The Determinants of Work Passions: A Study of Education Sector

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Abstract. Nowadays, the workforce does encounter big problems in work-life as almost no one is passionate about their work anymore. Work passion is comparable important among educators to maintain their job performance. Over the years, researchers, organizations, and leaders have been struggling with the challenge of how to best create a motivating work environment and play a role in leadership to stimulate and maximize the employees' work passion and performance. The purpose of this research is to explore the organizational factors i.e., organizational climate, organizational justice, work motivation and job autonomy driving the work passion among the educators in Malaysia. Convenience sampling was employed in this study and data were collected from 150 educators across various types of educational institutions. Partial least squares (PLS), a structural equation modelling approach was used to analyse the direct effect of the four determinants towards the work passion of educators. This study reveals that organizational climate, work motivation and job autonomy had a significant direct effect on work passions. Further, work motivation appeared to be the most influencing determinant towards work passion. This research unlocks a fresh debate window and offers an interesting chance to advance our understanding by examining the current study's findings in various areas of existence and should not be limited to the education sector. Whilst extensive research has been undertaken to investigate the antecedents of passion in the fields of psychology and marketing, there is no particular study that thoroughly explores the transition from educator to work passion. This research consequently adds to the literature of passion by exploring whether the work passion of an educator can be transmitted in other service industries in Malaysia. In general, this research makes notable theoretical contributions.

Keywords: Work Passions · Organizational Climate · Work Motivation · Job Autonomy · Education Sector

1 Introduction

Nowadays, the workforce does encounter big problems in work-life as almost no one is passionate about their work anymore. A comprehensive report had found out that 87% of employees are not passionate about their work, while 13% are passionate about

their work [1]. Therefore, employees generally lack work passion in reality and they cannot achieve their full potential in the workforce [1]. Over the years, researchers, organizations, and leaders have been struggling with the question of how best to build a motivating work atmosphere and play a leadership role to stimulate and maximize the employees' work passion and performance.

Work passion is important among the employee in the service industry, especially the education sector. A teaching profession needs passion. This is because passion is one of the implementations for the teacher to agree to support them in continuing to perform the daily activities or natural work tasks to serve and nurture the future generation. However, most of the recent studies focus more on students' passion for academics rather than the teacher [2, 3]. The COVID-19 pandemic is the ultimate adaptive and transformative challenge for educators. There is no doubt that passionate teachers at all levels and in all sectors of education (public or private) are capable of extraordinary feats. Despite this, no studies to our knowledge have yet examined the factor affecting teacher work passion in Malaysia. Thus, this research will fill the study gap by analyzing the effect of the organisational factors and perceived importance on the work passion among teachers in Malaysia. Through the research process, work passion can be determined and will likewise assist the management with placing more attention on the work environment in cultivating more passionate educators.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Work Passion

Passion was described by Perrewe et al. [4] as a continuous tilt that affects the appraisal of the organizational environment by people. They synthesized the concept of Vallerand [5], which pointed out that passion is a strong persistence of self-evaluation activities that people like and value, and people have to consume their own pace and strength in this aspect [4]. But recently, management scholars have paid more and more attention to passion and this passion has been integrated into the working environment with ideas such as "passion for work" [6]. Strong identification with a line of work that one feels inspired to engage in and generates good effect from doing is referred to as a passion for work. Chen et al. [6] identified three major characteristics of work passion: favorable effect toward engaging in the job, viewing the work as a vital part of one's identity, and being driven to engage in the work.

Apart from that, different examinations have investigated the results of work passion and found that it is related to a wide scope of positive practices, from simply demanding performing undertakings to being highly involved in behaviors beyond formal role regulations. Individuals who are passionate about their professions are less prone to burnout, are more devoted to their professions, and are less likely to face work-home conflict or health difficulties that are frequently caused by workplace pressures [6]. Studies have indicated that harmonious passion is positively related to job satisfaction among university teachers in physical education courses [7].

