

Journal of Organizational Behavior

Special Issue Call for Papers

Work Passion Research: Taming Breadth and Promoting Depth

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Overview

Jon Bon Jovi once said that “[n]othing is as important as passion. No matter what you want to do with your life, be passionate” (quoted in Vallerand, 2015, p. 8). In unison with Jon Bon Jovi’s motto, the slogans “follow your passion” and “passion is the key ingredient for career success” have increasingly penetrated business press in recent years (e.g., Collamer, 2019; Hedges, 2017). Organizations also claim that cultivating worker passion is “a cornerstone of talent development” (Hagel, Brown, Ranjan, & Byler, 2014) and strive to hire and retain passionate workers. The word *passion* that originated from the Latin root *patior* “to suffer” has therefore reincarnated into what we now view as a somewhat magic force and a powerful motivator that makes one’s work meaningful.

However, more than a decade since Robert Vallerand’s (2003) article introduced the notion of “passion for an activity” and Vallerand and Houliort (2003) extended this notion to the work context, our understanding of the work passion phenomenon remains largely elusive. First, despite a rapidly emerging literature on work passion (over 120 published articles since 2003), little consensus exists regarding how passion in the context of work is or should be conceptualized, defined, or operationalized. This has resulted in a number of different streams of passion research developing in silos despite their notable similarities: the *dualistic model of passion* (DMP; e.g., Astakhova & Porter, 2015; Ho, Kong, Lee, Dubreuil, & Forest, 2018; Ho, Wong, & Lee, 2011; Kong & Ho, 2018), *entrepreneurial passion* (e.g., Cardon, Gregoire, Stevens, & Patel, 2013; Cardon, Wincent, Singh, & Drnovsek, 2009), the *Employee Work Passion Appraisal Model* (EWPAM; e.g., Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt, & Diehl, 2009), and the most recently introduced *Dynamic Model of Passion* (DyMP; e.g., Jachimowicz, To, Menges, & Akinola, 2018; Jachimowicz, Wihler, Bailey, & Galinsky, 2018). The potential drawback of such a proliferation of research streams is concept redundancy or concept contamination which constrains the future development of the field.

Second, the divergence of passion conceptualizations and measurements has hindered clear distinctions between work passion and established motivational constructs, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), calling (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011), grit (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007), job involvement (Kanungo, 1982), job satisfaction (Spector, 1997), workaholism (Oates, 1971), and several others. Although a few studies have attempted to empirically demonstrate an incremental predictive value of work passion over and above some of those conceptually similar constructs (e.g., Birkeland & Buch,

2015; Ho & Astakhova, 2018; Liu, Chen, & Yao, 2011), such research remains scant and piecemeal in nature and has spawned fair criticism regarding whether or not work passion is just “old wine in new bottles.”

Third, the majority of published studies on work passion are cross-sectional (e.g., Forest, Mageau, Sarrazin, & Morin, 2011; Houliort, Philippe, Vallerand, & Menard, 2014), raising concerns about endogeneity problems and the validity of causal inferences in proposed models (Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2010). Although cross-sectional studies are instrumental for validating work passion across various settings (e.g., cultures, industries, occupations) and for examining the moderating role of work passion, these studies cannot conclude causality with confidence. Cross-sectional studies also fail to capture the (intra-individual) malleability of work passion (e.g., Collewaert, et al., 2016) and (inter-individual) passion contagion (e.g., Breugst, Domurath, Patzelt, & Klaukien, 2012). However, preliminary evidence suggests that passion (in a non-work context) changes over time (e.g., Mageau et al., 2009). The application of experimental and/or longitudinal design, such as experience sampling methodology, will allow for an in-depth understanding of casual as well as dynamic work passion models. Additionally, because individuals tend to “form a shared team passion for a common identity” (Cardon, Post, & Forster, 2017, p. 284), multi-level investigations of work passion are warranted.

Special Issue Objectives

The emerging wave of work passion research shows promise but also points to the dire need for steering the field away from the breadth-focused expansion toward an appropriate mix of breadth and depth in work passion studies. This special issue aims to refine and reconcile existing theoretical frameworks on work passion, explore the causes, consequences, and boundary conditions around work passion, and differentiate work passion from established motivational constructs.

An indicative but not exhaustive list of questions that may be addressed by papers in this special issue includes:

- What are the different conceptualizations/definitions of passion at work? What are similarities and differences among those conceptualizations? How can existing work passion streams uniquely contribute to the literature if they continue developing in silos? How can they be combined into an integrative work passion framework?
- How should we measure passion? What are the criticisms of existing measures of work passion and how can we address such issues?
- Is work passion “old wine in new bottles”? How can we apply rigorous psychometric testing (e.g., substantive validity, content validity, test-retest reliability, longitudinal measurement invariance, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and predictive validity) to distinguish work passion from conceptually similar constructs such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, calling, grit, job involvement, job satisfaction, workaholism, and others?

- How can work passion be developed? Is work passion fully self-determined or can contextual factors (e.g., job characteristics, leadership, training programs, organizational characteristics or national culture) influence it? If the latter, do contextual factors (including cultural factors) have the same predictive value for different forms of passion (e.g., harmonious, obsessive, and entrepreneurial passion)?
- What are the short- and long-term attitudinal and behavioral costs and benefits, both within and outside of the work domain, of having work passion?
- Is work passion a dynamic construct? Can passion change within an individual? If so, what are the factors that spur such changes? Is passion contagious? What are the mechanisms and boundary conditions of either intra- or inter-individual passion change?
- How do cross-cultural differences influence work passion or its display? How should such differences be incorporated into the theory and research of work passion?
- How does work passion function across levels (e.g., individual passion, team passion, organizational passion)? How does passion at one level influence passion at other levels (i.e., bottom-up and top-down passion emergence)? How do changes at one level influence other levels (entry and exit of new employees in the team or organization, new leadership, etc.)?

Submission Instructions

Submitted papers should make a new and important contribution to our understanding of the work passion phenomenon. We encourage both empirical investigations of the above issues and innovative theorizing at micro-, meso-, or macro-levels.

Pending acceptance, the editorial team will organize a workshop (on work passion and entrepreneurial passion) at the 2020 Academy of Management Meeting in Vancouver, Canada, for potential contributors to the special issue. During the workshop, interested researchers will be able to present and discuss their manuscripts with the guest editors and other attendees. Note that the inclusion of a paper in a workshop will not guarantee acceptance of the paper for the special issue, nor is participation in a workshop required for submission to the special issue.

The deadline for special issue submissions is **December 15, 2020**. The special issue is intended for publication in **2022**. To submit a manuscript, please visit the website <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10991379> and select Manuscript Type as Special issue from the drop-down menu. Please direct questions about the submission process, or any administrative matter, to the Managing Editor at JOBEdoffice@wiley.com. For other questions related to the Special Issue, please email guest editors directly: Marina N. Astakhova (mastakhova@uttyler.edu), Melissa S. Cardon (mcardon@utk.edu), Violet T. Ho (vho@richmond.edu) or D. Tony Kong (dkong@usf.edu).

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