



## Relationship between Workplace Fun and Job Satisfaction among University Administrative Staff: Does Perceived Organizational Support Matter?

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### Abstract

Research on the underlying factors connecting workplace fun and job satisfaction in public organizations is in dearth. Based on the aforementioned, this study examined the moderating effect of perceived organizational support (POS) in the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction. A cross-sectional design was adopted for the study. The convenience sampling technique was used for selecting 167 university administrative staff consisting of 58 males and 109 females. Standardized self-report measures were adopted for data collection while the regression analysis (complemented with model 1 of Hayes' PROCESS Macro) was used for testing the hypotheses via the IBM-SPSS version 25. The results indicated that workplace fun positively and significantly predicted job satisfaction. POS was positively and significantly related to job satisfaction but did not moderate the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction. The research findings suggest that workplace fun and POS are salient factors for the experience of satisfaction at work. It is recommended that workplace fun should be encouraged and supported by the organization as this has a unique way of improving job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Workplace fun, Job satisfaction, Perceived organizational support, University, Administrative staff, Nigeria.

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### **Contribution of this paper to the literature**

This study contributes to the literature by exploring the moderating effect of perceived organizational support in the nexus between workplace fun and job satisfaction in a sample of university administrative staff in Nigeria. It also examines the dimensions of workplace fun as predictors of job satisfaction.

## **1. Introduction**

Job satisfaction, the positive state or feeling emanating from employees' experience in the workplace has gained a lot of attention in organizational research (Bhatti, Alshagawi, Zakariya, & Juhari, 2019). The construct has been explored in different work settings, including the university work environment (e.g., Inuwa and Muhammad (2016)). The overall functioning of a university mostly relies on the job carried out by the administrative staff. The university administrative employees are in charge of administrative and supportive services that help in the daily functioning of the university. According to a report published by the National Universities Commission (2018), they constitute a large proportion of the total workforce in most Nigerian public-owned universities. Hence, an important task for Nigerian public universities is to stimulate the motivation and job satisfaction levels of their administrative employees.

Satisfying the higher-order needs of employees remains a priority and it is achieved by creating a conducive working environment where employees have a sense of belonging and attachment to the organization and the people in it (Adekanmbi, Ukpere, & Adegoke, 2020; Stefanovska-Petkovska, Bojadziev, & Velik-Stefanovska, 2014). With regards to productivity in the university system, administrative staff are assessed by their operational efficiency rather than the accumulation of revenue or profits (Adekanmbi et al., 2020). The success of academicians and students in the university greatly relies on the support provided by administrative staff of the university. There have been reports of inefficiency and reduced productivity among university administrative staff in Nigeria (Adejare, Olaore, Udofia, & Emola, 2020). Administrative inefficiency is a menace to the growth and success of a university. Inefficiency and unproductivity have been attributed to reduced job satisfaction (Inuwa & Muhammad, 2016). Therefore, to achieve timely organizational results, it is imperative to explore factors that are likely to promote job satisfaction. Based on this, the current study examines workplace fun as a predictor of job satisfaction, and the interacting effect (moderation) of perceived organizational support (POS) on the proposed relationship. Although empirical literature on the antecedents of job satisfaction exists, little is known about fun at work and the satisfaction university administrative staff derive from their job. A few gaps in the literature gave necessity to this study.

The first gap in the literature relates to the research setting (Nigeria), and the population utilized in previous studies within this setting. Although job satisfaction is a highly researched area in Nigeria (e.g., Inegbedion, Inegbedion, Peter, & Harry, 2020; Iyeke, 2020; Opeke, Ikonne, & Adewoyin, 2020); studies exploring the role of workplace fun and its dimensionality as possible antecedents of job satisfaction among public sector employees (especially administrative staff in the Nigerian universities) are in dearth. Previous studies have utilized workplace fun as a moderator on the nexus between identifying with an organization and job satisfaction among workers in hospitality organizations (Ugheoke, Mashi, & Isa, 2021). Hence, there is a scarcity of research regarding workplace fun as a predictor of job satisfaction among university administrative employees. Exploring this gap in literature will help to inform policies and managerial practices in the university setting and public organizations.

