

**FUN AS A RECRUITMENT TOOL:
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF JOB ADVERTISEMENTS**

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A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
of the University of Lethbridge
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

Faculty of Management
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

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Date of Defence: September 8, 2015

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my father for all the late night discussion, insight and support he has given me through my academic career. Without him, I could never have made it this far.

“My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me” (Jim Valvano).

ABSTRACT

Critical discourse analysis was used to examine how fun is represented in job ads from two websites in the Information Technology (IT), and Oil and Gas (O&G) sectors. The study identified two central discourses in recruitment ads.

Fun, as a controlled discourse and fun as a discourse of control. Each are manifested through different representations of fun between sectors. Fun was likely incorporated in job ads as one element of a strategic organizational impression management to attract applicants.

Differences between the industries provided an opportunity to examine existing typologies in the literature. The typology identifies the degree to which fun is a function of managerial control. The examination of fun as a discourse problematizes the definitions and depictions of fun in recruitment ads, thus demonstrating the importance of contextualizing any study of fun in the workplace within the organization's sector or industry, as well as in terms of power relationships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank several individuals for their contribution to this thesis: my thesis supervisor, Dr. Mary Runté for her encouragement, guidance, insight and unwavering faith in my abilities; Dr. Robert Runté for his invaluable insight and support; Dr. Debra Basil for her support and input; and Dr. Kelly Dye for taking on the role of external examiner. I would also like to extend a thanks to Dr. Kelly Williams-Whitt for overseeing this defence and Tammy Rogness for all the administrative and moral support she provided.

Finally, I wish to thank my family: my daughter Kyra; my partner in crime, Stan; and my mom, Heather; for their love and support and the many sacrifices they have made. Their encouragement and support have made this possible.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

At first glance, fun and work almost seem contradictory concepts, at least in the world of business. Historically, the sharp division between work and family, and between work and play, evolved during the industrial revolution with the shift from cottage industry to factory work. Factories removed the worker from the home and de-humanized work roles.

For line workers, when at work you were a worker and nothing more. Beynon's 1975 ethnography of Ford Motors Company documented the modern version of traditional shop floor philosophy as:

When we are at work, we ought to be at work. When we are at play we ought to be at play. There is no use trying to mix the two. The sole object ought to be to get the work done to get paid for it. When the work is done, then the play can come, but not before (Beynon, 1975, p. 26).

By the 1970s and 1980s, however, corporations such as Cadbury and Hewlett Packard began to humanize their organizations by incorporating elements of fun into the work environment (Fleming, 2005; Bolton & Houlihan, 2009). These organizations started to blur the lines between personal and work life by offering company picnics, and in the case of Hewlett Packard, “Friday beer busts” (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009). This change from the structured regime was further spurred by the recession in the 1980s, which left organizations looking for new ways of attracting and retaining employees within budget constraints. “... organizations found themselves on a desperate search for low-cost, high-yield mechanisms of engagement, and the idea of fun at work resurfaced with yet greater instrumental edge” (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009. p.558). Fuelled by books in the popular press such as the “Fish!” series, which attributed the success of the Pike Place Fish

Market to its transformation into a fun working environment (Lundin, Paul, & Christensen, 2002) placing 'fun' center stage in business settings became fashionable.

What is fun?

What constitutes fun in the workplace? This apparently simple question has generated multiple definitions and contrasting theories. Some studies have conceptualized fun as a single, all encompassing concept (Karl & Peluchette, 2005; Karl, Peluchette & Hall, 2008; Peluchette & Karl, 2004). Other theorists have researched fun as having multiple facets (Fluegge, 2008) providing lists of the attributes of fun (Chan 2010; Ford, McLaughlin & Newstrom, 2003; Karl, Peluchette, Hall & Harland, 2005). An example of this classification can be seen in research conducted by Ford, McLaughlin and Newstrom (2003), where workplace fun was classified into: personal milestones, public celebrations of personal milestones, social events, humour, games, competitions, community volunteering, humanizing the boss, and other actions. According to Ford, McLaughlin, and Newstrom (2003), “a fun work environment intentionally encourages, initiates, and supports a variety of enjoyable pleasurable activities that positively impact the attitude and productivity of individuals and groups” (p.22). Workplace fun can encompass a vast variety of activities that vary greatly in nature and are therefore challenging to classify. Indeed, fun can be seen not just as activities in the workplace, but as a way of thinking. For fun to be considered fun, it needs to be enjoyed with the right attitude (Everett, 2010).

Various definitions have emerged in an attempt to solidify the term 'workplace fun'. Everett (2010) notes that, “in the context of the workplace, fun is frequently used interchangeably with such terms as humour, play, playfulness, spirit, and creativity, and it is important to consider these terms when conceptualizing fun” (p.4). This is in line with

Lamm and Meeks, 2009) definition of workplace fun as “playful social, interpersonal, recreational, or task activities intended to provide amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure” (614). For the purposes of this study, the definition of workplace fun proposed by Fluegge (2008) will be adopted: “Fun at work involves any social, interpersonal, or task activities at work of a playful or humorous nature which provide an individual with amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure” (p. 15).

Research on the topic of workplace fun is highly polarized. On one hand, there is literature in support of workplace fun, which is highly promoted by the popular press; and on the other hand, there is a more cynical literature confronting the negative aspects of workplace fun. There has been a recent influx of research promoting fun in the workplace, skewing the literature towards the positive effects of workplace fun, and a corresponding neglect of the negative aspects. The proposed study is an attempt to provide insight into the expressed, as well as the veiled dimensions of workplace fun as it relates to the recruitment of employees.

Employers structure job advertisements to provide key information to potential employees regarding the scope of the position being filled. Job advertisements, however, are also structured to solicit applications through impression management. My interest in this research topic was stimulated by an interest in this impression management, specifically a desire to understand how ‘fun’ is used as a recruitment tool to both describe a job and an organization and to create a desirable impression to facilitate recruitment. This study is therefore structured to address the following research question: What is the discourse of workplace fun in job recruitment ads in Canada? With the increase of fun and fun elements being used in job ads, it is important to understand both the positive and

negative impacts this type of discourse may have on organizations and job seekers.

This thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter One – Introduction: In this chapter, I provide an introduction to my study. This chapter also provides an overview of the context and intent of the study.

Chapter Two – Review of Literature: An overview of the literature is presented in this chapter including the varying definitions of fun, conceptualization of typologies in the research, as well as benefits and criticisms of workplace fun. This is the research context in which this study is situated.

Chapter Three – Research Questions: Presented in this chapter is the overarching research questions that frames this study.

Chapter Four – Research Methodology: The design and research methodology of the study are described in Chapter 4. I specifically discuss the rationale for discourse analysis. Discourse analysis allows a researcher to reveal both the explicit as well as the veiled meanings of organizational language, such as a job advertisement. The discourse of fun is examined on multiple levels including the explicit use of the term ‘fun’ and exemplars of fun embedded in advertisements. I also discuss the sample frame.

Chapter Five – Data Analysis: In this chapter I discuss my approach to data analysis and include a discussion of the assessment of qualitative research wherein I disclose the various approaches I took to warrant and validate my research claims about the phenomena under study.

Chapter Six – Findings: Within this chapter I present my research findings.

Chapter Seven – Discussion: This chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 6. Specifically, themes are reviewed and discussed in the context of existing theory and literature.

Chapter Eight - Conclusion: Provided in Chapter 8 are the limitations of this study and areas for further research, and the implications for theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Definitions and Typologies of Fun

Due to the broad scope of workplace fun, several researchers have set out to classify and uncover key elements of fun in the workplace. A study conducted by Ford et al. (2003), surveyed 572 individuals who belonged to the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM). Ford and his colleagues were able to identify the top three categories employees considered workplace fun, which are 'personal milestones', 'social events', and 'public celebrations of professional achievements'.

Karl, Pelchette and Harland (2007) developed a more comprehensive model of workplace fun as seen from the employees' perspective. They looked at elements such as 'experienced fun' and 'attitudes towards fun', which addressed 'fun appropriateness' and negative aspects to having fun at work. According to Karl, et al. (2007), 'experienced fun' is “the extent to which a person perceives the existence of fun in their workplace” (p. 415). For example, they found that employees rated food-related activities to be the most desirable; and crazy and wacky activities to be the least desirable.

McDowell (2005) proposed a theoretical model that categorized fun into four distinct categories; socializing, celebrating, personal freedoms, and global fun. Karl et al. (2007) suggested, the first three categories refer to experiences of fun. However, the last category is more of an attitude towards fun. “... any activity can be considered play if performed with the right attitude” (Everett, 2010).

More recently, a study conducted by Simon Chan (2010) set out to create a typology of workplace fun activities. Chan interviewed 10 hotel human resource officers. Chan found workplace fun could be separated into four categories and identified as the four “S”s, which are

'staff-oriented' (e.g., celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, extra time off), 'supervisor oriented' (e.g., lunch days with the supervisor, gatherings after work with the supervisor), 'social-oriented' (e.g., annual dinner, social barbecue, Christmas parties), and 'strategy-oriented' (e.g., casual dress days, organization-provided food and refreshments, family friendly policies).

Studies such as these have provided insight into what employees interpret as workplace fun and their attitudes towards implemented fun.

Benefits of workplace fun

Fun in the workplace can be used as a tool to increase employee motivation, productivity, and customer satisfaction, as well as, decrease stress (Lundin, Paul, & Christensen, 2002; McGhee, 2000) and turnover (Lundin, Paul, & Christensen, 2002). This section will take a deeper look into employee recruitment and retention, an employee's wellbeing, customer satisfaction and profitability.

Employee Recruitment and Retention

To procure employees, it has become common practice for organizations to express and emphasize the positive or fun aspects of organizational culture. For example, I was recently at the local mall and was struck by a job advertisement posted in the window of a store for a sales associate. The advertisement used the words "fun, exciting, and entertaining" to promote a positive image of the workplace environment as a competitive recruitment technique.

If organizations within the same industry have comparable wages and benefits, then fun can be used to lure the job seeker away from the competitor. A study conducted by Tews, Michel, and Bartlett (2012), indicated this relaxed fun environment is what job seekers are looking for, at least among recent graduates. Their study surveyed 374 undergraduate students who were nearing the end of their studies and actively looking for employment. The results indicated fun

surpasses compensation and opportunities for advancement when job seekers are evaluating advertisements. The study also indicated that fun job responsibilities and fun co-worker interactions were even stronger predictors of applicant recruitment than organized fun (Tews, Michel, Bartlett, 2012). “The key practical implication of this study is that workplace fun should be a central focus of recruiting efforts” (Tews, Michel, Bartlett, 2012, p.111) at least for recent graduates.

This desire to find an organization which nurtures fun, which a few decades ago would have been unheard of, is now a reasonable expectation and within reach for many job seekers. Google, for example, seems to be the benchmark for workplace fun. Google allows for flexible schedules and promotes an environment that is fun, relaxing and mimics one's home. For example, they allow employees to complete non-work errands while at work. “A Googler who's pressed for time can get plenty of errands done while at work” (Lashinsky, 2007, p. 5). Therefore, to attract and retain employees, especially younger employees, employers need to emphasize the fun aspects of their organization to compete effectively.

Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010), used a popular search engine in New Zealand to search the word fun and found 1,970 advertisements. What was most surprising was the word fun was used to counteract the image of some jobs as highly stressful, such as “debt collecting” (p.347). This search illustrates fun is being used to attract and retain employees and masks unwanted or negative characteristics of a job. “... the fact that fun is used in such a large number of job advertisements suggests that it is being viewed as a popular catch-phrase to attract potential employees in what have been until recently, a fairly tight skilled labour market” (Owler, Morrison, Plester, 2010, p. 347).

The too liberal use of the word fun creates expectations for potential employees that the

organization may not be able to provide. Barbara Plester (2009) found that one of the companies in her New Zealand study that promoted itself as being fun for recruitment purposes had no policies to support such a claim. Employees' views were in direct contrast to this recruitment material. "This reaction emphasizes the contradiction and missed messages apparent at [company name], in espousing a fun culture in their recruitment literature, while very firmly constraining any controversial humour" (Plester, 2009, p. 589). By misrepresenting the workplace environment, the organization could face employee resentment, higher turnover, and higher recruitment fees due to ill-fitting employees.

Employee's wellbeing

Research suggests fun work environments lead to lower emotional dissonance and exhaustion (Karl, Peluchette & Harland, 2007) and increased job satisfaction (Karl & Peluchette, 2006). An example of corporate leadership capitalizing on fun is Paul Spiegelman, co-founder and CEO of Beryl companies. When morale in his company was in decline, he developed and implemented fun work cultures within his organization. Employees participate in small events, such as dress-up days, to elaborate events such as carnivals, where family and friends are invited to participate (Spiegelman, 2008). By incorporating fun into the workplace, the organization created an enjoyable and relaxed culture, which reduced stress and increased job satisfaction.

