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Moslem. Behyarfar¹, Mehrdad.
Sadeghi^{2*}, Reza. Ebrahimzadeh²

1 Department of Management, Isf.C., Islamic
Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

Corresponding author email address:
mehrdad1361@iau.ac.ir

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Typology and Identification of the Components of Work Passion in the Workplace: A Qualitative Study Based on Thematic Analysis

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop a typology of the dual-faceted phenomenon of “work passion” in the workplace and identify its constituent components. This qualitative study employed thematic analysis to examine 70 valid English-language scholarly articles. The validity of the findings was confirmed by experts, and their reliability was verified using Holsti’s coefficient of agreement. The typology of work passion results from the interaction of two principal dimensions: (1) the psychological core, encompassing motivational drivers, cognitive engagement, and emotion regulation; and (2) behavioral manifestation, encompassing work–life boundary management and behavioral and performance outcomes. The intersection of these two dimensions forms a comprehensive matrix for the typology of work passion. Differences among types of work passion are not limited to the intensity of intrinsic motivation; rather, they also depend on how passion is behaviorally manifested and how work–life balance is managed. Understanding this matrix is essential for designing human resource interventions and preventing job burnout.

Keywords: work passion; typology; thematic analysis; behavioral manifestation; psychological core

Introduction

Work has become an increasingly central domain of contemporary life, not only because it provides economic security and social status, but also because it serves as a major arena for identity construction, self-realization, professional growth, social interaction, and the experience of meaning. Within this context, researchers in organizational behavior and human resource management have devoted growing attention to the psychological qualities that determine how individuals relate to their work and why some employees approach work with sustained energy, enthusiasm, persistence, creativity, and commitment, whereas others experience pressure, exhaustion, compulsive involvement, or emotional depletion. Among the concepts developed to explain these differences, work passion has emerged as an important construct because it captures the motivational and affective intensity with which individuals invest themselves in occupational activities. Work passion is associated with employees’ willingness to devote psychological resources to their roles, persist in the face of difficulties, experience vitality in occupational tasks, and interpret work as personally significant. Empirical research has increasingly demonstrated that job passion and related forms of occupational enthusiasm are linked to job attachment, organizational loyalty, motivation, professional growth, commitment, and satisfaction, suggesting that passion is not a peripheral psychological state but a potentially consequential component of organizational functioning [1-4].

The managerial importance of work passion becomes more evident when it is considered in relation to contemporary organizational expectations. Organizations increasingly require employees who are adaptive, proactive, innovative, psychologically invested, and willing to extend their efforts beyond formally prescribed duties. In service-oriented, knowledge-intensive, and dynamic work environments, merely possessing technical competence may be insufficient; organizations also benefit from employees who experience meaningful engagement and voluntarily mobilize cognitive and emotional resources toward their jobs. Research has shown that work passion can contribute to constructive forms of job crafting, customer service behavior, work engagement, commitment, and occupational innovation. For example, passion may facilitate employees' efforts to redesign aspects of their jobs, seek resources, expand developmental opportunities, and align work activities with their strengths and interests, thereby improving both performance and service-related outcomes [5, 6]. Similarly, the relationship between digital lifestyle and occupational outcomes appears to be partly shaped by work passion through organizational commitment and job innovation, highlighting its relevance in increasingly technology-mediated work settings [7]. Studies of educational and professional environments likewise indicate that job enthusiasm can be linked to professional competence, educational performance, and occupational development [4, 8]. Collectively, these findings position work passion as a potentially valuable psychological resource with implications for individual effectiveness and organizational sustainability.

Nevertheless, work passion cannot be understood simply as "more enthusiasm is better." One of the most important developments in the literature has been recognition of the dualistic or multidimensional nature of passion. Passion may be experienced in adaptive forms characterized by autonomy, internalization, meaning, and flexible engagement, but it may also become controlled, compulsive, defensive, excessively outcome-driven, or difficult to regulate. This distinction is particularly important because employees who appear highly devoted to their work may differ substantially in the psychological processes underlying that devotion. Some may engage intensely because their work is intrinsically valued and integrated with a coherent sense of self, whereas others may work with comparable or even greater intensity because of external validation needs, fear of failure, perfectionistic concerns, self-worth contingencies, interpersonal pressure, or an inability to disengage. The distinction between harmonious and obsessive forms of passion has therefore become central to explaining why superficially similar levels of work investment may produce substantially different psychological and behavioral outcomes. Research on customer incivility and emotional labor, for instance, has demonstrated the relevance of dualistic work passion for understanding how employees respond to demanding interpersonal work conditions, while individual differences such as conscientiousness may further shape these processes [9]. Accordingly, work passion should be conceptualized not merely in terms of intensity but also in terms of its motivational source, mode of internalization, regulatory quality, and consequences.

The social and organizational environment also plays a critical role in shaping the development and expression of work passion. Passion is not generated exclusively from stable individual preferences; rather, it can be influenced, reinforced, transmitted, or constrained through leadership, organizational climate, interpersonal relationships, and collective norms. Ethical leadership, for example, can strengthen employee work engagement partly through trust in the leader and harmonious work passion, indicating that leadership practices can influence the quality—not only the quantity—of employees' motivational attachment to work [10]. Similarly, passion may spread through formal and informal social influence processes, suggesting that employees' passion is embedded within interpersonal networks and can be affected by coworkers, supervisors, and organizational interaction patterns [11]. Research has also emphasized the role of psychological climate and

core self-evaluations in shaping job passion, further supporting the view that passion emerges at the intersection of person-level and context-level forces [12]. In this respect, work passion may be viewed as an organizationally consequential phenomenon produced by the ongoing interaction between internal psychological tendencies and external social and structural conditions.

The role of personal and psychological resources in the formation of work passion has also received considerable attention. Positive psychological states and personal capacities can enhance the extent to which employees approach their work energetically and constructively. Positive psychology interventions, for example, have been shown to improve job passion and job motivation, indicating that passion is at least partly malleable rather than entirely fixed [2]. Psychological capital may likewise influence job passion, job commitment, and satisfaction through employees' emotional experiences, emphasizing the close relationships among internal resources, affective processes, and occupational attitudes [3]. Spirituality and job virtue have also been linked to occupational enthusiasm, suggesting that employees' sense of meaning, ethical orientation, and transcendence may contribute to the quality of their relationship with work [13]. These findings reinforce the idea that healthy passion is likely to involve more than energetic effort; it may also depend on meaningfulness, self-regulation, congruence between personal values and occupational roles, and the availability of psychological resources that enable individuals to remain engaged without becoming depleted.

At the same time, the consequences of work passion can extend beyond conventionally desirable outcomes and may include problematic behaviors when passion becomes poorly regulated. Research examining work passion in relation to deviant behavior has shown that the effects of passionate work involvement can depend on broader organizational processes such as technology acceptance and commitment, illustrating that passion may coexist with complex and even contradictory behavioral outcomes [14]. This complexity is consistent with the broader proposition that high occupational investment can be beneficial when it remains autonomous, flexible, and value-congruent but detrimental when it becomes compulsive, rigid, identity-dominating, or excessively dependent on achievement. In practice, employees with maladaptive forms of passion may initially be perceived as exemplary because they work long hours, accept additional responsibilities, seek constant improvement, and exhibit strong result orientation. Yet such patterns can conceal chronic internal pressure, heightened sensitivity to evaluation, difficulty detaching from work, and progressive erosion of work–life boundaries. Therefore, the managerial challenge is not only to cultivate passion but also to distinguish between forms that promote sustainable performance and those that may create hidden vulnerability.

