace fun scale referenced the group level, which is consistent with Schneider’s description of psychological climate, as well as Kozlowski and Klein’s (2000) recommendation that “researchers employ measures consistent with the conceptualization of their constructs, using unit-level referents, if possible, to assess shared unit-level constructs” (p. 38). Following Chan’s (1998) framework, an additive model is not appropriate here because of its exclusion of a within-group agreement index, which indicates the extent to which individuals agree about an aspect of their shared environment. Instead, a direct consensus model was used for calculating a climate of fun (Chan, 1998). A direct consensus composition model calls for a within-group agreement index to determine whether individual climate perceptions indicate a shared assignment of psychological meaning (James, 1982). High within-group agreement indicates consensus regarding a climate of fun, which justifies aggregation to the climate level. A consensus among employees regarding fun at work would mean that those employees agree that their workplace is fun (or not fun).

To test whether aggregation of climate of workplace fun was justified,  $r_{wg(j)}$  and intraclass correlation (ICC(2)) values were calculated. The  $r_{wg(j)}$  coefficient ranges from 0 (complete lack of agreement) to 1 (complete agreement) and represents interrater agreement for each retail store (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984). This coefficient compares the variance in observed responses with the variance that would be obtained if responses were random. Higher  $r_{wg(j)}$  values represent stronger agreement within stores—the higher the value, the more data aggregation is justified because it says that everyone shares the same perception. ICC(2) represents the reliability of the mean rating assigned by a group of individuals (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). Providing both  $r_{wg(j)}$  (interrater agreement) and ICC(2) (interrater reliability) values is recommended to provide adequate justification for aggregation (LeBreton & Senter, 2007).

Though many researchers claim that James et al. (1984) established a cutoff score of .70 for the  $r_{wg(j)}$  coefficient, such that values below this score should be dropped from analyses, Cortina (2002) and LeBreton and Senter (2007) argued forcibly that a cutoff was not recommended by James et al. and that such arbitrary cutoffs are counterproductive to research using multilevel data. Instead, LeBreton and Senter offered revised standards for interpreting interrater agreement estimates, such that estimates ranging from .51 to .70 represent moderate agreement, .71 to .90 represent strong agreement, and .91 to 1.00 represent very strong agreement. The authors additionally note that the quality of the measure being aggregated must also be considered; newly developed measures are not expected to elicit as high a level of agreement as psychometric tests that have more validity and reliability evidence available (LeBreton & Senter, 2007).

In the present study, the average  $r_{wg(j)}$  coefficient for climate of fun was .87 ( $SD = .09$ ), with values ranging from .41 to .99. The store with the  $r_{wg(j)}$  coefficient of .41 was the only store

to fall below LeBreton and Senter's (2007) "moderate agreement" category, with the next lowest coefficient being .60. As per LeBreton and Senter's recommendation, the store with the low  $r_{wg(j)}$  coefficient was retained in data analysis rather than eliminated, which would exclude a potentially valuable data point. In regard to ICC(2), the value for climate of workplace fun was .87, which is also well above the recommended levels (i.e., above .70) suggesting strong interrater reliability (LeBreton & Senter, 2007; Nunnally, 1978). In total, this evidence suggests that the aggregation of workplace fun to the group level is justified, and provides preliminary support for the concept of a climate of workplace fun.

### **Preliminary Analyses**

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities for all variables are reported in Table 1. Workplace fun was significantly and positively correlated with sales associate and store manager attitudes toward fun, as well as store-level OCBI and employee engagement. It was not, however, significantly correlated with store performance. The only variable with which store performance was significantly correlated was manager attitudes toward fun. A number of demographic variables were significantly related to the outcome variables. As expected, the average age of sales associates was significantly and positively correlated with their attitudes toward fun. Average tenure of sales associates was also significantly correlated with their attitudes toward fun and collective trust, suggesting that as groups work together longer, they view fun at work in a positive light, and also trust one another. Unexpectedly, average tenure of sales associates was significantly negatively correlated with their engagement at work. This finding runs counter to previous research (e.g., Sliter, Sinclair, Yuan, & Mohr, 2014), and may suggest a 'honeymoon phase' in which retail employees enjoy high levels of engagement early in their tenure. Lastly, the assumption of normality necessary for conducting multiple linear

regression and structural equation modeling was met for all study variables, and no problematic outliers were discovered in the data.

### **Measurement Models**

Prior to conducting the analyses for the study hypotheses and in keeping with convention of structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses, I first specified individual measurement models (Confirmatory Factor Analyses or CFAs) for each latent variable, followed by the full measurement model, which included all variable indicators and their respective latent variables (Byrne, 2013). All SEM analyses were conducted using MPlus version 6 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2011). Model fit was assessed using the chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The smaller the chi-square value, the better the model fit. A non-significant chi-square test statistic indicates acceptable model fit; however, chi-square is impacted by sample size and the complexity of the model and, therefore, other indices are preferred. Though not used as a strict criterion, the recommended cut-off scores suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) and MacCallum, Browne, and Sugawara (1996) were used to guide the assessment of model fit (CFI > .90, RMSEA < .08). Table 2 displays the results from the individual measurement models, as well as the full measurement model.

I ran two separate CFAs for those variables considered multidimensional: attitudes toward fun (in both sales associate and store manager samples) and engagement. The purpose of running the CFAs was to gain evidence for the variables' construct validity. The first CFA for each variable examined model fit in regards to the prevailing factor structure as indicated by theory. The second CFA for each variable, the alternative models, examined model fit with all items loading on to one factor. If the data support the theoretically-derived measurement of a particular variable, then evidence of construct validity is found. Using engagement as an

example, I first ran a CFA which included the three factors of physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement as proposed by Kahn (1990) and modeled in past research (Rich et al., 2010). In the second engagement CFA, all 18 items loaded on to one general factor. Because the one- and three-factor models are nested, meaning that all freely estimated parameters in the smaller (one-factor) model are a subset of those estimated in the larger (three-factor) model, a simple chi-square difference test can reveal which of the two models fits the data better (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). In the case of engagement, and with attitudes toward fun in both samples, the theoretically-derived, multiple factor models provided the superior fit (Table 2).

