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Effect of Harmonious Work Passion on Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior in Selected Commercial Banks in Abuja Metropolis, Nigeria.

Samuel Oluwashogo Oyediran[1] & Danjuma Nanfa Kusa[2]

[1, 2]Department of Business Administration, University of Jos

Email: samueloyediran05@gmail.com

Phone: +234-813 699 2092

ABSTRACT

The growing emphasis on employee engagement and passion in today's competitive work environment necessitates a deeper exploration of its potential ethical implications. This study explores the impact of harmonious work passion on unethical pro-organizational behavior within selected commercial banks in the Abuja metropolis, Nigeria. Utilizing an explanatory design and a quantitative approach, data were collected through a cross-sectional descriptive survey involving 354 employees from five banks in the region. The analysis employed structural equation modeling partial least squares (PLS) with SMART PLS 4.1 to evaluate the relationships among the variables. Findings indicate a significant relationship between harmonious work passion and unethical pro-organizational behavior, suggesting that while employees may feel passionate about their work, this passion can lead to ethical compromises when aligned with organizational interests. Based on these insights, the study recommends promoting ethical leadership at all levels within organizations to serve as positive role models for employees. Leaders should prioritize values such as integrity, fairness, and ethical decision-making to foster a workplace culture that emphasizes accountability and trust. By doing so, organizations can mitigate the risks associated with unethical behaviors while enhancing overall employee engagement and ethical standards. This research underscores the need for a balanced approach to harnessing employee passion while maintaining ethical integrity in organizational practices.

Keywords: Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior, Harmonious Work Passion, Organizational Behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business environment, organizations are continually seeking ways to enhance employee performance and foster positive workplace dynamics. A critical factor that has garnered significant attention in organizational behavior research is work passion, which is defined as a strong inclination toward one's work activities that drives individuals to invest considerable time and energy into their roles (Vallerand, 2010). Passionate employees are often associated with increased creativity, job satisfaction, and overall job performance (Gagné & Deci, 2005). However, this heightened enthusiasm can have dual consequences, particularly when intertwined with unethical behaviors aimed at benefiting the organization. Unethical pro-organizational behavior, as defined by Umphress et al. (2010), is referred to as work behavior that are conducted with the intention to benefit the organization, but violate core societal values, norms, laws or standards of proper conduct. UPB includes behaviors such as exaggerating the benefits of a product to entice customers or falsifying customer feedback to foster an image of success (Cheng et al., 2019). Such behaviors are common among employees in service organizations because of frequent interactions with a large number of customers, challenging customer demands, pressure to meet financial targets, and a commission-based compensation approach for rewards (Schwepker, 2001). Additionally, service employees are often more motivated than others to engage in UPB (Tang et al., 2020).

Existing literature has primarily focused on the positive outcomes associated with work passion while neglecting how such passion might compel employees to engage in unethical practices for the perceived benefit of their organization. For instance, prior studies have highlighted the dual nature of work passion (Houlfort et al., 2009). Among these, harmonious work passion, characterized by a deep, positive connection to one’s work that aligns with personal values, has gained traction in organizational behavior research. Although the benefits of employee passion for performance and job satisfaction are well-documented, less attention has been paid to its potential ethical implications, especially in contexts where organizational goals may conflict with ethical standards. In operational environments striving for enhanced organizational performance and vibrant workplace cultures, many companies overlook the critical aspect of ethical considerations tied to employee passion. While work passion particularly harmonious work passion is generally linked to positive organizational behaviors, it may simultaneously propel employees toward UPB when they feel pressured to prioritize organizational outcomes over ethical considerations (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018). This paradox is particularly pronounced in competitive sectors, such as banking, where employees may feel compelled to align with organizational goals that may conflict with ethical practices.

In the Nigerian banking sector, institutions have consistently reported stellar growth and performance over the past decade (Folorunso & Lokanan, 2023).

