

# Workplace Environment Characteristics as Antecedents of Affective Well-being in the Workplace

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## Abstract

Workplace environment characteristics may positively or negatively evoke an individual's affective experiences, and these experiences can influence affective experiences of others. This study investigates the relations between employees' affective experiences and workplace environment characteristics. A questionnaire-based investigation was conducted with employees in Thai companies. Participants were asked to evaluate various aspects of their own workplace environments and their affective well-being at work. A factor analysis revealed eight workplace environment factors that contribute to the overall affective experiences of employees. These eight factors were confirmed to significantly correlate with overall affective well-being and its five sub-dimensions. With *t*-test analysis, this study also found gender differences in the perceptions of affective well-being at work and workplace environment characteristics. Finally, regression analyses showed that seven workplace environment factors, job goodness, less conflict, autonomy, camaraderie, authentic leadership, fitness, role clarity, as well as positive and negative personality traits are significant predictors of affective well-being in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Workplace environment, Antecedents, Affective well-being, Affective experience

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Affective responses from individuals toward their workplace environment characteristics are significant, as they not only influence the individual but also most probably others in the workplace [1], [2]. However, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding those features of the workplace that are likely to produce particular moods and emotions among people at work [1], [3]. In other words, the relationship between workplace environment characteristics and particular affective experiences is still undetermined. Thus, it is necessary to identify precisely which workplace factors evoke an individual's positive and negative affective experiences at work, especially particular emotions or moods, to reduce negative affective experiences, which can influence co-workers, and to maximize organizational outcomes.

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between characteristics in the workplace and affective experiences in the workplace. Workplace environment characteristics and affective well-being in the workplace were measured and relations among them were investigated to show whether those work characteristics are significant in predicting affective well-being in the workplace.

## 2. RELATED LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES

## 2.1 Necessity of Having Affective Experiences at Work

Undesirable features of a workplace setting may decrease both a particular individual's positive experiences at work [4] and, as a consequence, decrease the positive experiences of others. This occurs via the sharing of affective experiences, called affective climate [5], affective group [6], or emotional contagion [7], [8], where the emotions of others are mimicked, thus, extending the range of emotions present [2].

Although positive affect seems to be short-lived, unlike negative ones, it can have deep and enduring effects such as increasing long-term intellectual, psychological, and social resources among people in the community [9]. Thus, it is crucial to pay more attention to aspects that relate to one's affective experiences in workplace settings where sharing experiences can influence team performance [6], [10], [11].

## 2.2 Workplace Characteristics that Contribute to Affective Experiences

### 2.2.1 Internal Contribution

- **Gender**

Although gender differences in emotion have been widely reported, the results are varied across personality, society, and task characteristics, because men and women are often socialized for different motives and goals [12]. A previous study found that when respondents were asked to report their overall emotion over a week women reported significantly less positive affect than men [13]. In terms of emotional contagion, women report higher levels of influencing the emotions of others than men do [14].

Regarding negative experiences, it has been found that women report a higher intensity and longer duration than men [13] and report greater hurt and disappointment after expressing anger in an experimental setting [15]. Thus, it seems likely that women more easily experience negative emotions than men. Undesirable workplace environment characteristics may evoke a greater degree of negative experiences in women than men, resulting in lower levels of overall affective well-being for women than men.

Negative affect in individuals is also associated with a negative bias in interpreting life experiences [16]. Thus, the interpretation or perception of workplace environments between women and men are likely to be different. These discussions derive the following hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1a:** Women tend to have lower-leveled perceptions of workplace environments.

**Hypothesis 1b:** Women have less positive experiences in the workplace than men.

- **Affectivity Personality Traits**

Positive and negative personality traits have been consistently associated with subjective well-being [17]. Individuals who have high positive trait seem to habitually construe events differently from those with high negative trait [4]. Individuals with positive trait are optimistic and have more strategies to deal with problems compared with less happy individuals [18], [19]. In contrast, persons in high negative trait tend to over-report unpleasant experiences [16], [20]. Thus, positive and negative traits are assumed to relate to how individuals interpret affective well-being at work. Hence, the second hypothesis is derived.

**Hypothesis 2a:** Employees with positive trait experience greater affective well-being at work.

**Hypothesis 2b:** Employees with negative trait experience lower affective well-being at work.

### 2.2.2 External Contribution

- **Conflict**

Perceptions of conflict among group members have been negatively associated with group performance and satisfaction [21], [22]. Emotional expressions regarding conflict concern the

ability to transmit and maintain emotions through group socialization [23]. People in groups with high levels of consensus regarding task issues express greater satisfaction and a desire to stay in that same groups [24].

