



## In Search Of Passion– Review Of Literature

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### Abstract:

*As business environment is changing faster than before, organizations are concentrating more on their manpower to cope up with such rapid changes. Now days, organization wants "Passion" in their employees as it is one trait which can turn failure into success. Passion is no more a word which has its place only in the area of romance or perusing hobbies but it has taken an important position in the realm of work also. The present paper intends to provide a systematic review of literature on the concept of passion, its types and outcomes. The dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2003) suggests that passion can be Harmonious and obsessive. Past researches reveals that passion can lead to both positive and negative outcomes depending upon the type of passion one has. Results of previous studies conducted in the area of non-work activities and work settings are presented in this paper.*

### KEYWORDS–

Harmonious passion, Obsessive passion, Passion.

### INTRODUCTION

"There is no more powerful force for achieving success than passion. You must love what you do. If there is one thing that will get you to success and victory faster than anything else, it is passion."(Robin Trehan). Every organization at present is fighting with the problem of survival in today's competitive environment. Hence, human resource has become a major area of concern as the problem of attrition, job dissatisfaction among employees, employee commitment towards job and its organization is affecting almost every organization leading to the problem of survival. To fight with such problems organization are trying their best by providing better working conditions, competitive perks, compatible job designs and many more that can lead to employee engagement. But one missing thing is the person itself. The personality characteristics of an individual also play an important role in making that person love and enjoy their work. Recently, researchers have started taking interest in one of those personality traits that can help organization in getting success that is passion. In this paper, based on results of previous researches, we have tried to find out the positive and negative outcomes of passion.

### CONCEPT OF PASSION

Passion is derived from a Latin word "Passio" means suffering of Christ. From the start, passion was never seen as futile or entirely personal. It is transformational and redemptive, producing something of huge

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value. The concept of passion has a long philosophical history. But, in psychology, it is only recently that researchers have tackled the concept of passion toward an activity. Most empirical studies on passion pertain to romantic relationships (e.g., Hatfield & Walster, 1978) or are focused on concepts similar to passion such as personal interests (Krapp, 2002), commitment and over commitment (Dubé, Kairouz, & Jodoin, 1997), serious play (Rathunde, 1993), or personally salient activities (Waterman, 2005). Regardless of their different names, these concepts have in common an engagement toward an activity, an emotional component attached to the activity, and a level of value toward the activity. Considering the research done on these different constructs, Vallerand and colleagues (2003) defined passion as a “strong inclination toward an activity that people like, find important, and in which they invest significant time and energy”. According to the definition, in order to have passion one needs to have three things-liking for the task, activity valuation and investment of time and energy. Past research has indeed shown that activity valuation (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994), time and energy expenditure (Emmons, 1999), and liking for the task (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993) are all associated with engagement in activities in which people are interested.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF PASSION

As proposed by Dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2003), passion can be classified into two different types-Harmonious passion and Obsessive passion. Harmonious passion can be defined as a motivational force leading the individual to choose to engage in his or her activity. The individual thus freely devotes time and energy to the activity while remaining in control of his or her engagement. This creates a sense of preference and personal endorsement about pursuing the activity (Vallerand et al., 2003). Also, as its name implies, harmonious passion is in harmony or in balance with other life areas. In contrast, obsessive passion is characterized by an internal pressure to practice the activity. The individual has thus lost control over the activity and feels a constant pressure or an internal compulsion to engage in it. The activity takes a disproportionate place in the individual's identity and daily life, which in turn generates conflicts between the passionate activity and other life areas. Obsessive passion can even make the person dependent on his or her activity (Vallerand & Houliort, 2003), just as a person becomes dependent on an illegal substance. This in turn creates rigid persistence in the activity, leading people to engage in the passionate activity even when the conditions surrounding activity engagement makes it ill advised or counterproductive.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF PASSION