The boundary between work and nonwork life is particularly important in this respect. Passionate involvement can enrich employees' experience when it supports meaningful engagement while preserving the capacity for psychological detachment, recovery, family participation, leisure, and self-care. Conversely, when work passion becomes pervasive and boundary-eroding, individuals may remain cognitively and emotionally occupied with work outside formal working hours, thereby increasing the likelihood of exhaustion and role conflict. Such concerns are especially salient in contemporary digital workplaces, where constant connectivity, mobile technologies, and expectations of availability can blur temporal and psychological boundaries. The relationship between digital lifestyle and work passion demonstrates how new work arrangements may intensify or reshape occupational involvement, especially when mediated by commitment and innovative behavior [7]. This suggests that work passion must increasingly be studied together with work–life boundary management, recovery processes, and the behavioral manifestations through which internal motivational states are expressed.

A further issue concerns the relationship between passion and performance. On the one hand, work passion is frequently associated with constructive outcomes such as professional growth, attachment, organizational development, job crafting, innovation, and high-quality performance [1, 5, 8]. Job enthusiasm has also been examined as a factor contributing to work attachment and the prevention of destructive supervisory dynamics, illustrating its potential protective and motivational role within organizational systems [15]. On the other hand, external performance alone cannot provide a reliable indicator of whether an employee's passion is psychologically healthy. Two employees may display equally high productivity while differing substantially in their underlying motives: one may be energized by intrinsic meaning and autonomous engagement, while another may be driven by insecurity, compulsive self-validation, or fear of failure. The first pattern may support resilience and sustainable effectiveness, whereas the second may remain productive only temporarily before contributing to exhaustion, interpersonal strain, or declining well-being. Thus, distinguishing the psychological core of passion from its observable behavioral expression is crucial for understanding its true organizational significance.

Recent literature has therefore moved toward more integrative conceptualizations of work passion. Rather than treating passion as a single undifferentiated variable, scholars have proposed broader models that incorporate motivational orientations, identity, engagement patterns, affective dynamics, and behavioral consequences. Ensour et al. explicitly called for a new model of work passion, reflecting dissatisfaction with overly narrow treatments of the construct and emphasizing the need for a more comprehensive framework [16]. In parallel, research on occupational wellness in higher education has shown that work passion and emotion regulation can serve as mediating mechanisms linking broader occupational conditions to employee effectiveness and well-being [17]. Such findings point toward a more process-oriented understanding in which passion operates through intertwined motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral pathways. This perspective is particularly compatible with the idea that healthy passion requires not only strong motivation but also adaptive emotion regulation, coherent identity integration, and the ability to manage boundaries between work and other domains of life.

The educational and public-sector literature further illustrates the need for such differentiation. Studies of teachers have linked occupational enthusiasm to professional competence, educational performance, and organizational growth, reinforcing the positive developmental potential of passionate involvement [4, 8]. Likewise, passion has been examined in relation to work attachment, job regeneration, professional commitment, and the prevention of abusive workplace dynamics [15]. However, the fact that passion is consistently associated with valued organizational outcomes may create a practical tendency to interpret all intense work involvement positively. This assumption is problematic because high investment can arise from qualitatively different psychological processes. An employee who experiences work as meaningful, self-concordant, and growth-promoting should not be placed in the same conceptual category as an employee whose work involvement is driven by pressure, compulsive perfectionism, external validation, or chronic fear of inadequacy. Without a typological approach, these distinctions may remain obscured in both research and human resource practice.

Another important consideration is that passion has a relational and socially embedded character. Employees do not develop or express passion in isolation. Their work attitudes are continuously shaped by leaders, teams, organizational culture, recognition systems, professional norms, and interpersonal feedback. Passion contagion demonstrates that the enthusiasm of colleagues and supervisors can influence employees' own passion through formal and informal social mechanisms [11]. Ethical leadership can create trust and support harmonious passion, thereby enhancing engagement [10]. Organizational climate and core self-evaluations can influence the quality and intensity of job passion [12]. At the same time,

systems that overemphasize performance metrics, competition, constant availability, or external recognition may unintentionally strengthen more controlled or outcome-dependent forms of passion. Consequently, identifying different types of work passion has practical implications for leadership, performance management, employee development, well-being programs, and organizational culture.

Personality and individual differences also contribute to variation in how passion is translated into behavior. Work passion may interact with personality traits to influence proactive behaviors such as job crafting, while conscientiousness can moderate how different forms of passion operate under stressful conditions [6, 9]. These findings further challenge one-dimensional interpretations and indicate that similar motivational states may generate different outcomes depending on personality, environmental demands, and regulatory resources. Moreover, the relationship between work personality, passion, loyalty, and work attachment suggests that passion can operate as part of a broader network of dispositional and relational variables rather than as an isolated psychological factor [1]. From a theoretical standpoint, this reinforces the value of identifying configurations or types rather than relying solely on linear associations between passion and organizational outcomes.

Despite substantial progress, an important conceptual gap remains. Existing studies have predominantly examined work passion through specific antecedents, consequences, mediators, or dualistic distinctions, but fewer studies have systematically integrated its psychological core with its behavioral manifestations to construct a comprehensive typology. The literature provides evidence regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, harmonious and obsessive passion, identity, emotion regulation, psychological climate, leadership, job crafting, innovation, commitment, well-being, performance, and deviant behavior [7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17]. Yet these dimensions are often studied separately, which limits the ability to distinguish employees who are psychologically healthy and behaviorally balanced from those who have a healthy motivational core but increasingly boundary-eroding behavior, or those whose external performance remains high despite an internally vulnerable and pressure-driven motivational structure. A typological model capable of crossing the quality of the psychological core with the form of behavioral expression can therefore provide a more precise understanding of work passion and its heterogeneous manifestations.

Such a typology is also important for human resource management because interventions should differ according to the underlying type of passion. Employees with healthy and balanced passion may benefit primarily from opportunities for autonomy, growth, innovation, and meaningful participation. Employees with healthy but excessively immersive passion may require stronger recovery practices and boundary-management support. Employees whose apparently high performance is driven by contingent self-worth or external validation may require interventions focused on psychological safety, sustainable performance expectations, and less evaluation-dependent forms of motivation. Finally, employees exhibiting compulsive and exhausting passion may require more substantial organizational and individual interventions aimed at workload, detachment, emotional regulation, and burnout prevention. A nuanced typology can therefore help prevent the common managerial error of rewarding all forms of extreme work involvement without considering their long-term psychological and organizational consequences.

Accordingly, drawing on the growing literature linking work passion with motivation, leadership, social influence, psychological resources, identity, job crafting, work attachment, innovation, professional development, performance, and employee well-being [3, 11, 13, 15], the present study adopts a qualitative thematic perspective to synthesize dispersed

conceptual evidence and organize it into a coherent framework capable of differentiating major forms of work passion. The aim of this study was to develop a typology of work passion in the workplace and identify its constituent psychological and behavioral dimensions through thematic analysis of the relevant literature.

Methodology

The present study was conducted with the aims of “developing a typology of work passion in the workplace” and “identifying its dimensions.” Achieving this objective requires the identification of patterns, themes, categories, and relationships among different aspects of the phenomenon, including causes, factors, and channels of work passion within the data. Thematic analysis is specifically designed to identify, analyze, and report such patterns and themes within a dataset. This method provides a powerful means of condensing a large volume of qualitative data and presenting a comprehensive and structured representation of the phenomenon under investigation.

Based on the thematic analysis approach, the researcher first collected all texts relevant to the research topic, which in the present study consisted of 100 English-language articles concerning work passion. In the first stage, meaningful concepts were extracted from the articles. Following the extraction and categorization of the categories, they were classified into semantically similar thematic clusters, after which their reliability was assessed using Holsti’s method. Following clustering, basic, organizing, and global themes were identified. These themes were subsequently organized into a visual network referred to as a thematic network.