For example, in my own experience, I worked for a company that discouraged fun and had degenerated into a hostile work environment. The work itself was easy, but the environment made simple tasks challenging and inhibited my ability to do my job. My quality of life decreased, as I found myself stressed during and after work hours, which in turn led to decreased productivity. In contrast, I acquired a job where the work was extremely demanding physically, but the workplace environment was relaxed and fun. We participated in workplace water-fights,

barbecues and auctions, which helped to offset the strain of the job and created an environment that was enjoyable. My stress decreased and my quality of life increased because of the positive work environment. These examples from my personal life help to illustrate the important role an environment can have on an employee's wellbeing and in turn on the productivity of the organization.

An element of fun is the use of humour and its role in reducing job-related stress (Martin, 2004; Boussine et al., 1999). Paul McGhee (2000) suggests humour can help employees deal with change, enhance one's ability to lead, provide benefits to physical health, increase creative thinking, and act as a significant stress reducer (McGhee, 2000). "Humour is one of the most powerful stress-management tools around" (McGhee, 2000, p. 5). At Southwest Airlines (SWA), for example, management encourages employees to incorporate humour into their everyday practices and in so doing, not only created a better work environment for employees, but also strengthened the SWA brand and services to their customers. "In addition, the emphasis SWA places on emotional expression and humour directly connects to offering an extremely personable and fun-oriented brand of service quality" (Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, Condemi, 1999, p.230). Organizations are also recognizing the benefit of fun work cultures in increasing their reputations and profits (Chan, Gee & Steiner, 2000; Whitehead, 1998). Karl et al. (2007), showed that individuals experiencing workplace fun have lower levels of workplace exhaustion and were reported as having higher job performance. Not only is management able to use fun as a way to attract and retain employees, but fun can be used as a way to increase employees' overall health and productivity.

Customer satisfaction

When employees are treated well, this can trickle down to positively impact customer satisfaction. One of the first organizations in the service industry to integrate fun into their corporate culture was Southwest Airlines (as in the example above), which increased not only employee satisfaction, but customer satisfaction (Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996; Lancaster, 1999). Employees are encouraged to participate and include customers in the light-hearted atmosphere. Herb Kelleher, one of the co-founders of Southwest Airlines stated, “You have to recognize that people are still most important. How you treat them determines how they treat people on the outside” (Lancaster, 1999, para. 24). This statement nicely illustrates the trickle down effect. If employees are treated well, they will respond by treating customers equally as well.

There is a research stream in psychology called the “well-being perspective” (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002, p.1). Harter, Schmidt and Keyes argues that, “from the well-being perspective, a healthy workforce means the presence of positive feelings in the worker that should result in happier and more productive workers” (p. 205). They further explore how employee happiness can lead to the increase in business outcomes such as customer loyalty. “Positive affect then relates to the efficient application of work, employee retention, creativity, and ultimately the business outcomes” (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002, p. 206).

Profitability

Profitability seems to be one of the main benefits of the incorporation of fun into the workplace. One must not forget fun in the workplace is a tool used by organizations to increase productivity, thus increasing the bottom line. “By making a workplace fun and by creating a positive work environment, employees feel more connected to the business. As a result, they become more productive and engaged in its long-term success” (Spiegleman, 2008, p. 17). The

thought being, happy employees lead to increased customer satisfaction, which in turn leads to increased profitability.

In creating a fun work environment, an organization's main purpose is to increase productivity and financial gain (Chan, Gee & Steiner, 2000; Whitehead, 1998). The goal is to create fun environments, which will encourage employees to work longer hours and more productively. In doing this, organizations can reap the financial benefits while providing an environment for employees that promotes well-being. Harter, Schmidt and Keyes (2002) found that when the basic needs of individuals as provided in their framework were met, the organization's chances of success increased. These organizations tend to be more financially profitable. They also discovered that employees' well-being and job performance work together and should not be viewed as independent. "The ability to promote well-being rather than engender strains and mental illness is of considerable benefit not only to the employees in the community, but also to the employer's bottom line" (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002, p. 207).

Criticism of workplace fun

"Fun, it seems is no laughing matter and is a very serious business issue" (Redman & Mathews, 2002, p. 52.)

This section addresses the negative outcomes associated with the marketing of workplace fun. More specifically, these criticisms include generational issues, forms of control, colonization of the family sphere, and differing individuals' interpretation of fun.

Generational

There have been several studies (Karl et al., 2005; 2007; Choi & Kwon, 2011) that have suggested that favourable attitudes towards fun result in high levels of enjoyment of workplace fun. More specifically, focusing on the hospitality industry, Kwon (2011) drew a connection between Generation Y-ers profile of being fun-loving and their overall experience at work. "...

this study revealed that attitude toward workplace fun significantly contributes to experienced workplace fun and, in turn, job satisfaction, and ultimately task performance and OCBI” (p. 420-421). In other words, workplace fun could be successfully used in a workplace with Generation Y-ers.

There can be up to four generations of employees in the same workplace environment, each with its own set of values and interpretations of what is suitable in the workplace and what constitutes fun. What happens, then, when multiple generations are present in the same work environment?

Lamm and Meeks (2009) studied three generational cohorts—baby boomers, generation Xers, and the millennials—to see if generational differences moderated the impact of workplace fun on job outcome. The results indicated that workplace fun is perceived differently by each age cohort, and that values associated with an individual's birth cohort affected the outcome of workplace fun. (Lamm & Meeks, 2009). They concluded that when implementing workplace fun, organizations should not use a blanket approach. Organizations need to consider towards whom the fun is directed. In other words, not all individuals respond to the same application of fun in the workplace.

This could be due in part to generational differences, which sculpt how fun is viewed and its appropriateness in the workplace. A study conducted by Karl and Harland (2005), asked 180 graduate students to rate nine categories of fun. The top three rated categories were outings, food and awards. Furthermore, the study indicated gender and age impacted the ratings. An individual's age played a significant part in overall ratings: older respondents rated activities lower than younger respondents.

Workplace fun, then, is now being used as a tool to attract generation Y, and at the same

time motivate generation X. “It does appear that the newest generation to join the workforce will embrace fun” (p. 628).

Fun as a Control

One stream of research that has emerged is the use of fun as a form of control over employees (Fleming, 2005; Casey, 1999; Fineman, 2006; Costas, 2012). Research conducted by Casey (1999) argues this “new culture” of fun does not promote employee empowerment and creating meaningful relationships, but is merely a new form of control over employees. The adoption of a fun work environment can be an attempt to elicit normative control through indirect means such as “playdates” and social gatherings. “What is specific to control through culture management is how it tries to indirectly mould employee selves through instilling certain norms, values, and beliefs” (Costas, 2012, p. 378). In other words, by dictating a fun working environment, the organization is eliciting control by pressuring the adoption of certain cultural norms. Peter Fleming and Andrew Sturdy (2009) showed that cultures of fun or liberal working environments can mask underlying pressures to conform, thus leading to greater control over employees. For example, an employee who does not engage in workplace fun can be ridiculed and punished even if they exhibit a strong work ethic. “...liberal approach to managing employee identities represents a form of control which is both distinct from and linked to other control typologies” (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p. 577).

Thus, control disguised as fun often goes undetected or ignored. On the other hand, Fineman (2006) suggests organizations need to be very circumspect in the use of fun when trying to increase positive attitudes. Fun in the workplace can backfire if employees view “fun” as an attempt to manipulate. “Such programs are unlikely to succeed on the basis of universalistic psychological prescriptions, or when they are motivated by interests that can be seen as

manipulative or dishonest” (Fineman, 2006, p. 281).

Colonization of Family

Another trend that has emerged is the attempt to blur the lines between work and family demands in a way that benefits the organization (Othman, Yusof & Osman, 2009). The organization as metaphorical family was said to exhibit the same characteristics of a real family. The mimicking of the family could lead to a change in role and gender expectations. For example, females adopting a mothering role within the organization. For example, the parent (organization) exerts control over the child (employee) (Costas, 2012; Casey, 1999), by creating emotional ties to the organization (Kunda, 2006). These emotional ties create positive and negative working environments. Often, organizations use the terms “team” and “family” synonymously “inviting both employee and customer to ‘come join the family’” (Casey, 1999, p. 156). By pairing team and family, an organization can start to develop an environment that depicts characteristics of team co-operation and the belongingness of family. “Both family and team, are, in normative conditions, positive and generative social practices. Therefore, their deliberate installation as part of the new organizational culture fundamentally assumes their reasonable incontestability and universal attractiveness” (Casey, 1999, p.156). Organizations have created environments that provide employees with a synthetic family, which provides companionship and caring. This type of environment, however, creates dependencies that allow for greater control by the organization. “...the new corporate culture provides, under the semblance of a caring team-family, an effective disciplinary and control apparatus that requires employees to sufficiently contain the disintegration, or mobilization, of ambivalence by its displacement into an obsessive compulsion to work and to belong” (Casey, 1999, p. 176). Organizations try to mimic family environments by creating an artificial family in an attempt to

entice employees to pick work over home.

This can backfire when some employees pick working at home over working at the office because they consider the “fun” aspect of work distracting. Respondents in one study “... reported that fun meant a noisy office in which it was difficult to work and a significant proportion of people reported taking work home so they could concentrate” (Warren, & Fineman, 2007, p. 99). Taking work home can produce more strain on one’s home environment by creating work-family conflicts (WFC).

Conversely, taking family obligations to work can create family-work conflicts (FWC). The distinction between these two conflicts can be seen through the following definitions. “WFC is a form of interrole conflict in which the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities” (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996, p. 401). Whereas, “FWC is a form of interrole conflict in which the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the family interfere with performing work-related responsibilities” (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996, p. 401). Some outcomes of FWC such as, absenteeism, poor job performance and low job satisfaction (Voydanoff, 2004) are decreased through implementation of fun work environments and the creation of family environments. As a result, WFC such as family absenteeism, poor family role performance, and family dissatisfaction and distress (Voydanoff, 2004) are correspondingly increased. This could suggest, organizations are increasing employee satisfaction and performance at the expense of the family.

Family-fun environments at work create a type of dependency and in turn control. As the line continues to blur, employees start to forget friends (outside of work), and their personal interests. “This vanishing of the non-work life can make individuals turn back to their work then,

as a basis for their social life, interests and, indeed, self-hood” (Costca, 2012, p. 387). Fleming and Sturdy (2009) found fun in the workplace can be used as a form of control by breaking down the traditional work/family boundaries. “One method in which this neo-normative feature of fun and playfulness is developed is through blurring the symbolic distinction that has traditionally separated home and the formal organization (p. 574). For example, an employee becomes so absorbed in their organizational family they forget about those outside the organization. Therefore, employees come to rely on their work life for a sense of belonging and purpose. Organizations may be creating a false sense of security through the use of these “fun-family” environments. As a result, organizations use this family setting as a form of employee retention. “That [family] sentiment is the Holy Grail for HR managers, especially today when employee loyalty is so hard to come by” (Grant, 2005, p. 13).

Not all fun is considered equal

Everyone's interpretation and idea of fun is different. It is important to have a mixture of all types of individuals in the workplace, each bringing their own skills and unique personality to the table. “The quiet guy came up with the solution; the noisy one helped execute it. It's also instructive for our people to see us honor their fellow employees” (Herb Kelleher, Lancaster, 1999, para. 10).

Diversity in the workplace goes beyond the obvious indicators such as ethnicity and gender, and expands to personal characteristics of an individual. The quiet guy who may not enjoy participating in workplace fun is just as valuable as the fun noisy guy. Adopting a culture of fun in the workplace, however, may make it challenging for valuable introverted employees to seek employment or be recognized. Places like Google opened the floodgate for other organizations to recruit employees based on the “fun factor.” The literature on workplace fun has

been largely based, however, on the assumption that everyone enjoys having fun in the workplace. Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010) demonstrated that research conducted on workplace fun assumes that fun:

1. Is a straightforward phenomenon that means the same thing to most people;
2. At work has positive workplace outcomes because it is desired by most people; and
3. Is relatively easy to introduce into a work-place. (p. 338-339).

Owler et al. (2010) argue that these claims are “untested and untheorized” (p. 338). This is supported by a study by Redman and Mathews (2002) who stated, “Not all employees within an organization wish to be funsters. “... fun was introduced into a hitherto 'normal' organizational culture” (p.61). The inclusion of fun into work is appealing; however, care needs to be taken to ensure that fun is appropriate for the workplace (Warren & Fineman, 2007). Joan Hamilton (2000) captures what many people have felt when fun is forced upon them.

I am here today to speak for the victims. The poor downtrodden employees yearning to go home. The party-pooping, costume-hating working stiffs. Those who dream about letting certain colleagues flop straight to the floor in the trust-building, don't-worry-we'll-catch-you exercise. The spouses keeping the home front together as Mom's or Dad's work group parties on (para. 2).

The reality of the matter is that not all employees have the time or desire to participate in organized workplace fun. What some employees deem appropriate and enjoyable at work, others do not.

The introduction of these new fun environments blurs the lines between what is appropriate at work and what is not. The new mentality is “anything goes”. As Buchanan (2007) warns, “The common practice of treating sick cultures with a fun-graft—parties, silly hats, visits from Mister Softee—is insulting to employees and vaguely grotesque. For fun to thrive, meaningful work,

competent management, fair compensation and mutually respectful employees are table stakes” (para. 4).