Researchers are of the opinion that the development of passion toward an activity results from three basic psychological processes: activity selection, activity valuation, and the type of internalization of the activity representation in one's identity (Vallerand, 2003). Activity selection refers to the person's preference for the activity over other activities. Activity valuation (or importance given to the activity) plays an important role in the internalization of the activity in identity and self. Past research shows that when the object of interest is highly valued and meaningful, one is liable to internalize the valued object, to make it part of him or herself (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Deci et al., 1994). The more valued the activity, the more the activity will be internalized in the person's identity, and, therefore, the more passionate the person will be toward this activity. Once an interesting activity becomes highly valued, the type of passion that will develop is determined by the type of internalization that takes place. A controlled internalization of the activity representation is expected to lead to the development of an obsessive passion and an autonomous internalization to a harmonious passion. Results show that internalization process is based upon personality and social factors. The extent to which the social environment promotes the person's autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1987) toward activity selection and activity valuation determines the internalization process. Research has also shown that autonomy support from parents and teachers facilitates children's autonomous internalization of values and regulations of non-interesting activities such as school (see Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Thus, autonomy support will facilitate the autonomous internalization of the interesting activity in one's identity and self leading to harmonious passion. Controlling behavior from important social agents would facilitate a controlled internalisation of the activity in one's identity, thereby leading to an obsessive passion. A second determinant of the internalisation process deals with one's personality (Vallerand & Houliort, 2003; Vallerand & Miquelon, 2007; Vallerand et al., 2006). Past research (see Vallerand, 1997, 2001) has shown that an autonomous personality orientation (having a tendency to do things out of pleasure and/or choice) leads to the internalization of non-interesting activities in the self resulting in harmonious passion. In contrast, having a controlled personality orientation (to do things out of external and/or inner pressure) leads to the pressured internalisation of non-interesting activities in the person resulting in obsessive passion (Guay, Mageau, & Vallerand, 2003; Vallerand, 1997,

2007).

#### **PASSION FOR ACTIVITIES**

Research in different life domains has supported the dualistic model of passion. Results of the research conducted in various non-work activities such as sport (e.g., Vallerand et al., 2006; Vallerand et al., 2008) and self-reported favourite activities (e.g., Philippe, Vallerand, & Lavigne, 2009; Stenseng, 2008), lead to a conclusion that harmonious passion is generally linked to positive consequences and that obsessive passion is related to less positive or negative consequences (e.g., Carbonneau, Vallerand, Fernet, & Guay, 2008).

#### **PASSION AND AFFECTIVE OUTCOMES**

Results indicate that harmonious passion is related to greater levels of vitality (Houffort, Koestner, Vallerand, & Blanchard, 2009), more positive emotions during and after the practice of the passionate activity, and more episodes of complete absorption or flow. In case of harmonious passion, activity is in control of the person. They can decide to engage or not in the activity and when (Vallerand et al., 2003). Obsessive passion was unrelated to these positive outcomes or related to negative outcomes such as conflicts in romantic relationships due to excessive activity engagement (Séguin- Lévesque, Laliberté, Pelletier, Blanchard, & Vallerand, 2003) and lower positive affect when people were prevented from engaging in the activity (Mageau & Vallerand, 2007).

#### **PASSION AND PERSISTENCE**

The results suggest that obsessive passion is implicated in behavioral persistence that may be self defeating for the person. People cannot help but to continue activity engagement even when positive returns are no longer forthcoming and the activity has become detrimental to them (Vallerand et al., 2003, Rousseau, et al 2003). People who display harmonious passion can take into consideration the nature of the situation (has the activity become hazardous for me?) and can decide whether to continue or cease participation in the passionate activity (Vallerand, et al 2003).

#### **PASSION AND PERFORMANCE**

At least 10 years of continuous deliberate practice involving several hours each day is needed to achieve international levels of performance in a given field (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). Common sense says that continued persistence in the activity at the expense of other life activities may be necessary to reach high achievement over time. As such persistence would appear to be rigid in nature; it would seem that obsessive passion may be required for high-level performance. However, such rigid persistence may also lead to mental staleness and even physical injuries that are not conducive to optimal performance (Vallerand, et al 2003). Even if harmonious passion may not lead individuals to persist at all costs in the activity, it might however lead to higher levels of performance. Because harmonious passion is characterized by a more flexible psychological state that should lead the person to focus better (Vallerand, et al 2003), to experience less pressure and anxiety, as well as to prevent mental staleness and physical injuries from occurring.

