INVESTIGATION OF THE JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCES MODEL IN

INCREASING QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS WITHIN

THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

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Quality of life as related to the workplace has been a focus of much research in

applied psychology. This study uses the Job Demands-Resources model to better

understand how job characteristics, such as social support and workplace fun are related

to work outcomes, such as job stress and job satisfaction. These outcomes were

x

hypothesized to predict quality of life factors like general life stress and self-worth. Using results obtained from surveying 65 participants in the retail industry, the hypothesis was supported that workplace fun and social support are major factors that are associated with job stress, as well as job satisfaction. A stepwise regression analysis showed that job stress is correlated to increases in life stress, and that job satisfaction is the only predictor of self-worth. Further research should be conducted to improve understanding of how experienced fun at work affects work outcomes, also considering how work outcomes impact quality of life factors.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The culture of the United States is individualistic where positive self-concept is
garnered from working hard to obtain a successful career with the opportunity for
advancement. However, advancement usually comes with the cost of an increased
workload and other time demanding responsibilities. Recently, in the wake of the
changing economy, the workforce is faltering and people are finding increased workloads
and the additional stress that inevitably follows (NIOSH, 2002). In order to better
understand the relationship between work and stress, scholars are attempting to use
positive psychology which is interested in optimizing employees' functioning and
positive work experiences (Luthans, 2002), as well as identifying and managing their
strongest qualities (Seligman & Csikszentimihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology is a
concept that promotes emphasis on focusing on peoples' strengths rather than their
weaknesses. Researchers are interested in factors that foster resilience rather than
vulnerability, and they are concerned with enhancing wellness, and prosperity of good
life (Diener, 2000; Peterson, 2000; Snyder, 2000). It seems important that overall
satisfaction with one's life is inexplicably tied to several facets of life, not the least of
which is effective work performance (Wright & Staw, 1999).

In the organizational behavior field, extensive research has been conducted on the relationship between positive feelings of employees and their performance, with much attention being paid to the constructs of positive reinforcement, social support, employee relationships and even humor (Luthans, 2002; Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 2004). Following in this light, studies of employee burnout have given way to its counterpart work engagement, which look to discover factors of work that actively engage employees as opposed to factors that lead to worker fatigue. This positive turn extends the research focus to more fully understand the effects and meaning of working (Turner, Barling, & Zacharatos, 2002). Models such as the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) explore both negative and positive characteristics of work experiences to glean further knowledge of employees optimal functioning (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, Witte, & Lens, 2008). The purpose of this study is to determine how positive job characteristics are related to work outcomes and ultimately how these outcomes are related to satisfaction with general quality of life factors, such as life stress and self-worth through the use of the Job Demands-Resources model.

Job Demands-Resources Model

In an attempt to overcome the limitations of other models, the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) was developed to not only study negative aspects and consequences of work but also to examine health-enhancing effects of positive job characteristics (de Lange, De Witte, & Notelaers, 2008). The JD-R model proposes that work outcomes can be categorized into two broad categories, which are job demands and job resources (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Scheufeli, 2001). This model focuses on the aspects of the job that affect burnout through the characteristics of job demands, or

aspects of work that tax employees' personal capacities (e.g. psychological/physiological costs) (Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2003). If these factors turn into stressors, the negative effects can elicit burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The JD-R model also looks at the positive effects of job resources that enhance employees' well-being. Job resources are described as the social, physical, physiological, or organizational aspects of work that can reduce the impact of the health hazards of job demands, are functional in accomplishing goals at work, and increase personal growth, development and learning (Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2003). Job demands and job resources are associated with employees' burnout and engagement through two different psychological processes. The presence of job demands and the absence of job resources associate positively with employees' burnout through an energetic process, which suggests that job demands wear out employees' energy (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Hockey's (1993) control model explains that employees use performance-protection strategies through increased subjective effort or the use of active control when processing information; where the greater the effort, the greater the psychological cost to the employee. This results in the adoption of a cynical attitude towards their work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Conversely, job resources are associated positively with employees' engagement through a motivational process that operates either extrinsically (e.g. financial rewards or social support) or intrinsically by stimulating goal accomplishment and enhancing feelings of self-efficacy (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

This study uses the framework of the JD-R model to research positive job

characteristics such as social support and attitudes toward fun in the workplace that are

associated with an increase in positive work outcomes, (i.e. increased job satisfaction and

decreased job stress), which in turn are related to general quality of life outcomes like life

stress and self-worth (See Figure 1. which outlines the hypothesized model underlying

this study).

Job Characteristics		**Work Outcomes**		**Quality of Life Outcomes**
Social support & Workplace fun	⟷	Increased Job satisfaction & Decreased Job stress	⟷	Decreased Life stress & Increased Self-worth
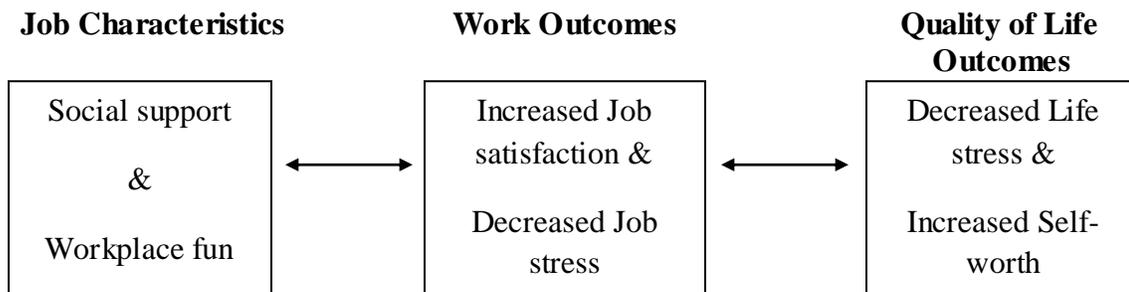
Figure 1. Model of the factors in the job setting that are related to work outcomes and
quality of life outcomes.

Social Support

Social support is a work characteristic that has been defined by Deelstra et al.

(2003) as "the actions of others that are perceived as helpful or intended to be helpful"

(p.324). This work characteristic includes a variety of interpersonal behaviors that have

the ability to increase the functioning of individuals either psychologically or

behaviorally (Harris, Winskowski, & Engdhal, 2007). Harris et al. (2007) go on to say

that some of these interpersonal behaviors include mentoring, providing emotional

support, and assisting others with assigned tasks for example. The construct of social

support varies in source: supervisor, mentor, or colleague, and also by content:

information, appraisal, assistance with tasks, or emotional support (Deelstra et al. 2003).