Not all fun is considered fun by everyone. Indeed, many employees may consider this type of work environment stressful. Literature on family-fun workplaces assumes employees enjoy working in a family-like environment, but many individuals find this type of environment “encroaches on life” (Costca, 2012). To fully integrate into a family work environment, the employee is often required to reveal much of their personal life (Costca, 2012, p. 387). For employees who value their personal privacy, this new fun environment is likely a source of anxiety. By creating fun work environments, organizations may be creating unintended stressors and emotional exhaustion (Karl & Peluchette, 2006). Personal time and money may be spent on acquiring costumes for dress-up days or baking for a work function, thus taking time away from one's family and personal life (Karl & Peluchette, 2006). Similarly, organizational and social pressures exerted to ensure employee participation in workplace fun can be exhausting for introverted employees (who would otherwise be less likely to participate). Insisting employees participate in work parties and social events during personal time can create resentment and “increased work-family conflict for those employees who would rather spend time with their families, but feel obligated to attend work-related events” (Karl & Peluchette, 2006, p. 137). Work and family extracurricular activities are subject to conflicting schedules. As a result, family activities are further displaced to accommodate work.

There was no room for the non-fun, non-'different' person in the organized events. As one agent recounted: “A woman in my team was told that she had to go to the Away Day but she said she had family commitments, ‘I’m a mother’. But she was told ‘No, we are all going’ (Fleming and Sturdy 2009 p. 578).

The exploitation of fun in the workplace may actually place greater pressures upon the worker’s time and mental health. Employees are expected to be fun at home and work. In addition,

managers are expected to be creative and fun in order to implement fun in the organizational culture.

Fun in Job Advertisements

Posting online job advertisements (ads) is becoming more common among today's organizations in an attempt to attract job seekers. This is due, in part, to their ability to quickly reach a wide range of individuals anywhere in the world and at minimal cost. Online job banks (e.g., Monster.ca, Workopolis.com) house a wealth of ads and allow the user to create search parameters to fit their specific needs. Company websites also routinely display tabs listing job opportunities.

Given this saturation of job ads, how can organizations attract the best applicants to apply for their positions? Cober, Brown, Keeping and Levy (2004), analyzed what characteristics of an organization's website affected whether job seekers were attracted to the positions offered. They suggest the potential employee's initial reactions, such as to the site's façade (comprised of aesthetics and playfulness) and the system's features affected the job seeker's willingness to engage with the website, and therefore the website's usability. Their study can be reasonably extrapolated to job ads within job databases. These websites require usable system features and the job ad itself needs to have qualities that attract the job seeker.

Similarly, Chen and Wells (1999) asked individuals to evaluate websites using adjectives. Three main factors were found: entertainment, informativeness and organization. Fun was used as one of the six adjectives under the entertainment factor. They concluded that the entertainment factor positively correlated to attitudes projected by websites (Chen & Wells, 1999). "The question challenging today's entrepreneur is not whether to have a website but how to become the winner in Internet competition" (Chen & Wells, 1999, p. 36).

Again, this can be reasonably extrapolated to an organizations' ability to attract competent workers in a highly competitive environment, which in turn is obviously a factor in

that organization's ongoing success. Therefore, organizations need to appeal to the attitudes and motivations of job seekers in their job ads to achieve effective recruitment and retention. Leary-Joyce (2004) stated,

More simply, many employers recognize within the fun agenda the opportunity to craft an image of “cool” in the pursuit of youthful and enthusiastic new employees, and institutional mimicry plays its hand in the growing trend of promoting workplace fun as a recruitment tool (as cited in Bolton & Houlihan, 2009, p. 561).

Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010) used the term ‘fun’ to search a local job search engine and found that out of the 18,386 job ads, 8.9% mentioned fun. They also noted that fun was used in jobs that were high stress such as debt collections. “‘Fun’ is becoming increasingly utilised as a recruitment strategy when advertising employment opportunities (a phenomenon likely inspired by both the management and generation Y literature discussed earlier)” (Owler, Morrison & Plester, 2010, p. 346). Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010), also address the negatives of advertising fun in job ads. Using fun as a recruitment tool can be a double-edged sword with assumptions made on both sides. The employer is assuming that job seekers want fun at work and the employees are assuming that fun will be present at the workplace (Owler, Morrison & Plester, 2010). So is using workplace fun as a recruitment tool a type of “façade”, as Cober, Brown, Keeping and Levy (2004) label it; a means to attract, but perhaps not deliver?

What happens when organizations do not live up to their promise of fun in the workplace? Psychological contract theory suggests that this would be a breach in the contract. Psychological contract is defined as “... an individual’s belief in mutual obligations between that person and another party such as an employer (either a firm or another person)” (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998, p. 679). A breach in this contract can happen when the individual believes the organization is not fulfilling its part of the contract. In the case of work place fun, the employee accepted employment based on the organization's promise of fun in the workplace. To

complicate matters, fun may be perceived differently from the employees' perspective than the employer's. "This suggests that even if an organization tries (but fails) to provide fun, a perceived contract violation may still occur, particularly if the 'fun' the organisation promotes is different from the 'fun' the individual expects" (Owler, Morrison & Plester, 2010, p. 348). A study of federal government civil servants indicated that a breach in the contract "... promotes behaviors that undermine organizational effectiveness and efficiency" (Lemire & Rouillard, 2005, p. 160).

Organic Verses Packaged

There is a growing understanding among scholars that some degree of workplace fun is desirable. I am reminded of a story recently shared with me by a family member:

Device orders of 100 units were needed to be filled over the Christmas holidays. The staff worked through the holidays and weekends, not for extra money or some fun promised event. It was because they enjoyed what they were doing and took pleasure out of getting a job done. They chose to make the work fun. There is something to be said for good ole self-fulfilment that you get from a job well done (Murray, 2014).

There is a gap in the literature in regards to what employees consider fun and what managers consider fun. Employees' perceptions can differ from managers' perceptions over many elements of workplace environments (Marchese & Delprino, 1998; Johnson, 2000), especially when it comes to fun. There are limits as to what management considers acceptable fun in the workplace and how management goes about providing fun or creating fun work environments.

Fun is an important part of organisational life – when autonomous and collective, naturalistic and socially produced and even, at times, when part of a manufactured 'fun' culture. Little wonder, then, that organisations now seek to harness play in ways that can be readily managed – if this is truly the aim. Yet, at the very least, fun and laughter is spontaneous; not neatly packaged with the promise of expected results clearly marked on the label. (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009, p.557)

To address this gap in the literature, I propose the typology by Bolton and

Houlihan (2009) of “organic” versus “packaged” fun as a lens for analyzing workplace fun. Is fun provided (packaged) to the employees in the form of events, retreats, and so on, or does fun occur naturally (organically), reflecting the attitudes of those within the organization.

“Organic fun is the property of those who live in it, not those who require it...” (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009, p. 565). Organic fun is what Plester (2009) refers to as “genuine fun” to describe a natural and organic type of fun: “... genuine workplace fun is spontaneous, contextual and has an unmanaged liberated element that defies control and perhaps true fun occurs when the boundary is challenged” (Plester, 2009, p. 597).

Research by Fleming (2005), also supports this stream of research: “perhaps the secret of organizational fun resides in the organic process of self-management and genuine autonomy, the onus for which would lie with workers as much as those who formally manage them” (p. 300).

For example, Fleming and Sturdy (2009) interviewed and observed employees for a U.S.-owned call centre based in Australia and described how the organization prided itself on creating a fun work environment for employees, by encouraging employees to “be you.” However, the study found fun was used as a form of neo-normative control. “Every 3F's activity we undertake is implemented in a controlled way and adherence is mandatory – although individualism and creativity are encouraged [...] we have one Sunray attitude, but people can still be themselves” (Manager, cited in, Fleming & Sturdy, 2009, p. 578).

A case study of Swedish packers who worked in undesirable conditions conducted by Stromberg and Karlsson (2009) illustrates this type of genuine or organic fun. The study describes how employees created their own workplace fun through jokes, pranks, humour, singing, dancing, clowning, nicknames, and so on. Clowning and teasing was directed towards

management and there was resistance to any form of mandated fun, thus between the worker culture and management culture. When packaged fun was introduced to the Meatpackers it was not widely received.

Now and then employees are given amenities in the form of what is called “feel-good money”. The last time the meat packing department used this budget was when some of the workers arranged an evening dinner cruise with a prawn buffet, but only about half of the employees participated (Stromberg & Karlsson, 2009, p. 637).

Similarly, a study by Redman and Mathews (2002) illustrated that when managers demanded employees participate in “fun initiative” they were met with resistance and cynicism.

Employee resistance to having fun, especially when it was seen as being 'forced' on them ("somedays you just don't feel like having fun," "it's not really right that you should be told by management to have fun," "there is a limit to how much fun you can stomach sometimes") was building up amongst some employees (p. 58).

Making fun mandatory can actually detract from the purpose of fun, generating resentment instead.

Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010), have suggested that more research needs to be conducted in identifying the difference between organic and packaged fun.

"It would be useful to conduct research that explores the differences between the fun that occurs organically in work settings (and which is promoted by Fleming); intrinsic fun had when conducting work tasks and more peripheral fun activities organised at work (e.g. barbeques or mad hat day)" (Owler, Morrison & Plester, 2010, p.349).

Organizational Impression Management

The degree to which organizations are willing to incorporate fun into the workplace is alarming because the use of fun in organizations is fairly new. There is a preconception that job

ads include standardized, conservative terminology and information which is contradictory to what we are seeing in some of the ads. Departments and positions have been created to spearhead fun initiatives and manage fun (Miller, 1996). Indeed, there is a whole industry catering to organizations' need to compete for employees by offering to customize an employer's workplace environment to include more fun. Organizational Impression Management (OIM) is carried out through job ads, therefore, employers highlight their fun initiatives in their job ads in hopes of appealing to the type of employee that will fit into their culture which could vary from conservative to informal.

Impression management (IM) theory was originally used in business at an individual level (e.g., Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Bolino, 1999; Stevens & Kristof, 1995), but has made its way into organizational level literature (e.g., Highhouse, Brooks & Gregarus, 2009; Elsbach, Sutton & Principe, 1998; Ginzel, Kramar, & Sutton, 1992) including, but not limited to, its use in diversity recruitment (Avery & McKay, 2006). It is therefore reasonable to extend the model of OIM to recruitment generally, and specifically to job ads. "OIM refers to any action purposefully designed and carried out to influence an audience's perceptions of an organization" (Elsbach et al., 1998, p. 68).

In dissecting this definition, in the context of job ads, the action would be the creation of the job ad and the audience would be the job seeker. Therefore, the use of the word "fun", or the implication of fun in a job ad, can be used to influence the job seeker to perceive the organization in a certain light. An organization's goal in an advertisement is not only to attract an individual, but to present the organization in a positive way (Cable & Graham, 2000).

Research conducted by Rafaeli & Olive (1998) builds upon the theory of impression management as it relates to job ads. According to Rafaeli & Olive (1998), job advertisements can

be broken down into ‘parts’: the skeleton and the embellishments. As part of the embellishments, they proposed that job ads have two messages: “a) a message about the organization—an impression management message; and b) a message about an employment opportunity in the organization—a recruitment message” (Rafaeli & Olive, 1998, p. 347). That being said, both messages do not have to be present in the ad (Rafaeli & Olive, 1998). Rafaeli and Oliver (1998), metaphorically illustrated the concept of impression and recruitment messages by likening impression management to a window and the recruitment message to a door. The window allows you to take a peek into the organization to see what it has to offer and the door provides a way to enter the organization. Building upon this metaphor, organizations place a light in the window through the use of words such as “fun” to attract individuals to come to the window and eventually open the door. That light, however, casts shadows. One cannot always see the shadows in the corners because of the brightness in the window. It is not until one is in the room for awhile that one starts noticing the dust on the floor. Bringing to light the ways in which organizations use fun to attract potential employees, it’s these shadows, if any, that the current study proposes to illuminate, as the ads are perhaps not always a realistic representation of the organization. The use of fun in recruitment, specifically in the initial attraction stage, will be analyzed in the context of OIM throughout this study.

Chapter 3: Research Question

The over-arching research questions posed for this study were:

- RQ1:** Are the current typologies defining the elements of workplace fun adequate to describe the phenomenon as revealed in job recruitment ads?
- RQ2:** What is the discourse of workplace fun?
- RQ3:** How does impression management model apply to recruitment advertisements?