Second, there is a lack of research investigating the conditional effect of POS on the nexus between fun at work and job satisfaction. The recent trend in organizational research indicates that the relationship between two workplace variables can be mediated or moderated by a third variable (Inegbedion et al., 2020; Oguegbe & Edosomwan, 2021) given that past research and organizational theory support the inclusion of a third variable. This informed the choice of investigating the moderating effect of POS to further understand the underlying factors responsible for the proposed nexus between fun at work and the satisfaction employee get from their job. Therefore, it is proposed that the likely relationship between fun at work and job satisfaction changes at the different levels of POS.

Last, most studies that have been conducted on workplace fun have adopted the five-item scale put toward by Karl, Peluchette, and Harland (2007). The use of this scale is largely evident in the literature (e.g., (Chan & Mak, 2016; Inegbedion et al., 2020; Mousa, Ayoubi, & Massoud, 2020a; Mousa, Ayoubi, Massoud, & Chaouali, 2021b; Ugheoke et al., 2021)). Although the scale has been proven to have good psychometric properties, recent conceptualization considers workplace fun as a multidimensional construct (Sekarawisut & Yurtkoru, 2021). Hence, it will be more valid and encompassing to measure workplace fun using this proposition to be better informed on the proposed relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. Based on the above-stated problem and gaps identified in the literature, the following objectives have been designed to guide this study: (1) to examine the nexus between workplace fun and job satisfaction, and (2) to examine the conditional effect of POS on the nexus between workplace fun and job satisfaction. Examining these objectives will be of great value in adding to the organizational behavior literature on the possible connection and interaction among the predictor, criterion, and moderating variables.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### **2.1. Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a construct that has been largely explored in management research because of its capacity to influence performance and other workplace attitudes (Katebi, HajiZadeh, Bordbar, & Salehi, 2022). According to Bhatti et al. (2019), job satisfaction is the positive emotional state of employees ranging from the feeling of happiness, optimism, enthusiasm, love, and passion for their job. These positive emotional states are usually based on the employees' experience in the workplace (Loan, 2020; Oluwatayo & Adetoro, 2020). Job satisfaction occurs when the job can meet the material and psychological needs of an employee. Recent literature indicates that job satisfaction is linked to positive workplace outcomes such as organizational commitment, employee loyalty, job performance, caring and empathic behavior among healthcare professionals, and general employee well-being (e.g., (Adeniji, Salau, Awe, & Oludayo, 2018; Bakotic, 2016; Iyeke, 2020; Jain, 2016; Loan, 2020; Phuong & Vinh, 2020)).

## 2.2. Workplace Fun

Workplace fun is another variable being considered in this study. It is defined as the interpersonal and task-related activities of a humorous or playful nature that provide the employees with enjoyment, pleasure, and amusement (Fluegge-Woolf, 2014). Workplace fun describes all the activities in the workplace that makes the work environment fun and pleasurable for the employees. Based on the report of McDowell (2005), these activities range from socializing with coworkers, celebrating at work, personal freedoms, and generally fun activities at work. According to Michel, Tews, and Allen (2019), workplace fun is defined as specific features or characteristics of a playful, social and humorous nature, with the potential of eliciting positive feelings such as amusement, enjoyment, and lighthearted pleasures among individuals at work. Management literature indicates that workplace fun is a positive resource that influences an employee's attitude in the workplace (Tsauro, Hsu, & Lin, 2019).

## 2.3. Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

POS is an important concept in the management literature. POS has been defined as employees' beliefs regarding the extent the organization shows support, cares about their well-being, and values their contribution (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). It represents the employees' assurances that the organization has their best interest at heart, is ready to provide assistance to them when it is required, and provides the necessary tools that will help them carry out their job effectively and deal with work-related stress (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). It is a unidimensional measure indicating the belief employees have regarding the degree or extent their organization will go to meet their socio-emotional needs, care for their well-being, values, and reward their contribution to the organization (Krishnan & Mary, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Eisenberger, Rhoades Shanock, and Wen (2020) reaffirm that POS is felt in the organization when the employees have a favorable experience in the workplace and when they attribute these experiences to the organization's voluntary actions toward making their work conditions better.