There is an abundance of evidence suggesting that social support is a positive predictor of

job satisfaction, as well as other positive outcomes such as increased self-efficacy and autonomy (Harris, Moritzen, Robitschek, Imhoff, & Lynch, 2001).

Four types of social support have been defined within the workplace: task support, career mentoring, coaching, and collegial social support (Hill, Bahniuk, Dobos, & Rouner, 1989). Hill et al. (1989) describe task support as focusing on the exchange and sharing of work assignments and/or ideas. Career mentoring refers to adviser relationships with people in the organization who have more experience in a given area. Coaching involves teaching the rules and goals of the organization or profession, including organizational politics. Finally, collegial social support takes the form of sharing confidences, friendships, and personal problems with other individuals in the workplace. Researchers have found that in studies of business managers, high levels of job satisfaction and perceived success were predicted when constructive support from colleagues and mentoring was displayed in the workplace (Bahnuick et al., 1990).

Luthan's (2002) work in positive organizational behavior has recently been focused on the pursuit of employee happiness and health as viable goals of organizational psychology. The quality of employees' working environment has delved into personal and organizational resources, such as social support that facilitate the flow at work. To be more specific, this experience can be described by feelings of intense involvement in an activity and the intrinsic interest to continue to perform the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Walen, 1993). Similarly, research on affective organizational commitment has found that positive work experiences tied to coworkers or managers leads to increased feelings of competence and stronger ties to the organization (Rousseau & Aube, 2010). Rousseau and Aube (2010) report that the social support received from both

coworkers and managers has been shown to provide needed approval and affiliation that an employee may need to feel like a valued member of the organization. Social support is a resource that has motivating potential because it has the ability to make employees' work meaningful, hold them responsible for work outcomes, and provide them with information about the results of their work activities (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003).

Workplace Fun

Experienced fun is defined as, "the extent to which a person perceives the existence of fun in the workplace" (Peluchette & Karl, 2005, p. 269). Studies suggest that when people have fun doing their jobs they get along better and are more energized and motivated. They also experience less stress, provide better customer service, and are less likely to be absent or leave the organization (Peluchette & Karl, 2005). In the healthcare industry, much attention is being paid to humor as an appropriate means of stress release and as a tool to build camaraderie among employees (Baughman, 2001). More recently, companies have discovered the link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, where workplace fun can enhance both perceptions (Karl & Peluchette, 2006). There is a growing body of literature and anecdotal evidence examining the link between workplace fun, employee satisfaction, and perceptions of quality of customer service; however, there is a lack of empirical research examining this link (Karl & Peluchette, 2006). Research has demonstrated that positive moods tend to generalize from whatever caused them to other stimuli in the temporal and social context (Forgas, Bower, & Krantz, 1984). Popular press writers have proposed a wide range of activities to make the workplace fun with suggestions ranging from bringing in food,

giving awards, playing games, and forming committees to plan fun activities, to hula hoop marathons and fashion shows (Berger, 2002).

Beliefs about the job, as well as experiencing a pleasant mood at work, have both been found to make independent contributions to the prediction of job satisfaction (Ilies & Judge, 2004). Within this study, the variable job satisfaction can be described as the level of contentment a person feels about their current job; however the factors that make a job satisfying are not the same for every person (Carlson & Mellor, 2004). There is also some support for increased employee job satisfaction based on the positive impact of workplace humor and fun. Recent research, for example, on both doctors and nurses of HIV/AIDS and oncology patients found that when coping with the emotional stress of their work, humor was indicated as an effective coping strategy (Dorz, Novara, Sica, & Sanavio, 2003). However, as with other psychological dimensions, individual attitudes toward fun are likely to differ. Some employees may see the humor and fun as a welcome distraction from the everyday stress of the workplace, whereas others may respond to the change cynically and with resistance (Peluchette & Karl, 2005).

There may be differences in individuals about the appropriateness of efforts to foster fun in the workplace. According to Aldag and Sherony (2001), whether one deems fun at work as appropriate may depend on personality traits, peer impact, past work history and childhood socialization. These factors may also explain varying perceptions about the value of fun at work. For individuals with strong needs for social connection, fun at work may help in initiating new relationships, which could play an important role in job satisfaction (Peluchette & Karl, 2005). Also, fun activities could be viewed by some as a way to increase productivity, but others may see these activities as creating

disorder and adding to the workload (Peluchette & Karl, 2005). Clearly, more investigation is needed to better understand employee attitudes toward workplace fun.

Social Support and Workplace Fun Linked to Job-Related Stress

Mikhail (1981) presents a definition of stress that integrates both a physiological component and a psychological component. He states that "stress is the state which arises from an actual or perceived demand capacity imbalance in the organ's vital adjustment actions and which is partially manifested by a nonspecific response" (p.10), suggesting that regardless of the source of stress, many specific indicators may be present because of the role that perceived and objective stressors have in influencing the level of stress (McGrath, 1976). Much of the organizational behavior literature has focused on attitudinal indicators of stress like job satisfaction; however, other categories of stressors include: interpersonal relations, personality characteristics, and environmental/organizational/role characteristics (E/O/R) (Frew & Bruning, 1987). Interpersonal variables include measures of relationships in the work environment that impact a person's adjustment, for example relationships with supervisors or peers. The personality characteristics include needs, values, self-esteem, behavior patterns etc. Additional variables included in the E/O/R characteristics are related to an individual's effective ability to perform a job (Frew & Bruning, 1987).

As discussed earlier, social support is defined as "the actions of others that are perceived as helpful or intended to be helpful" (p.324), inherently affecting interpersonal behaviors (Deelstra et al., 2003). Social support falls under the interpersonal relations category, in which relationships are evaluated and attributed to feelings of belonging and adjustment in the work environment. However, job stress can result not only from

underdeveloped work relationships, but also from unclear job-related responsibilities, vague task assignments, high demand/low resources, and under appreciation from peers, to name a few (Baumeister, 1991). For the purposes of this study, the relationship between social support in the workplace and reduced job stress is examined as a factor of these interpersonal relationships. There is little to no empirical research examining the effect of workplace fun on perceived job stress; however it does contribute to job satisfaction, which has been shown to reduce stress at work (Ilies & Judge, 2004).