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

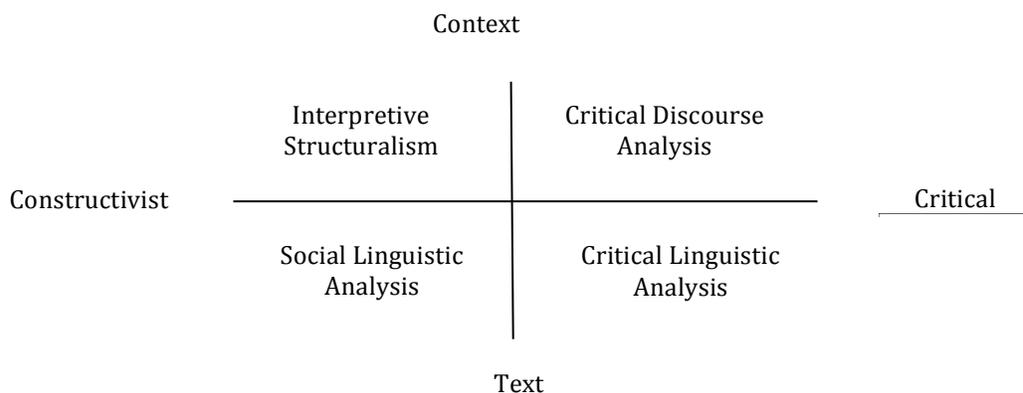
Discourse Analysis

“Therefore, discourse analysis is not the study of language per se (as in linguistics), but focuses on social action that is mediated through language” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 15).

Discourse analysis is an effective tool with which to understand how texts, written or verbal, influence our understanding of a situation or institution, and therefore shape our behaviour. “...Social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3).

Phillips and Ravasi (1998) have identified four major approaches to discourse analysis: Interpretive Structuralism, Social Linguistic Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Critical Analysis (as cited in Phillips & Hardy, 2002). However, discourse analysis should be thought of as being two dimensional. As seen in Figure 1, the first is a continuum between text and context and the second is the continuum of constructivist and critical (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Figure 1: Different Approaches to Discourse Analysis



(Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 21)

This study adopted Critical Discourse Analysis because this approach places the greatest emphasis on the context, rather than just an analysis of the text itself. As Fairclough & Wodak (1997) point out, “discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking context into consideration...” (p. 277). The study looked at how recruitment texts are used to represent—that is, socially construct—workplace environments. Consequently, Critical Discourse Analysis is the most applicable approach in linking recruitment texts to, and contrasting texts with, their work environment contexts.

In addition, Critical Discourse Analysis is also focused on finding the underlying power differences within text. “Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on the distal context—how it privileges some actors at the expense of others...” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 25). Critical Discourse Analysis will help illuminate any power differences that may be present in the job ads. For example, job ads stating “needs to work weekends and nights”. This type of ad shows a power difference between the organization and single parents who may not be able to meet this requirement.

A discourse is not then simply a 'way of seeing'; it is always embedded in social practices that reproduce that way of seeing as the 'truth' of the discourse (Knights & Morgan, 1991, p. 253). In adopting Critical Discourse Analysis, the hope is to provide insight into how organizations use text in recruitment, how these texts are used to shape the overall image of the organization, and whether this projected image accurately reflects the actual work environment. It is an examination of the discourse analysis of fun in recruitment ads. The goal is to unpack the representation from a critical perspective and identify how the workplace phenomenon of fun is best represented to employees.

Discourse Analysis in Job Advertisements

In conducting the literature review of fun in job advertisements, it became apparent that research methods used to analyze job ads have focused on content analysis and experiments (Feldman, Bearden & Hardesty, 2006; Kennan, Willard, Cecez-Kecmanovic & Wilson, 2008). Very little discourse analysis has been conducted on job ads, even though critical discourse analysis seems a good fit for understanding the underlying meaning behind what is represented in a job ad. Therefore, the current study addresses this gap in the research. Utilizing Chen and Wells' (1999) entertainment factor, and looking at the playfulness and aesthetics of the ad, emphasis will be placed on the relationship between the ads' depiction of the work environment and the actual job tasks and conditions laid out in the ads.

Sampling Frame

Design

This is a qualitative research study that employs critical discourse analysis as a tool to evaluate job advertisements. This type of non-invasive analysis will allow for patterns to emerge from the text. Two major Canadian online job sites were sampled: Workopolis (www.workopolis.com) and Monster (www.monster.ca). These two sites were chosen for their high profile in the Canadian popular press magazines, such as, *Canadian Living* (*Canadian Living*, 2014) which in 2014 had the second highest circulation in Canada (auditedmedia.ca, 2014) and their use in Canadian immigration resource websites such as Canadian Immigration (Canadian immigration, 2012).

Online postings of job advertisements on these sites has become popular and has become the norm in most business recruitment practices. A study conducted by Recruitsoft/Logos Research examined 50 Fortune 500 companies and revealed that by increasing their recruitment

through online ads and applications they were able to eliminate more than a week off the hiring process (Capelli, 2001). “With efficiency gains like these, it’s no wonder that 90% of large U.S companies are already recruiting via the Internet. Indeed, the only surprise may be that 10% aren’t” (Capelli, 2001, p. 140).

The overarching sampling frame for this study, which was all recruitment ads on these two online job boards, represented over 500,000 ads. The decision was made to narrow the sample based on industry. As discussed earlier, the IT sector has been the focus of much of the discussion of cultures of fun in the workplace in the popular press. Businesses, such as Google, are the benchmark of fun. The decision was thus made to narrow the study to look at this key industry.

It was also determined, in consultation with my committee, to add a second industry to the sample. We chose to include Oil and Gas for two reasons. First, the O&G sector was (at the time) financially stable and central to employment in several provinces, including the researcher’s home province of Alberta. Second, the Oil and Gas sector is seen, particularly in the Alberta environment, as having a culture distinct from that of the IT sector. It is not, particularly, thought of as having a fun and playful culture. The sampling frame was thus delineated as Workopolis and Monster Canada employment advertisements in the Oil and Gas and IT Sectors in Canada between October and November 2014.

Two preliminary searches were conducted in both search engines using the key word “fun”, following the design of Oowler, Morrison & Plester (2010). The purpose of this preliminary search was to determine if the key word “fun” generated a large enough sample of job ads. The first search was conducted in October 2014 and generated over 1000 matches in each of the search engines using “fun” as the key term. The second search was conducted on November

2014. In Workopolis, the term “fun”, was entered into the search box called "exact phrase". This was to help eliminate the generation of partial words in Workopolis, such as "function". In Monster, the word fun was entered into the "include key words" box and words that included parts of the word fun were entered into the "exclude key words" box. For example, "function" and "functional" were excluded words. Samples were taken at the end of the searches to make sure the ads still had the term fun in it. This search generated over 1000 matches in Monster and over 1000 results in Workopolis.

This large sample is consistent with the research conducted by Oowler, Morrison, and Plester (2010), whose results generated 1,970 job ads using the term fun from a popular New Zealand Website. In this preliminary search, 60 ads were selected based on their position in the search engine queue. Because two search engines were being used, the results were reviewed to remove duplicates. The job titles and first screen descriptions were reviewed to identify cases where the ad was for the same job, but used a different title. Where ads passed this initial screening, the researcher moved to the second screen description and printed the ad. This preliminary screening produced a wide variety of positions across numerous industries, which incorporated the word fun.

Based on the results from the preliminary search, the sample size was large enough that no other key words were needed to broaden the search. The challenge, however, was establishing the sample size required for comprehensive analysis. Several related studies adopted a variety of sample sizes from 241 to over 1000. For example, research conducted by Mathews and Redman (1996), started with a preliminary search and coding of 800 job ads, but then used over 1000 job ads in the second part to their study. When conducting a content analysis of job ads, Kennan, Willard, Cecez-Kecmanovic and Wilson (2008) used a preliminary search of 50 and a final

sample size of 400. In a study conducted by Cooman and Pepermans (2012) the final sample was 1,768; 1,234 were used in a study by Todd, McKeen and Gallupe (1995), though here the sample frame spanned 20 years. In contrast, Huang, Kvasny, Joshi, Trauth, Mahar (2009) were satisfied with a sample of 241. As can be seen from these examples, there is a large spread in the sample sizes used and to the type of analysis they were using.

Sample

This study used sample size of 101 job ads (52 for the Information Technology and 49 for the Oil and Gas industries) and continued until a point of saturation had occurred and no new information could be extracted. The ads in each job site queue were chosen based on random number generation. In addition, certain ads were excluded or included from the selection, based on their relevance to the study. For example, some job ad redundancy did occur and duplicate postings for the same position were eliminated. On the other hand, some organizations did have several job listings for different positions. In this case, the job ads were included because the focus was on the job ads and not just the organization. As a result, the sample size after inclusions and exclusions was 98 job ads.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Seven-Step Process

It is well known that the process of analysis in qualitative research can vary depending on the researcher and what they are trying to achieve (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). There is no standardized template to work from (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). That being said, this study used a seven-step process as provided by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 87-89) as a guideline. It should be noted that not all these steps were followed. Some steps were excluded or altered. As we know from qualitative studies, analysis is very organic and tends not to follow structured steps.

1. Each job ad was read several times to help establish a general sense of themes that were present
2. A master data list was created for both industries and each job ad was coded
3. The term “fun” and other key terms were underlined and colour coded
 - a. Green – Energy
 - b. Purple – Passion
 - c. Yellow –Fun and other key words
 - d. Orange - Team
 - e. Blue – Flexibility
 - f. Pink – Independent
4. Key phrases were identified and clusters created.
5. Clusters were reduced and labels attached (pattern coding).
6. Generalizations were drawn about the phrases in each cluster
7. Mini-theories were generated through writing memos that posed explanations.
8. Theories were integrated through development of an explanatory framework.

You are

- Detail orientated and customer focused
- Comfortable taking ownership of your work
- A team player with stellar communication skills
- Energetic, flexible and adaptable
- Known for having strong attention to detail
- Self-directed and effective under stress

Top 10 Reasons to work at Globe Electric

- We are an established modern company with a huge vision
- We are building an omni channel presence and distribution that offers great product and value to home improvement shoppers all over North America
- We stand on a cutting-edge technology stack
- We are in the West Island of Montreal
- We are growing and have real opportunities for personal and professional growth
- We empower people to do their best by providing only the necessary guidance
- We offer flexible hours
- We have a great team spirit. We work hard but we also like to have fun with team activities
- We have FREE delicious hot coffee and fresh fruit every day
- We have employee discounts on all our products!

These guidelines helped to organize the study and uncover the underlying themes present in the data set. For example, when using these steps during the preliminary test, a few themes started to emerge such as: superficial vs embedded, consistency vs inconsistency, integrative vs fragmented and paragraph groups, which continued to emerge during the remainder of this study.

I opted against using a software system to automate the coding system. However, I was able to increase my skill in manual coding. According to Phillips and Hardy (2002), using software helps with the amount of data collected, but it does not improve the analysis, "...and it certainly does not make the analysis more 'rigorous' or 'valid'" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 78).

Reliability

“The phenomenologist chuckles, reinforced in the idea that there is no single reality to get “right”—but cannot escape a sneaky feeling that, in fact, reasonable conclusions are out there somewhere” (Miles, Huberman, Saldana, 2013, p. 293).

Reliability was addressed in this study through the use of more than one database. This was done to document that representations of fun are integrated into recruitment ads in more than one platform. The decision was also made to examine recruitment ads in more than one industry. Although it is not reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the phenomenon occurs in all industries, it can be confirmed that it is not limited to only those most commonly referenced in the popular press (e.g., IT).

Validity

Validity in qualitative research looks to see if the data were gathered and interpreted correctly. It is concerned with credibility and transferability.

Descriptive validity was achieved by keeping accurate notes, and code sheets. Interpretative validity was achieved through peer debriefing. Colleagues were asked to listen to the developing analysis and asked for feedback, thus uncovering errors. In addition, my supervisor looked over the data set, themes and codes to judge the degree to which the findings were interpreted correctly.

To further assess the validity of the sample selected in terms of "fit" with extant models, the elements of fun were extracted from the job ads and fitted into a typology by McDowell (2005) and another by Chan (2010) that categorize elements of workplace fun. In doing this, it

could be seen if the job ads selected for this study were aligned with previous research and were representative of the elements of fun that are observed in an organization. The results of this first stage of analysis are discussed in the Findings section, and support this validity claim.

Chapter 6: Findings

Typology of Fun

An important first step was to establish whether the use of fun in job recruitment ads was consistent with the definitions of fun found in the literature on fun in the workplace. The typologies developed by McDowell (2005) and Chan (2010) were employed as they represented the most developed and most clearly defined categorization of fun in the workplace. All the job ads were compared against McDowell (2005) and Chan's (2010) classification of workplace fun. The first six ads presented below—three from IT and three from O&G—are representative of the larger sample.

- EXAMPLE 1
(Data Set, IT-30)
- Benefits Why work at Magmic?
Full Benefits – Comprehensive medical, dental, & vision plans for you and your family.
Free Lunch – Get from food and learn at our 'Eat & Innovate' sessions.
Flexible Hours – Whether you're an early bird or a night owl we won't mess with your mojo.
Location, Location – Location is the Byward Market, easy to get to from all over the city.
Competitive Salary – You will get paid well to have Fun. Enough said.
Gifts – We love giving gifts. One for birthday, one for your work anniversary, and more surprises.
Conferences – Wat to engage the industry at a cool conference? Just ask.
Corporate Retreats – Yes, we have a retreat, in the woods on the Great Rideau Lake.
- EXAMPLE 2
(Data Set, IT- 29)
- Why Join info-Tech?
If you weren't already convinced, here at Info-Tech we care about out local community and sponsor a wealth of large and small national and local charities. We care about the mind-body-spirit wellness of our employees too, and offer perks like: Workplace yoga and wellness sessions, courtesy of a private instructor Massage chairs (and these are the real deal!) Treadmill Working stations and ergonomic chairs
Generous professional development options (PLUS a company bag to carry all your books in) Team-building fun time, including fundays, talent shows, scavenger hunts and our annual celebrations (adult and kids Christmas and Summer parties) Dress down days, casual weeks and fancy Summer working hours and vacation days.