Operating within a highly regulated and competitive landscape underscores the importance of maintaining ethical conduct and fostering a positive work environment, which are essential for the sustained success and integrity of these financial institutions. Chami and Fullenkamp (2002) argue that trustworthiness is crucial for the survival of any bank; thus, it is imperative for banks to act in ways that merit public trust, confidence, and a good reputation by infusing values such as honesty, respect, and fairness into their decision-making processes. Kelebek & Alniacik (2022) assert that unethical behavior has proliferated the business world and is now a typical occurrence, endangering the viability of successful companies. As organizations navigate an era marked by intense competition and rapid technological advancements, prioritizing employee engagement and passion as key determinants of success becomes increasingly essential.

The significance of this research lies not only in addressing a gap in the literature but also in providing actionable insights for organizational leaders. As workplaces strive to balance employee engagement with ethical standards, understanding the dynamics between harmonious work passion and UPB becomes crucial.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of harmonious work passion on unethical pro-organizational behavior within selected commercial banks in Abuja metropolis, Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THE SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Self-Determination Theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), posits that human beings have innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Satisfaction of these needs fosters intrinsic motivation, leading individuals to engage in activities for their inherent enjoyment and personal value rather than for external rewards. In the workplace, this theory highlights how fulfilling employees' psychological needs can elicit positive outcomes, including job satisfaction and creativity. The theoretical conceptualization of work passion is partially derived from this theory (Vallerand et al., 2003; Ahmed et al., 2016). Accordingly, it is of value to understand its propositions well. SDT states that humans have an inherent tendency towards self-growth and development, and that we are all striving to continuously better ourselves (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

2.2 UNETHICAL PRO-ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Unethical Pro-organizational Behavior (UPB), introduced by Umphress, Bingham, and Mitchell in 2010, refers to intentional unethical actions by employees that, while violating ethical standards, benefit the organization (Umphress et al., 2010). UPB encompasses two main points: it is inherently unethical and actively pursued by employees for the organization's benefit. However, this initial definition focused

solely on organizational benefits, overlooking advantages to individual members. In response, Umphress and Bingham expanded the definition in 2011, stating that UPB involves intentional actions by employees aimed at enhancing organizational or member effectiveness, even if these actions breach societal values or laws (Umphress & Bingham, 2011).

Key components of UPB include its unethical nature, which contradicts widely accepted moral standards (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994), and its intention to benefit the organization or its members. They outlined three conditions: UPB must be intentional; actions leading to negative outcomes for the organization do not qualify as UPB; and self-serving unethical behaviors that do not benefit the organization or its members are excluded from UPB. Examples of UPB include acts of omission (e.g., concealing product risks) and commission (e.g., exaggerating product benefits) (Umphress et al., 2010).

Research indicates that employees often engage in unethical actions intending to aid their organizations, such as misrepresenting company information or deceiving customers for financial gain. This has sparked interest in terms like employer-benefiting misbehavior (OMB Type O) (Vardi & Wiener, 1996), pro-organizational workplace crime (Vadera & Pratt, 2013), and unethical pro-other behavior (Veetikazhi et al., 2022). Scholars have developed constructs to better define unethical behaviors aimed at benefiting employers, making UPB a significant topic in organizational behavior research.

Understanding the factors driving UPB is crucial, as it can lead to substantial personal and organizational consequences. Various individual, organizational, and leadership factors influencing UPB have been explored in the literature (Zhang & Xiao, 2020; Mishra et al., 2021).

2.3 HARMONIOUS WORK PASSION

Harmonious work passion refers to an employee's intrinsic motivation that fosters positive emotional engagement and commitment to work (Vallerand et al., 2003). This sense of passion is generally associated with better job performance and job satisfaction because it aligns with personal values and interests. Studies have demonstrated that passionate employees exhibit creativity, resilience, and goal-oriented behaviors, which are critical in high-pressure environments like banks (Vallerand, 2010). Harmonious passion involves autonomous internalization in which the individual freely pursues the job because of the job's importance or characteristics rather than because of any derived feelings of social approval or recognition (Ho et al., 2011; Vallerand & Houlfort, 2003).