## 2.4. Workplace Fun and Job Satisfaction

Workplace fun and job satisfaction have been explored across various types of organizations. The literature indicates that a link exists between fun at work and positive experiences in the workplace. For example, Tsauro et al. (2019) examined the indirect role of psychological capital on the nexus existing between fun at work and work engagement among front-line workers in the tourism-oriented and hospitality organizations in Taiwan. The researchers found that having fun at work is a positive and significant predictor of employee work engagement and psychological capital. In another study, Yang and Wang (2020) explored the psychological capital and its indirect effect on the link between fun at work and employee voice behavior. Based on the research outcome, workplace fun was a significant and positive predictor of employee voice behavior. This indicates that encouraging fun at work is a resourceful mechanism that has the capacity to influence positive attitudes and behaviors in the workplace.

Workplace fun adds some form of enrichment and meaningfulness to the job. When the organization encourages fun at work, the work becomes more meaningful to the employees (Mousa et al., 2021b). This sense of meaningfulness could impact the satisfaction derived from the job (Scanlan & Hazelton, 2019). A survey conducted by Chan and Mak (2016) among frontline employees in large retail stores in Hong Kong found that fun at work has a positive and direct connection to the satisfaction employees derive from their job. The researchers found that the higher the experience of fun in the workplace the higher the satisfaction employees derive from their job.

The literature on the proposed nexus between workplace fun and job satisfaction is further supported by the affective event theory (AET) and the job demand-resource model (JD-R model). As proposed by the AET, workplace events elicit emotional reactions (either positive or negative) from the employees (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Hence, positive workplace event (e.g., workplace fun) tends to enhance positive workplace attitude such as job satisfaction.

This is also supported by the JD-R model. The JD-R Model developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) proposed that the workplace characteristics can be grouped into two: job demand and job resources. Job demand has to do with the job requirements (e.g., physical, social, organizational, and psychological aspects of the job) while job resources are considered as the resources needed to meet the physical, social, psychological, and organizational demands of the job. In application, workplace fun can be regarded as a positive resource that can help the employees meet the requirements of their job thereby improving the satisfaction they derive from work. Consequent to the empirical and theoretical literature, it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis One (H<sub>1</sub>): Workplace fun will positively and significantly predict Job satisfaction.*

## 2.5. Perceived Organizational Support as a Moderator

There is a dearth in the literature on studies that have examined POS as a moderator in the nexus between fun at work and job satisfaction. According to Kundu, Phogat, Datta, and Gahlawat (2016), organizational support indicates resources allied to fairness in the workplace, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, and general employee support which has a way of increasing the levels of satisfaction employees get from their job. POS emphasizes the employee perception of the support they get from their organization. As seen in the literature, this has the tendency to influence how employees behave at work (e.g., (Imran, Elahi, Abid, Ashfaq, & Ilyas, 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017)). POS is a work resource that tends to influence a variety of workplace attitudes. Higher and lower levels of POS can serve as positive and negative resources respectively.

Previous literature indicates that POS can help improve work meaningfulness, job, and life satisfaction (Bernarto et al., 2020; Cardador, Grant, & Bruno, 2019). Empirical literature shows that POS has been adopted as a moderating variable. POS has been found to have an interacting effect on the nexus between emotional intelligence, job performance, and turnover intention (Akhtar, Gulfran, Husnain, & Shahid, 2017; Giao, Vuong, Huan, Tushar, & Quan, 2020), work engagement and job performance (Yongxing, Hongfei, Baoguo, & Lei, 2017), newcomer adjustment and socialization tactics (Perrot et al., 2014). Hence, there is a possibility that POS can have a conditional impact on the nexus between workplace fun and job satisfaction. This study is of the notion that when employees experience high support from the organization, there is a likelihood that it will produce positive emotions and thereby

reinforcing the proposed relationship in the study. Based on the above empirical literature and propositions, it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis Two (H<sub>2</sub>): POS will moderate the relationship between workplace fun and job satisfaction such that the relationship will be stronger when POS is high.*

The relationship and moderating effect under investigation are shown in the conceptual framework below:

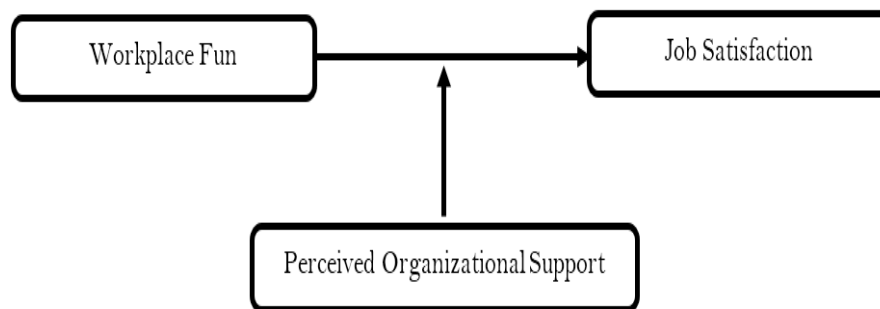


Figure 1. Conceptual model showing the proposed direct and moderating effect.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the study. It is built on the notion that workplace fun is related to job satisfaction and that this relationship is moderated by perceived organizational support.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Sample and Procedure

The participants of the study consisted of 167 administrative staff sampled from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. Job satisfaction is a salient factor in university settings. Job satisfaction of personnel at the university's disposal can help in the actualization of PROJECT 200 proposed by the university's new administration. The sample size adopted was estimated with the use of G\*power software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). Using the adequate number of predictors which were workplace fun and POS as outlined in the framework developed for the study, with a medium effect size ( $f^2$ ) of 0.15, a standardized alpha of 0.01, and a power level of 0.95. The G\*power analysis suggested a required sample size of 107 participants. However, Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001) Suggested that the sample size of the population should be increased by 50% of the required sample. Based on this proposition, an additional sample size of 60 was added to the overall sample totaling 167. Hence, the size of the sample was considered appropriate for the study.

The questionnaires were administered to staff at the university administrative block. The non-probability sampling technique (convenience sampling) was used for collecting data from 167 participants based on their availability. The use of non-probability sampling is a very common feature in organizational research, especially in the current research setting where sampling frames are often difficult to access. The sample consisted of 58(34.73%) males and 109(65.27%) females; 89(53.29%) single, 73(43.71%) married, 3(1.80%) separated, 1(0.60%) divorced, and 1(0.60%) widowed. The age range of the respondents was between 27-56 with a mean of 36.53 years and a standard deviation of 5.32. All the participants had a formal education with a minimum of a Higher National Diploma/Bachelor's degree.

#### 3.2. Measures

Three existing standardized instruments were adopted for data collection. They include the workplace fun scale, job satisfaction scale, and perceived organizational support scale. The scales are discussed below:

**Job Satisfaction.** This was assessed with job satisfaction scale developed by Judge, Bono, and Locke (2000). It is a standardized self-report measure composed of five items. The scale measures the level of satisfaction employees get from their job. Hence, a higher score is an indication of higher job satisfaction while a lower score indicates lower job satisfaction. Item 3 and 5 were reversed coded. Sample items for the scale include: "I find real enjoyment in my work" and "most days I am enthusiastic about my job". A 5- point summative Likert type response (ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5) was used. The scale presented a good internal consistency of 0.89.

**Workplace Fun.** This was assessed with the workplace fun scale developed by McDowell (2005). The scale measures employees' experience of fun at work using four components which represented the best and most valid measure of fun in the workplace. The four components of workplace fun as stated by the developer are: "socializing with coworkers", "celebrating at work", "personal freedoms", and "global fun at work". Each of the subscales was measured with six items. For the first three dimensions, the participants were requested to rate their response on a 5-point summative Likert type ranging from 1= never to 5 = always, while in the fourth subscale (global fun at work) participants' responses were also rated on a 5-point summative Likert type ranging from 1 =strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Sample items include: "joking with coworkers", "observing birthdays and other events at the workplace", "going out to lunch with coworkers", and "the overall climate of my organization is fun", representing each of the dimensions respectively. Reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) for each dimension as reported by Fluegge-Woolf (2008) were 0.85, 0.88, 0.74, and .95 respectively. Since the present study is focused on workplace fun and the specific dimensions, the composite score was estimated for the whole scale items such that the higher the scores, the higher the experience of fun at work. This approach is evident in the literature (Fluegge-Woolf, 2014; McDowell, 2005).