ActiveCo Perks:

- An Employer Who Cares
- 5 weeks of Paid Vacation and Flex Time for Employees
- Competitive Salary
- Comprehensive Benefits Package
- Paid Training Plans
- Social and Team Building Events such as Off-site Quarterly Meetings, Wings Nights, Potluck Lunches
- Family Oriented Events such as Bowling and Summer BBQ's
- Awesome Christmas Parties
- Goodie Fridays

EXAMPL
E 3

(Data Set,
IT-31)

EXAMPLE
4

(Data Set,
OG-17)

Here at Entero, a CAREER leads to greater challenged and opens a window of opportunities to develop your skills and help you reach your highest potential. Our office is a community of like-minded individuals who enjoy solving tough problems and accomplishing great things. Your colleagues are your friends, who enjoy a corporate culture of having fun, participating in social events, and enjoying the journey. Your work is a combination of great ideas, team effort, and achieving results to meet the needs of our clients.

EXAMPLE
5

(Data
Set,OG-28)

Parsons offers an ethical, challenging, diverse, rewarding, and fun work experience. Join us and become part of the enthusiastic team that comprises talented professionals who use their energy, innovation, and dedication to deliver vital infrastructure and services to our clients and communities. We provide competitive compensation packages, attractive benefits, and great careers. Parsons is an equal-opportunity, drug-free employer committed to diversity in the workplace. Minority/Female/Disabled/Protected Veteran/LBGT

EXAMPLE
6

(Data Set,
OG-8)

An organically grown business, we are passionate about career progression and offer our people unrivalled talent development programs. Rewarding success, having fun and working in a business that supports personal wellbeing is vital to the growth of our global team.

As can be seen from Table 1, each element of fun listed in the selected IT job advertisements fit within these existing typologies. All job ads had several of the components embedded within the advertisements. This alignment indicates that the IT job ads identified in this study are consistent with indicators of workplace fun and the definition of fun used in the existing literature.

Table 1 - Definitions of Fun in IT Job Ads

McDowell (2005)	Examples	Chan (2010)	Examples
Socializing	Free lunch Corporate retreats Social/Team-building fun time Fundays, talent shows and scavenger hunts, wing nights, potluck lunches Family oriented events	Social-oriented (e.g., annual dinner, social barbecue, Christmas parties)	Free Lunch Conferences Corporate retreats Employee wellness Social/Team-building fun time Fundays, talent shows and scavenger hunts Annual celebrations/ awesome Christmas parties Family oriented events
Personal Freedoms	Flexible Hours/Flex time Employee wellness Dress down days, casual weeks and fancy dress Summer Hours working hours and vacation days 5 weeks paid vacation	Staff-oriented (e.g., celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, extra time off)	Flexible Hours Gifts Employee wellness Fundays, talent shows and scavenger hunts, wing nights, potluck lunches Goodie Fridays
Celebrating	Gifts Annual celebrations/ awesome Christmas parties Goodie Fridays	Supervisor oriented (e.g., lunch days with the supervisor, gatherings after work with the supervisor),	Free Lunch Corporate retreats Team-building fun time Off-site quarterly meetings
Global Fun	Conferences Corporate retreats Employee wellness Social/Team-building fun time	Strategy-oriented (e.g., casual dress days, organization-provided food and refreshments, family friendly policies).	Full-benefits Free Lunch Flexible Hours/Flex time Dress down days, casual weeks and fancy dress Summer Hours working hours and vacation days

As can be seen from Table 2, the O&G industry is less aligned with the McDowell and Chan typologies. Characteristics are concentrated in the socializing, global, and strategy categories. In addition, trying to match these O&G job ads to the typologies was more

Table 2 - Definitions of Fun in O&G Job Ads

McDowell (2005)	Examples	Chan (2010)	Examples
Socializing	Colleagues are your friends Participating in social events	Social-oriented (e.g., annual dinner, social barbecue, Christmas parties)	Participating in social events Colleagues are your friends
Personal Freedoms		Staff-oriented (e.g., celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, extra time off)	
Celebrating		Supervisor oriented (e.g., lunch days with the supervisor, gatherings after work with the supervisor),	
Global Fun	Corporate culture of having fun Career Progression Talent development Personal Wellbeing	Strategy-oriented (e.g., casual dress days, organization-provided food and refreshments, family friendly policies).	Corporate culture of having fun Career Progression Talent development Personal Wellbeing

challenging because these ads used more general terms. These O&G ads focused on individuals' characteristics and organizational culture. They were directed towards how the potential employee could bring fun into the organization, or how fun was developed within the organizational culture. This turned out to be a consistent difference between the O&G and IT recruitment ads, and became an early finding of the current study, the implications of which are

addressed in Chapter 7. Although the Oil and Gas sector used ‘fun’ differently than did the IT sector, as well as in ways that were less consistent with extant typologies, I decided to continue to examine representations of fun within that sector. Recognizing, however, that it was distinct from the IT sector in this way, I chose to keep the two industry sub-samples segregated as the findings of one sector could not be generalized into the other sector. I also, as a consequence, adopted a comparative stance looking for and exploring differences between these two sectors as themes emerged. As a result, the emergent themes are often positioned as dichotomies.

Discourse as Impression Management

Job advertisements were analyzed in terms of structural elements. The structure revealed the placement of fun within the hierarchy of the job ad, and whether fun is treated as elemental or superficial. Such placement was also important in determining whether the ad depicted fun as deeply embedded throughout the organization or as constrained to only certain activities or aspects.

Each job ad had three to five parts:

1. information about the organization, such as a brief description of the organization.
For example, some job ads will start with “who we are” or “who is (name of the company)”.
2. position overview, what type of person the organization is looking for — for example, “What we’re looking for,” or “the opportunity”
3. responsibilities, a brief description of what the job entails
4. qualifications, a brief description of the certifications and skills the candidate needs to possess

5. a brief description of benefits the organization can offer the candidate. This is the organization's sales pitch. This is where benefits and extra perks are mentioned.

For example, "Why work for us?"

These five elements are not mutually exclusive; they work together to form an overall image of the posting. When integration is present, it allows the reader to clearly see the reflection of workplace fun through the job ad. Some job ads used the term fun as a tagline, whereas others used the word fun throughout the ad to create an overall picture of workplace fun.

How embedded the depictions of workplace fun were in each job ad was determined by two elements: word placement and word choice.

Word Placement

The O&G industry tended to use the word fun exclusively in one section of a job ad, whereas, the IT industry tended to use the word throughout the whole job ad. Fun, or elements of fun, are usually present in two or more sections of an IT job ad. In Example 7, over 16 elements of fun are to be found throughout this one ad. This consistency throughout the ad creates an impression that fun is integrated throughout all aspects of the workplace. We can see from the ad that fun is depicted as included in the organization's culture, expectations, and character.

In contrast, elements of fun were frequently exclusive to one section of the O&G job ads and the placement varied, as illustrated in example 8. The isolation of the word fun from the rest of the job ad provides the impression that fun is present in O&G workplaces as a distinct and separate element.

This type of word placement was found to be consistent through the comparison between the two industries. Consequently, the IT industry portrays fun as more integral to the IT

workplace than in the O&G industry.

Word choice

Variations and commonalities in phrasing across industries revealed two noteworthy patterns.

Formal versus casual. Word choice was another aspect that differed between industries. If we look again at Examples 1 and 2, we can see that the IT industry's use of words such as “awesome” and “cool” tend to give more of a conversationalist tone to job ads. Similarly, “You speak both fluent geek and CEO and can assess technology risk with your eyes closed” (Data Set, IT-25) illustrates how IT industry recruitment ads often use 'you' and 'your' to speak directly to the individual. In using the second person to assign these characteristics to the reader, the applicant can actually see themselves as part of the company, and the job seems more attainable. In addition, this example illustrates the casual tone adopted by using words that IT professionals would use in their workplace. The point playfully made is that ‘you’ need to be casual, but still professional.

In the O&G industry recruitment ads, word choice is more traditionally professional. The O&G industry tend to use formal terms such as “individual” and “candidate”. For example, “The successful candidate will report to the Operations Supervisor and will be responsible for assisting Project Managers...” (Data Set, OG-14). This creates distance between the organization and the reader by implying the reader is a ‘potential’ employee.

The appropriate word choice for the IT industry may differ from what would be appropriate for the O&G industry. If the O&G industry were to use the terms 'cool' and 'awesome' in its recruitment ads, they might attract a completely different candidate than perhaps the job entails; or more accurately, recruit someone at odds with the O&G industry's self-image

and preferred corporate culture. In contrast, those words may be completely appropriate to the IT industry's self-image as innovative and 'outside the box'. What is seen as appropriate for one industry is not necessarily seen as appropriate in another (quite apart from any objective measure of that industry's actual successful personality type).

Masking. The word 'fun' was also regularly used to mitigate a negative word or phrase. This masking of negative aspects of a job was present in both the IT and O&G industries. "Our client is a very busy mid-sized engineering company who runs a fun and fast paced work environment;" (Data Set, OG-49) "You will have fun working with the team if you thrive in a customer-focused, competitive yet friendly environment;" (Data Set, IT-1) "Join a dynamic, fast-paced, yet fun and casual working environment;" (Data Set, OG-32) "You work well in a casual yet fast-paced team environment." (Data Set, IT-28) As can be seen from these examples, the term fun is used as a positive element to offset 'fast-paced', itself a euphemism for workplaces characterized by 'deadline stress', 'moving targets', etc. The recruitment ads appear to reflect careful attention to phrasing to downplay the most negative aspects of the workplace through the use of both euphemisms and the arbitrary insertion of the word fun. Fun is evoked as both an outright denial that there is a problem ("fast-paced and fun"—as if both were equally positive) or as a compensatory factor ("fast-paced yet fun") that balances and so cancels out the negative.

Integration Versus Segmented

Word placement and word choice together give the reader a strong sense of whether the portrayed workplace integrates or segregates fun. By choosing a conversational tone, placing the reader immediately within the context of the position (through use of 'you', and so on), and integrating various aspects of fun throughout the ad, the IT industry portrays itself as one in which a culture of fun is fully integrated throughout all aspects of the workplace. In contrast, the

more formal tone and word choice of the O&G industry recruitment ads, and its careful segregation of the mention of fun into the single portion of the ad addressed to worker characteristics (rather than, say, the benefits section—which was the bare minimum for IT ads), conveys to the potential employee a clear division between work and play activities. The O&G recruitment ads seem to project that the O&G workplace is businesslike (that is, formal and serious); but that this should not be mistaken for 'stuffy' or 'tedious'. The addition of the word fun to the ad could be taken as just another example of masking—of trying to disguise a traditional corporate culture through its arbitrary denial—but its regular placement within the section of worker characteristics suggests that the intended message is slightly more subtle. The *work* may be serious, but the *team* consists of a fun bunch of guys/gals (just like you), and consequently the workplace is rendered bearable through its collegiality. Examples 8 and 9 illustrate the integration and segmentation of job ads in IT and the O&G industries.

EXAMPLE 8 – IT INDUSTRY

Traction is a one of a kind company. Respectful of people's personal interests and aspirations, with a simple mission: to bend web-based technologies to meet the needs of sales and marketing professionals. Our clients have included 10 of the 25 largest global technology companies, local startups on their way to greatness, and hundreds of other companies that are trying to make CRM easier, friendlier and more valuable.

We need our stuff not to just work...but to be awesome! LEDs light up when things happen, super speedy traffic via routing, invisible technology. In fact, you'd be like Q in James Bond for us with a huge disposition for excellence in service and delivery. We are looking for Culture fit first and foremost followed by a demonstrated aptitude for technology.

You work well in a casual yet fast-paced team environment. You work well with others, yet have the independence to support and drive projects. Maybe, you even like wakeboarding. We are excited about our growing team and want top-caliber people like you to join us in this adventure.