In contrast, regarding conflicts in relationships among work group members, Walton and Dutton cited in [22] discussed that employees may experience frustration, strain, and uneasiness when they dislike or are disliked by others in the group.

Conflicts in workplaces are likely to evoke negative affective experiences in individuals. Thus, less conflict at work will maximize the positive affective experiences of employees. Hence, the third hypothesis can be drawn as follows.

**Hypothesis 3:** Employees with perceptions of less conflict at work will experience greater affective well-being at work.

- **Camaraderie**

Camaraderie in organizations is a major source of workplace satisfaction and plays an essential role in meeting social and security supports that relate to positive and negative affects, such as comfort, enthusiasm, loneliness [25], [26], [27]. People can provide and receive the support that is essential in everyone's life affective experiences because all societies worldwide are built on structures and ways of living together that maintain the advantage of social contact [28]. Thus, the greater an employee's perception of positive social contact, the more feelings fulfilling colleagues and one's needs of being in society they have, in turn positively influencing greater affective experiences. From this the fourth hypothesis is drawn.

**Hypothesis 4:** Employees with positive perceptions of camaraderie will experience greater affective well-being at work.

- **Autonomy**

According to the theory of self-determination [29], everybody has the need to feel autonomous. In the workplace, autonomy is how the rights of individual to freedom and dignity manifest [30]. When people feel autonomous, they feel free to choose to do things that they find interesting or personally meaningful to them, and in turn, this results in better workplace motivation, productivity, and well-being [4], [31], [32]. Thus, in the workplace where managers support autonomy, employees will feel good and positive about most things, and the opposite is true for employees who receive no such supports [33]. Thus, the fifth hypothesis can be derived.

**Hypothesis 5:** Employees with positive perceptions of autonomy in their workplace will experience greater affective well-being.

- **Job Goodness**

The characteristics of job "goodness" can be explained as the sense of personal value contributing to an organization and the matching of organizational quality. Features of workplace environments that are important to individuals may vary regarding personal values that serve as personal indicators [34]. Some people may desire to work in a workplace with highly valued role, contribution, levels of innovativeness or creativity, while others may wish to work with an organization that fits with their personal values. Desirable workplace features refer to one's own attainment of what is personally valued, and this determines one's welfare in the workplace [35].

Thus, when a person's desire or requirements meet the organization's workplace environment, outcomes [36] and job satisfaction [35], [37], [38] should be optimized. This derives the sixth hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 6:** Employees with perceptions of a job goodness which matches to their desires and is provided by the organization will experience higher affective well-being at work.

- **Authentic Leadership**

Employees are likely to consider a workplace leader as being effective in terms of authenticity, trust, and confidence, if they identify similarly with them, and if that leader improves positive emotional reactions among employees [39] and their well-being [40]. A leader with a high level of effectiveness increases cooperative behavior among colleagues, leading to both pleasant affects [41] such as feelings of emotional support [40] and unpleasant affects such as jealous and envy [42].

In addition, displays of emotion from leaders can have a powerful impact upon employees' emotions and emotional climate of the workplace [43], [44], thereby, influencing employees' perceptions of their leaders' emotional intelligence. Thus, authentic leadership is hypothesized to essentially influence affective experiences.

**Hypothesis 7:** Employees with perceptions of greater authentic leadership will experience higher affective well-being at work.

- **Fitness**

Person-job fit is the compatible fit between an individual and a specific job. It was defined as the fit between the ability of an individual and the demands of the job [37]. Person-job fit is critical for an employee's well-being and the misfit of a person and job may cause strain and stresses [45]. In contrast, when a person is put into the right job, there are opportunities for that person to minimize boredom and anxiety and maximize effort and enjoyment; this concept can be described as flow [46] and engagement [47]. Selecting a person whose inherent talents match job demands can also reduce turnover rates, as cited in [48]. Thus, the eighth hypothesis can be derived as shown below.

**Hypothesis 8:** Employees with positive perceptions of positive fitness will experience greater affective well-being at work.

- **Growth and Development**

Positive perceptions of opportunities for personal growth and development may provide workers with greater upward movement and security [28] and feelings of well-being [49]. It is human nature for people to dislike being stuck in one place [48]. People who perceive better opportunities for personal development tend to develop more drive and enthusiasm at work, feeling more motivated and rewarded, and experiencing greater enjoyment and meaningfulness [27].