2.2 Organizational Climate

Hadiyatno [8] defined climate as workers' impressions of the objective work environment, which includes the characteristics of the company and the nature of connections among employees while doing tasks. Individuals' perceptions of their work environment are largely influenced by organisational climate, which sometimes forecasts individual values and psychological interests [9]. Basically, organizational climate (sometimes called corporate climate) is the process of quantifying organizational "culture"; it precedes the concept of organizational culture. It is a set of attributes of the work environment that employees directly or indirectly perceive, and it is considered to be the main force affecting employee behaviour [10]. Thus, organizational climate is one element of the factor that affects employee work passion. In addition to salary, employees also want to benefit from the work, such as the appreciation of achievements, career development and growth, the harmonious atmosphere of the organization and management styles supportive and so on, these are to be considered in terms of organization. It is recommended that companies that provide better work quality and supportive work environments today may gain influence in hiring and retaining valuable people. Therefore, in this study Hypothesis 1 is proposed as follow:

H1: Organizational climate significantly influences employee work passion.

2.3 Organisational Justice

The concept of organizational justice has received strong support in enhancing other work-related results. In their research, [11] reported that organizational justice–distributive, procedural and interactional justice - has a positive effect on the nature of the job and life of workers. Distributive justice is characterized as fairness related to decisions within an entity relating to the allocation of resources [12]. Procedural justice identifies with the opinions of workers on the reasonableness of executives' practices and strategies that control the mechanisms prompting outcomes in dynamic [12]. Interactional justice is defined as the fair treatment of employees due to management decisions [12]. Zigarmi & Nimon [13] proved that procedural fairness and distributive fairness and other factors are very important for building employees' work passion. According to [13] asserted that fair, consistent, and fair application of organizational processes and procedures to all employees will help cultivate employee work passion and improve organizational performance from the perspective of sustainable growth and increased profits. According to Zigarmi & Nimon [13] pointed out to improve the employee work passion, management should be designed the work environment to ensure that attention to employee participation in the decision-making process (procedural justice). Therefore, in this study Hypothesis 2 is proposed as follow:

H2: Organizational justice significantly influences employee work passion.

2.4 Work Motivation

Motivation factors refer to the elements that make employees satisfied. The work passion of teachers, scientists, and technicians should be stimulating and inspired, when their work enthusiasm is driven by the motivation of the organization, their workability and

creativity should be improved and enhanced [14]. In a similar case, in addition to knowledge employees, a representative of the organization should also persuade and inspire their work passion According to Wei & Jie [15] motivation factor meets the needs of employees and inspired the passion for the organization. The improvement of motivation factor not only can greatly stimulate work passion, but also increase labour productivity. An employee who is continually unmotivated to engage in their work cannot be passionate about it [16]. According to the impact of motivation factor on work passion, this research can find that the motivation factor has a great effect on the employee work passion. Therefore, in this study Hypothesis 3 is proposed as follow:

H3: Work motivation significantly influences employee work passion.

2.5   Job Autonomy

It is possible to free workers with a high degree of job autonomy from bureaucracy [17, 18]. In daily jobs, they typically have the luxury of relying on their own choices. Subsequently, passionate employees with a high degree of job autonomy should not have to face unique work restrictions. To strengthen their work, they have more slack in voicing and sharing their thoughts. In comparison, the growth in task autonomy enables workers to invest in their own upbeat jobs [17]. If passionate employees appreciate the opportunity in the work they like, at that point they will place a great deal of energy into discovering problems and putting forward ideas for improving their work. In addition, autonomy tends to foster autonomous internalisation of behaviour, which is compatible with harmonious passion but not obsessive passion [19]. Actually, low-independence work would not inspire employees to take reckless actions [18], and the harmonious passion of employees for voice conduct would be undermined because of uncontrollable external conditions such as bureaucratic restrictions. Therefore, in this study Hypothesis 4 is proposed as follow:

H4: Autonomy significantly influences employee work passion.

