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Lay Theories of Obsessive Passion and Performance: It All Depends on the Bottom Line

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Abstract

Obsessive passion predicts many different types of maladaptive intra- and inter-personal outcomes (Vallerand, 2015). Our aim in this research was to explore one potential force that might promote or sustain obsessive passion in the workplace: lay beliefs about the relationship between obsessive passion and work success. We hypothesized that people hold the lay belief that obsessive passion is ideal for achieving success in workplaces that focus on singular objectives (e.g., productivity) at the expense of competing goals (e.g., well-being) – that is, those work environments characterized by *bottom-line mentalities* (e.g., Greenbaum, Mawritz, & Eissa, 2012). In three studies we assessed lay beliefs about passion from different perspectives, including perceptions of others (Study 1, $n = 138$), the way people presented themselves and believed others should present themselves (Study 2, $n = 355$), and estimates of one's own success in different workplace environments (Study 3, $n = 418$). In support of our hypothesis, participants believed that, in workplaces characterized by bottom-line mentalities, they and others would be more likely to achieve success with high levels of obsessive passion. This means that lay beliefs about passion may be a force that promotes and sustains obsessive passion in workplaces focused exclusively on bottom line outcomes. This finding has implications for the decisions that are made by both employers and employees, and reveals a process that could contribute to the value that workplaces put on being obsessed toward the job.

Keywords: bottom-line mentality; harmonious passion; implicit theories; lay beliefs; obsessive passion

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People are often passionately motivated to engage in their work. For passionate workers, jobs are meaningful and valuable parts of their lives that have become incorporated into their self-concept. But according to much theory and research on passion (e.g., Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand & Houliort, 2019), the extent to which people are passionate toward their jobs is only part of the story. More specifically, the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2015) makes a critical distinction in the extent to which passions are harmonious and obsessive. Harmonious passion emerges when one internalizes an activity in an autonomous fashion, meaning that it is pursued with a sense of personal volition and is congruent with one's values and goals. Having strong levels of harmonious passion in this context means that one enjoys one's work and pursues it in a flexible way that is well balanced with other life pursuits. In contrast, obsessive passion emerges when one internalizes an activity in a more controlled fashion, meaning that it is pursued because of contingencies that are connected with the activity. Having strong levels of obsessive passion means that one also enjoys one's work but pursues it in a rigid way that can conflict with other parts of one's life.

In the workplace, harmonious and obsessive passion have been linked to different outcomes (Vallerand, 2010, 2015; Vallerand & Houliort, 2019; for a meta-analysis, see Curran, Hill, Appleton, Vallerand, & Standage, 2015). Harmonious passion is a positive predictor of adaptive outcomes such as work satisfaction, life satisfaction, flow, and perceptions of job control, and is protective against maladaptive outcomes such as burnout and psychological distress (Birkland & Buch, 2015; Forest, Mageau, Sarrazin, & Morin, 2011; Houliort, Philippe, Vallerand, & Ménard, 2013; Lavigne, Forest, & Crevier-Braud, 2012; Lavigne, Forest, Fernet, & Crevier-Braud, 2014; Spehar, Forest, & Stenseng, 2016). Obsessive passion, however, is a

positive predictor of maladaptive outcomes such as depression, burnout, perceptions of work overload, psychological distress, and work-life conflict (Birkland, Richardsen, & Dysvik, 2018; Houliort, Philippe, Bourdeau, & Leduc, 2017; Houliort et al., 2012; Lavigne et al., 2014; Vallerand, Paquet, Philippe, & Charest, 2010). Overall, research relying on the dualistic model of passion has revealed that distinguishing between both varieties of passion in the workplace is critical for predicting inter- and intra-personal outcomes.

Passion research has thus revealed that the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are characteristic of people with strong levels of obsessive passion toward work could make them less pleasant to be around and potentially more difficult to work with than those who are not obsessively passionate toward their work (Vallerand & Houliort, 2019). Therefore, our aim in this research was to focus on this more distressed variety of passion and examine why, given these known problems, obsessive passion continues to survive in the workplace. Why, for example, would employers hire or promote obsessively passionate employees? And why would employees persist in being obsessively passionate in spite of the personal and social consequences? Little attention has been paid to questions concerning the processes that promote or sustain obsessive passion in the workplace. In this research, we show that people's *beliefs* about passion offer some insight into these questions. Specifically, in certain work environments, people believe that having high levels of obsessive passion is an effective way to achieve high levels of performance and success.