Position Overview

As our IT Generalist, reporting to our COO and working closely with our CORE team, you will find creative ways too keep us up and running and looking for innovative ways to support us. We need someone who wants to deliver 5 Diamond Service to everyone in the company as well as maintaining and developing our systems including:

- Internet/Infrastructure - Maintaining and managing all aspects of Traction's network by managing our providers, monitoring our bandwidth, Meraki administration, addition of CAT5e connections, cabling. Maintaining wireless network by managing the Ubiquity disks, guest network, and ensuring only approved people are on the WiFi, others on Guest.
- Traction's Salesforce.com Administrator: Managing the Traction Org in Salesforce and driving the innovation and processes we have internally
- Technology - Managing and maintaining all hardware, defining specifications. Ensuring all monitors are running with cool dashboards/reports. Monitoring usage of software, suggests licensing management, ensure team has what they need to SaaS, CTI adapters, and make suggestions on peripherals. Doing cool things with our SMART boards
- Cisco Telephony and phones - Addition of phone lines, troubleshooting, keeping VM up and running, awesome hold music.
- Onboarding - Set up new hardware/software and access for new hires. Walk new employees through the setup and ensure all access is up and running in a timely manner.
- Support - Set up new hardware/software (OS/Office/Adobe/Cloud) and access for new hires. Walk new employees through the setup and ensure all access is up and running in a timely manner.
- Sourcing - the best deals on the planet for the coolest stuff!
- Any other things we dream up - cause we definitely do make our dreams reality

We're looking for the creative type, someone who could...for example:

- Convert our 1972 Coke machine into a Cloud enabled beverage dispenser - cool eh!
- Figure out how to deliver gifts remotely via the longest Lego powered train ever!
- Inventory incredible cool stuff that will just make our office 'hum' with efficiency and fun!
- Rewire our 1974 Airstream's sound system - CEO not so good at that apparently...

EXAMPLE 9 – O&G INDUSTRY

General Manager, Saskatchewan - 2 visits - 25-Feb

Nickpoint - Calgary, AB

At Nickpoint Environmental Services Inc. we specialize in providing Western Canada's oil and gas industry with dependable pre-construction planning and defensible regulatory compliance approvals.

Nickpoint is seeking a **General Manager** to lead our business development in Saskatchewan and oversee all office administrative functions, including staffing and operations. The successful candidate will have a degree(s) in Biology, Environmental Science, Engineering, Environmental Management or a similar discipline, and have 15 years' experience in relevant upstream oil and gas environmental consulting experience. This position requires strong leadership and motivational skills with the ability to develop positive working relationships in a team environment.

You:

- Have a university degree
- Can assess and develop project scope of work with appropriate details
- Possess a thorough understanding of Saskatchewan environmental regulations
- Are a member in good standing with an applicable professional association
- Co-ordinate and execute project work efficiently and cost-effectively
- Develop standard operating procedures, review safe work practices and training
- Have strong leadership and mentoring abilities
- Oversee preparation of technical reports for clients, regulatory agencies or contractors
- Can meet tight deadlines while providing leadership and support to our team
- Have strong problem solving skills
- Will act as a liaison between our clients, regulatory agencies, contractors, and landowners
- Have the ability to plan and organize tight deadlines and tasks to meet client requirements while providing leadership and support to our team

If your core values are aligned with:

- Fun
- Team
- Service +1
- Growth
- Work Smart
- Technical Excellence
- Stakeholder Return

Then with Nickpoint you can expect:

- Competitive salary
- Flexible working hours
- Support for continuous education
- Substantial opportunities for professional development
- A comprehensive and superior benefits package
- Access to our Profit Sharing Program

Fun Defined Through IT Job Ads

A key characteristic of IT job ads was a distancing from a traditional perception of the corporate, as characterized by bureaucracy and bottom lines. The ads presented themselves as a deviation from the norms of corporate life and used this characteristic as a perk to working with them. “This is a great opportunity to escape from the shackles of over-bearing micromanagement and be given the freedom to do what you do best in your own style” (Data Set, IT-27). “Our careers page should give a pretty good idea of what to expect here; a fun, open and modern environment that is about as far from “corporate” as you can get. We believe that creating an awesome workplace is the best way to ensure that we deliver great service to our clients” (Data Set, IT-22).

This shift away from the dominant corporate culture is fuelled by the use of fun in the workplace. The IT industry's concept of fun is well defined by lists which indicate what an individual can expect if they decide to work for that organization. Even the placement of these lists was interesting: they were most frequently found in the benefits or extra perks section of the ad, the headers suggest that that fun was being provided in the workplace to distinguish these organizations from their competitors and from standard corporate norms.

To help illustrate this we will look at three examples from three different job ads (examples 1, 2, and 3):

EXAMPLE 1	Benefits Why work at Magmic?
(Data Set, IT-	Full Benefits – Comprehensive medical, dental, & vision plans for you and your family.
30)	Free Lunch – Get from food and learn at our ‘Eat & Innovate’ sessions.
	Flexible Hours – Whether you’re an early bird or a night owl we won’t mess with your mojo.
	Location, Location – Location is the Byward Market, easy to get to from all over the city.
	Competitive Salary – You will get paid well to have Fun. Enough said.
	Gifts – We love giving gifts. One for birthday, one for your work anniversary, and

more surprises.

Conferences – What to engage the industry at a cool conference? Just ask.

Corporate Retreats – Yes, we have a retreat, in the woods on the Great Rideau Lake.

Why Join info-Tech?

EXAMPLE 2

(Data Set, IT-
29)

If you weren't already convinced, here at Info-Tech we care about our local community and sponsor a wealth of large and small national and local charities. We care about the mind-body-spirit wellness of our employees too, and offer perks like: Workplace yoga and wellness sessions, courtesy of a private instructor. Massage chairs (and these are the real deal!) Treadmill Working stations and ergonomic chairs Generous professional development options (PLUS a company bag to carry all your books in) Team-building fun time, including fundays, talent shows, scavenger hunts and our annual celebrations (adult and kids Christmas and Summer parties) Dress down days, casual weeks and fancy Summer working hours and vacation days.

ActiveCo Perks:

EXAMPLE 3

(Data Set, IT-
31)

- An Employer Who Cares
- 5 weeks of Paid Vacation and Flex Time for Employees
- Competitive Salary
- Comprehensive Benefits Package
- Paid Training Plans
- Social and Team Building Events such as Off-site Quarterly Meetings, Wings Nights, Potluck Lunches
- Family Oriented Events such as Bowling and Summer BBQ's
- Awesome Christmas Parties
- Goodie Fridays

These examples exhibit elements of fun consistent with previous research, such as McDowell (2005) and Chan (2010), who each created distinct categories of fun (See Table 1, page 48-49). Similarly, Karl, et al. (2007), noted that individuals consider food-related activities to be an integral part of workplace fun, and was a frequent element in IT jobs ads, as illustrated in the three examples above.

By including elements of fun in job ads, employers are using organizational impression management (OIM) to appeal to prospective employees and in turn benefit from the positive

outcomes of workplace fun: recruitment, retention, employee wellbeing, customer satisfaction and profitability. Fun can be so deeply rooted in IT organizations that it becomes a pillar or mantra for all employees. “Have Fun - Our mantra is to work hard, play hard, and have fun. We also find ways to relax and unwind, with beer bashes, team events and lunches” (Data Set, IT-24).

Fun Defined Through O&G Job Ads

Unlike the IT industry, it became apparent that the O&G industry considers fun to be part of the actual work environment and not an added perk. Fun is considered by O&G to be related to the personal characteristics of employees and the culture of the organization. The O&G industry suggests the candidate brings fun to the workplace. As can be seen by examples 4, 5 & 6, the element of fun is not provided for individuals — it’s more a social aspect that the prospective employees would help create within the organization. The prospective employee is promised a culture of fun; personal growth, teamwork and one's skills are what make the job fun.

EXAMPLE 4
(Data Set, OG-17)

Here at Entero, a CAREER leads to greater challenged and opens a window of opportunities to develop your skills and help you reach your highest potential. Our office is a community of like-minded individuals who enjoy solving tough problems and accomplishing great things. Your colleagues are your friends, who enjoy a corporate culture of having fun, participating in social events, and enjoying the journey. Your work is a combination of great ideas, team effort, and achieving results to meet the needs of our clients.

EXAMPLE 5
(Data Set,OG-28)

Parsons offers an ethical, challenging, diverse, rewarding, and fun work experience. Join us and become part of the enthusiastic team that comprises talented professionals who use their energy, innovation, and dedication to deliver vital infrastructure and services to our clients and communities. We provide competitive compensation packages, attractive benefits, and great careers. Parsons is an equal-opportunity, drug-free employer committed to diversity in the workplace. Minority/Female/Disabled/Protected Veteran/LBGT

EXAMPLE 6 (Data Set, OG-8) An organically grown business, we are passionate about career progression and offer our people unrivalled talent development programs. Rewarding success, having fun and working in a business that supports personal wellbeing is vital to the growth of our global team.

BENEFITS

EXAMPLE 7 (Data Set, OG-48)

- Competitive Salary
- Company stock options
- Health, dental, and vision benefits
- Fun, passionate, and skilled co-workers
- Free drinks and foods + fun events at workplace, Xbox Competitions
- Great office environment at the heart of downtown Calgary
- Easy access to public transport

Further, the definitions of fun in examples 4, 5 and 6 are directly related to increasing the employees' knowledge and job performance. The ads present a corporate culture within the organization that fosters fun as long as it is related to the job and contributes to the success of the organization.

Example 7 at first appears to be the exception to O&G trends: the type of list presented in example 7 is more consistent with characteristics from job ads within the IT industry. On closer examination, however, this makes sense because it is actually an ad for a software engineer position, albeit within the O&G industry.

Thus, IT uses fun as a way to entice a potential employee by providing a variety of fun elements and promises of enjoyment, whereas, O&G is looking for an individual to bring elements of fun into the workplace — it is not provided, but emerges spontaneously.

Differing Discourses of Fun: Organic verses Packaged

An analysis of job advertisements reveals that the O&G industry employment ads portray an organic type of fun. They depict fun as being developed within the organizations. For example, “You receive development through your career and work with a dynamic team that are proud and passionate about what they do and enjoy having fun too!” (Data Set, OG-1). “For 25 years, we have been creating value for our clients and opportunities for our people, by challenging the status quo, looking after each other, having fun, and building great things together!” (Data Set, OG-38).

Conversely, “packaged fun” or “official fun” is fun that is mandated (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009). The IT industry's employment ads portray this type of fun. For example, “There is a free lunch!! It is every Monday at PeopleToGo. We have created a fun team based environment that, if you like that stuff, will make it a pleasure to come to work each day and of course we offer a competitive salary and lucrative compensation plan” (Data Set, IT-51). “We offer: a flexible health care spending account, fun activities, and Friday happy hour. We work over one of the best coffee shops in the city and get a great discount. Most importantly, we have a lot of fun but are serious about doing great work for our clients” (Data Set, IT-19). This is fun forced upon employees by upper management, one's direct supervisor or peers. As illustrated in Table 3, packaged and organic fun can be seen on a continuum with varying degrees of implementation and control.

Table 3 – Continuum of Organic versus Packaged Fun

Bolton & Houlihan (2009)	Organic Fun ←-----→ Packaged Fun
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Differing Discourses of "Team" and "Entrepreneur"

Both the IT and O&G industry recruitment ads used the terms 'team' and 'entrepreneur', but closer examination reveals differences in how these industries depict team and individual work. In looking at team and entrepreneur, it uncovers the social aspects of fun. How individuals interact within an organization can illuminate what type of fun is used to foster a team or entrepreneurial environment. For example, if an organization is fostering teamwork, they may focus on more social fun.

In the IT industry, the ads indicate a desire to recruit individuals with an entrepreneurial spirit to be part of a team. Employees are depicted as having autonomy within the team and the opportunity to breakout of this team as needed. Management is portrayed as encouraging discussion, brainstorming and thinking 'outside the box'. The ads represented management-initiated fun as fostering a creative environment wherein IT professionals can fully express themselves and thereby push the boundaries of team. It is understood in these ads that pushing boundaries is how innovations are created.

You like thinking “outside the box”, are not afraid of ambiguity, let no technology obstacle stand in your way and are a motivated self-starter. The successful applicant will be a strong team player and will thrive in a start-up environment where flexibility is essential and delivering rock solid, customer focused solutions are paramount (Data Set, IT-24).

In this job ad, the prospective employee needs to work within a team, but have the ability to tackle challenges on their own initiative. “You work well with others, yet have the independence to support and drive projects” (Data Set, IT-28). There is limited supervision, with the expectation of autonomous professionals seeing assigned projects through to successful completion. For example, “We do not believe in placing unrealistic and over-bearing KPLs on your day-to-day running of your desk; instead, we trust your ability and give you the tools,

space, and resources to do your job effectively and efficiently” (Data Set, IT-27).

In the O&G recruitment ads, candidates are encouraged to be part of a brotherhood. O&G professionals are depicted in the recruitment ads as part of a collective team or pod, where output is measured from the pod rather than each individual.

We seek brilliant, hardworking people who want to be part of a growing team and fun environment where leading edge technology and solutions are created and successfully commercialized. Each member is empowered to learn, grow and share his or her knowledge and experience. Together, we are TRUE, BRILLANT and we MAKE THINGS HAPPEN! (DATA SET, OG-43)

The O&G recruitment ads emphasize the need for individuals who are the right fit, or can be ‘moulded’ into the right fit. For example, note how this ad explicitly states, “To develop people to work together to create value for the Company’s shareholders by doing it right with fun and integrity” (Data Set, OG-18). This example speaks to individuals being shaped into their role within the company and doing it with a smile. Some O&G recruitment ads mention the need to fit into a team, but with the tone that any appropriately qualified individual could be slotted into the position. “Our client is a very busy, mid-sized engineering consulting company who run a fun and fast-paced work environment. They are currently looking for an intermediate structural Engineer to join their expanding team” (Data Set, 1A). The emphasis is therefore on fitting the candidate to the pre-existing structures of the organization, in contrast to the more individualistic values dominant in IT ads.