In both cases of attitudes toward fun and in the case of engagement, however, the fit statistics were worse than desired. The somewhat poor fit statistics could be due to a function of the measure itself, or some idiosyncrasy in the samples used in the present study. Because no evidence exists regarding the factor structure of the attitudes toward fun measure, I do not have any reference as to whether the scale has performed better in other samples. The RMSEA for the attitude toward fun scale in both samples were only slightly above MacCallum, Browne, and Sugawara's (1996) cut-off recommendation of .08, which means the fit indices were mediocre but not indefensible. The measurement model for the engagement scale used in the present study displayed adequate CFI value (.90), but the RMSEA was not adequate (.12). Though this is disconcerting, the theoretically-derived dimensions modeled in this CFA were not used as independent subscales (in keeping with the theoretical conceptualization) in the subsequent structural model. That is, I was not interested in delineating engagement into its components of physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Instead, I used the composite scale score for analyses, and therefore, parcels were created as indicators for the latent construct of engagement,

based on recommendations by previous researchers (Williams & O'Boyle, 2008). This process is described below.

To ensure enough power, latent variables were created using a partial disaggregation model to parcel scale items (Williams & O'Boyle, 2008). Specifically, the factorial algorithm method of item parceling was used (Rogers & Schmitt, 2004). This method uses factor loadings obtained from an exploratory factor analysis to create parcels that are equally balanced according to item difficulty and discrimination for each latent variable. Williams and O'Boyle (2008) recommend using parcels that are composed of at least three items each – this method was used for the variables attitudes toward fun (both sales associate and store manager), collective coworker trust, and group-level engagement; three parcels were created for each.

I first conducted a CFA that included all latent variables in the antecedent model. These variables were sales associate attitudes toward fun, collective coworker trust, manager attitudes toward fun, and climate of fun. This 4-factor CFA displayed adequate fit, particularly when compared to the alternative 1-factor model that did not distinguish between constructs (see Table 2). Next, I conducted a 4-factor measurement model that included all latent variables in the outcome model. These variables were climate of fun, group-level engagement and OCIBs, and store performance. This 4-factor model displayed adequate fit, particularly when compared to the alternative 1-factor model (shown in Table 2).

I also conducted a CFA on a 7-factor measurement model that included all latent variables in the study (i.e., a combination of Figures 1 and 2). Although I have divided the study into two distinct models based on antecedents and outcomes of climate of fun, the study variables were ultimately from the same two samples and as such an overall measurement model is necessary. The full measurement model included all latent variables and their predictors. This

hypothesized 7-factor measurement model showed significantly better fit, as determined by a chi-square difference test, than the alternative 1-factor measurement model (see Table 2). Also, the highest correlation among latent variables in the measurement model was .46, suggesting that although related, none of the variables overlapped significantly. Together, these results support the contention that all variables studied are distinct from one another in this sample.

### **Antecedent Model Hypotheses**

To test the hypotheses illustrated in Figure 1 (the antecedents of a climate of workplace fun), I used multiple linear regression. For Hypotheses 1, which proposed that sales associates' attitudes toward fun was significantly related to climate of fun, climate of fun was regressed on attitudes toward fun and the two control variables, tenure and age. The relationship between sales associate attitudes toward fun and a climate of fun was significant ( $\beta = .64, se = .12, t(150) = 5.48, p < .001$ ), which lends support to Hypothesis 1.

Hypotheses 2 and 3, which proposed that collective coworker trust and manager attitudes toward fun (respectively) moderated the relationship between sales associate attitudes toward fun and climate of fun, were also tested using hierarchical regression analyses. To test Hypothesis 2 and 3 (see Table 3), the control variables, average tenure and average age, were entered into the first step of the regression analysis; this model was not significant  $F(2, 100) = 0.18, R^2 = .02, ns$ . In the second step, sales associate attitudes toward fun, collective coworker trust, and manager attitudes toward fun were entered into the regression analysis along with the control variables; this model was significant  $F(3, 97) = 12.10, p < .001, R^2 = .35$ . All three variables had significant direct effects on climate of fun. Sales associate attitudes toward fun was significantly related to climate of fun,  $\beta = 0.46, p < .001$ . Additionally, collective coworker trust was significantly related to climate of fun,  $\beta = 0.22, p < .05$ . Lastly, manager attitudes toward

fun was significantly related to climate of fun  $\beta = 0.17, p < .05$ . However, results from the third step of the regression analysis in which the two interaction terms were entered showed that the addition of these interaction terms did not significantly increase the variance explained in climate of fun,  $\Delta R^2 = .02, ns$ . Results, therefore, suggest that neither collective coworker trust nor manager attitudes toward fun moderate the relationship between sales associate attitudes toward fun and climate of fun – they are instead each directly related to climate of fun. Therefore, Hypotheses 2 and 3 were not supported.

### **Outcome Model Hypotheses**

The hypotheses included in the model shown in Figure 2 (the outcomes of a climate of workplace fun) were tested using SEM. The structural model showed adequate fit ( $\chi^2 = 326.62$  (113)  $p < .001$ , CFI = .91, RMSEA = .11), meaning that the model is explained by the data reasonably well, though the RMSEA was a bit high relative to suggested cutoffs. Climate of fun was significantly related to both sales associate engagement ( $\beta = .32, p < .001$ ) and OCBI ( $\beta = .25, p < .05$ ), indicating support for Hypotheses 4 and 5. However, climate of fun was not related to store performance ( $\beta = .05, ns$ ), therefore Hypothesis 6 was not supported. Figure 3 displays all paths in the structural model. Table 4 includes details for the path statistics from the structural model.



## CHAPTER IV

### **Discussion**

The purpose of the present study was to develop a theoretical model for an empirical examination of fun in a fashion that more closely models how it is used and described in practice. As such, I advanced a new theory for the potential antecedents and outcomes of a climate of workplace fun. These antecedents and outcomes differ from those antecedents and outcomes studied at the individual level of analysis because climate variables are fundamentally different than individual perceptions. For instance, when a group of employees share a particular perception of a workplace environment, they could establish norms for behavior that influences the group much more than if only one or two individuals hold the perception (McDonald, 2012). Thus, a climate variable represents more of an objective reality of the workplace and can impact different variables than do individual perceptions. In the present study, a climate of workplace fun is likely associated with altruistic and helping norms that lead to OCBI, as well as group-level engagement via the social support and sense of group belongingness that climate of fun encourages.

The overall theory of climate of workplace fun advanced in the present study included both an antecedent and an outcome theory. The antecedent theory describes how a group of employees who share positive attitudes toward fun also share perceptions about the amount of fun they experience at work, and how store managers' attitudes toward fun and trust act as potential moderators in the relationship between attitudes toward fun and experienced fun. The outcome model includes three potential consequences that occur on account of a climate of fun at the group level: employee engagement, OCBI, and store performance. Though not all of the

study hypotheses were supported by the data, the results have implications for practice and future research on workplace fun.