3   Methods

This study is fundamentally explanatory and adopted the quantitative approach mainly because numerical data through mathematical and statistical concepts were applied to assess the relationships between variables to explain or predict events. The non-probability sampling (purposive sampling), was used in this study where data were purposively collected from a readily available and accessible population; teachers from various education sectors. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed but 150 usable questionnaires were collected which yielded a response rate of 75%. In this study, data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squared (PLS), a structural equation modelling (SEM) method based on the component-based approach. The data gathered were analysed using the two-step approach prescribed by Anderson and Gerbing [20]. The measurement models were assessed for adequate validity and unidimensionality before commencing to structural model effects and interaction modeling to test the hypotheses. There were total 61 validated measurement items were adopted and adapted from related previous works of literature [21–25].

4 Results

4.1 Demographic Profile

Among the total 150 respondents in the present study, the majority of them are female (64.7%). In terms of analysis by age, the largest group of respondents are at their age between 20–29 years old with a percentage of 50.7%. The majority of the respondents are single (54.7%) and the remaining are married with at least one child. Generally, most of the respondents are obtained a Bachelor's degree and above which counted 78%. 70% of them are full-time teacher with at least one to five years' experience (41.3%). This group of teachers mainly come from primary school (22.7%), higher education (21.3%), secondary school (15.3%) and follow by pre-school (10%), nursery (10%) and others. In terms of working hours, the majority of them are loaded with 31 to 50 h per week (58%) and earn below RM4000 per month (53.4%).

4.2 Measurement Model

Construct validity is composed of two integral components; convergent and discriminant. Indicator loadings were assessed initially before the assessment of convergent and discriminant validity. For indicator reliability, the rule of thumb is that the loading for the indicator must exceed 0.5, as suggested by Hair et al. [26]. As a result, an item with low loading (below 0.5), such as organisational climate (OC14), was discarded. The analysis was re-run and new loadings were gathered, as tabulated in Table 1.

To investigate the convergent validity, Hair et al. [26] indicated that the average variance extracted (AVE) which is the mean-variance extracted for building loading items were all above the recommended value of 0.5 or higher [26]. All AVE values for this sample were higher than the threshold value of 0.5 from 0.636 to 0.895. In sum, for all constructs, the convergent validity was met. All the composite reliability values ranging from 0.960 to 0.988 surpass the cut off value of 0.6 [27]. As such, it can be concluded that all measurements are reliable based on composite reliability.

To determine the discriminant validity of the constructs, Henseler et al. [28] suggested a method that would be the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of correlations based on a multitrait-multimethod matrix. While the discriminant validity has an issue where the HTMT value is higher than the HTMT0.90 value of 0.90 [29], all values seen in Table 1 were smaller than the suggested value of 0.90 suggesting that the discriminant validity was established. In addition, not all the confidence intervals of the HTMT values included value 1 in the range of intervals are assured that the constructs are empirically distinct [28]. In a conclusion, the study's measurement model showed adequate convergence and discriminant validity.

4.3 Structural Model

Table 2 shows the results of hypotheses testing on direct relationships in the structural model. The significance of path coefficients was determined to decide if a hypothesis is supported or otherwise. Among the four determinants for work passion, organization climate ($\beta = 0.190$, t = 2.855, p < 0.01), work motivation ($\beta = 0.484$, t = 4.636, p <

Table 1. Discriminant Validity of Constructs

Construct	OC	OJ	WM	JA	WP
OC					
OJ	0.871				
WM	0.818	0.897			
JA	0.704	0.733	0.752		
WP	0.727	0.726	0.805	0.786	

Table 2. Results of Structural Model

Hypotheses	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	Decision	R^2	f^2
H1: OC → WP	0.190	0.066	2.855	0.002	Support	0.74	0.035
H2: OJ → WP	−0.120	0.102	1.183	0.118	Not Support		0.009
H3: WM → WP	0.484	0.104	4.636	0.000	Support		0.178
H4: JA → WP	0.382	0.069	5.578	0.000	Support		0.242

0.01) and job autonomy ($\beta = 0.382, t = 5.578, p < 0.01$), had significantly positive links with work passion. Thus, H1, H3, and H4 are supported. The R2 value of work passion was 0.74; signifying that 74% of the variance in teachers' work passion was explained by the three determinants. The R2 values displayed an acceptable level of explanatory power (>0.67), as prescribed by [30] in identifying a substantial model.