Under qualifications, O&G ads may also ask for “Experience managing projects with minimal or no supervision” (Data Set, OG-49). Candidates are told they need to be able to complete assigned tasks on their own, much as in the IT ads, but unlike IT, there is no suggestion of pushing boundaries. The *team* is entrepreneurial, rather than the individual. “Our team operates with an entrepreneurial attitude, a strong reputation for quality, a rich history of success and a strategic plan for continued growth” (Data Set, OG-47). In O&G ads, emphasis is placed

on the performance of the collective rather than the individual. This emphasis on the collective—and the more limited interpretation of individual initiative as merely the ability to work unsupervised—projects a higher expectation of conformity within the O&G industry.

Both industries, then, are seeking individuals who will fit into their team. They both suggest that an entrepreneurial attitude is important for the employee to be able to work independently to overcome problems or complete a task. The difference lies in if the entrepreneurial spirit is expressed as part of a team or individually. In the IT ads, the term is used to encourage each member of the group to push boundaries to break new ground, thus fostering innovation. In the O&G ads, by contrast, the entrepreneurial spirit is expressed within the collective to reach goals initiated by the organization. Fun can be used in both these industries to help foster an entrepreneurial or team environment which is reflected in the job ads.

Differing Discourses of "Flexibility" and "Family"

Attention to flexibility and work/life balance has grown in popularity. The ability of an employee to balance work and life has become an essential expectation of any corporate culture. A study by Bourhis and Mekkaoui (2010), for example, evaluated the impact of family-friendly practices (FFP) on job seekers. The results indicated job ads that highlighted an organization's flexible scheduling and personal leaves rated the highest in attractiveness. Bourhis and Mekkaoui therefore argued that even smaller organizations that lack the funds to implement large-scale family-friendly activities still need to include some sort of flexibility in their job ads.

There is no standardized concept of workplace flexibility, however. In comparing the IT and O&G industries, there were distinct differences.

In the IT industry, fun and family seem to be confabulated. In other words, fun is provided to create the work environment as family-substitute rather than family-friendly. Many

fun activities are family *unfriendly* because they take time away from one's family. Based on the job ads, the IT industry seems to be recruiting young singles and the company is offering to be a substitute family that provides the support and fun that one would normally get from one's family. "A positive, fun and casual work environment; highly supportive, family-like and result-driven culture; and a convenient office location in Gastown" (Data Set, IT-15,1). If we look at Examples 1, 2, and 3 — the use of fun is integrated into the benefits including going away on cool conferences and retreats with one's family substitute. This creates an overall image of the organization and the appearance of a family-like setting. Much as these events may bring one's coworkers closer as a family, such activities take time away from one's home life and one's *actual* family.

In the O&G industry ads the term 'flexibility' was sometimes coupled with fixed work schedules, or creating one's own work schedule. In several job ads, there seemed to be a conflict between work schedule, flexibility and work/life balance. For example, one ad states, "Shifts, 10/10 shift rotation working 12 hours per day, 6 hours OT each rotation (10 days)" yet it boasts "hours are reasonable, home life is encouraged and remuneration is competitive" (Data Set, OG-37). In this example, home life is encouraged, but only after these long hours are met. The priority of work over family is clear in that the organization grants one 10 days with one's family if one gives up 10 days with one's family.

In another example, the job descriptions claim "...flexibility to maintain an excellent work/life balance" and yet requires "50% to 75% travel time, travel at short notice, and working long hours in remote locations" (Data Set, OG-46). The worker can go home and wait when she/he is not needed, but must respond at short notice. The working conditions described by this ad are not so much *flexible* as they are *unpredictable*; the changeability is focused on

management's needs and not the needs of the worker. Clearly 'flexible hours' sounds better than 'at our beck and call', but that is what the ad is really calling for.

Similarly, this ad for a Materials Handler states, "Hours are reasonable, home life is encouraged" (Data Set, OG-38). Then it continues to state, "Successful candidates will work Night shift of Monday through Thursday at 11.5 hours/shift" (Data Set, OG-38).

References to work/life balance in these ads attempt to mask the negatives of the job by suggesting that there are compensations that balance them. A work schedule of ten plus hours a day and night shifts, is masked by emphasizing the three days off in a row, high wages, benefits, and a promise of a fun working environment. The reality is that the ten days off are likely days playing catch up on sleep, chores, and relationships damaged by being away during key events (birthdays, school plays). The reference to work/life balance in these ads gives assurances of personal freedom and family-friendly policies that are intended to mask the obvious drawbacks to the position, including the significant, ongoing disruption to family life incurred by frequent absence.

The IT industry ads make similar appeals, masking the assimilation of family time by the promise of fun times at work. IT companies offer weekend events, retreats, social gatherings and family barbecues, etc., in an attempt to mirror activities traditionally done in a family setting. These activities then erode actual personal and family time, with the end results likely similar to those in the O&G industry. They both have the same effect of taking away from family, but are represented differently to appeal to their specific demographic. These contrasting industries use different representations of fun to reach the same goal: the assimilation of family time into work time, and the prioritization of work over family.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Discourse analysis explores the explicit and the veiled dimensions of text. Employment recruitment advertisements are a constructed representation of a business. They are constructed to provide job applicants with an impression of the business as well as present job qualifications and job tasks. As discussed in the literature review, fun is presented in popular press and academic literature as an aspect of organizational culture of growing importance and prevalence. The findings of my study support that fun is prevalent in recruitment postings on online job boards. My findings further support that the discourse of fun is embedded in these job advertisements both in terms of how fun is presented within the structure of the advertisements, and how fun is used as a representation of corporate culture within these ads. These dimensions of fun, analyzed in the findings section, are illustrative of fun as a controlled discourse. The presentation of fun within job ads, as well as the representations of the organization as a fun worksite, are constructed as a form of impression management. Fun is not only a controlled discourse, it is also a discourse of control, whereby fun is used within job ads to mask less appealing aspects of the job and to reinforce limiting and potentially discriminating organizational norms. These two dimensions of discourse are used to explicate the research findings as dominant discourses of fun within job advertisements.

Fun as a Controlled Discourse

Fun is integrated more fully within the job advertisements in the IT sector and multiple elements of fun are presented therein. Fun is embedded through both word choice and word placement. Fun is used to describe the organization, portrayal of the ideal candidate, provide an overview the position, identify qualifications and summarize the benefits of employment with the organization. Word choice is casual (e.g., "geek"); candidates are addressed directly (e.g., use

of the pronoun "you"); and fun is seen as relevant to all dimensions of the recruitment protocol and, arguably, the work/worksites thereafter—at least in terms of how the organization is being presented to the potential applicants.

Fun is less integrated within the job advertisements in the O&G sector. The terminology is formal (e.g., the term "candidate" is used); fun is principally mentioned as a core value of the recruit—something that s/he will bring to the job and often appears as part of a list or as if tacked on without an attempt at explanation or integration. As such, it is not the organization's responsibility. It is the employees' responsibility. Fun is something "that can happen", but is not presented as elemental to organizational life.

The finding that fun in the IT job advertisements—and not in the O&G advertisements—is fully integrated into the descriptions of both the job responsibilities and the work environment in IT was seen in the earliest phase of the analysis, during which I applied two models of workplace fun (Chan 2010 and McDowell, 2005). These researchers had categorized fun based on casualness or formality of the activity, in the case of McDowell, and in terms of the orientation or the focal point of the activity, in the case of Chan. The findings showed that there was considerable fit of the data to these two models. Consistent with the above discussion of the integrated nature of fun in IT, exemplars were provided in the advertisements that showed fun of many different varieties represented in all aspects of the organizational life. Employees had, for example, opportunities for socializing (Chan) and social-oriented non-mandatory gatherings (McDowell). Whilst some activities focused on the employee and the availability of personal freedoms (Chan), there were also supervisor-oriented or structured activities (McDowell). Exemplars of every dimension of both models were integrated within the job advertisements for IT.

This was not the case for O&G, however, where fewer exemplars were provided and fell exclusively into categories of activities requiring employees' active personal engagement (such as taking part in social events) or activities that are arguably more task-oriented than play-oriented (e.g., taking part in talent development programs). This finding was consistent with the subsequent analysis showing degree of integration of fun within the ads through word choice and structure.

Examination of exemplars of fun used by the businesses also lent support to the model developed by Bolton and Houlihan (2009) defining fun as either organic or packaged. The IT sector provided exemplars of fun that covered both dimensions. Employees engage in fun that is spontaneous and emerges through a corporate culture of play. They also engage in activities that are organizationally determined and, perhaps, even mandated, such as corporate retreats. The O&G sector may (and almost certainly does) have employees participate in structured events such as corporate retreats, but does not represent these activities as dimensions of fun in the job advertisements.

Three different models of workplace fun were therefore used in the findings section to make sense of the structure of fun in job advertisements. Do these models taken together, however, offer any insights regarding the structure/control of the discourse of fun in job advertisements? Layering the models results in the following integrated model of workplace fun. Bolton and Houlihan's dichotomy becomes a continuum upon which different exemplars of Chan's and McDowell's categories of fun can be placed. The greater the degree of organizational foci (Chan, 2010) and the greater degree of structuring (McDowell, 2007), the more packaged (Bolton and Houlihan, 2009) the activity becomes. The dimension of Global Fun (McDowell,

2005) was removed from this model because, as discussed in the literature review, it has been interpreted to be more attitudinal than activity oriented.

Table 4: Organic Verses Packaged Fun

Bolton & Houlihan (2009)	Organic Fun ←-----→Packaged Fun			
Chan (2010)	Social-oriented	Staff-Oriented	Supervisor-Oriented	Strategy-Oriented
McDowell (2005)	Socializing	Personal Freedom	Celebrating	
IT Job Advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free lunch • Goodies Friday • Fun Days • Potluck lunches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer hours • Vacation days • Flexible hours/Flex time • Employee wellness • Dress down days Causal weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent shows • Family-oriented events • Gifts • Christmas Parties • Scavenger hunts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Team-building • Retreats • Conferences
O&G Job Advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleagues are your friends • Corporate culture of having fun • Career Progression • Talent development • Personal Wellbeing • Social events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career development • Talent development • Personal Well-being 		

The different industries present differing images of fun to both reflect the industry's corporate norms and the desired skills and qualities sought in the employee candidate. As illustrated in the findings section, the O&G industry focuses on the team structure of its worksites. Employees are expected to generate a fun environment as they work closely with others. Fun within this context is therefore more organic and employee-driven. IT employees are

presented with a greater number of structured fun activities to create engagement. Both industries, as reflected through their job advertisements, use fun to structure employee interaction.

Representations of fun embedded within job advertisements also serve the function of managing potential employees' impression of the firm. The word 'fun' was regularly used to mitigate a negative aspect of the job. This masking of negative aspects of a job was present in both the IT and O&G industries. 'Fun' being linked with descriptors such as 'fast-paced environment' demonstrate how fun is used to downplay more negative/stressful aspects of the workplace. Representations of fun are presented to cancel out, or downplay, the negative.

Fun is, therefore, a controlled discourse. Representations of fun are used to create positive workplace impressions and mask the undesirable. Descriptors of fun embedded within the ads reveal the degree of organizational control over the activities. There are significant differences between industries in terms of the degree to which fun is represented within the ads as well as in terms of how fun is managed within the organization itself in terms of purpose and structure.

Fun as a Discourse of Control

Most job ads list the obvious knowledge, skills, attitudes and certifications required—the ‘surface qualifications’—but many also try to get at the subtler, underlining, ‘other’ characteristics. The references to fun in recruitment ads may be used to weed out certain age groups, for example. As mentioned earlier, there can be up to four generations of employees working in the same workplace environment, which suggests all four generations may be looking at the same job ads. Lamm & Meeks (2009) found that each generation perceives and values workplace fun differently, so this likely applies to the recruitment process. If employers promise Friday beer nights or ski weekends in their recruitment ads, it is reasonable to assume that this would serve as a disincentive to older, more settled candidates who may have ongoing family responsibilities. These candidates may meet the ‘surface’ qualifications, but fail to fit these ‘other’ requirements of the corporate culture. By extension, the construction of fun and fun candidates is highly gendered. Females with children would find it challenging to meet after work obligations. Other family priorities take precedence over workplace activities. Also, by attracting individuals with beer it can be seen as a gender specific drink. For example, beer is associated with men and women are associated with wine.