First and foremost, the present study suggests that employees who share a work environment have similar perceptions regarding the amount of fun occurring at work. The vast majority of retail teams in the current study had strong or very strong levels of agreement, which, combined with the fact that fun initiatives occur at the group level, means that perceptions of workplace fun can be aggregated to the team level and thus considered as a climate variable. However, researchers should have a strong theoretical basis grounded in an understanding of the appropriate composition model for aggregating measures of workplace fun from the individual to the group level (Chan, 1998). In particular, the items composing measures of climate of fun should reference the group's environment at work, rather than individual experiences.

A second key finding was in relation to collective coworker trust and workplace fun. Previous research has established that coworker trust and attitudes toward fun are positively related (Karl et al., 2005), but this study is the first to highlight the association between trust and *experienced* fun. Teams operating in trusting environments also shared the perception that their workplace was fun. A high level of collective coworker trust at work likely leads employees to take risks and be vulnerable, sometimes by acting in a playful and fun manner. At the group level, this finding is particularly relevant as trust-building exercises are commonplace in team training (Jones, 1998; Newstrom & Scannell, 1998). Organizations that establish a foundation of trust within their teams may also be indirectly working toward fostering a climate of fun.

In the present study, manager attitudes toward fun were also positively related to climate of fun. This finding is consistent with past research that has found associations between leader attitudes and climate-level variables in work groups (Christian et al., 2009; Jiang, Chuang, &

Chaio, 2014). Social Learning Theory provided a useful framework for explaining how store managers might influence their employees' experience of fun at work through role modeling and value transference (Bandura, 1997; Weiss, 1978). Future research on workplace fun could include the effects of manager attitudes toward fun to tease apart this relationship. Also, in the present study, the store manager was considered to be the primary leader for each of the sales associates. However, many of the stores also employed assistant managers who share many of the same duties with store managers and thus could have been considered as leaders, too. Future research should tease apart who exactly is in a leader role when considering leadership variables as contributing factors to workplace fun. Despite the important role that leaders can play in shaping their followers' work environments, this study is the first in which the relationship between leader attitudes and workplace fun was investigated.

However, contrary to my hypotheses, neither collective coworker trust nor manager attitudes toward fun moderated the relationship between sales associate attitudes toward fun and climate of fun. One reason for these findings may be because a group's attitudes toward fun are legitimately not influenced by extenuating circumstances, such as relationships with coworkers or their managers' attitudes. If a group has a positive attitude toward fun at work, they will experience fun at work regardless of the specific aspects of the work environment conceptualized as moderators in the present study. A second reason why no moderation was found may have been due to range restriction in the variables being measured. Range restriction is a factor that attenuates the power for detecting interactions (Aguinis & Stone-Romero, 1997; Dawson, 2014). In the present study, sales associate and store manager attitudes toward fun and climate of fun did not vary greatly from store to store. Additionally, the high scores on all three variables indicate that the majority of participants view fun at work positively and also experience a lot of

fun at work. For instance, only two managers and one group of sales associates held what could be considered negative attitudes toward fun (i.e., below the “neutral” response option on a 1-7 scale). Moderation effects would be difficult to find if one of the moderating variables did not have values nearing the low end of the scale.

Contrary to my hypothesis, climate of fun was not significantly associated with store performance. However, climate of fun was related to group-level individually-focused OCBs. OCBs have long been argued to be an important part of the larger job performance domain (Organ, 1988; Waldman, 1994). The findings from my study suggest that although workplace fun is associated with the effective interpersonal functioning of a group (OCBI), fun is not directly related to the group’s performance on key financial indices. Store performance is likely influenced by task specific and non-task specific behaviors as outlined by Campbell (1990) in his taxonomy of performance. Such behaviors are largely attributed to employee ability, which is not influenced by workplace fun. In contrast, OCBs are voluntary behaviors and as such rely heavily upon employee motivation (Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Woehr, 2007). Thus, the positive effects of a climate of fun may manifest in performance outcomes that are more closely related to employee motivation than employee ability (like task specific behaviors). That being said, workplace fun could still be associated with more traditional performance metrics in an indirect manner. The arguments put forth in the present study, associating climate of fun with store performance, were indirect and theoretical in nature. It could very well be that workplace fun has a positive impact on financial performance through mediating mechanisms such as customer satisfaction, which was unmeasured in the present study.

It may also be that store performance as measured in the present study is largely out of the hands of the employees of the store. Consumer purchasing behavior, which would directly

impact the performance measure used in the present study, is a complex phenomenon that has many determinants outside the influence of retail employees. For example, Serpkenci (1985) highlighted the importance of product quality and consumer demand for product as key factors in retail store performance. Price promotions and coupons, which are rarely applied across all stores, are additional factors that have been shown to impact store performance (Walters & Mackenzie, 1988). Any of the factors described above could have directly influenced specific stores' performance in the present study. Thus it could be that employee behavior was a distal predictor of store performance for the retail stores that were investigated in the present study.

Climate of fun was also significantly related to employee engagement, which is largely considered a desirable outcome and potential competitive advantage for organizations (Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009). Engagement is a motivational state that is largely influenced by employees' perceptions of their workplace environments (Kahn, 1990; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Thus, this finding lends credence to the idea put forth above that workplace fun has a measurable impact on outcomes associated with employee motivation. Workplace fun may act as a social resource or as a recovery mechanism that influences the likelihood that employees immerse themselves fully in their work. In the case of retail employees, an environment that fosters fun appears to be a critical feature of work that is positively associated with group-level engagement amongst store employees.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Above all, the major theoretical implications of the present study are that it presents a starting point for research on climate of workplace fun and provides a much-needed transition from the individual to the group level of analysis. Together, the models depicted in Figures 1 and 2 represent a new theory that explains how novel antecedents and outcomes are related to fun at

the group level. Though not all hypotheses were supported, future research can build from these models by adding theoretically interesting mediator and moderator variables to those paths that were significant. Such research can advance the workplace fun literature to a point where it gains traction as a variable of interest for research on employee attitudes and behavior. Therefore, the present study represents an important first step in advancing a group-level consideration of workplace fun that aligns with organizational reality and can be useful from both research and applied points of view.