In contrast, low-level job growth and insecurity are associated with high levels of tension and anxiety in employees and their families [28]. Even though an employee holds a position, substantial worry produces negative affective experiences. Thus, the hypothesis below on the opportunity for growth and development may be derived.

**Hypothesis 9:** Employees with positive perceptions of growth and development will experience greater affective well-being at work.

- **Role Clarity**

An employee's role at work can influence negative affective experiences such as stress when expectations regarding employee behavior are unclear or when in meeting one's own expectations it becomes difficult to meet those of others [50], [51], [52]. Less role clarity increases the probability that a person will be more dissatisfied with one's role and experience feeling of anxiety [51]. These discussions derive the following hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 10:** Employees with perceptions of role clarity will experience greater affective well-being at work.

### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1 Participants and Procedure

Employees at various large organizations in Thailand participated in a questionnaire-based investigation. Aiming for general insights across a broad range of workplaces, we collected samples representing employees from numerous different organizations. Before the distribution of the questionnaire, a telephone interview was conducted with general managers or head of institutions of the target organizations to confirm the characteristics of the various jobs and workplaces of prospective participants. Finally, 14 organizations were included (6 state enterprises, 5 private organizations, and 3 large public institutions). The questionnaires were distributed at the workplaces of the participating organizations, and collected one week later by one of the authors. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality.

The questionnaire yielded a response rate of 86.7% (690 questionnaires were distributed and 598 returned). The average age of the participants was 33.5 years old ( $SD = 8.40$ ). Among participants, 45.3% were males, 71.5% held a bachelor's degree, and 25.4% reported a master's degree. In their responses, 38.0% of participants reported their work content as administrative work and 45.1% as professional work. Among participants, 39.6% belonged to public institutions, 35.2% to state enterprises, and 25.3% to private organizations.

#### 3.2 Measures

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of measures of workplace environment characteristics that are expected to influence affective experiences. This part of the questionnaire included question items that assessed participants' perceptions of job goodness, conflicts, autonomy, camaraderie, authentic leadership, support for growth and development, and role clarity. Participants were asked to rate to what extent each item matched their own workplace environment using 7-point scales.

Question items included in this part are listed in Table 1. Items for job goodness were adopted from [36] 14-item of the Organizational Supplies Scale. Conflict was assessed using four items from [22] measure of relationship conflict and six items from [53] measure of task conflict. Job autonomy was assessed using three items from [54] and one item adopted from [55]. Camaraderie was assessed with four items from [55] workgroup characteristics. Leadership was assessed with five items from [55] characteristics of leadership and one additional item from the authors: "pleasant and safe physical environments are promoted." Fit between person and job was assessed using items adopted from [48]. Opportunities for growth and development were assessed using four items from [55] organizational characteristics sub-category and one item from job challenge under job and role characteristics. Role clarity was assessed using two items adopted from [55].

The second part contained the positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS) scale to assess participants' affectivity personality trait [56]. The PANAS scale consisted of two lists of 10-item positive and negative emotions. Thus, with this scale, independent measures of positive and negative personality traits of individuals were provided. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they experienced each particular emotion within a specified time period ("at this moment" used in this study) using a 7-point scale (1 = Very slightly or Not at all, 4 = Moderately, 7 = Extremely).

In the third part, affective experiences at work were measured using an affective well-being at work scale [25]. This scale consists of five bi-polar sub-dimensions that represent the presence of positive and negative affective experiences. Five sub-dimensions are anxiety-comfort, depression-pleasure, boredom-enthusiasm, tiredness-vigor, and anger-placidity. The scale consisted of 30 bi-polar question items, 6 items for each of the 5 dimensions. Participants were asked to score to what extent they experienced each feeling at work over past week with 7-point scales (1 = Never, 7 = Always). Scores for each sub-dimension were calculated as the average

response to the six question items belonging to the sub-dimension (after reversing the scoring for negative items that were specified in [25]). High scores for each sub-dimension indicated good affective well-being at work. The overall affective well-being score, representing overall affective well-being at work, was calculated as the average of the five scores for the five sub-dimensions.