Person-Job (P-J) and Person-Organization (P-O) theory may apply here. P-J fit is defined as “the match between an applicant and the requirements for a specific job” (Kristof-Brown, 2000, p. 643). In comparison, P-O is “the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs, they share similar fundamental characteristics, or both” (Kristof, 1996, pp. 4–5) In other words, “Whereas P-J fit is relevant to an individual’s compatibility with a specific job, P-O fit pertains to how an individual matches an organization’s values, goals, and mission” (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001, p. 455). In the

context of job ads, P-J can be viewed, as the ‘surface’ qualifications and P-O are the ‘other’ qualifications.

Research in this area has supported the notion that the more a person’s attributes and values are in line with the organization the more success the individual will have, and in turn the more successful the organization will be. Cable & Judge (1996) found that job seekers’ P-O perceptions predicted the job selection. In addition, their results suggest that there is more emphasis on P-O fit than on P-J fit. Further research in this area may be beneficial to uncovering more insight into how P-O and P-J fit is used in job advertisements and how it may vary between industries.

Thus, the types of fun promoted in these job ads may represent a subtle generational discrimination. By adopting a casual tone ('cool' and 'awesome') and listing at-work social activities and after-work gatherings in their ads, the IT industry is signalling its interest in attracting young, unattached workers with few outside interests, without ever having to say so explicitly. The O&G recruitment ads' more formal tone and emphasis on helping workers manage the unavoidable disruptions to family life may correspondingly leave the positions more open to older workers with family responsibilities. The O&G ads’ presentation of fun as something that emerges spontaneously out of the collegiality of peers—and therefore under the control of the employee and within the confines of working hours—rather than something imposed by management and intruding on the employees' off hours, speaks to a more generationally inclusive workforce.

P-O fit is important, of course, but organizations need to recognize that diversity can also be important to avoid groupthink. Organizations therefore need to understand the implications for diversity when recruitment ads reference fun. Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010) looked at

the assumptions organizations make about 'fun' in the workplace, and their findings are likely to apply equally to the use of fun in recruitment ads. When employers create job ads which reference fun they are likely assuming;

- All job seekers will interpret references to fun in the same way; job seekers share the employers' understanding of what constitutes appropriate fun.
- A positive workplace environment will occur because people prefer a positive work environment;
- references to workplace fun can easily be inserted into job ads with limited or no repercussions

These assumptions become more apparent when comparing IT and O&G industries, because these industries represent differing views on what constitutes appropriate fun. In O&G, employers tend to look for experienced (and therefore older) individuals for high level positions. Consequently, these ads do not use weekend trips, beer days, gifts and parties to lure recruits. These incentives could be appropriate for an IT organization, however, particularly for startups, where employers may be looking for younger (more malleable) workers.

So why do organizations use fun in their job ads? Although usually understood in terms of making the job more attractive by outbidding competing employers in promoting a positive work environment, closer examination renders this explanation inadequate. If, as is readily demonstrated in the literature, the interpretation of fun is so broad that it can be interpreted very differently by potential employees, then simply inserting the minimum reference to fun necessary to remain competitive is not a sufficient explanation.

As demonstrated in the Findings section, one function of the inclusion of references to a fun or family-like/family-friendly environment is simply to mask or compensate for negative aspects of the job. This is again an insufficient explanation, however, because not all potential candidates will respond in the same way to the vision of fun on offer. The impact of including fun in these ads is therefore broader and more varied.

Given that candidates will likely respond differently to different presentations of fun, the image of fun chosen by the employer is likely strategic and purposeful. The employer is likely to project that image of fun and family-like/family-friendly policies that most closely reflects that organization's corporate culture. Organizations naturally look for candidates who are the 'right fit' with the existing corporate culture. When employees are hired who are not a good fit with the culture, they can disrupt the organization, resign in frustration, or may even have to be removed. Such disruptions and turnover represent concrete costs to the organization, and a recruitment failure. Successful selection is therefore improved if the ad itself can pre-screen applicants by attracting only those potential employees who not only fit the job requirements (P-J), but also the corporate culture (P-O).

Given that age, gender, and personality cannot be directly included in a job posting, fun and family-like/family-friendly policies are used in their place. Fun serves to attract people with the P-O appropriate characteristics.

Both the IT and O&G industries, then, use fun to attract the type of individual who will fit into their respective cultures, while alienating those thought not a good fit.

Family

The more organizations blur the line between work and family, the more demands there are on the employees, and the more work-family conflicts (WFC) and family-work conflicts (FWC) will likely arise. As a result, organizations may seek to recruit employees based on their ability to accept the organization's definition of work/family and therefore create job ads that reflect this preference. The IT industry uses trips and fun events—birthdays, (work) anniversaries—that might normally be celebrated in a family context as a way to attract potential employees. By the same token, such ads are likely to alienate candidates with children or other

responsibilities outside work, for whom such trips on family time would be unacceptable.

Corporations are limited by what they can ask for in job ads. Specifying marital status, age, gender, and so on would make discrimination against other job-qualified candidates too explicit. The addition of fun to recruiting ads, on the other hand, accomplishes the same end without the appearance of unfair discrimination. Indeed, it becomes the applicant's decision not to apply for a position where the work environment is depicted as one they would find unsuitable, rather than the employer's decision not to hire.

This injection of fun into job ads is not arbitrary. It is a strategic. For the O&G industry, claims of flexibility and a fun work environment seem to contradict the actual working conditions specified, so management has seen the value of using OIM to mask the negative aspects of the work. Further, even granting that the work and working conditions may be undesirable, recruitment ads can still claim that the work environment—the collegiality of the team and firm—can still be fun, can still be a positive.

In the IT industry the use of fun has become normative, almost mandatory; firms compete to recruit the best and brightest by promising the best packaged fun. There may, however, be more going on than simple competition for job candidates.

Offering concierge services, as Google does for example, not only implies a level of luxury and indulgence that out bids competitors, but also provides the supports one might otherwise expect from one's family. The organization depicts services such as picking up the employee's dry cleaning as family-friendly or as enhancing the employee's lifestyle—because it frees the employee from chores that might otherwise consume personal time. The question then becomes, does the employee actually benefit from the time thus freed up, or does this merely allow the organization to raise expectations of the employee? In an industry where few workers

are paid by the hour—but are evaluated instead on their ability to finish projects to deadline, whatever that takes—one can be excused for suspecting management may be working on the assumption that the time-saved will accrue to an organization rather than to the employee.

Similarly, the work demographic most likely to benefit from fun perks are young, single, white males without responsibilities outside of work. Making work a self-contained family where the team is the focus not only of production, but also of play and emotional support, binds the worker more tightly to the firm, and may allow work to more effectively colonize personal hours. Socializing with peers and supervisors not only builds team spirit, but allows workers additional networking opportunities to discuss work task solutions, and to gain direct, immediate access to the supervisor's ear. Although beyond the scope of the current study, the question certainly arises whether the after-work fun activities depicted in recruitment ads are truly after work, or merely an extension of work.

This is not to say that workplace fun is not beneficial or enjoyable. On the contrary, workplace fun has many benefits as discussed earlier. It should not be overlooked that organizations have a bottom line that needs to be met. The use of fun in job ads as a strategic tool to increase profitability is entirely appropriate. Deconstructing these ads, however, does allow one to identify issues to provide a more balanced portrait of the use and misuse of fun in recruitment ads.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Contribution to Theory

The purpose of this study was to see how fun was represented in job ads. This study illustrates how the discourse of fun and its strategic use in recruitment ads varies between industries. The consistent differences between IT and O&G definitions and depictions of fun in recruitment ads demonstrates the importance of contextualizing any study of fun in the workplace within the studied organization's particular sector or industry. Structural differences between industries likely dictate differing labour needs, corporate cultures, and therefore definitions and implementations of fun within the workplace. Such structural differences have previously been largely overlooked in the literature, with authors claiming generalizability to all workplaces, when findings likely only applied to the sector(s) included in that study.

The discourse of entrepreneurship differed markedly between the IT and O&G sectors. In the IT sector, recruitment ads conveyed the expectation that individual workers were to demonstrate initiative outside of their team and work group. In the O&G sector, by contrast, entrepreneurship was to be expressed through the achievements of the team. Although beyond the scope of the current study, this again raises the question of whether understandings of entrepreneurship, like fun, vary by industry and sector.

On the other hand, both industries appeared to incorporate fun in job ads as one element of a strategic Organizational Impression Management to attract applicants that would not only meet job requirements but also fit into the existing corporate culture. The inclusion of fun in IT ads likely served to discourage applications from those with commitments (such as family obligations) outside of work. The provision of fun activities outside work hours likely allows the IT sector to increase the colonization of non-work hours. On the other hand, the depiction of fun

in O&G ads likely permitted applications from an older demographic, downplaying the already heavy and explicit time commitments required of employees in this sector. In both industries, references to fun, flexibility and family-friendly work-environments often masked a lack of flexibility, predictability, undesirable job characteristics, and family-*un*friendly policies. Recruitment ads therefore use fun in a strategic effort at Organizational Impression Management, a confirmation of the application of OIM to recruitment ads and a logical extension of the work of Avery & McKay (2006).

A new typology was created by adding Bolton & Houlihan's (2009) "organic" versus "packaged" fun categories to the pre-existing typologies of fun by McDowell (2005) and Chan (2010). The typology identifies the degree to which fun is a function of managerial control: packaged fun, representing activities defined, initiated, and dictated to workers by management; versus organic fun, wherein fun emerges spontaneously from within the collegiality of the work environment. Packaged fun may represent a higher degree of managerial control; organic fun is worker-initiated or worker-controlled. Using the Chan, McDowell, and Bolton & Houlihan models to examine illustrative examples of specific activities and benefits from job ads (Table 3) demonstrates that there is a continuum of packaged to organic fun, reflective of a continuum of managerial/employee control.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in the area of workplace fun. It demonstrates that fun has extended beyond the office into the recruitment process. In addition, it illuminated some negative aspects of fun and the part it plays in controlling employees and discrimination.

Limitations

First, data was collected from two popular job-posting websites. Although such sites are widely used by employers, it is possible that some firms may prefer more traditional posting methods (newspapers, industry newsletters) and that this could have biased the sample. One could speculate that online job forums are more likely to appeal to IT managers (who are by definition immersed in online culture) than O&G managers (who may be perpetuating more traditional habits of recruitment) and that this could have influenced the results. The finding that the O&G sector was more formal in its wording of ads, more restrictive in its use and definition of fun, and more likely to use fun to mask the negatives of the job and working conditions, however, suggests that it is unlikely that a firm too conservative to post on online employment sites would turn out to be more radical than those included in the sample.

Second, this study was limited to what was represented in the job ads, which may not reflect the actual characteristics of the job or workplace. Recruitment ads are likely to be a strategically worded, carefully managed impression of how an organization wishes to present itself. Although an organization's self-image may be highly revealing, it is important to keep in mind that statements about an organization's fun work environment represent claims, not facts verifiable by the researcher.

Third, the current study had no way to take into account the views of a job applicant. Recruitment ads necessarily represent the views of management, and any discussion of candidate response is necessarily speculative. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume the ads sampled represent a successful format, or presumably they would have evolved in some other direction as earlier ads failed to attract sufficient candidates—or, conversely, attracted too many of the wrong candidates. But deconstructing the ads can only suggest which demographic may be attracted or

repelled by the specific categories of fun depicted; there is no way to measure who or how many read the ads, what percentage responded, and who did not and why.

Fourth, discourse analysis is necessarily subjective: the themes of this study were based on interpretations necessarily influenced by my comprehension of the literature and interpretation of the data.

Nevertheless, the job ads selected were compared to previous research to gauge the relevance and validity of the study. Themes naturally emerged using Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 87-89) guidelines for discourse analysis, which I followed rigorously. The themes were consistent among jobs ads within the sample and across both job-posting websites. Although not generalizable beyond the two industries examined without further research, the themes discussed provide reasonable grounds to pursue that future research.

Further Research

First, although there has been some research addressing the concept of packaged verses organic fun (Stromberg & Karlsson, 2009), the area remains under-researched. The current study clearly demonstrates the need to explore the differences in packaged verses organic approaches to fun across different industries and sectors. Although it is tempting to speculate on how the nature of the work performed in the IT and O&G sectors shaped their differing approaches to fun, further research is needed to demonstrate the connection between sector characteristics and the interpretation and adoption of fun in the workplace.

Second, it would be beneficial to extend beyond the organization's perspective on workplace fun and delve into employees' perceptions. It can be argued that fun in jobs ads is a form of control; however, workers may have no objections to a 'fun' environment, and accept control as inevitable and appropriate. To quote Becker (2012, p. 67) "...for employees, an

exciting and enjoyable work experience is far preferable to a dull and onerous work experience". Tracking an individual through the process of job selection, hiring and training would help to illuminate if the fun depicted in job ads is an accurate representation of the workplace, or if OIM is merely a mask for undesirable work environments and managerial control. This in turn would help illuminate the benefits of fun in the workplace, and perhaps the differing perspectives of job applicant, employees and management.

Third, this leads back to the questions posed by Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010) "What are the differences between intrinsic and extrinsically motivated fun?" and "What workplace conditions make it possible for fun to naturally occur at work?" (p. 329). It would therefore be useful to apply the typologies suggested in this study to other industries to help improve OIM, recruitment processes, and work environments specific to other industries.

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