The research population consisted of all valid scientific articles published in English in the field of work passion. During the initial search of reputable databases, 100 relevant articles were identified. After a careful review of the abstracts and full texts and the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, including the screening of irrelevant or methodologically inadequate articles, 70 articles were ultimately selected through purposive sampling for the final analysis.

The analysis process was conducted by first extracting meaningful concepts from the texts of these 70 articles and organizing them into initial or open codes. After identifying common codes, the resulting categories were classified into semantically similar thematic clusters, or organizing themes, and global themes were ultimately derived. Holsti’s coefficient of agreement was also used to assess the reliability of the coding process.

The principal and central analytical tool in thematic analysis is its category system. Every unit included in the analysis must be coded; that is, it must be assigned to one or more categories. A category refers to a more or less operationalized definition of elements within the text. Every category definition must be clear, comprehensive, and appropriate. In thematic analysis, unlike ethnographic analysis or grounded theory, the category system is specified before coding (Mohammadpour, 2023, p. 104).

The researcher initially referred to the texts of the retrieved articles and extracted themes related to work passion (Table 1), while the meaningful concepts derived from these themes are presented in Table 2. The categorization of semantic clusters is presented in Table 3. Subsequently, after modifying and integrating common codes, the basic themes were extracted. Then, incorporating the views of a group of experts, the organizing themes and global themes were derived. The results are reported in Table 4, followed by the thematic network.

Findings and Results

In this study, 70 articles related to the typology of work passion were analyzed.

In the first stage, based on the texts of valid scholarly articles, the researcher extracted themes related to different types of work passion. The themes were derived directly from the articles, and an attempt was made to examine all relevant studies in detail and extract meaningful concepts associated with work passion. A selection of the themes related to work passion is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Concepts Extracted From the Article Texts

No.	Article Text	Extracted Category
1	Harmonious passion occurs when an individual autonomously internalizes an activity into their work identity; autonomous internalization leads to harmonious passion. Obsessive passion occurs when the internalization of an activity is controlled; work becomes important because of its inherent characteristics and comes to define the individual.	Identity internalization mechanism: autonomous versus controlled
2	Harmonious passion is voluntary in nature and does not interfere with other areas of life. Individuals become involved in work flexibly and nondefensively and possess a strong sense of self-worth. Individuals with obsessive passion demonstrate a lack of flexibility and greater defensiveness.	Voluntariness and flexibility versus defensiveness
3	Harmonious passion stimulates creative thinking and a tendency toward innovation. Passionate innovators take creative risks; sustained passion fosters continuous innovation; harmonious passion expands employees' creative capacity and inspires creativity and intrinsic enthusiasm.	Creativity orientation and continuous innovation
4	Obsessive passion originates from interpersonal pressure, social acceptance, or an uncontrollable urge. Because individuals experience external pressure to perform work and need to strengthen their self-esteem or obtain external rewards, they seek self-validation and reassurance from their workplace peers.	Dependence on external stimuli and social approval
5	Harmonious passion remains balanced with other areas of life. Individuals experience greater work–family enrichment and greater harmony between work and other life activities. Obsessive passion creates conflicts with other life activities and is associated with greater work–family conflict.	Role synergy and enrichment versus conflict

The researcher classified themes extracted from the article texts that were similar or addressed comparable subjects under basic themes in accordance with their conceptual content and organized them into semantic clusters, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Extracted Concepts Related to Work Passion

No.	Meaningful Theme	No.	Meaningful Theme
1	Agency, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation	10	Self-awareness, reflection, and constructive meaning-making
2	Psychological compulsion, control, and extrinsic motivation	11	Excessive engagement, rumination, and inability to psychologically detach
3	Dependence on external approval and validation	12	Flexibility, adaptability, and emotion regulation
4	Orientation toward growth, learning, and curiosity	13	Behavioral rigidity and defensiveness
5	Identity internalization, integration, and value congruence	14	Stress, anxiety, and negative emotional consequences
6	Identity conflict and value incongruence	15	Perfectionism, excessive outcome orientation, and competitiveness
7	Identity conflict and value incongruence	16	Extra-role behaviors, responsibility, and social openness
8	Role interference and lack of boundary management	17	Creativity orientation and continuous innovation
9	Self-awareness, reflection, and constructive meaning-making		

The researcher condensed the data and integrated similar and repetitive themes. The organizing themes were subsequently derived by summarizing and integrating the common basic themes. Finally, based on the research literature and study objectives, the global themes were named and specified. The resulting themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Basic, Organizing, and Global Themes

No.	Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Themes
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1	Agency, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation	Motivational drivers and orientations	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
2	Psychological compulsion, control, and extrinsic motivation	Motivational drivers and orientations	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
3	Dependence on external approval and validation	Motivational drivers and orientations	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
4	Perfectionism, excessive outcome orientation, and competitiveness	Motivational drivers and orientations	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
5	Identity internalization, integration, and value congruence	Identity formation and value congruence	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
6	Identity conflict and value incongruence	Identity formation and value congruence	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
7	Self-awareness, reflection, and constructive meaning-making	Identity formation and value congruence	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
8	Deep psychological engagement and sustained energy	Patterns of cognitive and psychological engagement	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
9	Excessive engagement, rumination, and inability to psychologically detach	Patterns of cognitive and psychological engagement	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
10	Orientation toward growth, learning, and curiosity	Patterns of cognitive and psychological engagement	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
11	Flexibility, adaptability, and emotion regulation	Emotion regulation and psychological consequences	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
12	Behavioral rigidity and defensiveness	Emotion regulation and psychological consequences	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
13	Stress, anxiety, and negative emotional consequences	Emotion regulation and psychological consequences	Psychological core (nature of the internal experience)
14	Balance, enrichment, and role integration	Boundary management and work–life balance	Behavioral manifestation (external actions and outcomes)
15	Role interference and lack of boundary management	Boundary management and work–life balance	Behavioral manifestation (external actions and outcomes)
16	Extra-role behaviors, responsibility, and social openness	Behavioral and performance outcomes	Behavioral manifestation (external actions and outcomes)
17	Creativity orientation and continuous innovation	Behavioral and performance outcomes	Behavioral manifestation (external actions and outcomes)

Based on the analyses conducted, two global themes were identified. The first global theme was the psychological core (nature of the internal experience), and the second was behavioral manifestation (external actions and outcomes).

Based on the findings obtained from thematic analysis and the dimensions identified through this process, the typology matrix of work passion in the workplace is presented in Table 4. Based on the results of the thematic analysis and the extracted thematic network, two final themes associated with work passion were identified: the first was the psychological core (nature of the internal experience), and the second was behavioral manifestation (external actions and outcomes). Accordingly, Analytical Matrix 1 was developed to classify the various types of work passion, and the characteristics of each type were identified and explained in the corresponding sections.

