

Title – Is Passion Influential? An Empirical Investigation of Managerial Displays of Passion on Employee Performance and Engagement

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Abstract:

Research empirically investigating the construct of passion has only just become forefront in the field of industrial-organizational psychology. It began to flourish when Vallerand and his colleagues introduced the dualistic model of passion, comprised of harmonious and obsessive passion. These two types of passion are distinguished by how a passionate activity is internalized by an individual. Harmonious passion is internalized in an autonomous manner, free from external pressures where the passionate activity remains in harmony with other aspects of the self. Contrarily, obsessive passion is internalized in a controlled manner, where an individual engages in an activity due to external pressure and that activity becomes a major aspect of his or her self-concept. Researchers have taken Vallerand's model and linked these two types of passion to differing organizational outcomes such as burnout, organizational citizenship behaviors, and performance. However, passion researchers have only sought to examine how the internalization of activities as passionate affects outcome variables for that person alone. Contrarily, we seek to examine how the display of passion by someone else, such as a supervisor, affects outcome variables for an individual employee. Few researchers have examined passion as a true, manipulated independent variable in this manner. Chen and colleagues, however, did manipulate entrepreneurial passion to investigate how displays of passion influenced funding decisions. We seek to use a similar method to investigate how displays of passion influence employee engagement and performance, as these two outcome variables are highly significant within the field of industrial-organizational psychology. Our study will use a random sample of residential psychology students at a Christian University. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: non-passionate or passionate. They will view a video with the corresponding type of supervisor, where affective displays of passion are manipulated. Using the same confederate and script, participants will be tasked with completing a business simulation task where they must research competitors for their university's online program. They will be randomly assigned to one of three competitors, whose website they must utilize to gather the necessary information to answer questions. The blocks of questions received will also be randomized, with participants receiving either all easy or all difficult questions. Task performance will be measured by number of correct questions completed within the given time frame. After completion of the questions, participants will be given a scale measuring perceived displays of passion as a manipulation check and a question about task likability to use as a covariate. Lastly, respondents will complete a measure of work engagement and demographic questions. We hypothesize that participants will both report higher levels of engagement and perform better when in conditions where the supervisor displays passion. Additionally, we expect to see differences in results for those who receive difficult questions as their task when compared to those who receive easy questions as their task. Consequently, if displays of

passion influence employee engagement and performance, organizations should seek to select individuals who frequently display characteristics associated with passion for supervisor and managerial roles within their company.