**Perceived Organizational Support.** This was assessed with the 8-item version of the perceived organizational support scale developed by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997). The instrument measures employees' perception of the organization's contribution and care for their well-being. A higher score on the scale indicates that employees perceive their organization to be supportive and lower scores indicate that the organization offers little to no support for its employees. Items 6 and 7 are negatively worded. Reverse coding was utilized for the items that were negatively worded. Examples of some of the items include: "my organization takes pride in my accomplishment at work" and "my organization cares about my well-being". A 5-point summative Likert response type ranging from

strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5 was utilized. Principle components analysis (PCM) reported for the original scale using the response gotten from 361 employees in nine organizations revealed a single factor accounting for 48% of the total variance (Eisenberger et al., 1997). The developers reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90. Generally, the scale has good psychometric properties (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2021).

### 3.3. Design and Statistical Tools

This is a cross-sectional study. It is a cross-sectional study because data were collected from all the participating University administrative staff at one point in time. This gave the researcher the liberty to collect data using several variables at one point in time. The data collection, analysis, and interpretation were done at the individual level. The data collected for the study were analyzed through a two-step procedure. First, the instruments' reliability coefficient, the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and normality test), and the correlation coefficient of the variables were examined. This is carried out to determine if the data are congruent with the assumptions of parametric statistics such as the normality of data.

Second, the research hypotheses were tested with regression via the IBM-SPSS add-on (Hayes' PROCESS Macro v.4) utilizing an independent moderator (Model 1). This was used for testing the direct and conditional effects as proposed in the research hypotheses. The Hayes PROCESS Macro is a popular analytical tool used for testing the indirect and conditional effects of variables on observed relationships. 5000 bootstrapped samples were utilized to estimate the confidence interval (95%) for the developed model. The conditional effect is significant in the absence of absolute zero between the lower and higher limit of the 95% confidence interval.

### 3.4. Common Method Variance

Several methods have been suggested in the literature with regards to controlling common method variance (CMV) in survey-based studies. It is one of the challenges surrounding questionnaire-based studies. Hence, it is necessary to control for this so that the result of this study will have more explanatory power. To achieve this, the researcher employed some of the methods suggested in the literature during the design of the study to help control for CMV. To for respondents' misinterpretation of the questionnaire items and to prevent random responses, the researcher ensured that the wording of the questionnaire was concise and easy to comprehend. The cover later guaranteed the anonymity of the respondents and also stated that participants should respond based on their true feelings to control for socially desirable responses. These methods were adopted to help increase respondents' honesty to the items on the questionnaire (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2020; Steenkamp, De Jong, & Baumgartner, 2010). Statistically, the correlation matrix technique as suggested by Bagozzi and Phillips (1991) and Tehseen, Ramayah, and Sajilan (2017) was adopted for testing the severity of CMV in the data. This approach states that a high correlation value between the variables under investigation ( $r > 0.90$ ) indicates the presence of CMV. Therefore, correlation values  $< 0.90$  indicate the absence of CMV.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Assessment of Reliability, Validity, and Correlation Coefficients

The researcher tested the reliability of the adopted scales using Cronbach's alpha. This is reported in Table 1. The scales or instruments' reliability values ranged from  $\alpha = 0.73$  to  $\alpha = 0.89$ . Therefore, indicating that the scales are reliable and suitable for use in this study. The inter-item correlation values offer support for the convergent validity of the scales (Field, 2018), while content validity was achieved by using existing instruments in the literature (Mirjana, Ana, & Marjana, 2018). The mean score ranged from 3.17 to 3.88 which indicates an average score using a 5-point Likert-type response.