Future research can build upon the two models put forth in the present study in several ways. First, results from this study indicate that workplace fun can be considered a climate variable, which opens the door for future work on workplace fun at the group level through the development of climate-specific measures of workplace fun. Though the present study did conceptualize the shared perceptions of workplace fun to be a climate variable, the measure used was not developed to assess fun as a climate variable. Measures that are developed specifically for climate use typically include items tapping into employees' perceptions of the policies and procedures revolving around the climate variable of interest. For example, Neal, Griffin, and Hart's (2000) measure of safety climate includes items relating to specific organizational policies such as rewards and training and their relation to workplace safety. The measure used in the present study did not contain such specificity, which would have strengthened the argument for considering fun to be a climate variable. Future researchers can address this gap by creating a specific climate measure of fun.

After a measure for climate of fun is developed, the logical progression is to follow the lead of previous research on specific climates (e.g., service climate; Schneider, Salvaggio, & Subirats, 2002) by considering climate *strength* as an important moderating variable impacting

the relationships between climate of fun and individual, group, and organizational outcomes of interest. Climate strength refers to the level of agreement within a group and is easily calculated using an estimate of within-group variability, with less variability indicating a stronger climate. Schneider et al. (2002) highlighted the importance of this concept when they discovered that the interaction of service climate and service climate strength predicted customer satisfaction, whereas service climate and climate strength alone did not. Similarly, climate of fun could influence many outcomes of interest within organizations, but only when perceptions of this climate reach a certain level of agreement within a group. By understanding this ‘tipping point’ associated with climate of fun, researchers can make better and more accurate recommendations regarding just how much fun is needed at work. After conducting post-hoc analyses including climate strength as a moderator between climate of fun and the three outcomes included in Figure 2, it was determined that climate strength did not have a moderating influence in the present study. However, that does not rule out the possibility that it is a significant moderator in other samples.

Similarly, a second research agenda is to understand how within-team diversity of opinions about workplace fun impacts the outcomes associated with workplace fun. Much of the current team research focuses on demographic and personality diversity within work teams (Trinh, 2015). Researchers are discovering that depending on the variable under study, team diversity can influence the effectiveness of teams in different ways. To illustrate, Kozlowski and Klein (2000) provided the example of a team struggling with conflict due to one very disagreeable member in an otherwise agreeable team. The authors concluded that researchers must deeply consider whether it is appropriate to aggregate certain individual characteristics to the team level given the potential importance of diversity within the team. In much the same

vein, a team with relatively positive attitudes toward fun on the whole could become bogged down by one or two team members who actively dislike fun at work (Hamilton, 2000). In the present study, the groups were largely homogenous with respect to their attitudes toward fun. Future research including samples with more variability may prove useful in determining whether diversity in attitudes toward fun or experienced fun matters. It is clear that considering workplace fun as a group-level phenomenon comes with additional considerations that open new doors for research.

The finding that store manager attitudes toward fun were positively related to climate of fun should spur future research on the role of leadership in establishing fun work environments. The omission of leadership variables in the workplace fun literature is surprising considering that managers are the ones most frequently implementing fun activities at work (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009; Fineman, 2006). A potentially useful research avenue could be to determine whether workplace fun is explained by Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs) and leader prototypes (Eden, 1992; Lord & Maher, 1991). ILTs operate under the assumption that leadership is in the eye of the beholder; that individuals create mental images of their ideal leader and judge their actual leader based upon this prototype (van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2011). The extent to which employees' leaders fit within their subjective prototype is critical in evaluating the effectiveness of that leader. As the concept of workplace fun continues to grow, employees may enter the workforce expecting their leaders to value and support fun, especially if these employees value fun at work themselves. A mismatch between a follower's prototypical leader and their actual leader in regard to workplace fun could result in negative outcomes resulting from unmet expectations (Lord & Maher, 1991).



On a related note, employees could enter the workplace *without* well-formed attitudes toward fun. In this case, leaders may be in a position to impact their employees' attitudes toward fun as well as their experienced fun at work. The antecedent model proposed in this study was created under the assumption that employees entered their workplace with pre-formed attitudes regarding fun at work and that aspects of the workplace environment (specifically, collective trust and leader attitudes) buffered or enhanced their actual experience of fun at work. Though this assumption was made by recognizing past research findings that highlighted the impact of individual differences on attitudes toward fun (Aldag & Sherony, 2001; Karl et al., 2007), it is also true that attitudes are malleable and change over time, often for reasons resulting from the social environment (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). Thus, the questions for researchers who study fun are – (1) just how malleable are attitudes toward fun; and (2) what causes one to change his or her attitudes regarding fun?

Dual-processing models of attitude change, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and the Heuristic Systematic Model (Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989) offer potential explanatory mechanisms as to how and under what conditions peoples' attitudes change. Using ELM as an example, an individual's attitudes toward fun may be changed via the central route if multiple coworkers express their desire to have fun at work, or if an authority figure (i.e., leader) eloquently details the importance of workplace fun. This change, as opposed to change occurring due to more peripheral cues (e.g., attractiveness of those persuading), has longer-lasting effects that are more predictive of subsequent behavior (Kruglanski & Stroebe, 2005). Future research should attempt to understand just how ingrained attitudes toward fun are and what conditions at work can change them. Leadership is a promising avenue to study in regard to employee attitude change because certain types of leaders (e.g.,

charismatic leaders; Conger, 1989) may be particularly well-suited to change their followers' attitudes via the central route of persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The results regarding the potential outcomes of climate of fun at work from the present study also invite additional research. For instance, OCBI were significantly associated with climate of fun, but there exist several other frameworks for OCBs and contextual performance not used in this study that also warrant research attention. For example, future researchers can attempt to delineate whether any of the five dimensions of OCBs proposed by Organ (1988) and measured using Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter's (1990) corresponding scale are related more strongly to climate of fun than the others. Alternatively, researchers may want to consider a general OCB factor composed of Organ's subdimensions, as recommended by Hoffman et al. (2007). Though climate of fun was significantly related to OCBI, it may also be useful to determine whether fun is strongly related to more specific or more general conceptualizations of OCBs that have been advanced in the literature. For instance, knowing that climate of fun is related to courtesy behaviors more than altruistic behaviors may be useful for organizations and studies that are interested in employee conflict, since courtesy behaviors help to prevent work-related conflict with others (Law, Wong, & Chen, 2005). Likewise, organizations that include OCBs in their performance domain as a general factor would benefit from research that investigates whether fun is related to this general concept of OCB (Hoffman et al., 2007). Additionally, an important step for future research is to understand *why* workplace fun is associated with OCBs through the inclusion of explanatory mediating mechanisms connecting the two. Social Exchange Theory (SET; Blau, 1964) offers a promising framework as to why workers might respond to a fun working environment by performing OCBs. Van Dyne, Graham, and Dienesch (1994) operated under this framework and explained how employees'

covenantal relationship with their organizations acts as a critical mediator between aspects of the work environment and OCBs. Though this mediator may only be relevant for OCBs directed toward the organization, it is still a worthwhile variable to consider in future research on workplace fun.