Work Outcomes Related to Life-Stress

Perhaps a more serious factor in the overall picture of quality of life that can be affected by job satisfaction and job stress is life stress. Work has both rewards (money, recognition, meaning, etc.) and pitfalls (fewer days off, less flexibility, increased responsibility, etc.) that can challenge one's ability to adapt to the work atmosphere (Baumeister, 1991). Researchers of occupational stress have found that work demands that are not resolved but are prolonged become stressors that can lead to burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Symptoms of burnout can spread past the workplace and into the personal life, that left unresolved can spiral into malfunctioning on several different levels (Vladut & Kallay, 2010). Research on burnout symptoms has discovered an association with social, psychological, and physiological functioning, with correlations with high levels of depression and anxiety. Specifically, these researchers found correlations with mental illness and alcoholism, cardiovascular problems, suicide, self-neglect, and alienation from others (Melamed, Shirom, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2006).

Clearly, negative aspects of work can have effects that span into other facets of

life. It goes unsaid that if a job has the resources needed to meet the job demands it is likely that employees can recover from stressors before they lead to burnout. This study looks to discover if job characteristics like social support and workplace fun are related to reports of job satisfaction and job stress. In turn, increased job satisfaction and decreased job stress are predicted to decrease life stress.

Work Outcomes Related to Self-Worth

Self-worth is a construct that has been related to several facets of the workplace atmosphere. Specifically, in this study, self-worth was studied in relation to job satisfaction. It was hypothesized that an increase in job satisfaction would also predict self-worth. In this instance, self-worth or self-esteem is understood as the overall evaluation of oneself as either positive or negative (Brown, 1993). Ferris et al. (2009) argue that work outcomes can be determined by whether one feels contingent or noncontingent self-esteem associated with a job. Contingent self-worth has been described as a global sense of self-worth that one may feel is attributed to a specific domain, where the determination of one's self-worth is linked to success or failure in that domain (Ferris et al., 2009). For example, if the CEO of a large corporation that has contingent self-esteem is charged with the task of increasing revenue by ten percent in the next fiscal year and it only increases by three percent, then this person may feel a negative overall evaluation of his or her self-worth. This does not indicate whether an individual's self-esteem is high or low, but whether these levels are contingent on the outcomes of particular life domains. To clarify, if the CEO in the example above had noncontingent self-esteem then his or her failure to increase revenue would not affect global feelings of self-worth. For the purposes of this study, it is important to recognize

that the self-worth of the participants is regarded in relation to their job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the construct of self-esteem describes the degree of value a person feels in life through thoughts, feelings, experiences, and emotions. Similarly, job satisfaction has been defined in relation to factors that are psychological, physiological, and social in nature where the individual should feel satisfied in each of these domains to achieve job satisfaction (Alavi & Askaripur, 2003). Alavi and Askaripur (2003) also list three reasons why job satisfaction is important in organizations: 1) there has been evidence that unsatisfied employees leave or resign from their current jobs, 2) evidence from past research has indicated that satisfied staff have better health and improved life expectancy, and 3) employees who experience job satisfaction carry the positive effects outside of the workplace and into their private lives.

Additionally, the degree of value and usefulness an individual feels in an organization has been shown to be related to job performance and job satisfaction (Moorhead & Griffin, 1989). Also, individuals who exhibit low self-esteem may be more likely to report symptoms of depression or anxiety, a decrease in physical health, and report physical complaints that lead to job dissatisfaction and a decrease in performance while at work (Biabangard, 1997). From this information it would be useful to explore self-worth and job satisfaction from several points of view as these constructs may play a role in the psychological climate of the organization.

Hypotheses

The data should help to clarify the relationship between certain work characteristics and quality of life factors. The first hypothesis of this study is that experiences of social support in the workplace and a positive attitude toward workplace

fun will relate to increased feelings of job satisfaction. Second, this study hypothesizes that experienced social support and a positive attitude toward workplace fun will be associated with decreased feelings of job stress. The third hypothesis postulates that the job characteristics of social support, workplace fun, and the work outcomes of job stress, and job satisfaction will be associated with decreases in reports of life stress. Fourth, this study hypothesizes that social support, workplace fun, job stress, and job satisfaction will be related to increases in evaluations of self-worth.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study utilized a cross-sectional design and assessed the relationship between social support and workplace fun on work outcomes of job satisfaction and job stress, as well as quality of life outcomes such as life stress and self worth. To assess these variables, surveys were distributed to different stores in the local outlet mall who agreed to participate in the study.

Participants

The participants were current employees of consenting retail stores in the Prime Outlet Mall in San Marcos, Texas. Most, but not all, employees consisted of Texas State University-San Marcos students. The sample of this study was comprised of 18 males and 47 females, and they had the option not to participate in the study at no risk to the participant (see Table 1. for additional demographics). IRB approval (2009L8135) was obtained for this study, and all participants were asked to give informed consent for their participation.

Measures

The participants were asked to respond to questions on these six measures: Social Support Inventory, Attitude Toward Fun at Work scale, Work Satisfaction survey,

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Job-Related Stress scale, Perceived Stress scale, and the Self-esteem scale.

The Social Support Inventory, adapted from the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988), measured perceived support that participants received from coworkers that was analyzed to determine if this factor can help reduce overall life stress. This inventory consisted of four questions, and the scores of this scale were rated on a five point Likert scale. An example of this measure is, "My friends at work really try to help me", where answer choices ranged from A (strongly agree: 1) to E (strongly disagree: 5). Higher scores indicated weak feelings of social support in the workplace. The adaptation of the MSPSS used in this study originally consisted of 12 items that distinguished perceived social support from three sources: family, friends, or significant other (Dahlem, Zimet, & Walker, 1991). The four items used in this study were adapted from a question of each source to reflect perceived social support from colleagues in the workplace. Two items reflected questions about social support received from friends. Results of past research suggest that the MSPSS is psychometrically sound and consistently demonstrates strong test-retest reliability and factorial validity (Dahlem, Zimet, & Walker, 1991).