Work passion impacts numerous aspects of one's way of engaging with work, such as performance, satisfaction, intentions to quit, or OCB (Mititelu, 2020). Research on the affective, behavioral, and cognitive consequences of passion has generally shown that harmonious passion is linked to positive consequences and that

obsessive passion is related to less positive or negative consequence (Carbonneau, et al., 2008). For example, results indicate that harmonious passion is related to greater levels of vitality (Houlfort et al., 2013). In the work context, individuals with harmonious passion engage in their work because of certain inherent characteristics of the work itself (e.g., enjoyable, challenging) (Vallerand & Houlfort, 2019; Vallerand et al., 2014). Additionally, because of the autonomous or volitional nature with which work is internalized into their identities, harmoniously passionate individuals are able to balance work with other aspects and obligations of their lives (Vallerand, 2015). Consequently, they not only report more positive affect like fun and enjoyment, but also less negative affect like guilt and anxiety, when engaging in the activity (Vallerand et al., 2014).

A study by Chen et al. (2021) found that harmonious work passion positively correlates with innovative behavior among bank employees, enhancing overall organizational performance. Conversely, when work passion becomes misaligned with organizational ethics, it can lead to moral disengagement, where employees justify unethical actions as beneficial for their organization (Bandura, 1991).

2.4 HARMONIOUS WORK PASSION AND UPB

Employees with harmonious work passion (HWP) may be less likely to engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB) due to the influence of self-determination theory (SDT) and specific psychological mechanisms associated with HWP. SDT explains the conditions that motivate individuals' actions and suggests that autonomous motivation, as opposed to controlled motivation, leads to more ethical behavior.

According to Self-determination theory, individuals experience different types of motivation, ranging from extrinsically controlled to intrinsically motivated. Harmonious passion for work represents a form of internalized motivation, whereby individuals engage in work activities aligned with their true interests and values. This autonomous form of motivation fosters a sense of personal agency, satisfaction, and well-being. As a result, employees with HWP are more likely to act in ways that are consistent with their deeply held values and aspirations, leading them to resist engaging in unethical behaviors that compromise their integrity.

Conversely, if the organization emphasizes performance over ethical standards—thereby undermining employees' sense of autonomy—individuals may experience conflict between their passionate commitment to the organization and their ethical beliefs. This internal conflict can lead to moral disengagement, where employees justify unethical actions taken in the name of organizational loyalty (Bandura, 1991).

Research has shown that fostering a rich environment for autonomy, competence, and relatedness reduces the likelihood of UPB. For instance, a study by LePine et al. (2005) found that when employees felt autonomous and competent, they

were less likely to compromise their ethical standards, even in competitive or high-pressure environments.

Virtue ethics as proposed by Aristotle and further developed by modern ethicists, emphasizes the development of virtuous character traits and the pursuit of moral excellence. According to this ethical framework, individuals with harmonious work passion are likely to embody virtues such as integrity, conscientiousness, and dedication to their work. These virtues align with ethical conduct and may serve as a foundation for resisting the temptation to engage in UPB. Previous literature supports this view by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between HWP and ethical behavior. For example, individuals with HWP are driven by an internal desire to engage in work-related activities, which is associated with positive work attitudes, including higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Burke, et al., 2014; Ho et al., 2011). This suggests that employees with HWP are inclined to exhibit behaviors that benefit their organization without resorting to unethical means, as they are intrinsically motivated to contribute positively to their work environment.

Furthermore, research by Forest et al. (2010) demonstrated that individuals with HWP are more likely to experience positive work outcomes, such as higher job satisfaction, lower emotional exhaustion, and greater psychological well-being. These factors are known to be negatively associated with engaging in unethical behaviors, as employees experiencing job satisfaction and well-being are less likely to engage in behaviors that could jeopardize these positive work-related states. Based on the foregoing discussion, we hypothesize that;

$H0_1$: *There is no significant relationship between harmonious work passion and unethical pro-organizational behavior.*

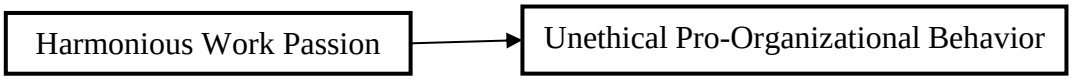


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Harmonious work Passion and Unethical Pro-organizational behavior

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESIGN, POPULATION, SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

This study adopted an explanatory design and quantitative approach to gather data based on a cross-sectional descriptive survey and the data was collected through the distribution questionnaire.