Additionally, researchers should begin to consider workplace fun as a potential precursor to engagement and attempt to better understand this relationship. In the present study, workplace fun was theorized to work as both a recovery mechanism that aids subsequent engagement at work, as well as a type of social support that satisfies the fundamental need of belongingness at work and as such, increases engagement. It could be that workplace fun operates in both manners in relation to engagement, but what is more likely is that it depends on the industry. For example, workers operating in high-stress environments (e.g., healthcare) may benefit from fun in the sense that it allows for a release from challenging work conditions. In contrast, workers functioning in environments that are relatively isolating (e.g., computer programming) might view fun as a re-energizing force that helps to fulfill their social needs. Bolton and Houlihan (2009) offer a handy table that explicates the various functions of workplace fun from a managerial standpoint, but this could also guide research on fun and engagement. In fact, Bolton and Houlihan included engagement as one of the primary functions of workplace fun, along with fun as a developmental reward and fun as alleviation from difficult work conditions. Future research should consider using a guide like Bolton and Houlihan's that delineates the many functions that workplace fun can serve. Depending on the function, researchers would have a conceptual roadmap as to what variables to include in their study.

Whether fun acts as a recovery mechanism or a social resource (or both) may also depend upon the conceptualization and measurement of engagement. Researchers investigating the

effects of fun as a recovery mechanism may be more inclined to use the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which was created from a conceptualization of engagement that is rooted in the occupational health and burnout literature (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). The UWES contains subscales (vigor, dedication, and absorption) that, when combined, form an overall construct of engagement that is considered the opposite of burnout. Thus, researchers who view workplace fun as a recovery mechanism that helps workers move away from burnout would be well suited to use the UWES. Other measures, such as Rich et al.'s (2010) Job Engagement Scale (JES), were conceptualized using a definition of engagement that refers to workers' investment of themselves into their work roles (Kahn, 1990). According to Kahn, employee engagement occurs when workers perceive their environment to be meaningful and safe, while also providing the necessary resources needed for them to invest themselves fully. As discussed earlier, these perceptions form the three critical psychological precursors of meaningfulness, safety, and availability, respectively. Future research using the JES could make a case that fun helps to build feelings of safety and availability through the social connections that fun tends to foster (Ford et al., 2003).

### **Practical Implications**

Results from the present study carry several practical implications as well. First, the finding that collective coworker trust within a team is directly associated with that team's perception of a climate of fun means that organizations can incorporate trust-building activities into their training repertoires with the hopes of eventually creating fun work environments. Trust-building exercises are already a popular component of team training (Jones, 1998; Newstrom & Scannell, 1998), and the results from this study suggest that fun is another positive outcome that can result from such exercises. Second, results from this study clearly display that

managers' attitudes toward fun are also strongly related to their employees' perception of a climate of fun. Therefore, if upper management would like to promote an atmosphere of fun at work, they should ensure that the leaders they choose to implement this atmosphere truly believe in its value and have positive attitudes regarding its implementation. This is an especially important consideration in the retail industry, which is frequently making use of workplace fun to better reach their customers (Backstrom & Johansson, 2006).

Practitioners should be aware that workplace fun is positively associated with the prevalence of individually-focused OCBs within work teams. This finding is particularly relevant to the increasing number of organizations that value OCBs as an important piece in their overall performance criteria (Organ, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011). There is increasing evidence that managers consider OCBs when conducting performance reviews with their employees (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Wayne, Short, & Liden, 1997). In fact, in their meta-analytic review of the literature, Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, and Blume (2009) showed that the correlation between OCBs and performance evaluation ratings was higher than the correlation between task performance and performance evaluation ratings. It is clear that managers and organizations alike value OCBs, and as such, building a climate of fun at work that promotes OCBs could pay dividends within work teams and for the organization as a whole.

Likewise, organizations interested in increasing their employees' engagement should look into how to promote fun at work. Organizations define and measure engagement in many different ways (Masson, Royal, Agnew, & Fine, 2008); therefore, a major challenge for practitioners is to determine whether the results of the present study translate to their companies. Engagement is argued to be fundamental to organizational success, resulting in higher customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and company profit (Harter et al., 2002; Macey &

Schneider, 2008). Due to the positive benefits resulting from engagement and the established relationship between fun and engagement, organizations should attempt to inject fun into their culture when appropriate.

Practitioners interested in workplace fun can look to a related field of study, workplace humor, for some tips on determining the benefits arising from fun. Humor refers to “a personality trait that enables a person to recognize and use successful humor as a coping mechanism and/or for social/affiliative communications/interactions” (Mesmer-Magnus, Glew, & Viswesvaran, 2012; p. 158). However, the ongoing debate in the humor literature as to whether humor is a stimulus, a cognitive process, a personality trait, an emotional or behavioral response, or all of these has resulted in many definitions and conceptualizations with little consensus (Martin, 2001). In a broad sense, workplace humor has been found to relate to many positive individual and organizational outcomes that fun has been associated with as well (see Mesmer-Magnus et al.’s 2012 meta-analysis). Though similar, the concepts differ in how they are studied and what they include. For example, workplace fun is usually studied as a management-directed initiative, whereas humor has been conceptualized mostly as an individual difference variable (Lynch, 2002). Also, fun activities at work are not necessarily intended to be humorous (though many are). Ford et al.’s (2003) study shows that out of the top ten most frequently listed fun activities listed by HR professionals, only five could be considered to be humorous –humor itself was the sixth-most frequently mentioned activity category on the list. Workplace fun and humor may converge, however, in the concept of successful humor. Successful humor is defined as mutually amusing communications, where recipients of the humorous communication do perceive it to be humorous (Lynch, 2002). In much the same way, organizations should determine whether their fun initiatives are actually perceived as fun by

those employees the organization are targeting (i.e. successful fun). Practitioners or managers seeking to incorporate fun at work would be wise to determine whether their attempts are working, rather than assuming that all employees enjoy fun activities equally (Hamilton, 2000). Accumulating evidence regarding workplace fun from both research and practice could result in a list of best practices that has the potential to guide future fun efforts.