Table 1 also shows the correlation coefficients of the studied variables. The table indicated that workplace fun ( $r = 0.42, p < 0.01$ ), and POS ( $r = 0.18, p < 0.05$ ) were positively related with job satisfaction. Furthermore, the table also indicated that the dimensions of workplace fun such as socializing with coworkers ( $r = 0.19, p < 0.05$ ), celebrating at work ( $r = 0.32, p < 0.01$ ), personal freedoms ( $r = 0.27, p < 0.01$ ), and global fun at work ( $r = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ) were all positively correlated with job satisfaction. The relationship among the variables was modest ( $< .80$ ) indicating the absence of multicollinearity. The values for the correlation coefficients were less than 0.90. This met the requirement of the correlation matrix technique for assessing CMV as suggested by Bagozzi and Phillips (1991) and Tehseen et al. (2017). Based on the observed correlation, CMV was not an issue in the study.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, correlation coefficient, and Cronbach's alpha of the variables.

Variables	Mean	SD	WF	SC	CW	PF	GF	JS	POS
WF	3.45	0.41	[0.81]						
SC	3.88	0.69	0.44**	[0.73]					
CW	3.41	0.65	0.53**	-0.01	[0.78]				
PF	3.31	0.73	0.63**	0.01	0.28**	[0.87]			
GF	3.17	0.77	0.53**	0.05	0.08	0.39**	[0.84]		
JS	3.69	0.54	0.42**	0.19*	0.32**	0.27**	0.15*	[0.88]	
POS	3.75	0.48	0.11	0.15*	0.05	-0.03	0.09	0.18*	[0.89]

Note: \*\*p < 0.01; \*p < 0.05; SD = standard deviation; WF= workplace fun; SC = socializing with coworkers; CW = celebrating at work; PF= personal freedoms; GF = global fun at work; JS = job satisfaction; POS = perceived organizational support; Cronbach's alphas are given in parenthesis.

### 4.2. Testing the Hypothesized Model

Based on the research model, two hypotheses were tested in this study. The hypotheses testing was carried out with regression analysis through Hayes' PROCESS Macro v.4. The appropriate model was utilized (Model 1) using 5000 bootstrapping to test the direct, and conditional effects based on the research model. Before testing the hypotheses, multiple regression was adopted to examine the individual and combined predictive effect of the dimensions of workplace fun on job satisfaction.

Table 2 shows the multiple regression analysis carried out on job satisfaction predicted from the dimensions of workplace fun. The results indicated that socializing with coworkers ( $B = 0.14, p < 0.01$ ), celebrating at work ( $B = 0.22, p < 0.01$ ), and personal freedoms ( $B = 0.12, p < 0.01$ ) significantly predicted job satisfaction while global fun at work ( $B = 0.04, p > 0.05$ ) did not. As revealed by the  $B$ -values, job satisfaction increases by 14%, 22%, 12%, and 4% for every one-unit increase in coworkers' socialization, celebrating at work, personal freedoms, and global fun at work.  $\beta$  values indicated that job satisfaction was largely influenced by celebrating at work which accounted for a 27% variance in job satisfaction. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.66 was within the normal range with regard to positive autocorrelation (Field, 2018). The variance inflation factors (VIF) were below 10. This falls within the normal range and indicates the absence of multicollinearity (Field, 2018; Hayes, 2017).

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis of job satisfaction predicted from the dimensions of workplace fun.

Predictors	B	$\beta$	T	Part correlation	95% CI	VIF
Socializing with coworkers	0.14	0.18**	2.68	0.18	[0.04, 0.25]	1.00
Celebrating at work	0.22	0.27**	3.78	0.26	[0.10, 0.34]	1.09
Personal freedoms	0.12	0.16**	2.15	0.14	[0.01, 0.24]	1.27
Global fun	0.04	0.06	0.77	0.05	[-0.06, 0.14]	1.18
F = 9.26, R = 0.42**, R <sup>2</sup> = 0.17, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.15 (DW, 1.66)						

Note: \*\*p < 0.01; DW = Durbin-Watson; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor.

The statistics at the base of Table 2 shows the combined contributions of the dimensions of workplace fun on job satisfaction,  $R = 0.42, R^2 = 0.17, p < 0.01$ . The  $R^2$  value indicates that workplace fun as a composite explained a 17% variance in job satisfaction. As symbolized by the  $R^2$ , the effect size statistic indicates a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). This is an indication that workplace fun contributes to employee feelings of satisfaction at work. The  $F$ -ratio, also significant at 0.01, indicates that the model is good; job satisfaction can be predicted from workplace fun. Hence, the first hypothesis was supported.