The target population for the study is the staff of selected five (5) banks in Abuja metropolis in all namely FirstBank of Nigeria Plc, Zenith Bank, Gt Bank Plc, Access Bank Plc and United African Bank Plc. The justification for choosing the above banks is because they are among the largest and most established banking

institutions in Nigeria, with extensive operations nationwide, including in Abuja and their staff strength.

The Krejcie and Morgan's sample size table was used to determine the sample size. The sample size for this study was 354 from the population of 4,918. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the diversity of the population of 4,918 employees from five selected banks within the Abuja metropolis. This method allows for the representation of different subgroups within the workforce, such as departments, job levels, and demographic characteristics, thereby capturing a comprehensive overview of employee perspectives on the research. The nature of the questionnaire used for this study was a seven-point Likert-scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (1 = 'Strongly Disagree', 2 = 'Disagree', 3 = 'Somewhat Disagree', 4 = 'Undecided', 5 = 'Somewhat Agree' 6 = 'Agree' and 7 = 'Strongly Agree').

3.2 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is a statistical technique used in social sciences, marketing, and other fields to analyze complex relationships among variables. PLS-SEM was initially proposed by Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011), building on the work of earlier scholars. The PLS-SEM in study tested for the measurement model and the structural model.

Measurement model

The measurement model assesses the constructs involved in the study, which is to determine whether the indicators such as, Composite reliability (CR), convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity, as described by Hair et al. (2011), Hair et al (2012) and Henseler et al (2009) met their required threshold.

Table 1: Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	CA
Harmonious Work Passion	HWP1	0.789	0.624	0.869	0.799
	HWP2	0.798			
	HWP4	0.870			
	HWP5	0.695			
Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior	UPB2	0.733	0.538	0.823	0.718
	UPB3	0.682			
	UPB6	0.783			
	UPB7	0.732			

The result in Table 1 shows the convergent validity for the constructs under study. The results thus demonstrated a high level of convergent validity of the latent construct and used in the model. An AVE value of at least 0.5 indicates sufficient convergent validity, meaning that a latent variable can explain at least half of the variance of its indicators on average.

Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Discriminant Validity

	HWP	UPB
HWP		
UPB	0.542	

Table 2 show the discriminant validity result. According to Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2015: 121), a well-fitting model should indicate that the heterotrait correlations should be smaller than monotrait correlations, meaning that the HTMT ratio should be below 1.0, Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2015: 121) suggested that if the HTMT value is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been established. Results in Table 2 indicated that discriminant validity was established.

The Structural Model

Structural model fitness is examined after measurement model assessment has been met and fitness is shown to be acceptable. The structural or inner model consists of the factors and the arrows that connect one factor to another. The loadings of the direct paths connecting factors are standardized regression coefficients. To ensure that the final estimated result from the PLS is true, it is important to determine the fitness of the model. The fitness of the model can be assessed in the following ways; testing for collinearity of the structural model, assessing the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships, the level of the R^2 values, and the f^2 effect size (Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin & Lauro 2005). Höck & Ringle, (2006) described results above the cutoffs 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 to be "substantial", "moderate" and "weak" respectively. The R-square here would be considered to be of moderate strength or effect. To assess multicollinearity in the structural model, tolerance or VIF criteria may be applied, discussed and illustrated. The VIF benchmark should be less than 4.

The f-square effect size measure is another name for the R-square change effect. The f-square coefficient can be constructed equal to (R^2original – R^2omitted)/(1-R^2original). The denominator in this equation is "Unexplained". The f-square equation expresses how large a proportion of unexplained variance is accounted for by R^2 change (Hair et al., 2014). Following Cohen (1988), .02 represents a "small" f^2 effect size, .15 represents a "medium" effect, and .35 represents a "high" effect size.

Table 3: Structural Fitness Indices

Construct	Items	VIF	R^2	f^2	Q^2	SRMR
Harmonious Work Passion	HWP1	1.826		0.232		
	HWP2	1.924				
	HWP4	2.140				
	HWP5	1.237				
Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior	UPB2	1.342	0.188		0.174	0.067
	UPB3	1.770				
	UPB6	1.949				
	UPB7	1.480				

From Table 3, it revealed that the VIF values are less that than 4.0, indicating no multicollinearity. Harmonious Work Passion influences UPB by 18.8%. The f^2 which measures the effect size for the structural model indicated that Harmonious Work Passion has "medium" effect on UPB. The value of the SRMR indicated a good fit which is within the threshold of than .08 which 0.080. The Q^2 was estimated by the blindfolding method. The values of the Q^2 are 0.174 indicated that since it is greater than zero, indicating a predictive relevance for this study.