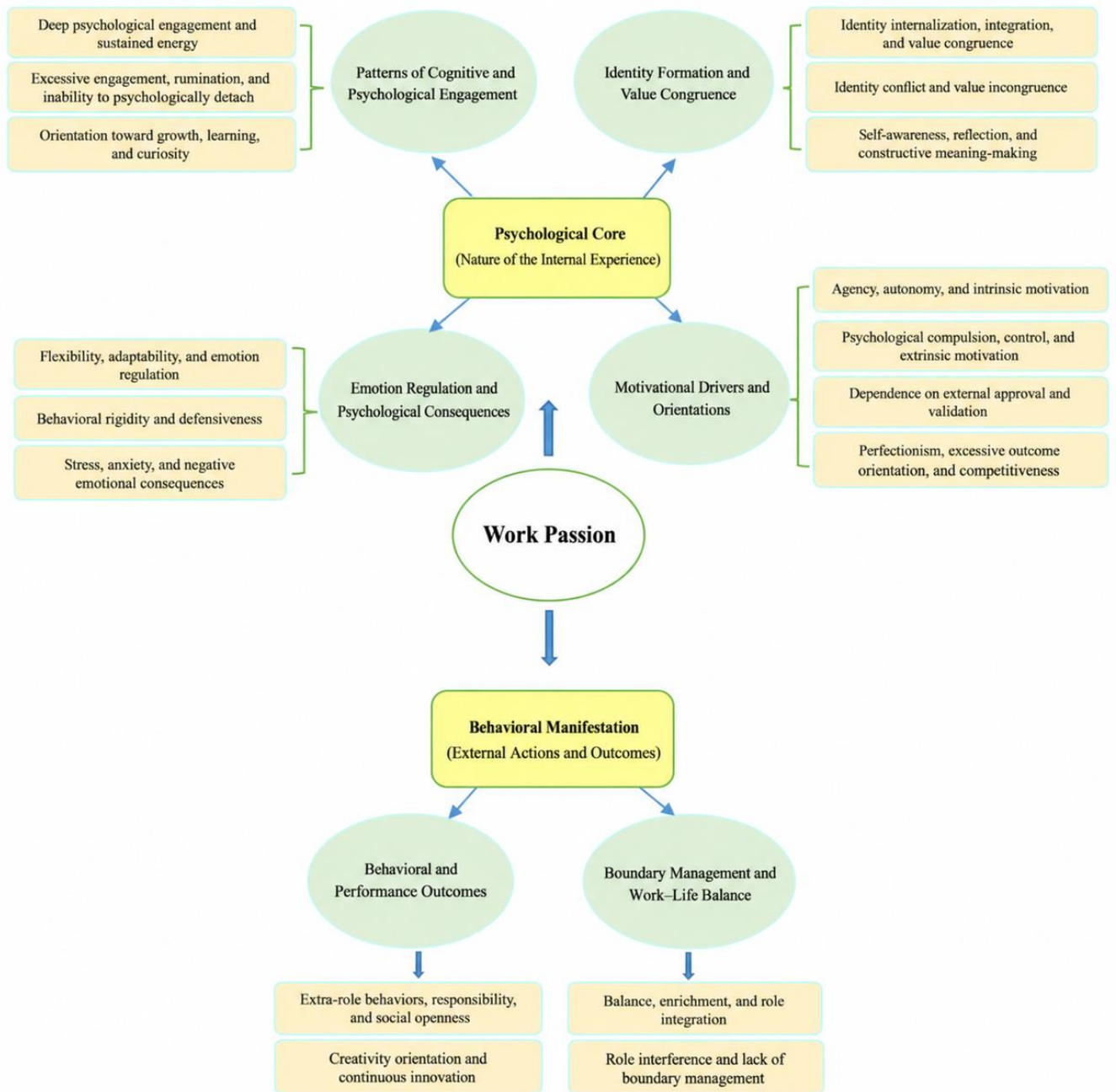
Table 4

Types of Work Passion (Source: Derived From the Results of the Thematic Analysis)

Psychological Core	Balanced / Bounded Behavioral Manifestation	Intense / Immersive / Boundary-Eroding Behavioral Manifestation
Healthy / autonomous / meaning-oriented	Flourishing work passion	Immersive / absorbed work passion
Unhealthy / pressure-driven / dependent / compulsive	Outcome-oriented / performative work passion	Exhaustive / obsessive work passion

Figure 1

Thematic Network of the Extracted Psychological and Behavioral Manifestation Dimensions of Work Passion



In this section, the conceptual definition and nature of each type are presented in terms of its psychological core, identity and values, pattern of cognitive, psychological, and emotional engagement, behavioral manifestation, and consequences and implications.

Types of Work Passion Based on the Psychological Core and Behavioral Manifestation

Flourishing Work Passion

Flourishing work passion represents the healthiest, most integrated, and most developmentally mature form of work passion. In this type, an individual's attraction to work does not originate from compulsion, deficiency, psychological insecurity, or a need for compensation; rather, it stems from genuine interest, conscious choice, identity congruence, value internalization, and the experience of meaning. Under such conditions, work is not merely a duty, a means of earning a

livelihood, or a stage for self-validation; instead, it constitutes a domain for self-actualization, experiencing effectiveness, growth, creation, and meaningful contribution.

In this type, work becomes an important part of the individual's life, but it does not consume their entire life. In other words, the individual is engaged in work without becoming subsumed by it; is committed to work without becoming captive to it; derives energy from work without being depleted by it. This balanced relationship among passion, autonomy, identity, and boundary management distinguishes this type from the other forms of work passion.

Psychological core: This type is grounded in an experience of healthy self-regulation and internal coherence. The individual experiences alignment among motivations, values, identity, emotions, and behaviors. Work is not experienced as imposed or externally driven; rather, it represents a conscious and internalized choice. Such an individual generally feels that they are an agent rather than a passive object in relation to work; that is, they experience autonomy, choice, and agency in relation to their professional activities. This sense of agency gives their psychological energy for work a calm, sustained, and non-disruptive quality. In this type, an individual's sense of self-worth is not entirely dependent on external achievements, others' admiration, or a continuous stream of success. Although success and advancement remain important, their identity and self-esteem are not exclusively built on these elements. Consequently, temporary failures, professional criticism, or occupational shortcomings, although potentially difficult, do not destabilize their psychological foundation. This characteristic distinguishes flourishing work passion from compensatory and unhealthy patterns.

Relationship with identity and values: One of the central dimensions of this type is identity and value congruence with work. Individuals perceive their work as consistent with their deeply held values and personal beliefs and do not experience a chronic divide between their "personal self" and "professional self." In this sense, work is not merely something they do; it forms part of the narrative through which they understand themselves—a narrative in which they see themselves as competent, responsible, purposeful, and influential individuals. Nevertheless, this identification with work remains balanced. That is, individuals regard work as one component of their identity rather than reducing their entire identity to it. They can simultaneously participate in other roles involving family membership, intimate relationships, friendship, learning, leisure, and self-care. Maintaining this multidimensional identity constitutes one of the key components of psychological health in this type.

Pattern of cognitive, psychological, and emotional engagement: In flourishing work passion, individuals generally experience deep, vibrant, and constructive psychological engagement with their work. While performing their activities, they can remain focused, energetic, and deeply absorbed in their work; enjoy the process of working; and experience meaning, mastery, development, and effectiveness. This deep engagement is not equivalent to exhaustion or psychological entrapment. The principal distinction is that engagement in this type reflects enthusiastic and intrinsically driven involvement rather than anxious rumination or obsessive compulsion. Emotionally, these individuals generally demonstrate more effective emotion regulation, greater flexibility, and greater resilience. They can manage occupational pressures, avoid emotional collapse when confronted with setbacks, and establish a balance between professional seriousness and psychological calm. An important indicator of this type is the capacity for psychological detachment from work; that is, individuals can appropriately distance themselves from work, free their minds from professional concerns, and remain genuinely and meaningfully present in other areas of life.

Behavioral manifestation: At the behavioral level, flourishing work passion is generally accompanied by a set of constructive and balanced manifestations. Such individuals often demonstrate favorable performance, high professional commitment, responsibility, initiative, and extra-role behaviors. When necessary, they perform beyond their formal responsibilities, but such behavior does not arise from pathological compulsion or fear of negative evaluation. Instead, it is rooted in a sense of responsibility, genuine interest, and internalization of the professional role. Creativity, innovation, openness in workplace interactions, and positive social participation are also prominent in this type. Because individuals are not internally operating from a defensive or deficiency-based state, their relationships with others are not necessarily based on threatening competition or a constant need for self-validation. Consequently, the quality of their interpersonal interactions is often more constructive, collaborative, and sustainable. Most importantly, these individuals can combine high work involvement with relatively healthy boundaries and balance among life roles.