Table 3. Moderation analysis on the effect of workplace fun and POS on job satisfaction.

Predictors	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Workplace Fun	0.52	0.08	5.89	0.001	0.35	0.70
Perceived Organizational Support	0.15	0.07	1.98	0.040	0.01	0.30
workplace Fun x POS	-0.09	0.20	-0.45	0.651	-0.49	0.31

Note: n = 167;  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient; SE = standard error of sample size (5000); LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval; POS = perceived organizational support.

Table 3 shows the results of the direct effect and moderation analysis. In congruence with the first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), the results in Table 3 shows that workplace fun positively and significantly predicted job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.52, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.35, 0.70], t = 5.89, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, hypothesis 1 was accepted. Also, POS positively and significantly predicted job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.15, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.01, 0.30], t = 1.98, p < 0.05$ ). For the second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ), the interaction term between fun at work and POS was not significant ( $\beta = -0.09, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.49, 0.31], t = -0.45, p > 0.05$ ) indicating that POS did not moderate the nexus between workplace fun and job satisfaction. Hence, hypothesis two was rejected.

## 5. Discussion

The present study tested the model that POS would moderate the nexus between fun at work and job satisfaction. The result confirmed the importance of workplace fun and POS on job satisfaction among university administrative staff. In testing the hypothesized model for this study, the first hypothesis which stated that workplace fun will positively and significantly predict job satisfaction among university administrative staff was accepted. Workplace fun was a significant predictor of job satisfaction. This shows that university administrative staff who have a high experience of fun in their workplace are more likely to be satisfied with their job. Also, further analysis showed that of the four dimensions of workplace fun, three were positive predictors of employee job satisfaction. These include socializing with fellow employees, celebrating at work, and personal freedoms. The model was good as the multiple regression values show that workplace fun as a composite construct predicted job satisfaction. Hence, an increase in workplace fun leads to an increase in job satisfaction.

This finding is in agreement with previous empirical research linking workplace fun and positive workplace behaviors and attitudes. For example, Tsaour et al. (2019) found that fun at work is a positive predictor of employee work engagement and psychological capital, while Yang and Wang (2020) discovered that encouraging fun at work is a resourceful mechanism that enables positive behaviors and attitudes in the workplace. The researchers found that workplace fun enables employee voice behavior such that an increase in workplace fun promotes voice behavior. Workplace fun acts as a form of enrichment, this enrichment can foster work meaningfulness, which in turn promotes employee job satisfaction (Mousa et al., 2021b; Scanlan & Hazelton, 2019). More specifically, Chan and Mak (2016) conducted a study on the association between fun at work and job satisfaction among frontline employees working in large retail stores in Hong Kong. The researchers found that workplace fun significantly predicts job satisfaction, such that the higher the experience of fun at work, the higher the satisfaction employees derive from their job. Theoretical evidence also supports the result of the first hypothesis. The theories are the affective event theory, and the job demand-resource model (JD-R model). The affective event theory (AET) proposes the emotional reaction of employees (positive or negative) is a result of events in the workplace (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Based on this proposition, workplace fun is considered a positive workplace event that is bound to produce a positive reaction from employees. Therefore, workplace fun can promote positive workplace attitudes such as job satisfaction. Consistent with the JD-R model put forward by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), fun at work can be seen as a positive resource that can help the employees deal with the demands or requirements of their job. Employees are likely to feel more satisfied when there are available resources that can help them meet the demands of their job.

The second hypothesis which stated that POS will have a moderating effect on the link between workplace fun and job satisfaction was not supported, as the result was not in line with the proposed hypothesis. This study found that POS has a non-significant role in buffering the nexus between workplace fun and job satisfaction among university administrative staff. The result is not consistent with the arguments offered by the researcher on the moderating effect of POS. Also, this finding is contrary to some of the previous empirical studies that have adopted POS as a moderator variable (Akhtar et al., 2017; Giao et al., 2020; Yongxing et al., 2017).