The Attitude Toward Fun at Work scale (Aldag & Sherony, 2001) enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of how employees felt about fun experienced in the workplace. The Attitude Toward Fun at Work scale measured the participants' feelings on seventeen total items. There were three sections of this scale, the first of which contained four questions about the appropriateness of having fun at work (e.g. "Work hours are the time for work and non-work hours are the time to have fun."). The second portion of this scale contained five questions about the salience of fun at work (e.g.

"Having fun at work is very important to me."). The last portion of the scale consisted of eight questions about the perceived consequences of having fun in the workplace (e.g. "Having fun at work can enhance interpersonal relations and teamwork."). All questions were rated using a five point Likert scale ranging from A (strongly agree: 1) to E (strongly disagree: 5). The responses from the three sections were combined into one total score. Lower scores indicated that participants felt that workplace fun was appropriate, salient, and had favorable consequences. The Attitude Toward Fun at Work scale has been used mainly in the hospital setting with doctors and nurses to assess how fun at work can help decrease the tension in serious work atmospheres, however it has been in use for over 10 years to predict how the use of humor at work can increase employee satisfaction (Peluchette and Karl, 2005).

The Work Satisfaction Survey (by the Gallup Organization) assessed participants' satisfaction with thier current employment and if they felt motivated to do good work. Responses to these twelve questions were rated on a five point Likert scale from A (totally disagree: 1) to E (totally agree: 5) on questions such as, "At work, I have the opportunity to do that which I do best every day." Higher scores on this survey indicated that participants felt satisfied with their current job. This survey was developed from research that spanned the past 25 years to determine the minimum number of questions needed to accurately measure the environmental constructs of a strong workplace (Forbringer, 2002). This survey was tested among 2,500 businesses with over 105,000 employee responses, where employees who responded more positively to the questions worked in units of businesses that had higher rates of productivity, retention, profit, and customer satisfaction. The results show that the questions can be generalized across many

different companies especially linking employee opinion and business performance (Forbringer, 2002).

The Job-Related Stress scale (Kahn et al., 1964) contained fifteen items that helped to determine how much life stress is related to one's job (e.g. "How frequently are you bothered at work by feeling that you have too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to you?"). The answer choices ranged from A (never: 1) to E (very often: 5) on a five point Likert scale to measure stress related to the job for each participant. Higher scores indicated that participants perceived their jobs to be stressful. The Job-Related Stress scale has been utilized by researchers in organizational psychology for decades to measure attitudes and performance of employees to gain a better understanding of role strain. For example, this scale has been used to better understand direct conflicts, job overload, problems resulting from the necessity of exerting illegitimate authority, and ambiguity related to information needed for effective job performance (Ivancevich, 1980).

The Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983) measured life stress and consisted of fourteen items. This scale helped determine how much stress a person experienced from day to day by utilizing a five point Likert scale that ranged from A (never: 1) to E (very often: 5), where higher scores indicated that participants perceived that their day to day lives were stressful. An example question would be, "In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?" The Perceived Stress Scale has been in use for over 25 years, as well as in foreign countries to measure individual adaptation to stressors, predict both physical and psychological symptoms, and health behaviors (Cohen, 1986).

The Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to gain an understanding of the participants' feelings of self-worth based on their responses to ten questions. These scores were correlated with their reports of stress and work satisfaction to determine the quality of life factor of self-worth. Participants had the option of circling from A (strongly agree: 1) to D (strongly disagree: 4) on questions such as, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself." Participants' scores were rated on a four point Likert scale, where higher scores indicated a low degree of self-worth. The Self-Esteem scale has been used since 1965 to measure principles of self-esteem formation such as reflected appraisals, social comparison, and self-attribution. Self-worth is regarded as a product of social interaction (Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1989).

Procedure

The researcher approached 30 stores located in the Prime Outlet Mall in San Marcos, Texas. Twenty-one stores agreed to participate in the study, and 10 surveys were sent to each store for completion. Thus, a total of 210 surveys were distributed. Participants were recruited when the researcher obtained written consent from each store manager agreeing to distribute the surveys among current employees. On the survey, participants were asked to report the level of education completed, classification (if enrolled in school), and current enrollment status if applicable. Participant demographics, such as gender, age, ethnicity, and rate of pay were self-report measures to track group differences. They were asked to respond truthfully, as per survey instructions, because of relative anonymity. The researcher only knew which store each participant belonged to, not specific names of employees. As an incentive, participants were informed on the consent form that they could be eligible to win a raffle for a $25 gift card to Barneys New

York following their completion of the survey.

After receiving permission from each store manager to distribute the surveys, he/she gave the surveys to all employees and asked them to fill them out and return them to an envelope provided. After two weeks the surveys were collected. Upon delivering the packet of surveys, the researcher wrote the pick-up date on the front to help remind the store managers of the deadline. In order to reduce the time needed to transcribe the data for analysis, answer forms were provided with each survey, and the participants were asked to fill in their answers.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Data Scoring

A portion of the data from three of the scales on the survey was reverse scored prior to analysis to attain accurate scores on the scales. The data from the Attitude Toward fun at Work scale were reversed scored for nine items: numbers 7,8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, and 22. Seven items on the Perceived Stress scale were reversed during analysis: numbers 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, and 36. Lastly, the Self-Esteem scale had five items which were reversed: numbers 51, 54, 55, 57, and 58.

Demographics

Following the distribution and collection of the surveys to the consenting retail stores, 65 (31%) of the original 210 surveys were sufficiently completed to be processed and analyzed. A total of 72.3% of the participants were female, 34.1% of the participants were between 17-22 years of age, and 32.3% were between 23-28 years of age. Fifty-five percent were Caucasian/White, 24.6% of the participants were Latino, 9.2% were African American, 7.7% responded as Other, and 3.1% were Asian American. Subsequently, 36.9% had completed high school, and almost as many participants (33.8%) completed a Bachelor's degree. The majority of participants (33.8%) reported that they had been employed at their current location between 6-12 months, with 30.8% reporting being

employed fewer than 6 months. Currently, 63.1% of the participants reported being

enrolled at a university (See Table 1. for the full demographics of participants).