Consequences and implications: This form of work passion is most closely associated with growth-oriented patterns, healthy professional passion, and flourishing work engagement. In the short term, this pattern is associated with job satisfaction, a sense of meaning, productivity, learning, and high participation. In the long term, provided that organizational and life conditions are supportive, it may contribute to sustainable performance, identity integration, psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and professional flourishing. Overall, flourishing work passion may be regarded as a type in which work becomes a context for growth, meaning, self-actualization, and constructive participation without chronically undermining the boundaries of personal life or trapping the individual in a cycle of compulsion and exhaustion. This type represents the most desirable and healthiest form of work passion.

Outcome-Oriented / Performative Work Passion

Outcome-oriented/performative work passion is a type in which an individual's observable functioning may appear positive, productive, orderly, and even exceptional, while this functioning is supported by a relatively unhealthy internal core. In this type, the primary force driving work involvement originates less from genuine interest, identity congruence, and healthy meaning-making and more from the need to prove oneself, compensate for psychological deficiencies, obtain external approval, control feelings of worthlessness, or stabilize self-esteem through achievement. Thus, this type represents a form of work passion in which a positive performance-oriented exterior can conceal underlying psychological vulnerability. This characteristic gives outcome-oriented/performative work passion particular diagnostic and organizational importance. An individual may be perceived by others as committed, diligent, responsible, and successful, while at deeper psychological levels their relationship with work is founded on pressure, insecurity, or a need for compensation.

Psychological core: The psychological core of this type is generally associated with a contingent sense of self-worth. Explicitly or implicitly, individuals may regulate their sense of personal value through performance, achievement, success, and approval from others. Consequently, work is not merely a domain for realizing their capabilities but also a mechanism for preserving psychological coherence and defending against experiences of inadequacy, invisibility, or diminished self-worth. Within this pattern, negative elements such as dependence on external validation, perfectionism, excessive outcome orientation, competitiveness, identity conflict, and latent anxiety may become more prominent. Individuals may work extremely hard not simply because they enjoy their work but because, in the absence of high performance, they do not experience sufficient psychological stability or self-worth. Consequently, occupational functioning in this type frequently serves a compensatory function.

Relationship with identity and values: From an identity perspective, this type represents a complex and fragile condition. On the one hand, individuals may define themselves profoundly through their occupational roles and professional achievements; on the other hand, this identification is unstable and conditional. In other words, their identity is founded not on authentic integration between the self and work, but on external success and validating feedback. Under such conditions, the boundary between “who I am as a person” and “who I am as someone who must perform well” becomes weakened.

From a values perspective, discrepancies may also exist between what individuals genuinely regard as important and what they actually do to maintain their position or sense of self-worth. However, these discrepancies may be marginalized because of an intense preoccupation with outcomes, advancement, or social approval. Therefore, whereas work was authentically connected with identity and values in flourishing work passion, the relationship with work in this type is frequently conditional, defensive, or compensatory.

Pattern of cognitive, psychological, and emotional engagement: Work engagement in this type may be very high, but the quality of such involvement is often intertwined with concern, sensitivity to evaluation, self-criticism, and internal pressure. Individuals may constantly assess their own performance, compare themselves with others, worry about making mistakes, and privately fear deterioration in the quality of their output or loss of professional standing. Thus, their psychological engagement with work represents tension-laden vigilance regarding outcomes rather than healthy and pleasurable absorption.

Emotionally, these individuals may appear controlled, disciplined, and self-possessed, while internally experiencing anxiety, tension, vulnerability to criticism, and difficulty accepting failure. Even when their performance is high, their psychological calm is not necessarily stable because their sense of self-worth is temporarily and conditionally regulated through occupational success. Consequently, positive emotions resulting from achievement often have less depth and durability and are more rapidly replaced by concern regarding the next achievement.

Behavioral manifestation: At the behavioral level, this type is often associated with high performance, considerable precision, discipline, intense responsibility, and highly visible external commitment. Individuals may be meticulous, hardworking, persistent, and result-oriented and may be regarded as reliable contributors in many situations. They may also display extra-role behaviors, accept additional workloads, or establish standards for themselves that exceed customary expectations.

However, the important distinction between this type and flourishing work passion is that these positive behaviors do not necessarily emerge from a healthy psychological core. Responsibility may be intertwined with internal compulsion, perfectionism, or fear of failure; discipline may reflect a strong need for control; and external commitment may serve to reinforce the self-concept. Consequently, what is externally perceived as “professional success” may internally be accompanied by considerable pressure and fragility.

Consequences and implications: In the short term, outcome-oriented/performative work passion may appear advantageous to both the organization and the individual because it is associated with productivity, advancement, professional recognition, and positive outputs. In the long term, however, this type is vulnerable to hidden burnout, chronic dependence on approval, self-alienation, pronounced vulnerability to failure, and deterioration in psychological well-being. Individuals who regulate their self-esteem through performance may experience a more severe crisis when confronted with reduced performance, failure, or an absence of external recognition.

Accordingly, outcome-oriented/performative work passion can be regarded as a type in which work becomes an instrument for compensating for identity-related, emotional, or value-related deficits. Despite its positive outward appearance, this process renders the pattern vulnerable and unstable. The theoretical importance of this type lies in demonstrating that external success does not necessarily indicate internal psychological health.

Exhaustive / Obsessive Work Passion

Exhaustive/obsessive work passion represents the most intense and detrimental type of work passion—a pattern in which both the psychological core and behavioral manifestations have unhealthy, compulsive, and exhausting qualities. In this type, individuals not only experience chronic internal pressure, anxiety, compulsion, dependence on achievement, and an inability to disengage, but also exhibit a breakdown of work–life boundaries at the behavioral level, with negative consequences becoming evident in psychological health, relationships, and performance sustainability. Under these conditions, work is no longer merely an object of interest, growth, commitment, or even psychological compensation; rather, it becomes a form of psychological captivity. Individuals may recognize that they are paying substantial personal costs for their work but nevertheless remain unable to distance themselves from it. Thus, work passion shifts from being a motivating force to becoming a self-reinforcing and exhausting cycle.

Psychological core: The psychological core of this type is based on a combination of negative components: psychological compulsion, external or internal control, rumination, inability to detach, chronic anxiety, dependence on achievement to maintain self-worth, and, in many cases, identity and value incongruence. Work becomes a psychological necessity; stopping work is accompanied by guilt, restlessness, emptiness, or a perceived threat to identity. Individuals work from a position of compulsion rather than autonomy. Within such a pattern, the experience of work frequently has a disturbed and tension-laden quality. Even when individuals occasionally experience satisfaction or success, these experiences are generally unstable and are rapidly replaced by greater pressure, new concerns, or the perceived necessity to continue working. Accordingly, the driving force of work is not healthy passion but obsessive pressure and an attempt to avoid psychological destabilization.

Relationship with identity and values: From an identity perspective, individuals in this type may either become intensely fused with work and seek most of their sense of self-worth exclusively through it or, conversely, become so disconnected from their authentic selves and values that they no longer understand why they work so intensely, except that they feel unable not to do so. In both circumstances, the relationship with work is unhealthy. If work becomes the sole source of existence and self-worth, even a minor disruption in work may be experienced as an existential threat.

From a values perspective, this type is frequently accompanied by incongruence or depletion. Work may no longer be genuinely meaningful to the individual but may nevertheless continue compulsively. Under these conditions, work becomes detached from meaning and functions primarily to temporarily reduce anxiety or avoid confronting an internal void. This is precisely the point at which the “intensity of work” no longer signifies “healthy engagement” but instead becomes an indicator of entrapment.