Hair et al. [26] depicted that the relative impact of a predictor construct on an endogenous construct can be assessed by effect size. Effect size (f2) determines if an exogenous latent construct has a substantial, moderate or weak impact on an endogenous latent construct [31]. Cohen [32] suggested a guideline measure based on the magnitude of f2 at 0.35 (large effects), 0.15 (medium effects), and 0.02 (small effects). In this study, the results of f2 tabulated in Table 2 revealed that all the relationships with small to medium effect sizes ranged from 0.009 to 0.242.

5   Discussion

The findings revealed that the organization climate, work motivation, and job autonomy were significantly associated with work passion. In line with previous studies, Obeng et al. [33] found that a good organisational climate would generate harmonious work passion toward attaining job performance, therefore policies and methods that reflect a positive organisational climate should be used to spark employees' harmonious work passion. Intellectual fulfillment and happiness are important concepts in motivational works of literature [34, 35]. Teacher motivation leads to the work of teachers which in turn contributes to student satisfaction and learning outcomes. In other terms, teachers will have either positive or negative effects on students. Students' learning outcomes

are based on teacher motivation because it is an integral component of classroom effectiveness, curriculum efficiency, and teaching effectiveness. Likewise, work motivation appeared to be the key factor that influences employees' passion for their work to show in educational contexts, and it was proven in the previous study that motivation is a core to the experience of work passion [16]. In addition, job autonomy reported significant influences on work passion among the educators. The finding is consistent with the premise that the experience of autonomy support in the workplace is universally beneficial because it nurtures innate human psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness [19]. Autonomy in teaching can play an integral role in the creativity of students because autonomous teachers are more passionate to initiate a creativity-friendly learning environment. Teachers with a high sense of autonomy are more likely to be open to the other talents and strengths of students and to bring greater awareness to their teaching activities.

To our contrary expectation, organization justice did not influence the work passion among the teachers in this study. Indeed, Okpu & Basuo [36] found that not all three elements in organizational justice are significantly influenced work passion, distributive justice appeared to be a non-significant factor to work passion. This research indicates that gender has a modest view of justice, but unlike what was predicted, the perceptions of organizational justice are higher for females than males, which is apparent from the consistently higher percentages of women in each dimension of justice. Whatever the cause, females tend to provide a more positive view of organizational activities and seem to be more pleased with whatever the organization is capable of offering, behaviors, and attitudes that employers consistently really like pursue the most.

6   Conclusion

This research unlocks a fresh debate window and offers an interesting chance to advance our understanding by examining the current study's findings in various areas of existence. It is recommended that other research designs such as longitudinal or qualitative design be used to expand the various characteristics of the respondents, and test work passion factors among employees to obtain richer and in-depth information about employee work passion. There are also chances to explore whether one's passion for any career can be passed to another such as newscaster, accountant, businessman/woman, musician, actress, etc. Apart from that, a post-positivist approach can be used to minimize the interpretability by using the survey based on the platform done in this study. In the nutshell, research on work passion and education is indeed recent for the researcher, so it is still very rare for them. Nonetheless, numerous researches have reported on a broad range of work passion's impacts within the educational environment, especially on the benefits of harmonious passion. People's passion is not a fixed feature, school administrations can adopt some strategies to enhance the passion of teachers, such as support for teacher's autonomy, emphasizing the usefulness of teaching content, suggesting activity levels for teachers, providing positive feedback, and attention processes from teachers. Not the actual outcome alone.

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