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Variable	N(%)
Gender	
Male	18 (27.7%)
Female	47 (72.3%)
Age	
17-22	28 (34.1%)
23-28	21 (32.3%)
29-34	6 (9.3%)
35-40	5 (7.7%)
40 and Above	5 (7.7%)
Ethnicity	
African American	6 (9.2%)
Asian American	2 (3.1%)
Latino	16 (24.6%)
Caucasian/White	36 (55.4%)
Other	5 (7.7%)
Education Level	
High School	24 (36.9%)
Associate Degree	13 (20%)
Bachelors Degree	22 (33.8%)
Masters or Higher	1 (1.5%)
Other	5 (7.7%)
Time Employed	
0-6 Months	20 (30.8%)
6-12 Months	22 (33.8 %)
1-2 Years	8 (12.3%)
2-4 Years	8 (12.3%)
4 Years or More	7 (10.8%)
Enrolled at a College/University	
Yes	41 (63.1%)
No	24 (36.9%)

NOTE: Percentages are based on the total sample (N=65)

Analyses

Before analyzing the results, tests of reliability were performed on the scales used to measure the variables. The Attitude Toward Fun at Work scale had a reliability of α=.843, where a higher scale score indicates that participants want to have more fun at work. The Perceived Stress Scale had a coefficient alpha of .821, and a higher score indicates higher perceived stress. The Work Satisfaction Survey had a coefficient alpha of .907, where a higher score signifies participants are more satisfied. The Self-Worth Scale had a reliability of α=.860, indicating that higher values imply less self-worth. The Job-Related Stress scale had a coefficient alpha of .907, where higher values indicate more experienced stress. Lastly, the Social Support Scale had a reliability score of α=.872, where higher values signify less support (See Table 2. for mean and standard deviation scores).

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for All Measures

Variable	Mean	SD
Attitude Toward Fun at Work Items and Scales	37.47	9.06
Perceived Stress Scale	33.58	6.83
Work Satisfaction Survey	46.51	8.78
Self-Esteem Scale	44.58	5.06
Job-Related Stress	30.53	9.65
Social Support Scale	16.65	3.14

NOTE: Percentages are based on the total sample (N=65)

The first step in the analysis was to examine the correlations between the six measures of the study: social support, attitude toward fun at work, job-satisfaction,

 job- related stress, perceived life stress, and self-worth. The data show that several variables were significantly correlated.

Attitude toward workplace fun was positively correlated with job stress (.405, p< 0.01), indicating that as attitude toward workplace fun increases so does job stress. Social support was positively correlated with job satisfaction (.413, p< 0.01), which shows that as social support increases so does job satisfaction. Interestingly, there was a negative relationship between the attitude towards fun at work variable and job satisfaction with a correlation of -.425 (p< 0.01). This indicates that as positive attitude towards fun at work increases, work satisfaction decreases.

The variable of job stress was negatively correlated with job satisfaction with a correlation of -.768 (p< 0.01). This was expected, as feelings of job stress increase, feelings of job satisfaction should decrease. Job stress was also positively correlated with life stress (.304, p< 0.05), showing that as job stress increases, feelings of life stress also increase. Attitude toward workplace fun was found to be negatively correlated with self-worth with a correlation of -.290 (p<0.05). This indicates that positive attitudes toward workplace fun decrease feelings of self-worth. Predictably, the variable job stress was negatively correlated with self-worth (-.371, p<0.05). As feelings of job stress increase feelings of self-worth decrease. Job satisfaction was positively correlated with feelings of self-worth with a correlation of .441, (p<0.01), indicating that as feelings of job satisfaction increase so do feelings of self-worth. Lastly, life stress was negatively correlated with self-worth (-.531, p<0.01). It was not unexpected to find that as life stress increased, feelings of self-worth decreased (See Table 3. below for the full correlation matrix).

Table 3. Correlation matrix for all measures

	Work-related Social support	Attitude Toward Workplace Fun	Job Stress	Job Satisfaction	Life Stress	Self-Worth
Work-related Social Support	1					
Attitude Toward Workplace Fun	-.280	1				
Job Stress	-.228	.405**	1			
Job Satisfaction	.413**	-.425**	-.768**	1		
Life Stress	.048	.088	.304*	-.225	1	
Self-Worth	.123	-.290*	-.371*	.441**	-.531**	1

NOTE: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Using a stepwise regression design, the first hypothesis examined if job satisfaction scores were related to experiences of social support and a positive attitude toward fun in the workplace. In the model, social support provided a positive relationship with job satisfaction while attitude toward fun at work showed a negative relationship with job satisfaction. The full regression model can be found in Table 4. With both attitude toward fun at work and social support at work in the model, approximately 26% of the variance in job satisfaction could be explained (R^2= .258). The negative relationship between attitude toward fun at work and job satisfaction (β=-.318) is opposite to what was predicted, whereas the positive relationship between social support and job satisfaction (β =.299) was expected. A visual representation of how the attitude

toward workplace fun and social support variables affect reports of job satisfaction can be found in Figure 2.

Table 4. Regression Summary Table for Hypothesis 1 (N=65)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
(Constant)	46.662	8.815	
Fun at Work	-.377	.141	-.318
Social Support	.822	.327	.299

NOTE: R^2= .258, F= 10.45 (p<0.01). DV: Job Satisfaction

The second hypothesis examined whether social support and attitudes toward fun at work predicted decreased feelings of job stress. The stepwise regression analysis showed that social support was negatively related to feelings of job stress; however a positive attitude toward workplace fun was found to be related to an increase in feelings of job stress. The full regression model can be found in Table 5. The negative relationship between social support and job stress (β=-.117) was supported by the analysis that explains how decreases in social support at work are associated with feelings of job stress. However, the positive relationship between attitude toward fun at work in relation to job stress (β=.370) was not expected, as the analysis showed that increases in positive attitude toward fun at work also increased job stress. Together, these variables explained approximately 18% of the variance in job stress (R^2=.176). Figure 2 provides a visual representation of how the analysis of attitude toward workplace fun and social support variables predict reports of job stress.