Pattern of cognitive, psychological, and emotional engagement: Cognitive and psychological engagement in this type is chronic, pervasive, and exhausting. Individuals are unable to mentally switch off from work, even during rest or while spending time with others. Continuous rumination concerning responsibilities, failures, tasks, occupational futures, or others’ evaluations becomes a persistent aspect of their experience. They may feel guilty when resting, become restless when distancing themselves from work, and seek psychological relief only by returning to the work cycle.

Emotionally, this pattern is generally associated with anxiety, tension, irritability, suppressed anger, feelings of entrapment, emotional exhaustion, and, in many cases, anhedonia. Individuals may continue working extensively while no longer deriving enjoyment from work, or their enjoyment may become so brief and unstable that it is immediately replaced by renewed pressure and anxiety. For this reason, this type is the most distant from the experience of healthy professional passion.

Behavioral manifestation: At the behavioral level, exhaustive/obsessive work passion is accompanied by clear signs of imbalance and depletion: excessively long working hours, inability to stop working, constant cognitive preoccupation with work, severe work–life interference, reduced attention to family and relationships, diminished self-care, physical and emotional exhaustion, and a gradual deterioration in sustainable performance quality. Although individuals may initially maintain high output, burnout gradually erodes concentration, creativity, flexibility, and cognitive capacity. Work–life boundaries are severely compromised in this type. Work intrudes into the home, relationships, leisure time, sleep, and even the individual’s mental space and progressively dominates other domains of life. Consequently, work, which should represent one domain of professional activity, becomes an all-encompassing structure that occupies the individual’s life as a whole.

Consequences and implications: This type is more strongly associated than any other with negative individual, interpersonal, and professional consequences. At the individual level, the risks of job burnout, deteriorating psychological well-being, chronic anxiety, emotional exhaustion, psychosomatic problems, and reduced quality of life increase substantially. At the interpersonal level, family and social relationships come under pressure, conflicts increase, and individuals become less emotionally and temporally available to others. At the professional level, although productivity may be maintained in the short term, performance sustainability, decision-making quality, creativity, and effectiveness decline over the long term.

Therefore, exhaustive/obsessive work passion should be regarded as the most vulnerable and problematic type of work passion—a pattern in which work shifts from being a meaningful domain of human activity to becoming a compulsive and depleting mechanism. The significance of this type lies in the fact that its adverse consequences extend beyond the individual’s internal psychological experience to encompass relationships, health, and the sustainability of performance.

Immersive / Absorbed Work Passion

Immersive/absorbed work passion is a type of work passion in which the individual’s internal psychological core remains largely associated with interest, meaning, growth, and choice, while its behavioral manifestation progressively deviates from balance and moves toward boundary erosion, role interference, and depletion of psychological recovery capacities. This type is neither completely healthy and flourishing nor yet explicitly pathological and harmful. Rather, it should be regarded as a transitional or boundary condition in which initially positive components, in the absence of adequate self-regulation, gradually contribute to an increasingly imbalanced life.

In other words, in this type, individuals still enjoy their work, perceive it as part of their developmental trajectory, and experience meaning and progress through it. However, if this positive attraction exceeds appropriate boundaries, it may gradually lead their lives toward excessive work centrality. The primary issue is therefore not a completely unhealthy psychological core but rather an intensity of engagement that increasingly exceeds the individual’s capacity for boundary management and self-regulation.

Psychological core: At the level of the psychological core, this type continues to include positive components such as intrinsic motivation, a sense of growth, curiosity, and relative internalization of work-related values. Individuals regard work

as meaningful, possess an identity-related connection with it, and feel psychologically energized through engagement with professional issues. However, they differ from individuals with flourishing work passion in that the quality of this involvement gradually becomes less regulated. Although they are not necessarily internally anxious, compensatory, or incongruent, their ability to regulate the intensity of their work involvement progressively declines.

Thus, the psychological core of this type may be described as “predominantly healthy but vulnerable to depletion.” Whereas professional energy in flourishing work passion is guided by agency and balance, in this type professional energy gradually outpaces regulatory control. Individuals may not yet clearly recognize that they are crossing the boundaries of healthy involvement because the internal quality of their experience remains partly positive.

Relationship with identity and values: In this type, individuals continue to have a predominantly positive relationship with work and may regard it as an important part of their identity. However, the principal risk is that work gradually shifts from being an important component of identity to becoming its dominant component. Thus, without consciously intending to do so, individuals may organize their time, attention, energy, and priorities in ways that progressively marginalize other areas of life.

From a values perspective, congruence may still be present, but it is increasingly vulnerable to disruption because individuals progressively lose opportunities to experience and invest in other life values, including relationships, family, leisure, self-care, and a balanced lifestyle. In this sense, the central issue is not an explicit value conflict but rather the increasing dominance of one value or role over the overall organization of life.

Pattern of cognitive, psychological, and emotional engagement: Cognitive and psychological engagement is generally intense in this type. Individuals think extensively about work, bring professional concerns home, and find it increasingly difficult to mentally disengage from work-related preoccupations. Although this engagement does not necessarily reflect chronic anxiety or obsessive compulsion, it becomes increasingly pervasive and expansive. Individuals may find rest difficult, struggle to mentally switch off, and remain psychologically occupied with work even when they are physically present with family members or participating in nonwork situations.

Emotionally, this type occupies an intermediate position. Passion, interest, and enjoyment of work may still be present; however, signs of fatigue, irritability, reduced recovery capacity, and pressure resulting from continuous involvement gradually become apparent. If this trajectory continues, the initially positive emotions may progressively be replaced by pressure, exhaustion, and aversion.

Behavioral manifestation: At the behavioral level, immersive/absorbed work passion is typically characterized by indicators such as long working hours, continuous availability, bringing work home, reduced genuine leisure time, and the gradual weakening of boundaries between work and personal life. Individuals may continue to demonstrate high productivity, extensive learning, and substantial professional commitment, but these characteristics increasingly impose costs on other life domains.

An important indicator of this type is that individuals may continue to appear successful, dynamic, and even admirable, while the quality of balance beneath this outward appearance is progressively deteriorating. Family members or significant others may increasingly experience them as less available, either temporally or psychologically. Professional activity, even when growth-promoting, gradually develops into a domain that overshadows other life roles.

Consequences and implications: Immersive/absorbed work passion is theoretically and practically significant because it represents an intermediate region between health and impairment. In the short term, this type may be associated with positive outcomes such as high productivity, rapid advancement, professional enthusiasm, and continuous learning. In the long term, however, if boundary management, self-care, and psychological recovery are not strengthened, this type may lead to chronic fatigue, deterioration in work–life balance, reduced relationship quality, energy depletion, and ultimately progression toward more exhausting patterns.

From this perspective, immersive/absorbed work passion can be conceptualized as a form that remains rooted in positive individual capacities but whose behavioral manifestation has departed from balanced regulation. Consequently, this type should not merely be regarded as harmful but rather as an early warning sign of potential future depletion.