Above all, the findings from the present study offer some additional credibility to the claims made by practitioners and authors of books on the subject of workplace fun (e.g., Lundin, Christensen, & Paul, 2002; Lundin, Paul, & Christensen, 2002, 2003). The claim that appears to be supported the most by the present study is that workplace fun is associated with employee motivation (Lundin, Paul, & Christensen, 2002). Though motivation was not directly studied, both employee engagement and OCBs have been considered to be motivational constructs in the past because they involve or relate to discretionary effort (Organ, 1988; Rich et al., 2010). Additionally, results showing that climate of fun is related to engagement suggests that fun may very well energize employees, as originally stated by Lundin, Paul, and Christensen (2000). Engagement has been conceptualized as an energizing force that prevents workers from burning out (Sonnentag, 2003), and the results from this study suggest that fun is associated with engagement, thus providing preliminary support for Lundin et al.'s (2000) claim. As stated previously, applied work on workplace fun has far outpaced academic output, but much of this applied work has spawned from unsubstantiated claims from popular press authors. The present study adds some legitimacy to these claims, and as such provides a theoretical and empirically supported framework for both researchers and consultants to utilize in the process of learning more about workplace fun.

## **Study Strengths and Limitations**

A major strength of the present study is the use of multiple sources of data in a field setting. Specifically, I included attitudinal data from both sales associates and store managers. The outcome variables in this study included sales associate job attitudes, store managers' ratings of their sales associates' group level of OCBI, and objective performance data. By obtaining multiple sources of data, I was able to assess the role that a climate of workplace fun has in the work environment from a variety of perspectives: the employees themselves, the store managers, and the organization. The inclusion of multiple sources of data is also a useful a priori technique for reducing common method variance, which occurs in part due to overreliance on single-source data (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Common method variance introduces the issue of systematic measurement error relating to the measurement method rather than to the constructs of interest. The use of multiple sources of data attenuates this issue and allows for more confidence in attributing results to the variables or processes being studied (Podsakoff et al., 2003). An additional strength of this study is the large number of individuals and teams included in my sample. The large field sample used in the present study is a welcome addition to the workplace fun literature, which has relied upon smaller samples and experimental studies in its nascent stage.

A limitation of this study is the use of a single time point in collecting data for sales associate job attitudes. Sales associate attitudes toward fun, experienced fun, and engagement were collected in the same survey at a single time period and as such, causality cannot be inferred. The issue of causality is particularly salient in the relationship between climate of workplace fun and employee engagement because one cannot be certain when these attitudes developed or which attitude precedes the other. However, the theoretical argument for the causal



relationship between sales associate attitudes toward fun and experienced fun is likely true on account of the oft-supported causal link between attitudes and behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1985). A second limitation is the less than ideal fit statistics for several of the CFAs. In the cases of attitudes toward fun, collective trust, climate of fun, engagement, and OCBI, the RMSEA values were above the recommended score of .10 (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). Thus, the construct validity of these variables was not at the desired level. Several of these RMSEA values were artificially inflated due to the low degrees of freedom in the model (Kenny, Kaniskan, & McCoach, 2014). Also, I did not use the theoretically derived subdimensions in my structural model as I tested in the CFAs, so this issue did not adversely impact my structural model fit. A third limitation is the potentially low level of generalizability to other companies because the study participants work for the same organization. Despite that the retail stores included in the sample are separated geographically and as such likely form unique cultures, each store is still operating under the larger culture of the organization at large. The selection, training, and day-to-day operations of the stores are similar, which certainly all play roles in shaping employee job attitudes, as well as store climates – this concept was reflected in the low amount of variability in climate of fun across the sample. However, the results from this study can likely generalize to retail organizations that have similar goals and cultures.

## **Conclusion**

The current study adds to our understanding of workplace fun by proposing a new theory as to how a group of employees come to share perceptions regarding fun at work and what outcomes these shared perceptions can elicit. This is the first theoretical and empirical investigation of shared perceptions of fun, or a climate of workplace fun. From a research standpoint, the present study offers explanations as to how aspects of the workplace

environment, such as leader attitudes and collective coworker trust, directly relate to shared perceptions of fun at work. Results from the present study also illustrate how shared perceptions of fun are associated with important team-level outcomes in a retail setting. The study of a climate of fun is critical from a practical point of view because in a retail environment that emphasizes customer service, the groups' collective attitudes and experience with fun should lead to more positive outcomes than if only one or two group members experienced fun. It is my hope that the theoretical model of climate of fun advanced in the present study will be useful from both a research and an applied perspective.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations between Key Study Variables (N = 154)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Sales associate attitudes toward fun	(.87)									
2. Store manager attitudes toward fun	.17	(.84)								
3. Collective coworker trust	.38*	.12	(.88)							
	*									
4. Climate of fun	.40*	.28*	.40*	(.87)						
	*	*	*							
5. Group-level OCBIs	.27*	.35*	.06	.21*	(.87)					
	*	*								
6. Group-level employee engagement	-.06	.11	.04	.31*	.10	(.95)				
				*						
7. Store performance	.11	.28*	.05	.07	.02	-.05	-			
		*								
8. Store size	-.11	-.04	-.12	-.12	-.08	.01	.15	-		
9. Average tenure	.24*	-.01	.20*	.01	.01	-	.15	.01	-	
	*						.19			
						*				
10. Average age	.21*	.06	.01	.02	.08	.06	.16	.01	.09	-
	*									
Mean	5.28	5.37	4.71	5.36	5.8	4.3	18.	8.1	3.1	27.