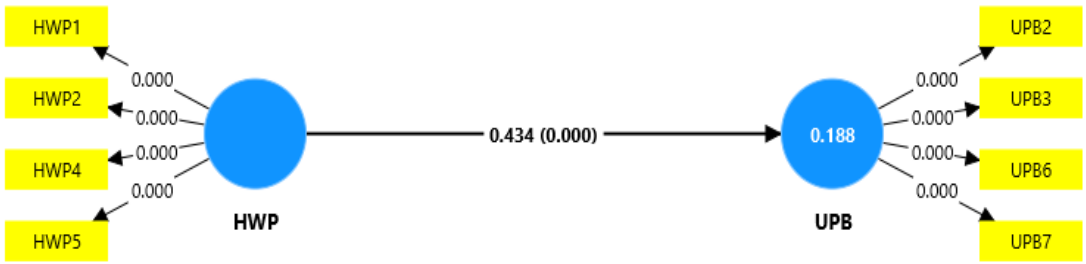


Figure 2: PLS-SEM structural model

Table 4: PLS-SEM Result

Variables	**Coeff. B**	**Std err**	**t-test**	**P-value**	**Decision**
HWP -> UPB	0.434	0.053	8.207	0.000	significant

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between harmonious work passion and unethical pro-organizational behavior.

The decision rule is that if the p-value is less than the level of significance of 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. But if the p-value is greater than the level of 0.05, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate.

As shown in Figure 3 and Table 4, the standardized regression weight for harmonious work passion on unethical pro-organizational behavior is 0.434, suggesting that this path is statistically significant at α =0.05. This indicated that harmonious work passion has positive and significant effect on unethical pro-organizational behavior. Given that the p-value 0.000 is less than the significance level of 0.05 as shown in Table 4, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis implying that there is a significant relationship between harmonious work passion and unethical pro-organizational behavior.

This result does corroborate with the study of Mititelu, (2020) who studied the affective, behavioral, and cognitive consequences of passion has generally shown that harmonious passion is linked to positive consequences and that obsessive passion is related to less positive or negative consequence. The results indicated that harmonious passion is related to greater levels of vitality. Consequently, the result does support the findings of Vallerand et al., (2003) who not only report more positive affect like fun and enjoyment, but also less negative affect like guilt and anxiety, when engaging in the activity.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this research revealed that there is a significant relationship between harmonious work passion and unethical pro-organizational behavior. The findings have shown that individuals with harmonious passion engage in their work because of certain inherent characteristics of the work itself. Harmoniously passionate individuals are able to balance work with other aspects and obligations of their lives. Employees with harmonious work passion (HWP) may be less likely to engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB) due to the influence of self-determination theory (SDT) and specific psychological mechanisms associated with HWP. SDT explains the conditions that motivate individuals' actions and suggests that autonomous motivation, as opposed to controlled motivation, leads to more ethical behavior. Based on the finding, the study recommends that encouraging ethical leadership at all levels of the organization to set a positive example for employees. Leaders should emphasize integrity, fairness, and ethical decision-making to create a culture of accountability and trust.

5. AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Samuel Oluwashogo Oyediran: As the main author of this study, I conceptualized the research framework, conducted the literature review, and developed the methodology. I was responsible for data collection and analysis, as well as the interpretation of findings. Additionally, I drafted the manuscript and integrated feedback throughout the writing process.

Dr. Danjuma Nanfa Kusa: As my supervisor, **Dr. Kusa** provided invaluable guidance and support throughout the research process. He contributed to the

refinement of the research design, offered critical insights during data analysis, and reviewed various drafts of the manuscript, ensuring academic rigor and coherence in presentation. His mentorship was instrumental in shaping the direction and quality of this work.

This collaborative effort reflects our commitment to advancing knowledge in the field of organizational behavior, particularly regarding the interplay between harmonious work passion and unethical pro-organizational behavior.

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