Table 5

Types of Work Passion

Dimensions	Flourishing Work Passion	Outcome-Oriented Work Passion	Exhaustive Work Passion	Immersive Work Passion
Psychological core	Healthy self-regulation and internal coherence	Generally associated with a contingent sense of self-worth	The psychological core is characterized by obsessive pressure and the avoidance of psychological destabilization	The psychological core can be described as “predominantly healthy but vulnerable to depletion”
Identity and values	Identity and value congruence with work	Identity based on external success and validating feedback	Identity and value incongruence with work	Congruence that is vulnerable to disruption
Pattern of cognitive, psychological, and emotional engagement	Enthusiastic, intrinsically driven cognitive engagement, together with more adaptive and flexible emotion regulation	Psychological engagement takes the form of tension-laden vigilance regarding outcomes and is emotionally maladaptive and vulnerable	Cognitive and psychological engagement is chronic, pervasive, and exhausting and is accompanied by emotional exhaustion and, in many cases, anhedonia	Engagement does not necessarily reflect obsessive compulsion but becomes increasingly pervasive; emotionally, it occupies an intermediate position
Behavioral manifestation	Constructive and balanced manifestations	What appears externally as “professional success” may internally involve pressure and psychological fragility	Accompanied by clear manifestations of imbalance and depletion	Despite an outwardly successful, dynamic, and even admirable appearance, the quality of balance is progressively deteriorating
Consequences and implications	Most closely associated with growth-oriented patterns, healthy professional passion, and flourishing work engagement	Work becomes an instrument for compensating for identity-related, emotional, or value-related deficits	This type is most strongly associated with negative individual, interpersonal, and professional consequences	Behavioral manifestation has departed from balanced regulation; this type constitutes an early warning sign of possible future depletion

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study sought to develop a typology of work passion in the workplace and to identify the psychological and behavioral dimensions underlying its different manifestations. The thematic analysis resulted in two overarching dimensions: the **psychological core**, reflecting the quality of employees’ internal experience of work, and **behavioral manifestation**, reflecting the manner in which that internal state is expressed through work-related behaviors, performance patterns, and work–life boundary management. The psychological core comprised motivational drivers and orientations, identity formation and value congruence, patterns of cognitive and psychological engagement, and emotion regulation and psychological consequences. Behavioral manifestation comprised boundary management and work–life balance, as well as behavioral and performance outcomes. The intersection of these two dimensions generated four distinct types of work passion: **flourishing work passion**, **outcome-oriented/performative work passion**, **exhaustive/obsessive work passion**, and **immersive/absorbed work passion**. These findings suggest that work passion cannot be adequately understood merely in terms of the intensity of employees’ interest or involvement in work; rather, its adaptive or maladaptive nature depends on both the psychological quality of the motivation underlying work involvement and the behavioral pattern through which that motivation is enacted.

The identification of the psychological core as one of the principal dimensions of work passion is consistent with prior research emphasizing that passion is fundamentally rooted in motivational processes, identity, meaning, and the internalization of work-related values. In the present study, agency, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation represented adaptive motivational drivers, whereas psychological compulsion, external control, dependence on approval, excessive outcome orientation, and perfectionism reflected less adaptive motivational conditions. This distinction is closely aligned with studies that have differentiated autonomous and harmonious work passion from controlled or obsessive forms of passion. Research has shown that harmonious passion can strengthen work engagement when employees experience trust, autonomy, and supportive leadership, whereas less adaptive forms of passion are more closely associated with controlled motivational processes [10]. Similarly, the proposed multidimensional model of work passion developed by Ensour et al. emphasizes that passion should not be treated as a simple affective preference but as a more complex phenomenon involving motivational, cognitive, and behavioral mechanisms [16]. The present findings extend this reasoning by suggesting that the quality of employees' motivational orientation forms part of a broader psychological core that shapes subsequent behavioral manifestation.

The role of identity and value congruence identified in this study further supports the proposition that passion becomes adaptive when work is integrated into the self without completely dominating the self. In flourishing work passion, employees perceive their occupational roles as congruent with their values and personal identity, while retaining a multidimensional sense of self. By contrast, outcome-oriented and exhaustive forms of passion were characterized by conditional or unstable identity structures in which self-worth was excessively tied to performance, achievement, or external recognition. This finding is compatible with research showing that work passion is related to work personality, organizational loyalty, and attachment to work, suggesting that employees' broader self-concept and personal dispositions influence the manner in which work becomes psychologically important [1]. The relationship between job enthusiasm and professional growth also supports the idea that passion can contribute positively to identity development when it is associated with competence, learning, and meaningful occupational development [4]. Likewise, spirituality and job virtue have been associated with stronger job enthusiasm, indicating that value systems and meaning-related processes may contribute to the internal quality of passionate work involvement [13]. The present typology therefore suggests that the critical issue is not whether work contributes to identity, but whether such identity integration is autonomous, value-congruent, and psychologically balanced.

Another important finding concerns patterns of cognitive and psychological engagement. Thematic analysis distinguished deep, constructive engagement and sustained energy from excessive involvement, rumination, and inability to detach psychologically from work. This distinction is central to the differentiation between flourishing and exhaustive forms of work passion. Employees with flourishing passion can be deeply engaged while retaining the ability to disengage when necessary, whereas employees with exhaustive passion remain cognitively preoccupied with work even outside formal working hours. This finding is consistent with evidence showing that work passion can influence employee responses to emotionally demanding job conditions. For example, dualistic work passion has been found to mediate the relationship between customer incivility and emotional labor, indicating that different forms of passion shape how individuals cognitively and emotionally process workplace demands [9]. Similarly, the mediating role of work passion in occupational wellness and effectiveness suggests that the cognitive and emotional quality of work involvement influences whether strong engagement contributes

to positive or negative employee outcomes [17]. Thus, the present findings reinforce the importance of distinguishing enthusiastic absorption from persistent and uncontrolled cognitive preoccupation.

The findings regarding emotion regulation also provide an important explanation for why seemingly similar levels of work passion may lead to different outcomes. In flourishing work passion, flexibility, adaptability, emotional regulation, and resilience were identified as central features, whereas exhaustive and outcome-oriented passion were more closely associated with stress, anxiety, defensiveness, and emotional vulnerability. This distinction is supported by research showing that emotion regulation plays an important mediating role in the relationship between occupational conditions, work passion, wellness, and effectiveness [17]. Moreover, studies of psychological capital indicate that positive psychological resources influence job enthusiasm, commitment, and satisfaction partly through emotional processes [3]. Positive psychology interventions have also been shown to enhance job passion and motivation, which suggests that passion can be strengthened by improving positive psychological functioning rather than simply increasing work intensity [2]. Accordingly, the current findings indicate that adaptive emotion regulation should be regarded as a defining characteristic of healthy work passion rather than merely as an outcome associated with it.

The first identified type, **flourishing work passion**, represents the most adaptive configuration because it combines a healthy psychological core with balanced behavioral manifestation. Individuals in this category are intrinsically motivated, experience value congruence, maintain a coherent but multidimensional identity, remain cognitively engaged without becoming trapped in rumination, and regulate emotions effectively. Behaviorally, they demonstrate responsibility, initiative, creativity, extra-role behavior, and high performance while maintaining appropriate work–life boundaries. This profile is consistent with research linking work passion to desirable outcomes such as job crafting, service behavior, organizational commitment, innovation, professional growth, and educational performance [5, 7, 8]. The relationship between job enthusiasm and job crafting is particularly relevant because job crafting reflects proactive and self-directed changes in work activities, which are more likely to emerge when passion is grounded in agency and intrinsic interest rather than compulsion [6]. Similarly, research showing that work passion mediates the effects of ethical leadership on work engagement supports the notion that healthy forms of passion contribute to sustainable and constructive involvement in work [10]. Thus, flourishing passion may be considered the form most likely to generate simultaneous benefits for employee well-being and organizational performance.

The second type, **outcome-oriented/performative work passion**, is theoretically important because it demonstrates that high performance does not necessarily indicate healthy passion. Individuals in this category can appear highly productive, responsible, disciplined, and committed, yet their behavior is driven by a more vulnerable psychological core characterized by conditional self-worth, dependence on validation, perfectionism, and excessive result orientation. This distinction may explain why some highly successful employees remain psychologically vulnerable despite strong objective performance. Previous research showing associations between work passion, commitment, work attachment, and performance-related outcomes suggests that passion can support high achievement, but these relationships do not by themselves establish the psychological quality of that passion [1, 15]. Similarly, findings concerning technology acceptance, organizational commitment, work passion, and deviant behavior indicate that the consequences of passion are not uniformly positive and depend on the broader psychological and organizational context in which passion operates [14]. The present typology

therefore contributes by identifying a form of passion that may produce desirable external outcomes while remaining internally unstable and potentially unsustainable.