Table 5. Regression Summary Table for Hypothesis 2 (N=65)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
(Constant)	21.874	9.116	
Fun at Work	.392	.129	.370
Social Support	-.363	.378	-.117

NOTE: R^2= .176, F= 6.536 (p<0.01). DV: Job Stress

Job Characteristics   **Work Outcomes**

Social Support		Increased job satisfaction
	←→	Decreased job stress

Job Characteristics   **Work Outcomes**

Positive attitude toward workplace fun		Decreased job satisfaction
	←→	Increased job stress
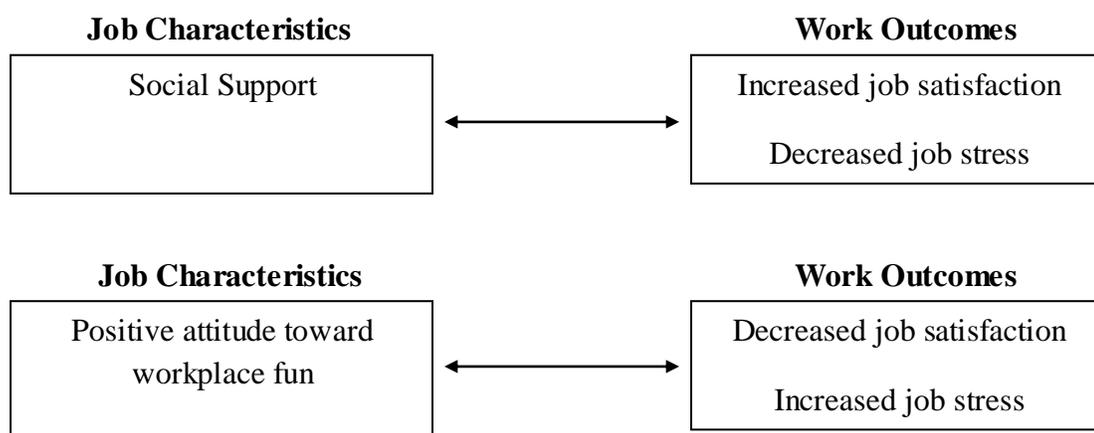
Figure 2. Results of the analyses of the relationships between job characteristics and work outcome variables.

In the third hypothesis, a stepwise regression analysis was applied to the hypothesis that social support, workplace fun, job stress, and job satisfaction are predictors of perceived life stress. The only significant predictor of life stress in this hypothesis was job stress. The full regression model can be found in Table 6. The positive relationship between job stress and life stress ($\square$=.314) was supported by the analysis that increases in feelings of job stress also relate to reports of life stress. The job stress variable accounted for approximately 10% of the variance in life stress (R^2=.099). This small percentage reflects that although job stress is the best predictor of life stress, there are other significant factors that were not represented in the hypothesized model. A

visual representation of the analysis of how the variable job stress is related to the quality

of life variable of life stress is provided in Figure 3.

Table 6. Regression Summary Table for Hypothesis 3 (N=65)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
(Constant)	26.688	2.859	
Job Stress	.231	.090	.314

NOTE: R^2= .099, F= 6.585 (p<0.01), DV: Life Stress

Work outcomes	**Quality of Life**
Increased job stress	Increased life stress
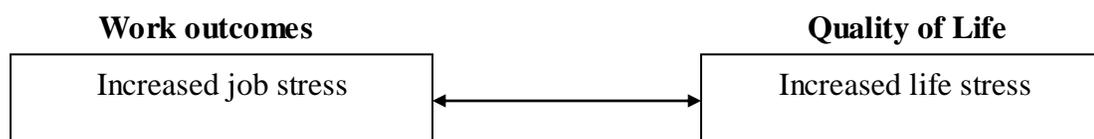
Figure 3. Results of the analysis of the relationship between the work outcome variable
of job stress and the quality of life variable of life stress.

The fourth hypothesis concerned the ability of social support, workplace fun, job

stress, and job satisfaction to predict perceptions of self-worth. The stepwise regression

analysis showed that job satisfaction was the only predictor of self-worth, as the other

factors did not contribute a significant effect. The full regression model can be found in

Table 7. There was a positive relationship found between job satisfaction and self-worth

(β=.314), which supported the hypothesis that increases in job satisfaction would be

positively related to feelings of self-worth. The variable of job satisfaction accounted for

approximately 23% of the variance in self-worth (R^2=.228). A visual representation of

the analysis of the relationship of the variable of job satisfaction to the significance of

self-worth can be found in Figure 4.

Table 7. Regression Summary Table for Hypothesis 4 (N=65)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
(Constant)	31.778	3.113	
Job Satisfaction	.276	.066	.477

NOTE: R^2= .228, F= 17.707 (p<0.01), DV: Self Worth

Work Outcomes   **Quality of Life**

| Increased job satisfaction | ⟷ | Increased self-worth |
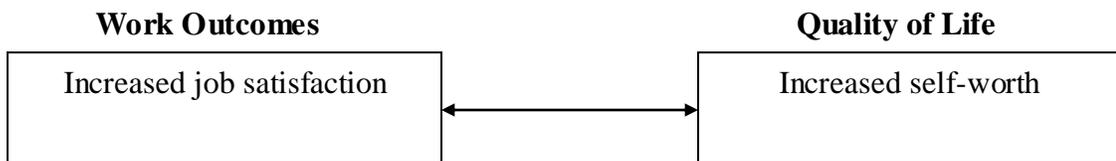
Figure 4. Results of the analysis of the relationship between the work outcome variable of job satisfaction and the quality of life variable of self-worth.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Findings

Given the results of the analyses, several inferences can be made. The findings related to the first hypothesis suggest that social support is a positive predictor of job satisfaction as was previously hypothesized. Social support is almost as good of a predictor of job satisfaction as attitude toward workplace fun, in that perceptions of social support at work are important to feeling satisfied with one's current job. Also, it appears that increases in positive attitudes to workplace fun are related to a decrease in job satisfaction. The study only assessed attitudes toward fun in the workplace; it did not assess actual fun experienced at work. Having said this, from these results it could be inferred that as the participants were thinking about fun experienced at their current jobs and taking into account that they would look favorably on fun at work, the amount they currently experience was not satisfactory. Based on this study, it appears that participants would like to experience more fun at their jobs, and are not satisfied with the amount they currently experience, which is correlated with lower job satisfaction.

Findings from the second hypothesis revealed that social support is a negative predictor of job stress, and positive attitude toward fun at work was linked to increases in reports of job stress. The negative result of the analysis of social support and job stress

was predicted in the hypothesis and supported by the finding that feelings of social support at work were associated with increased feelings of job satisfaction. The finding that positive attitude toward workplace fun predicted increased job stress was opposite to what was anticipated; it was hypothesized that social support and positive attitude toward workplace fun would be associated with decreased job stress. This finding is similar to the results found in the analysis related to the first hypothesis, and can be explained by the perceptions that participants are not experiencing fun at their current job but would like to experience more fun in the workplace.