					0	4	00	4	6	20
Standard deviation	0.51	0.76	0.71	0.76	0.8	0.3	4.5	4.0	0.7	5.4
					0	2	4	0	7	2

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*Note.* Coefficient alpha internal consistency reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal  

*\*p* < .05; *\*\*p* < .01

Table 2

*Measurement Models*

Model	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$ ( $\Delta df$ )	CFI	RMS EA	95% RMSEA CI
3-Factor Attitudes toward Fun Model (Sales Associates)	272. 38	11 1		.86	.10	[.08, .11]
1-Factor Attitudes toward Fun Model (Sales Associates)	465. 93	11 9	193.55(8) **	.70	.14	[.13, .15]
3-Factor Attitudes toward Fun Model (Store Managers)	204. 36	11 4		.84	.09	[.07, .11]
1-Factor Attitudes toward Fun Model (Store Managers)	276. 17	11 9	71.81(5) **	.72	.11	[.10, .13]
1-Factor Collective Coworker Trust Model	122. 76	29		.91	.15	[.12, .17]
1-Factor Climate of Fun Model	8.90	2		.98	.15	[.06, .26]
1-Factor Group-level OCBI Model	23.6 4	9		.95	.13	[.07, .19]
3-Factor Group-level Engagement Model	462. 81	13 2		.90	.12	[.11, .14]
1-Factor Group-level Engagement Model	1196 .12	13 5	733.31(3) **	.65	.23	[.21, .24]
4-Factor Antecedent Model	96.8 3	59		.97	.07	[.04, .09]
1-Factor Antecedent Model	773. 71	65	676.88(6) **	.45	.27	[.25, .28]
4-Factor Outcome Model	326. 62	11 3		.91	.11	[.10, .13]
1-Factor Outcome Model	1827 .56	11 9	1500.94(6) **	.27	.31	[.29, .32]
7-Factor Complete Measurement Model	582. 13	27 8		.91	.08	[.08, .09]
1-Factor Complete Measurement Model	2958 .68	29 9	2376.55(2) 1)**	.20	.24	[.23, .25]

*Note.*  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square; *df* = degrees of freedom;  $\Delta\chi^2$  is the chi-square difference; CFI = comparative fit index. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. 95% RMSEA CI = RMSEA confidence interval. \*\**p* < .001

Table 3

*Summary of Moderation Analyses*

Step	Variables	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
		<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	$\beta$			
1					.18	-.02	
	Average Tenure	0.05	0.09	0.48			
	Average Age	0.01	0.01	0.03			
2					12.10**	.35	.38**
	Average Tenure	-0.09	0.08	-0.01			
	Average Age	-0.01	0.01	-0.08			
	Sales Associate Attitudes toward Fun	0.64	0.13	0.46**			
	Collective Coworker Trust	0.22	0.09	0.22*			
	Manager Attitudes toward Fun	0.17	0.08	0.17*			
3					9.28**	.36	.02
	Average Tenure	-0.08	0.08	-0.09			
	Average Age	-0.01	0.01	-0.10			
	Sales Associate Attitudes toward Fun	2.28	0.98	1.64*			
	Collective Coworker Trust	1.86	0.96	1.84			
	Manager Attitudes toward Fun	0.35	0.77	0.37			
	Sales Associate Attitudes toward Fun x Collective Coworker Trust	-0.32	0.19	-2.29			
	Sales Associate Attitudes toward Fun x Manager Attitudes toward Fun	-0.31	0.15	-0.23			

*Note.* \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .001

Table 4

*Path Coefficients with Confidence Intervals for Structural Model*

	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient	<i>se</i>	95% CI of standardized coefficient
Climate of Fun → Group-level Engagement	0.14**	0.32**	0.08	[0.17, 0.47]
Climate of Fun → Group-level OCBIs	0.30*	0.25*	0.11	[0.03, 0.47]
Climate of fun → Store Performance	0.33	0.05	0.09	[-0.12, 0.22]

