

**EMPLOYEE WORK PASSION:  
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR, EMPLOYEE AFFECT AND  
WORK INTENTIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In response to the evolving dynamics of the workplace in 21<sup>st</sup> century organisations, organisational leaders have attempted to harness the emerging concept of employee engagement as a competitive business strategy. However, the development of a precise definition of the employee engagement construct, a theoretical framework that explains its formation and a valid and reliable process by which to measure the concept has lagged behind its uptake in organisational practice. To respond to this situation, a model based on social cognitive theory that explains the formation of a construct related to employee engagement termed “employee work passion” has been proposed. The conceptual foundation of employee work passion is that the work experience of employees is shaped by cognitive perceptions and affective inferences stemming from ongoing appraisals of various organisational, job and interpersonal factors in the work environment. Research on employee work passion is evolving. However, the role that antecedents play in its formation remains unclear. Prior to this study, research on employee work passion using organisational samples in countries other than the United States of America had not been conducted.

Research over many decades in numerous organisational contexts has demonstrated that leadership behaviour and the individual values of leaders have significant effects on leader-follower relationships and on a range of positive organisational outcomes. However, little research attention has been given to the roles that leadership behaviour and leader values play in the formation of employee work passion. This study tested the hypothesis that employee cognitive perceptions of leadership behaviour and leader values are linked to employee emotional states or employee affect, which, in turn, predict employee behavioural intentions that are indicative of employees who are passionate about their work.

An internet-based self-report questionnaire survey was administered to all employees, representing multiple organisational levels, within three medium-sized Australian private sector organisations. The data was subjected to empirical scrutiny, in particular, multivariate analysis. The results of structural equation modelling indicated significant and meaningful relationships among a majority of the variables in the study’s hypothesised model.

The study's major findings follow. First, cognition and affect are inextricably linked in the individual's appraisal of his/her leader's behaviour. Second, the affective aspect of an employee's appraisal of his/her leader's behaviour is central to shaping an employee's subsequent behavioural intentions. This finding was particularly true for work environments where an employee perceived his/her leader to use supportive leadership behaviours or demonstrated other-focussed values or displayed self-focussed values. Third, employee positive affect was found to be a stronger predictor of employee work intentions than was employee negative affect. Fourth, this study confirmed the conceptual validity of the employee work passion appraisal process in an Australian organisational context. Implications for theory and practice and recommendations for future research complete this study.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AIC	Akaike Information Criterion
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
ASV	Average Shared Variance
CAIC	Consistent Akaike Information Criterion
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CLF	Common Latent Factor
CMIN	Normed Chi-square
CMV	Common Method Variance
CR	Composite Reliability
df	Degrees of Freedom
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
$\eta^2$	Eta Squared
EWPA	Employee Work Passion Appraisal
HRM	Human Resource Management
I-PANAS-SF	International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule–Short Form
LAP	Leader Action Profile
M	Mean
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
MSV	Maximum Shared Variance
NA	Negative Affect
OCB	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour
PA	Positive Affect
PANAS	Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
$p$	Probability Value
RMSEA	Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation
SCOOM	Self-concern and Other-orientation as Moderators Hypothesis
SD	Standard Deviation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SFL	Standardised Factor Loading
SMC	Squared Multiple Correlation
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRMR	Standardised Root Mean-square Residual
$\chi^2$	Chi-square
WII	Work Intention Inventory
WII-SF	Work Intention Inventory–Short Form