#### **PASSION AND PHYSICAL HEALTH**

The results indicates that obsessive passion may potentially affect people's health by leading them to engage in certain risky activities while they should not (Rip, Fortin, & Vallerand 2006, Vallerand, et al 2003). Due to its rigid motivational pattern, OP may lead to engage in activities while they should not, thereby lead to potential health problems. As a result OP leads to health problems such as injuries and negative health symptoms. (Vallerand, et al 2003). Harmonious passion can take into consideration the nature of the situation (has the activity become hazardous for me?) and can decide whether to continue or cease participation in the passionate activity (Vallerand, et al 2003).

#### **PASSION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT**

Results show that harmonious passion positively predicts positive indices of psychological adjustment (life satisfaction, meaning in life, and vitality) but negatively predicts negative indices (anxiety and depression).

On the contrary, obsessive passion positively predicts anxiety and depression, was negatively related to life satisfaction, and was unrelated to vitality and meaning in life (Rousseau and Vallerand, 2003). Research with young adults and teenagers using different measures has produced similar results. In particular, harmonious passion was positively related to life satisfaction and vitality (Vallerand, Salvy, et al., 2007), while obsessive passion was either negatively related or unrelated to these indices (Vallerand, Salvy, et al., 2007b). The results also suggest that harmonious passion positively contributes to psychological adjustment through the repeated experience of situational positive affect. Rigid persistence in activities with negative returns for the person is the reason of negative influence of obsessive passion on psychological adjustment (Vallerand, Salvy, et al., 2007b).

#### **PASSION AND ENVIRONMENT**

Past research has systematically shown that harmonious passion is related to a multitude of positive outcomes whereas obsessive passion is either unrelated to positive outcomes or positively related to negative outcomes. But it is not always true because environment in which a person is performing its passionate activity also plays a vital role. The research findings reveal that a match between the person and the environment may be necessary for psychological adjustment to be maximized (Catherine E. Amiot, Robert J. Vallerand, Céline M. Blanchard, 2006). Under certain circumstances, obsessive passion may not invariably lead to poor outcomes and harmonious passion to positive outcomes. It was found that participants who experienced the highest levels of psychological adjustment were either those who were obsessively passionate and who performed in a highly competitive environment or those who were harmoniously passionate and performed in a less competitive environment. This is because harmoniously passionate individuals may experience conflict between high levels of continued activity involvement necessary to reach high levels of performance, on one hand, and their harmoniously oriented needs and goals, which also may include personal development and engagement in other life pursuits, on the other. However, the neglect of other life pursuits at the expense of increased engagement in the activity may actually fit in well with the objectives hunted by obsessively passionate athletes. In such conditions, these individuals would therefore experience less conflict than their harmoniously passionate counterparts. The exact opposite situation will take place in less competitive environments where less conflict would be experienced by harmoniously passionate than obsessively passionate individuals (Catherine E. Amiot, Robert J. Vallerand, Céline M. Blanchard, 2006). These findings are in line with past research that has shown that a Person-Environment fit is related to several psychological benefits, including work satisfaction, personal accomplishment, positive affect, enjoyment, less emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, somatic complaints, and negative affect (Brandstatter, 1994; O'Connor & Vallerand, 1994; Smith & Tziner, 1998; Tauer & Harackiewicz, 1999; Wallenius, 1999).

#### **PASSION AT WORK**

Results from a series of experiments (Houfort, Koestner, Vallerand, and Blanchard, 2003a; Houfort, Koestner, Vallerand, and Blanchard, 2003b) involving over 300 workers from various fields confirmed the applicability of the passion concept in the workplace. Using the three criteria of liking for the job, valuing the job, and spending time and energy on one's job, findings of the study reveals that 77% of workers experienced at least a moderate level of passion toward their work. It can be concluded that, passion is not reserved for the chosen few but seems to be experienced by a majority of workers. The proportion of passionate workers was evenly spread between the two types of passion with 38% of workers having a harmonious passion and 39% having an OP. Thus, it can be concluded that the two types of passion prevail in the work place.