The participants' scores on the Job-Related Stress scale showed a mean score of 30.53 with a standard deviation of 9.65, where the highest potential score was 75. On the Attitudes Toward Fun at Work scale the participants' mean score was 37.47 with a standard deviation of 9.06, where the highest potential score was 49. These numbers suggest that the participants about "average" levels of stress (41%- mean percent of stress participants reported due to job stress), and they reported above "average" positive attitudes toward fun at work (76%- mean percent participants reported about positive attitudes toward fun at work). See Table 2 for the full summary of means and standard deviation scores for the six measures. Based on the stress levels and the positive attitude toward fun at work, it could be inferred that companies could introduce small things to make the daily duties of work more fun and enjoyable to help reduce stress levels of employees. For instance, casual Friday, hat day, and team building activities have all been found to increase job satisfaction (Berger, 2002).

In addition, in the analysis of perceived life stress related to the third hypothesis, job related stress explained the majority of the variance and was the only predictor of

perceived life stress. Social support, attitude toward fun at work, and work satisfaction did not contribute a significant effect. Overall life stress encompasses several aspects of daily life. For example, interpersonal relationships, finances, health, etc. all affect the overall stress of an individual, however job related stress is shown to be the major source of stress for American adults (AIS, 2010). Occupational pressures described in the "Attitudes in the American Workplace VII" report claimed in 2001 that over one third of workers were involved in jobs that harmed their emotional or physical health, and that 42% said job pressures were interfering with personal relationships (The Marlin Company, 2001). Similarly, The American Institute of Stress (2010) discloses that increased levels of job stress can be linked to increased rates of heart attack, hypertension, and other related disorders. Given this information, job stress may be a cause not only for health problems but also for financial issues, and can place limits on personal time for extracurricular activities.

For the fourth hypothesis, this study examined predictors of self-worth, and the analysis found that job satisfaction was the only predictor and explained the majority of the variance. The other variables of social support, attitude toward fun at work, and job related tension did not contribute a significant effect. This finding can have major implications for the way we perceive ourselves based on our job satisfaction. Ferris, Lian, and Keeping (2009) examined the role of self-worth to understand its effects and whether it is contingent or non-contingent. It has been postulated that contingent self-esteem is seen when one's global sense of self-worth is directly related to a specific domain (e.g. competence in the workplace), so much so that one's successes and failures determine global self-worth (Deci & Ryan, 1995).

It is important to note that contingent self-esteem does not describe whether self-esteem in high or low, but if self-esteem levels are contingent on the successful outcomes of particular life domains (Ferris, Lian, & Keeping, 2009). To date, there is not a preponderance of research examining the effects of job satisfaction on reports of self-worth; however, this study provides evidence that job stress and job satisfaction are important variables that predict general life stress and overall self-worth, and these relationships should be the focus of further study. We spend the majority of our time at work, and as the results of this study indicate, work factors permeate to other facets of life that play a significant role in global quality of life.

Limitations

The results of this study indicate that attitude toward workplace fun is a significant predictor of quality of life factors in relation to job characteristics. Surveying the participants based on experienced fun rather than attitudes toward fun at work may go farther in making predictions about how actually experiencing fun at work is associated with perceptions about job satisfaction and self-worth. This is relevant because actual experiences of fun at work could have greater effects on job outcomes and quality of life factors. Therefore, this study is limited in the connections drawn from the attitudes toward workplace fun variable.

Additionally, the study focused on local retail employees from businesses that agreed to participate in this study. Due to the fact that it was not mandated for all employees to participate in the study, the number of completed surveys was small (65 participants). Also, the survey packets were left with the store manager of each consenting business for the period of two weeks. During this time, the principal

researcher did not contact the business with a reminder of the survey pick up deadline. As a result, many store managers forgot to hand out the surveys to their employees for completion. Upon retrieval of the survey packets, the majority of the surveys were unused. Regardless of the small number of employees that participated, the study was able to find significant results. However, future study of this population should focus on having the researcher present a more active role in the survey process to ensure larger sample size.

It may also be noteworthy to mention that the study did not ascertain the leadership role of the employee in the demographics of the survey. For instance, the amount of perceived job stress or job satisfaction may be different for employees who are strictly sales associates from employees who are store managers or who are members of the management team. Going forward with this research, it could be helpful to include this information to get a better understanding of how workplace fun, for example, affects quality of life for different levels of employee responsibility.

In addition, bias may have existed as not all the stores in the Prime Outlet Mall were solicited for participation. Only clothing stores were approached to ensure a degree of similarity in daily duties and responsibilities of the participants. A total of 21 stores agreed to participate. Some stores employ more than 10 people and some stores employ less than 10 people, so an average of only 10 surveys was included in each packet. The participation of employees from each store was random; however, not every employee may have had an opportunity to participate due to the number of surveys provided.

Future Directions

This study has indicated that certain job characteristics can affect both work

outcomes and quality of life factors. Results of this study suggest that attitudes toward fun at work may provide an avenue for further study to better understand how employees relate their feelings about work with feelings of quality of life. Throughout this investigation, research has been limited about workplace fun. Thus, some researchers choose to call it humor; however, humor has a similar meaning to fun in the context of the workplace. Some researchers describe it as joking, jesting, banter, telling stories, and teasing (Lang & Lee, 2010). The value of humor is largely taken for granted where several studies have investigated its use in creating a harmonious work environment (Terrion & Ashforth, 2002), developing stronger work connections among employees (Holmes & Marra, 2002), relieving stress in the workplace (Smith, Harrington, & Neck, 2000), and influencing creative productivity (Lang & Lee, 2010). It may also be important to identify other factors in the workplace that have a significant effect on quality of life. For example, management style and work flexibility are two factors that have been regarded to impact worker output and satisfaction at work (Lang & Lee, 2010).