Finally, the fourth part consisted of demographic and job-related questions such as gender, age, status, education, work experience, content of work, and industrial sectors of the organization.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Workplace Environment Antecedents

To identify the factor structure of workplace environment antecedents, an exploratory factor analysis with principle axis factoring with a Varimax rotation was conducted on the response scores to the question items for workplace environment. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.95, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was approximately  $\chi^2_{1378} = 23669.09$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , which indicated that the collected data were appropriate for functioning factor analysis. The factor analysis yielded an eight-factor structure with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and all Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of eight factors were higher than 0.70 regarding [57]. The cumulative contribution of the eight factors was 63.03%. Table 1 shows the summary of factor analysis results.

Items highly loaded on the first factor related to how well matched the organization was to a person in terms of a general evaluation of how "good" the job was. Thus, this factor was labeled "job goodness." For the second factor, highly loaded items especially related to either task conflicts or relationship conflicts. Thus, this factor was labeled "conflict". For the third factor, highly loaded items related to the freedom to complete work their own way, such as in making decisions or designing work methods. Therefore, this factor was labeled "autonomy". The remaining factors were interpreted in a similar way and labeled as follows: the fourth factor as "camaraderie"; fifth factor as "authentic leadership"; sixth factor as "job fit"; seventh factor as "opportunities for growth and development"; and eighth factor as "role clarity".

### 4.2 Gender Differences in Perceptions of Workplace Environment

Table 2 summarizes factor scores for workplace environment factors by gender, as well as results of *t*-tests between gender groups. The factor score for the second "conflict" factor was reversed (indicated as R in Table 2) so that the greater value represents positive meanings for all eight factors. As seen in Table 2, males tend to show higher scores than females, except for work autonomy. Males perceived workplace environment characteristics such as job goodness ( $t = 3.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the opportunity for advancement ( $t = 2.49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly higher than females. Males also had the tendency to perceive camaraderie, which is relationship among colleagues higher than females ( $t = 2.37$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, H1a was partially accepted.

### 4.3 Affective Well-being at Work Scores and Gender Differences

Table 3 summarizes affective well-being scores by gender as well as the results of the gender comparison. High affective well-being scores imply a positive experience for each dimension, while low scores represent negative experiences. Results of the *t*-tests showed that males tend to perceive positive affective experiences significantly more than females. This result supports H1b.

**Table 1:** Factor analysis results for workplace environment variables

Workplace environment variables	Factors (% of variance, Cronbach's alpha coefficient)							
	1 (15%, 0.93)	2 (15%, 0.96)	3 (7%, 0.90)	4 (7%, 0.89)	5 (6%, 0.92)	6 (6%, 0.89)	7 (4%, 0.84)	8 (3%, 0.86)
How much is "your contribution" present in your work?	0.724							
How much is "problem solving" present in your work?	0.719							
How much is "respect" present in your work?	0.693							
How much is "creativity" present in your work?	0.685							
How much are "knowledge and technique" present in your work?	0.671							
How much is "innovation" present in your work?	0.655							
How much is "variety in duty" present in your work?	0.632							
How much is "job stability" present in your work?	0.617							
How much is "superiority" present in your work?	0.614							
How much are "colleagues" present in your work?	0.589							
How much are "rule and procedure" present in your work?	0.569							
How much is "pay" present in your work?	0.519							
How much is "autonomy" present in your work?	0.478		0.458					
Pleasant and safe physical environments are promoted	0.475							
Organization policies are consistently and fairly applied	0.431							
How frequently do people in your work team disagree about opinions? (R)		0.860						
How frequently are there conflicts about the delegation of tasks within your work team? (R)		0.858						
How much emotional conflict is there among members in your work unit? (R)		0.843						
How frequently do members of your work team disagree about the way to complete a team task? (R)		0.833						
How much are personality conflicts evident in your work unit? (R)		0.823						
How much tension is there among members in your work unit? (R)		0.823						
How frequently do members of your work team disagree about who should do what? (R)		0.822						
How much friction is there among members in your work unit? (R)		0.812						
How frequently are there conflicts because of different points of view about work content in your work unit? (R)		0.811						
How frequently do members of your work team disagree about the tasks that your team has to carry out? (R)		0.706						
The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom to how I do the work			0.774					
How much do you have autonomy in making decision?			0.744					
People are free to express their personalities at work			0.742					
Your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about doing the work			0.708					
I have freedom in my work life			0.555					