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

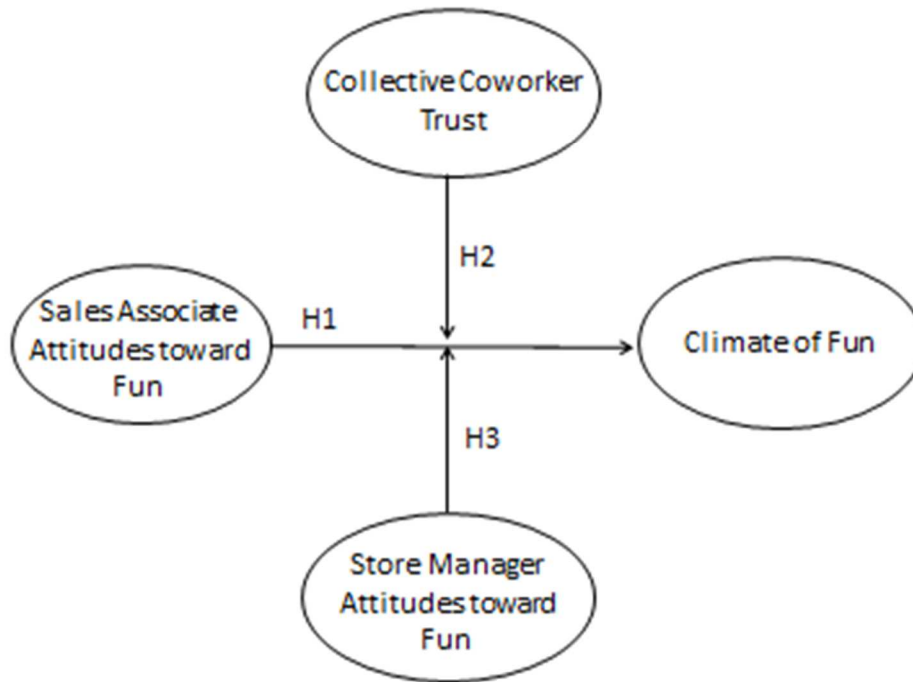


Figure 1. *Antecedents of climate of workplace fun.*



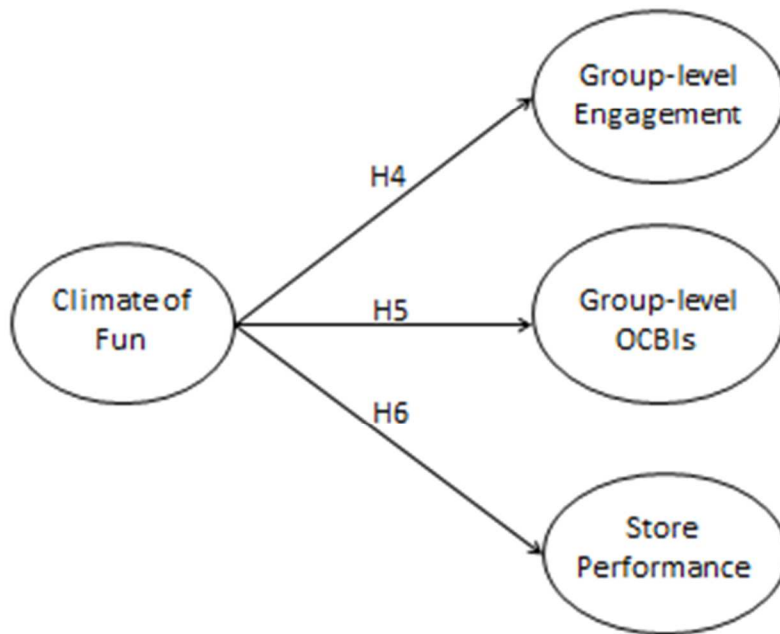


Figure 2. *Outcomes of climate of workplace fun.*

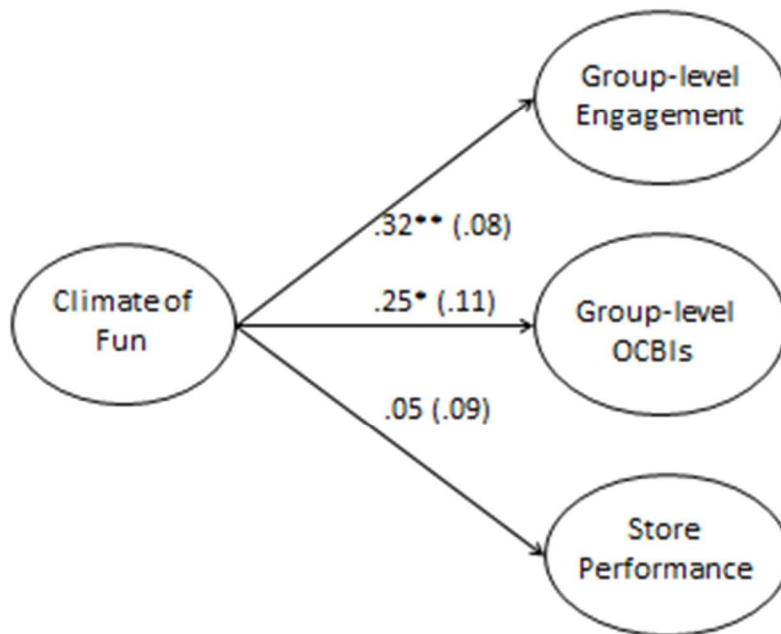


Figure 3. *Hypothesized model with standardized path coefficients and standard errors in parentheses.*

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$

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## APPENDIX

### **Attitudes toward fun (Karl, Peluchette, Hall, & Harland, 2005)**

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree

1. Joking, laughing, or having a “playful attitude” while on the job is immature and unprofessional. (R)
2. Work hours are the time to work and non-work hours are the time to have fun. (R)
3. Having a good time and doing a good job are incompatible achievements. (R)
4. If you are playing, you cannot possibly be working. (R)
5. Having fun at work is very important to me.
6. If my job stopped being fun, I would look for another job.
7. I prefer to work with people who like to have fun.
8. I don’t expect work to be fun—that’s why they call it work. (R)
9. Experiencing joy or amusement while at work is not important to me. (R)
10. Having fun at work can enhance interpersonal relations and teamwork.
11. Fun at work usually gets out of hand. (R)
12. Fun at work can help reduce stress and tensions.
13. When work is fun, employees work harder and longer.
14. Joke-telling almost always comes at the expense of others (e.g., harassment). (R)
15. Companies with no sense of humor typically have dissatisfied employees.
16. When employees are having fun, they are typically goofing off and avoiding their work. (R)
17. Employees with a healthy sense of humor tend to work well with others.

\*(R) indicates a reverse-coded item

### **Collective coworker trust (Gillespie, 2003)**

Please answer the following questions in relation to your coworkers at your store. Try to consider all of your coworkers – not just a selected few – when answering.

How willing are you to...

(1 = not at all willing; 4 = neither willing nor unwilling; 7 = completely willing)

1. ...rely on your coworkers’ work-related judgments?
2. ...rely on your coworkers’ task-related skills and abilities?
3. ...depend on your coworkers to handle an important issue on your behalf?
4. ...rely on your coworkers to represent your work accurately to others?
5. ...depend on your coworkers to back you up in difficult situations?
6. ...share your personal feelings with your coworkers?
7. ...confide in your coworkers about personal issues that are affecting your work?



8. ...discuss honestly how you feel about your work, even negative feelings and frustrations?
9. ...discuss work-related problems or difficulties with your coworkers that could potentially be used against you?
10. ...share your personal beliefs with your coworkers?

### **Workplace fun (Karl, Peluchette, & Harland, 2007)**

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree

1. This is a fun place to work.
2. At my store, we try to have fun whenever we can.
3. Managers encourage employees to have fun at work.
4. We laugh a lot at my store.

### **Group-level organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBIs; Williams & Anderson, 1991)**

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about the employees working at your store? Try to assess the overall performance of the store including all employees. Use the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree

The employees of my store...

1. Help others who have been absent.
2. Help others who have heavy work loads.
3. Assist their supervisor with work (when not asked).
4. Take time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries.
5. Go out of the way to help new employees.
6. Pass along information to co-workers.

### **Job Engagement Scale (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010)**

Below are a number of statements regarding how you invest your energies at work. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

1. I work with intensity on my job.
2. I exert my full effort to my job.
3. I devote a lot of energy to my job.

4. I try my hardest to perform well on my job.
5. I strive as hard as I can to complete my job.
6. I exert a lot of energy on my job.
7. I am enthusiastic about my job.
8. I feel energetic about my job.
9. I am interested in my job.
10. I am proud of my job.
11. I feel positive about my job.
12. I am excited about my job.
13. At work, my mind is focused on my job.
14. At work, I pay a lot of attention to my job.
15. At work, I concentrate on my job.
16. At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job.
17. At work, I am absorbed in my job.
18. At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job.

### **Demographic Variables**

Demographic Variables - these questions are for informational purposes only and help us describe, in general terms, who participated in the study (for example, 40% females, 60% males, average age 42 years, etc).

The information that you provide here will not be linked to individual stores or employees and therefore cannot be used to identify you. This information will not be handled by [name of organization] and will be used for research purposes only.

1. What is your age (in years)?
2. What is your sex (M/F)?
3. Please indicate your race/ethnicity
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - White
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - Asian
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Two or more races
4. How long have you been employed with [name of organization]?
  - 0 – 3 months
  - 3 – 6 months
  - 6 months – 1 year
  - 1 – 3 years
  - More than 3 years