The third type, **exhaustive/obsessive work passion**, represents the most maladaptive configuration because both the psychological core and behavioral manifestation are problematic. In this pattern, work involvement is driven by pressure, psychological compulsion, dependence on success, and inability to detach. Behaviorally, work becomes excessive, work–life boundaries deteriorate, recovery is restricted, and the individual becomes vulnerable to burnout, emotional exhaustion, interpersonal strain, and declining long-term performance. This finding is consistent with the dualistic perspective showing that obsessive passion can intensify maladaptive emotional responses under demanding workplace conditions [9]. It is also consistent with research indicating that different manifestations of work passion may be related to counterproductive or deviant behavioral outcomes when passion is embedded within unfavorable psychological or organizational processes [14]. Furthermore, the influence of psychological climate and core self-evaluations on job passion implies that unhealthy organizational conditions or unstable self-evaluations may contribute to maladaptive patterns of passion [12]. Accordingly, exhaustive passion should not be confused with high engagement; rather, it is characterized by loss of regulatory control, persistent psychological occupation with work, and erosion of personal resources.

The fourth type, **immersive/absorbed work passion**, occupies an intermediate position between flourishing and exhaustive forms. Its psychological core remains primarily healthy: employees continue to experience meaning, intrinsic interest, learning, curiosity, and growth. However, their behavioral manifestation increasingly becomes boundary-eroding. They work for long periods, remain constantly available, bring work into personal time, and gradually reduce opportunities for psychological recovery. This finding is particularly relevant in contemporary digital work environments. Research on digital lifestyle and work passion has demonstrated that technological patterns of living and working can influence organizational commitment and job innovation through passion-related mechanisms [7]. Although such employees may remain highly productive and innovative, the gradual weakening of boundaries may place them at risk of transitioning toward more exhausting patterns. In this sense, immersive passion provides an important conceptual explanation for why positive motivation can eventually become problematic when behavioral self-regulation fails to keep pace with increasing work involvement.

The importance of behavioral manifestation was also evident in the themes of extra-role behavior, responsibility, social openness, creativity, and innovation. These themes indicate that work passion becomes organizationally visible through concrete behavioral outcomes. Previous research supports this observation. Work passion has been identified as a mediator of the relationship between job crafting and customer service behavior, suggesting that passion converts proactive work redesign into observable performance outcomes [5]. Job enthusiasm has also been related to professional competency and performance in educational settings [8], while studies of employees have linked passion to work attachment, organizational loyalty, and proactive job behaviors [1, 6]. These findings are consistent with the present model but also emphasize the importance of interpreting positive behavior in conjunction with its psychological source. Extra-role behavior may represent healthy initiative in flourishing passion, but similar behavior may reflect perfectionistic compulsion in outcome-oriented or exhaustive passion.

The results additionally highlight the social embeddedness of work passion. Although the current typology focuses primarily on psychological and behavioral characteristics, previous studies indicate that passion can be shaped and

transmitted through leadership and workplace relationships. Passion contagion research shows that employees can develop or strengthen passion through formal and informal social influence from colleagues and organizational actors [11]. Ethical leadership has also been shown to foster harmonious passion through trust in leaders, which in turn contributes to stronger engagement [10]. These findings suggest that the four types identified in the present study should not be interpreted as fixed individual traits. Rather, employees may move between types over time depending on organizational demands, leadership practices, reward systems, social expectations, and access to psychological resources. This dynamic interpretation is compatible with findings showing that psychological interventions can increase job passion and motivation [2] and that psychological capital and job emotions contribute to occupational enthusiasm and commitment [3].

Overall, the present study contributes to the literature by integrating dispersed findings into a two-dimensional typology that distinguishes the **quality of the psychological core** from the **quality of behavioral manifestation**. Previous studies have established the relevance of work passion to leadership, emotion regulation, engagement, job crafting, innovation, attachment, professional competence, performance, and organizational growth [4, 5, 8, 10, 17], but they have generally examined these variables separately or through linear relationships. The current typology demonstrates that similar behavioral intensity can emerge from substantially different psychological foundations and that a healthy motivational core does not automatically guarantee sustainable behavior if work–life boundaries progressively deteriorate. By distinguishing flourishing, outcome-oriented, exhaustive, and immersive work passion, the findings provide a more differentiated framework for understanding why passion can simultaneously serve as a resource for growth and performance and as a potential pathway to pressure, imbalance, and burnout.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research was based on thematic analysis of previously published English-language articles rather than primary data collected directly from employees, managers, or organizations. Consequently, the proposed typology represents a theoretically synthesized framework and requires further empirical validation. Second, although the final sample included 70 relevant articles, the selection of databases, search terms, inclusion criteria, and availability of full texts may have resulted in the exclusion of potentially relevant studies. Third, thematic analysis necessarily involves interpretive judgment during coding, clustering, and theme development, and although expert review and Holsti's agreement coefficient were used to strengthen validity and reliability, some degree of researcher subjectivity remains unavoidable. Fourth, the typology was constructed at a general workplace level and therefore may not fully capture sector-specific, occupational, cultural, or technological differences in the expression of work passion. Finally, the four identified types should not necessarily be regarded as stable and mutually exclusive personality categories; individuals may move between them depending on changing organizational demands, personal circumstances, and stages of their professional careers.

Future studies should empirically test the proposed four-type typology using both quantitative and qualitative designs. Scale-development studies could operationalize the psychological-core and behavioral-manifestation dimensions and examine whether the four configurations can be reproduced through latent profile analysis, cluster analysis, or person-centered structural modeling. Longitudinal research would be particularly valuable for determining whether employees transition from flourishing to immersive and eventually exhaustive patterns over time, and for identifying the organizational or personal conditions that facilitate or prevent such transitions. Future research should also compare the typology across industries, occupational groups, managerial levels, employment arrangements, and national cultures. Additional studies

could investigate the roles of leadership style, workload, reward systems, digital connectivity, psychological safety, personality, perfectionism, job autonomy, emotional regulation, and family support as antecedents of different passion types. Research should further examine differential outcomes such as creativity, innovation, citizenship behavior, absenteeism, burnout, turnover intention, work–family conflict, physical health, and sustained performance. Mixed-method and diary-based studies may be particularly useful for capturing day-to-day fluctuations in passion and boundary management.

Organizations should avoid assuming that all intense work involvement is inherently desirable and should assess both the psychological quality and behavioral expression of employee passion. Human resource managers can use the proposed typology as a diagnostic framework to distinguish healthy, sustainable passion from externally driven, compulsive, or boundary-eroding forms of involvement. Practices that strengthen autonomy, meaningful work, value congruence, psychological safety, learning opportunities, and constructive feedback can help employees develop flourishing passion. At the same time, organizations should establish clear expectations regarding availability, workload, working hours, recovery, and the right to psychological detachment in order to prevent immersive passion from developing into exhaustive passion. Managers should be trained to recognize apparently high-performing employees whose behavior is driven by perfectionism, fear of failure, or excessive dependence on external validation. Performance systems should reward sustainable effectiveness rather than chronic overwork, and employee development programs should include emotion regulation, self-awareness, boundary management, recovery skills, and healthy job crafting. By managing both the motivational foundations and behavioral manifestations of passion, organizations can support high performance while reducing the risk of burnout and long-term human-resource depletion.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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