**Table 1:** Factor analysis results for workplace environment variables (continued)

Workplace environment variables	Factors (% of variance, Cronbach's alpha coefficient)							
	1 (15%, 0.93)	2 (15%, 0.96)	3 (7%, 0.90)	4 (7%, 0.89)	5 (6%, 0.92)	6 (6%, 0.89)	7 (4%, 0.84)	8 (3%, 0.86)
There is open communication and trust among members of a workgroup and the atmosphere is characterized by friendly relations				0.721				
Members take pride in their group				0.713				
There are friendly, cooperative interactions between departments				0.691				
There is cooperative efforts among individuals to carry out difficult tasks				0.686				
A good job gives the individual a chance to use his skills and abilities				0.454				
Supervisor's ability to plan and coordinate the group's activities so that maximum performance is possible					0.741			
Group members' feelings of trust and confidence in the supervisor					0.692			
Supervisor encourages the development of close, mutually satisfying relationships within the group					0.641			
The supervisor is aware of and responsive to the needs of subordinates. Supervisor enhances others' feelings of personal worth and importance					0.575			
Supervisor helps achieve goal attainment through such as providing materials, equipment, and technology supports and other facilities					0.574			
My job is fit to my interest						0.826		
I am fit to job						0.771		
I am fulfilled with my job						0.690		
I have the opportunity for growth and advancement in my work life	0.409					0.467		
An organization rewards individuals for performance rather than seniority or other non-performance reasons							0.501	
An individual feels that the organization provides a vehicle for development and of desired personal skills, goals, and rewards	0.408						0.487	
An individual believes his organization performs an important function and offers unique opportunity for growth and reward							0.482	
An individual believes his profession has a good image to outsiders and provides opportunities for growth and advancement							0.418	
Your activities are specified in writing								0.653
Job responsibilities are defined								0.612

Note: Factor loadings less than 0.40 are suppressed; (R) indicates reversed score. In case of an item appeared in more than one factor, an item was counted for a factor which the highest loading appeared.



**Table 2:** Means and standard deviations of factor scores of workplace environments by gender

Workplace environment factors	Participants (n = 549)		t
	Male (n = 250) M (SD)	Female (n = 299) M (SD)	
1. Job goodness	0.138 (0.884)	-0.116 (0.967)	3.199**
2. Conflict (R)	0.007 (0.921)	-0.006 (1.025)	0.156
3. Autonomy	-0.053 (0.953)	0.044 (0.906)	-1.221
4. Camaraderie	0.102 (0.775)	-0.085 (1.023)	2.368*
5. Authentic leadership	0.007 (0.897)	-0.006 (0.927)	0.163
6. Fitness	0.022 (0.914)	-0.020 (0.949)	0.495
7. Growth / development	0.100 (0.782)	-0.082 (0.886)	2.487*
8. Role clarity	0.061 (0.848)	-0.051 (0.849)	1.535

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; (R) indicates reversed score.

**Table 3:** Means and standard deviations of affective well-being scores

Affective well-being dimensions	Participants (n = 598)		t
	Male (n = 271) M (SD)	Female (n = 327) M (SD)	
Anxiety-Comfort	4.653 (1.062)	4.388 (1.016)	3.108**
Depression-Pleasure	5.181 (1.087)	4.978 (1.092)	2.261*
Boredom-Enthusiasm	4.759 (0.953)	4.533 (0.985)	2.829**
Tiredness-Vigor	4.518 (0.985)	4.218 (1.049)	3.573**
Anger-Placidity	5.066 (0.965)	4.911 (0.889)	2.045*
Overall affective well-being	4.835 (0.869)	4.606 (0.843)	3.261**

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 4:** Pearson’s correlation coefficients between workplace environment factor scores and affective well-being scores

Workplace environment factors	Affective well-being sub dimensions					Overall affective well-being
	Anxiety-comfort	Depressio n-pleasure	Boredom-enthusiasm	Tiredness-vigor	Anger-placidity	
1. Job goodness	0.121**	0.188**	0.230**	0.166**	0.199**	0.212**
2. Conflict (R)	0.258**	0.259**	0.163**	0.168**	0.246**	0.258**
3. Autonomy	0.136**	0.139**	0.169**	0.157**	0.060	0.157**
4. Camaraderie	0.216**	0.307**	0.214**	0.185**	0.270**	0.282**
5. Authentic leadership	0.156**	0.183**	0.154**	0.128**	0.234**	0.200**
6. Fitness	0.173**	0.258**	0.365**	0.231**	0.260**	0.302**
7. Growth / Development	0.044	0.030	0.168**	0.154**	0.076	0.110*
8. Role clarity	0.200**	0.188**	0.220**	0.200**	0.232**	0.244**

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; n = 523; (R) indicates reversed score.