#### **CONCEPT OF PASSION IN AN ORGANIZATION**

Recently passion for job is defined as a "job attitude comprising both affective and cognitive elements that embody the strong inclination that one has towards one's job" (Violet T. Ho, Sze-Sze Wong and Chay Hoon Lee, 2011). The first fundamental element of job passion is affective in nature, capturing the strong, intense liking for and enjoyment of the job; the second element is a cognitive one capturing the perceived importance or significance of the job to the individual, such that the job becomes internalized to the self and defines who the individual is (Cardon et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2003). Hence, in order for individuals to be considered as having job passion, they must have intense liking for the job as well as view the job as

personally important to them. A person who is passionate about his job as a research scientist would not only love his job but also consider the job to be vital to his self-concept, such that he defines himself as a scientist first and foremost, rather than by the other roles he may play.

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT AND NEED SATISFACTION**

Results indicate that harmonious passion was positively related to psychological adjustment and obsessive passion was negatively related to psychological adjustment (Vallerand, 2008). In addition, the results also suggest that the relation between harmonious passion and psychological adjustment at work is mediated by need satisfaction (Vallerand & Houliort, 2003). Particularly, results suggested that harmonious passion at work leads to psychological adjustment because this type of passion facilitates the satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000), these three basic human needs are essential for mental health and optimal functioning in various settings (Ryan & Deci, 2000) including work (Gagné & Forest, 2009). Results showed that obsessive passion was unrelated to need satisfaction but instead was directly and negatively linked to psychological adjustment.

#### **LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES OF PASSION ON PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT**

Results indicate that workers with obsessive passion cannot control their urge to work and they can't live without their work which leads to adjustment problem after retirement. Although workers with harmonious passion completely taken by their job still manage to control their need to work and their job ends up being in harmony with other activities in their life. Such influence of passion on retirement is mediated by worker's feeling of autonomy, competence and relatedness that take place in the workplace (Vallerand & Houliort, 2003). Workers with harmonious passion tends to invest time in socializing with others, attending training programs ,etc which in turn satisfies their three basic needs during their work span. This is not the case with obsessive passion and hence they are more dissatisfied during retirement.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF PASSION AT WORK**

Harmonious passion at work positively relates to optimal human functioning variables such as concentration, sense of control, autotelic experience, and vitality, and affective commitment, mental health while obsessive passion is negatively related to mental health and to autotelic experience (Jacques Forest, Geneviève A. Mageau Claude Sarrazin Estelle M. Morin, 2011). Results also indicate that only obsessive passion is related to behaviours that might bring out intra and interpersonal conflicts and rigid persistence: bringing work home, working during holidays, and thinking about work after work hours. Findings of previous studies conducted on non-work activities also supported the same, which showed that obsessive passion is positively associated with intra (Stenseng, 2008) and interpersonal conflicts (Séguin-Lévesque et al., 2003), as well as with behavioral rigidity (Rip et al., 2006). Whereas, harmonious passion is not related to these harmful behaviors but is linked to control over one's professional life, career satisfaction, and fun at work.

#### **PASSION, JOB SATISFACTION AND BURNOUT**

Results reveal that increases in harmonious passion will lead to increase in job satisfaction and decrease in burnout symptoms over time. On the other hand, increases in obsessive passion seems unrelated to such outcomes (Noemie Carbonneau and Robert J. Vallerand, Claude Fernet, Frederic Guay, 2008). Involvement in an activity central to one's life contributes to one's personal well-being to the extent that harmonious passion underlies such involvement. On the contrary, high activity involvement triggered by obsessive passion may not afford similar benefits.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on cited researches it can be concluded that having passion in harmonious form can prove beneficial to both the individual as well as the organization. Findings of previous researches reveal that developing harmonious passion can lead to more positive outcomes as compared to obsessive passion. So, organizations should try to create such an environment which supports the development of harmonious passion among its employees. As hiring passionate employee will not be enough, but keeping their passion



alive is also important. In future, researchers can look forward for identifying those factors which contribute in the development of harmonious passion.

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