Summary

In the present study the findings show that among employees in the retail industry at Prime Outlet Mall in San Marcos, TX, attitude toward workplace fun is the primary factor at work in discerning levels of job satisfaction and job stress. The factor job stress was most important in relation to perceptions of life stress, whereas the job satisfaction factor was the most predictive of feelings of self-worth. Job factors relate to work outcomes, and through this research, these have been shown to predict quality of life and judgments about self-worth. In the future, this knowledge could be used to determine how who we are at work shapes our perceptions of a successful life.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please read and fill out the survey, <u>you can use pen or pencil</u>. Once it is complete, place this survey in the provided envelope and seal it, then return it to the store manager. Use the answer sheet provided to mark your answers to the following questions. <u>DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE ANSWER FORM!</u> Please disregard the 79th answer slot on the answer form; there are only 78 questions.

Please answer the following items to the best of your knowledge. Fill in the corresponding circle on the answer form.

1. Gender   A. Male   B. Female

2. Age   A. 17-22   B. 23-28   C. 29-34   D. 35-40   E.41 and over

3. Ethnicity   A. African-American   B. Asian-American
          C.Latino   D. Caucasian/White   E. Other

4. Level of Education Completed   A. High School   B. Associate Degree
                                    C. Bachelors Degree   D. Masters Degree or
                                                          higher
                                    E. Other

5. Amount of time employed with company   A. 0-6 months   B. 6 months-1 year
        C. 1-2 years   D. 2-4 years   E. 4 years or more

6. Enrollment Status at a college or university   A. Yes, currently enrolled

                                                 B. No, not enrolled

Instructions: This scale measures your feelings about workplace fun as follows: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Please fill out the appropriate circle on your answer form. Strongly agree(A)…Strongly disagree(E)

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly Agree				**Strongly Disagree**

Attitude Toward Fun At Work Items and Scales

Appropriateness

7. Joking, laughing, or having a "playful attitude" while on the job is immature and unprofessional.

8. Work hours are the time to work and non-work hours are the time to have fun.

9. Having a good time and doing a good job are incompatible achievements.

10. If you are playing, you cannot possibly be working.

Salience

11. Having fun at work is very important to me.

12. If my job stopped being fun, I would look for another job.

13. I prefer to work with people who like to have fun.

14. I don't expect work to be fun—that's why they call it work.

15. Experiencing joy or amusement while at work is not important to me.

Perceived Consequences

16. Having fun at work can enhance interpersonal relations and teamwork.

17. Fun at work usually gets out of hand.

18. Fun at work can help reduce stress and tensions.

19. When work is fun, employees work harder and longer.

20. Joke-telling almost always comes at the expense of others (e.g., harassment).

21. Companies with no sense of humor typically have dissatisfied employees.

22. When employees are having fun, they are typically goofing off and avoiding their work.

23. Employees with a healthy sense of humor tend to work well with others

Instructions: The questions on this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case you will be asked to indicate *how often* you felt or thought a certain way. Although some questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer each question fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way, but rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate. On your answer form circle the answer that best describes you: Never (A)…Very Often (E).

Perceived Stress Scale

In the last month, how often have you…	Never	Almost Never	Some-times	Fairly Often	Very Often
24. been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?					
25. felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?					
26. felt nervous and "stressed"?					
27. dealt successfully with irritating life events?					

28. felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?				
29. felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?				
30. felt that things were going your way?				
31. found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?				
32. been able to control irritations in your life?				
33. felt that you were on top of things?				
34. been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?				
35. found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?				
36. been able to control the way you spend your time?				

37. felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?					

(Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983)

Instructions: Read each statement then fill in the corresponding circle on the answer form to indicate how you feel at this very moment about how satisfied you are with your work. A-totally disagree, B-disagree, C-neutral, D-agree, and E-totally agree.

WORK SATISFACTION SURVEY by the Gallup Organization					
Indicate your opinion in statements 1-12 using the 5-point scale where A means you totally agree and E means you totally disagree.	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
38.	**I know what is expected of me at work.**				
39.	**I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.**				
40.	**At work, I have the opportunity to do that which I do best every day.**				
41.	**In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.**				
42.	**My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.**				
43.	**There is someone at work who encourages my development.**				
44.	**At work, my opinion seems to count.**				
45.	**The mission and purpose of our Program/office/business, department, organization, or agency make me feel my job is important.**				

46.	My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.					
47.	I have a best friend at work.					
48.	In the past six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.					
49.	This last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow at work.					
		A	B	C	D	E

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please fill in the corresponding circle on your answer form where you strongly agree-SA(circle A), agree-A(circle B), disagree-D(circle C) and strongly disagree-SD(circle D).

Self-Esteem Scale
(Rosenberg, 1965)

		A	B	C	D
50.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
51.	At times, I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD
52.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
53.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
54.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
55.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
56.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
57.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
58.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
59.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD

Instructions: The next items ask you questions about tension you may feel at work. Fill in the corresponding circle on your answer form for the feeling that best applies to you. Never (A)…Very Often (E)

Job-related Stress
(Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal 1964)

	A	B	C	D	E
How frequently are you bothered at work by:	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Rather often	Very often
60. Feeling that you have too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to you.					
61. Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of your job are.					
62. Not knowing what opportunities for advancement or promotion exist for you.					
63. Feeling that you have too heavy a work load, one that you can't possibly finish during an ordinary workday.					
64. Thinking that you'll not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of various people over you.					
65. Feeling that you're not fully qualified to handle your job.					
66. Not knowing what your immediate supervisor thinks of you, how he or she evaluates your performance.					
67. The fact that you can't get information needed to carry out your job.					
68. Having to decide things that affect the lives of individuals, people that you know.					

69. Feeling that you may not be liked and accepted by the people you work with.					
70. Feeling unable to influence your immediate supervisor's decisions and actions that affect you.					
71. Not knowing just what the people you work with expect of you.					
72. Thinking that the *amount* of work you have to do may interfere with how *well* it gets done.					
73. Feeling that you have to do things on the job that are against your better judgment.					
74. Feeling that your job tends to interfere with your personal life.					

Instructions: The questions on this scale measure perceived support from friends in the workplace. The answers range from Strongly Agree (A), Agree (B), Neutral (C), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (E). Please fill in the corresponding circle on your answer form.

<u>Work Social Support Scale</u>

75. My friends at work really try to help me.

76. I can count on my friends at work.

77. I have friends at work with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.

78. I can talk about my problems with my friends at work.

Thank you for your participation!

If you would like to enter in a raffle to win a $25 gift card for Barneys New York please fill out the information on the next page! Only completed surveys are eligible.

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