#### 4.4 Correlations Between Workplace Environment Characteristics and Affective Experiences

Table 4 summarizes the results of the correlation analysis between the factor scores of eight workplace environment factors and affective well-being scores (overall and its sub-dimensions). As can be seen in Table 4, all of eight workplace environment factors showed significant correlations with the overall affective well-being score. Furthermore, there was a correlation between most of the factors and five sub-dimensions—except for a few combination of affective well-being sub-dimensions and workplace environment factors (such as autonomy and the opportunity for growth and development).

#### 4.5 Correlations Between Affectivity Personality Trait and Affective Experiences

The affectivity personality trait scores of the individual participants showed significant correlations with the overall affective well-being score (positive affectivity:  $r = 0.477$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; negative affectivity:  $r = -0.547$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results are in line with previous studies that state that personality traits tend to significantly correlate with job satisfaction or happiness at work [58], [59].

#### 4.6 Workplace Environment Factors as Predictors of Affective Well-being at Work

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis using the enter method was conducted to determine whether workplace environment factors with control variables (work content, gender, and trait affectivity personality) can predict affective well-being at work. The combination of twelve variables including seven workplace environment factor scores and two personality trait scores that significantly predicted affective well-being at work ( $F(11, 522) = 7.943$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , at step 4). The adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.602. According to the criteria [60], the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were indicated no multicollinearity problem. The Durbin-Watson value in this study was fell in the acceptable range of no-autocorrelation between adjacent residuals. The standardized regression coefficients shown in Table 5 suggest that different background of work contents and genders of participants were not significant predictors of affective well-being. On the other hand, two types of affectivity personality trait and workplace environment characteristics (except for the opportunities for growth and development) were also significantly predictors to affective well-being at work. Although the opportunity for growth and development factor was not found to be a significant predictor of affective well-being here, the result of the correlation analysis still indicated its significance in terms of its potential correlation with affective well-being in the workplace. Thus, H2a, H2b, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, and H10 were accepted but H9 was only partially supported for the correlation with affective well-being at work.

**TABLE 5:** Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis with work content, gender, trait affectivity, workplace environment factors scores as independent variables and affective well-being as dependent variables.

Variables	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Step 4	
	$\beta$	VIF	$\beta$	VIF	$\beta$	VIF	$\beta$	VIF
Work content	.006	1.000	.009	1.000	.037	1.002	.045	1.012
Gender			-.149**	1.000	-.049	1.003	-.045	1.062
Positive trait					.475*	1.029	.356**	1.512
Negative trait					-.578**	1.003	-.473**	1.254
Job goodness							.059*	1.124
Conflict (R)							.131**	1.105
Autonomy							.075**	1.043
Camaraderie							.119**	1.121
Authentic leadership							.064*	1.058
Fitness							.109**	1.197
Growth/ Development							.020	1.064
Role clarity							.092**	1.044
Adjust $R^2$	-.002		.019		.560		.602	
df	533		532		530		522	
F	.018		12.116**		328.419**		7.943**	
Durbin-Watson							1.800	

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; (R) indicates reversed score.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Gender Differences

In this study, significant gender differences were found in the evaluation of three workplace environment characteristics, job goodness, camaraderie, and opportunity for growth and development, and in affective well-being scores of all five sub-dimensions. Males perceived all

workplace environment characteristics higher (except for autonomy) and had higher levels of positive affective well-being in the overall score and for all sub-dimensions than females.

One possible explanation for this result could be culture-specific characteristics of the samples in this study. Although gender roles have become more equal in many countries, Thai women might still perceive less chance for growth in their jobs, as women's social roles are still lower than men in Thailand. A lower perception of job goodness for women implies less opportunity to choose or to be chosen to perform meaningful tasks in a job. Thai women might have fewer alternatives to choose jobs than men do. As gender roles may be different across cultures, it is possible that these differences may be smaller or not significant when conducted in other countries with more gender equality.

Females also perceived less workplace camaraderie, which may imply that being friendly and building trust and friendships among Thai women is more challenging than for men. This could result in less positive affective experiences for females toward colleagues when compared with male participants. Similarly, as shown in Table 2, though differences were not statistically significant, female samples also perceived other workplace environment characteristics (except for autonomy) at lower levels than the male samples. The lower-leveled perceptions may result in having less positive affective experiences at work for women than men (see Table 3). These results support the discussion that women are more likely to experience negative emotions [61], and when negative experiences exist, it is hard to extricate them because negative experiences seem to be long-lived compared with positive experiences [9]. It is noteworthy that psychological and behavioral characteristics in social relations may differ across cultures. Thus cross-cultural comparative studies are worth conducting on this point as well.