A few plausible explanations could be offered for the unexpected result. The buffering effect of POS could have been impeded by other workplace characteristics. A possible workplace characteristic that could have caused the observed result is perceived fairness in the workplace. Employees usually judge their experience in the workplace based on how their fellow employees are being treated (Twumasi & Addo, 2020). When there is perceived fairness in recognition, promotion, rewards, and all the decisions that concerns employee safety and well-being at work, employees are more likely to derive satisfaction from their job (Mohammadi, Kazemi, Raisoon, & Ramezani, 2017). Meanwhile, in the absence of perceived fairness, employees will be less motivated leading to job dissatisfaction. According to Kurtessis et al. (2017), higher POS is more focused on job tasks and work issues than the employees' socio-emotional needs. That is, an employee may feel that the organization gives him or her support to carry out work-related activities, but less attention may be given to the employee's socio-emotional needs. Hence, there is a high tendency of employees feeling dissatisfied with their job when the whole facet of support is not prioritized. This is also likely to be stronger in the absence of fairness with regard to allocating supportive resources to employees. These could be the reasons for the observed difference between the result of this study and that of the previous empirical literature. It is suggested that future studies should utilize POS and perceived fairness as simultaneous moderator variables on the nexus between fun at work and job satisfaction. Understanding the effects of both moderators taken simultaneously would help in enhancing the literature and inform managerial practice in public organizations.

## 6. Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study has made a unique contribution to the literature by investigating the moderating effect of POS in the workplace fun and job satisfaction relationship among university administrative staff. This population is unique to the literature as it has not been examined in this research area. The findings confirm the Affective event theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and the job demand-resource model Bakker and Demerouti (2007). These theories explained the nexus between fun at work and job satisfaction while the result confirms the relationship between the predictor and criterion variable. This provides empirical literature for future studies that will attempt to use these theories to map out complex organizational relationships. Also, the context for the development of the measures (scales) utilized in this study (workplace fun, POS, and job satisfaction) was different from that of the current research area (Nigeria). Adequate procedures were followed to ensure that the measures were reliable, valid, and suitable for use in the Nigerian population. The measures showed evidence of reliability and validity. On this background, future studies that will be conducted by organizational behavior and management researchers in Nigeria can adopt the scales that were specifically used in this study.

## 7. Practical Implications

University education has become a necessity in most countries of the world. It becomes paramount for management practitioners to understand the behaviors and attitudes of individuals who work in these institutions. This gave justification for exploring workplace fun as an antecedent of the satisfaction university administrative staff derives from their job. The moderating effect of POS on the relationship was also investigated. Based on the research findings, workplace fun was a significant predictor of job satisfaction while POS did not moderate the nexus between fun at work and job satisfaction. These results have implications for management practitioners and university administrators. University administrators should ensure that they encourage fun at work because this tends to positively influence the job satisfaction of workers. Socializing with colleagues, celebrating at work, personal freedoms, and other indicators of workplace fun should be sanctioned because they have positive effects on job satisfaction which can lead to job performance in the institution. The administrative head of the university should also make sure that the institution provides adequate support for its administrative staff.

## 8. Conclusion

The importance of job satisfaction for university administrative staff cannot be undermined. The need for an increased level of performance on students and other academic-oriented services is largely dependent on job satisfaction. This study concludes that job satisfaction can be enhanced when fun is encouraged in the workplace. That is, the higher the experience of fun at work, the higher the job satisfaction. Also, the study found that POS did not moderate the nexus between fun at work and the job satisfaction of university administrative staff.

## 9. Limitations and Avenues for Further Studies

Although this study has contributed to the organizational behavior literature by enhancing the knowledge of workplace fun, POS, and job satisfaction, it is not without limitations. These limitations are discussed and avenues for future studies are suggested. First, the study was cross-sectional making it difficult to draw causal inferences. Better approaches can be adopted. Second, the use of self-report measures in measuring all the variables might introduce bias thereby confounding the data. Although constructive approaches were used to reduce response bias from participants, it was difficult to eliminate it from the study. Future studies should include items within the measure that can help capture and remove participants with socially desirable responses. Also, the indirect questioning technique can be adopted (Meisters, Hoffmann, & Musch, 2020), while the statistical procedure such as the latent marker variable can be adopted to check the severity of response bias.

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