## **5.2 Predictors of Affective Well-being in the Workplace**

### **5.2.1 Affectivity Personality Trait**

Positive and negative personality traits of individuals were found to be major predictors of affective well-being at work as shown in regression analysis in Section 4.6. This result confirms previous literature that claimed that an individual's personality traits can predict positive affective experiences [58], [59]. The results of regression analysis illustrate that even after merging personality traits with the effects of workplace characteristics in step 4, seven of eight workplace environment factors (excluding the opportunities for growth and development) still significantly contributed to predict affective well-being. This implies that workplace characteristic variables should be considered in combination of the personality traits of individuals if one wishes to promote a higher level of affective well-being in employees in the workplace.

### **5.2.2 Job Goodness**

Job goodness is the concept emphasizing the quality of work such as the opportunity to solve problems, opportunity to contribute, or being respected by others. These elements relate to job meaningfulness and reinforce employees' role identification [47], thus tending to increase level of enthusiasm (from highly correlation with boredom-enthusiasm sub-dimension of affective well-being). It is likely that the opportunity to solve problems by using one own implicit knowledge or to share knowledge to others would increase realization of individual's values and result in increasing the willing to work. The results suggest that employees with a high perception of job goodness are likely to focus on job goals, which improve levels of affective well-being, such as motivation and enthusiasm to devote themselves to complete tasks.

### **5.2.3 Less Conflict**

This study also finds that less conflict is a major predictor among proposed workplace characteristics for affective well-being at work. In addition, significant correlations between less conflict and pleasure and comfortable are observed. This result conforms to study of [24] which reported employees with less conflict in the workplace expressed more satisfaction toward group members. Less conflict in the workplace also implies to better social contact among colleagues in which everyone will provide best support to each other, resulting in the possibility of improving in

pleasure experience. On the other hand, the existence of high conflict might be likely to evoke anxiety and depression among individuals as rising up of unsatisfactory of employee who may face to dislike others or to be disliked from others. These negative affective experiences in turn could result in contagion from one individual to others because negative affects are more easily detected than positive affects and may have a longer life [9]. Thus, these negative feelings may not only reduce cooperation among members but encourage employees to leave [24].

#### **5.2.4 Autonomy**

Autonomy is also able to predict the level of affective well-being at work. Autonomy increases an individual's meaningfulness at work and one's ability to control situations; it also increases psychological well-being [62] and happiness [32]. In this study, autonomy shows significant correlations with the overall score and four sub-dimensions, but not with anger-placidity. Employees with autonomy probably tend to have more comfortable, energetic, and happy to actively complete tasks at their pace, using their methods, and with the feeling of social support from colleagues. Since everyone can work on their own fashion, this may decrease conflict at work which may be caused by controlling or inflexibility of the way to complete tasks. Thus, autonomy is considered to represent a sense of activity and energy context and may not be correlated with placidity in affective well-being.

#### **5.2.5 Camaraderie**

Camaraderie is a major predictor among other workplace characteristic variables and shows a particularly high correlation with depression-pleasure sub-dimension of affective well-being dimensions. Camaraderie likely increases affective well-being through the experiences of harmony and unity among colleagues, resulting in more compromising and pertaining to high pleasurable feelings. Meaningful conversations or discussions among colleagues either work-related or non-work-related can reinforce the positive relationship between them. Activities fostering family-friendly practicing or cooperation-oriented (rather than competition-oriented) may strengthen the bonding between workers in the positive way. Although the degree of camaraderie can vary across types of workplaces (e.g., open-plan layouts or separated spaces), community, or culture, every society still holds in common adaptive ways to engage in social contact or to live together [28]. For example, the common area where can encourage employees to have face-to-face conversation or the workplace layout which allow employee to have easily contact should be promoted in order to increase social interaction among employees.

#### **5.2.6 Authentic Leadership**

The findings also suggest that authentic leadership influences the affective well-being at work. In addition, there is a strong correlation between a positive perception of leadership and anger-placidity sub-dimension. This suggests that workplaces where employees perceive their leaders to possess a high level of leadership qualities are environments that are less likely to harbor angry climates. It implies that employees likely feel safe in a workplace when they perceive authentic leadership such as supportiveness or the ability to keep employee resistance at a low level, resulting in a highly placid climate. This sense of supportiveness from leaders is not limited to the workplace context but may enter other areas of life. When struggling with work or personal problems, employees tend to know where to turn and seek support. Thus, leadership is one of important predictor for affective well-being at work.

#### **5.2.7 Job Fitness**

Findings also show that job fitness has a stronger correlation with boredom-enthusiasm sub-dimension than any other sub-dimensions and strong influence to affective well-being. Job fitness is the connection between a person and their job, which results in the optimization of work functions and by building positive emotional responses such as motivation and enthusiasm to complete work. This echoes the concept of flow or motivation reinforcement [46]. The great fit shall increase the willingness to come to work and enjoy working with long hours by being absorbed in the involved activity with time flies, persisting to complete job and probably producing the better work quality from activity engagement, because flow state will strengthen bonding between task and an individual. Thus, job recruitment and assignment are also considered to be

the most important issues, which are correlated with employees' enthusiastic affective experiences.

### **5.2.8 Role Clarity**

Having greater role clarity influences affective well-being and correlates with placidity and suppresses feelings of anger. The results of this study are in line with [47]; clear and consistent expectations of work create a safe environment. Greater consistency in work probably results in safer and more placid experiences. This might also explain how role clarity may decrease conflict in the workplace and increase employee support because there is no overlapping regarding work roles. Thus, negative feelings such as anger may decrease and positive feelings such as pleasure and comfort may increase.

### **5.3 Implications for Managers**

Encouraging affective well-being at work is desirable and valuable in itself without any proof of beneficial outcomes. Eight of the workplace environment factors are proposed as potential characteristics of workplaces that increase positive experiences and seven out of them are significant predictors of affective well-being at work.

This study also reported the correlations between individual workplace environment factors and sub-dimension of affective well-being. Management does not necessarily have to implement all of the eight workplace environment characteristics at once. Instead, a focus on any of the smaller issues regarding workplace environment factors may contribute to improve affective well-being by increasing levels of positive affect among individuals in the workplace.

Despite the potential burdens and costs, promoting affective well-being at work would actually benefit the organization in terms of high group connection, hospitality among members, work commitment, and low turnover rate. Through high work commitment, workers may over time develop into professional employees with greater experiences, resulting in greater performances. In the long-term, affective well-being at work can benefit the organization to increase its level of sustainability. All levels of an organization, including top management, managers, leaders, as well as workers, can take advantage of the results of this study, and use them as guidelines to improve their affective well-being in the workplace.

Finally, the results of this study also suggest the importance of taking employees' gender and affectivity personality traits as well as workplace characteristics into consideration for workplace management. As genders differ in the perceptions of affective well-being and affectivity personality traits are significant predictors of affective well-being, it is recommended for managers to appropriately understand the traits of employees in the workplace and gender differences, and conduct the workplace management based on the knowledge.

### **5.4 Limitations**

Besides implications, this study does have limitations. Firstly, the data were collected at just one specific time. Antecedents such as workplace environment characteristics may influence affective well-being with time delays as long as months or years. Long-term observations might be necessary to identify causality relations. Also, affective experiences and its relations with antecedents may change over time. Thus, a longitudinal study could also be necessary.

Secondly, although the relationships between workplace characteristics and specific affective experiences were proved their significant correlations in this study, the causal analysis among them is suggested to carry out in the future study in order to justify the findings and proper practice in the workplace.

Thirdly, participants in this study were from a single country. Further investigations with samples from broader cultures and/or regions should be conducted to determine which of the results of this study can be generalized and which are culture-dependent. This also counts for further investigation in gender differences across cultures as discussed in Section 5.1. The expected

results of these cross-cultural comparative studies would be beneficial for management to optimize the promotion of affective workplace management depending on regions and cultures where the workplace is located.

Finally, the participants of this study were mainly working in professional and administrative roles. Further studies with a broader range of jobs and workplaces should be pursued in order to generalize the findings of this study and to identify antecedents depending on the nature of jobs.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between workplace environment factors, personality traits and affective well-being dimensions. The overall results showed that eight factors representing workplace environment characteristics were positively correlated with the overall affective well-being score and its five sub-dimensions. The results also suggest that personality traits and seven workplace environment factors were significant predictors of affective well-being in the workplace. Organizational managers may make use of results of this study as a guideline to improve or promote affective well-being in their workplace. According to limitations in this study, there are still some opportunities for further studies.

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