Lay Beliefs of Passion

People form beliefs about how the world works and how best to pursue their goals and objectives (Dweck, 2017; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Epstein, 2014; Molden & Dweck, 2006). These lay beliefs can be broad, such as believing that the world is fair and just (e.g., Lerner &

Miller, 1978), or that everything happens for a reason (e.g., Banerjee & Bloom, 2015). Lay beliefs can also be about specific personal attributes or phenomena, such as the malleability of intelligence (e.g., Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995), the extent to which self-control is a limited resource (e.g., Job, Walton, Bernecker, & Dweck, 2015), the benefits of stress (Jamieson, Crum, Goyer, Marotta, & Akinola, 2018), and the causes of happiness (Furnham & Cheng, 2000), obesity (Ogden & Flanagan, 2008), and mental illness (e.g., Matschinger & Angermeyer, 1996; see also Zedelius, Müller, & Schooler, 2017).

Passion is another phenomenon about which people hold lay beliefs. For example, research studying lay beliefs about the causes of passion has distinguished between those who believe that passionate interests develop over time (develop/growth theories) and those who believe that passionate interests are waiting to be discovered (fit/fixed theories; Chen, Ellsworth, & Schwarz, 2015; O’Keefe, Dweck, & Walton, 2018). Another distinction that has been made is between those who believe that desired levels of passion can be attained by finding activities that they like (enjoyment lay belief) and those who believe that passion emerges when one finds a pursuit that is personally important or valuable (values lay belief; Jachimowicz, To, Menges, & Akinola, 2018). Research studying these lay beliefs has shown that expectations, decisions, and motivation can depend on the particular lay belief that is endorsed (Chen et al., 2015; O’Keefe et al., 2018; Jachimowicz et al., 2018). In research relying on the dualistic model of passion, Schellenberg and Bailis (2017) studied university students’ beliefs about the academic outcomes linked with both passion quantity (i.e., the amount of passion a student has toward academics) and quality (i.e., harmonious and obsessive varieties of passion). They found that students believed that having high levels of obsessive passion led to worse academic experiences (lower satisfaction, enjoyment, and resiliency at university) compared to having high levels of

harmonious passion. However, students also believed that having a high level of passion for academics – regardless of whether a passion was predominantly harmonious or obsessive – was associated with academic success. Overall, research thus far has revealed that people can have different lay beliefs about the causes and consequences of passion, and that such beliefs can differ for harmonious and obsessive passion dimensions.

Our focus in this research was on the lay beliefs that workers have about the relationship between passion for work and success. Based on our curiosity with the forces that promote or sustain obsessive passion in the workplace, we approached this research with the specific objective of identifying a context in which people hold the belief that obsessive passion is the only variety of passion that can lead to success. There is reason to believe that this specific lay belief is common. A common piece of career advice that circulates in the popular press recommends that young professionals and entrepreneurs be obsessed toward their careers (e.g., Cardone, 2016). Indeed, even a cursory search of popular job search websites reveals that employers are seeking to fill all types of positions, from software developers to stylists, with applicants who would be in some ways obsessed with the job.

Obsessive Passion and the Bottom Line

Obsessive passion involves a rigid, all-encompassing pursuit of an activity along with the suppression of alternative goals (Bélanger, Lafrenière, Vallerand, & Kruglanski, 2013; Bélanger, Schumpe, & Nisa, 2019; Vallerand, 2015). Therefore, people may believe that those who adopt this all-or-nothing approach toward their work are best suited to perform in workplaces in which a norm exists to focus on specific objectives at the expense of other priorities. This type of mindset in the workplace has been referred to as a *bottom-line mentality* (BLM), which is defined as “...one-dimensional thinking that revolves around securing bottom-line outcomes to

the neglect of competing priorities” (Greenbaum, Mawritz, & Eissa, 2012, p. 344). Workplaces with a BLM place an emphasis on singular objectives (e.g., profits, productivity, performance outcomes), and pay little attention to other goals (e.g., employee well-being, personal relationships). Maintaining a BLM is therefore a simplistic way of thinking that values the performance on a focal objective above everything else (Wolfe, 1988). Although this mindset, in and of itself, is not necessarily problematic, it can lead to dysfunction by triggering processes oriented toward achieving bottom-line outcomes by any means necessary, including cutting corners, opting for quick-fix solutions, and other ethically problematic behaviors (Bonner, Greenbaum, & Quade, 2017; Greenbaum et al., 2012; Wolfe, 1988). For example, having a high BLM has been associated with social undermining, a process that involves intentionally impeding the success of coworkers (Greenbaum et al., 2012).

In workplaces, supervisors play an important part in embodying and transmitting norms consistent with a BLM to employees (Greenbaum et al., 2012). The values and principles of supervisors can be important cues to inform prospective employees (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011) about organizational norms and cultures (Schein, 2017), potential person-organization fit (Kristoff, 1996), and the type of people employees would be working with (Schneider, 1987). The emerging empirical literature on BLM in the workplace has supported the significance of a supervisor’s BLM: a supervisor’s BLM is a positive predictor of an employee’s BLM (Greenbaum et al., 2012), and employees working for high-BLM supervisors feel worse about themselves following unethical behavior compared to those working for low-BLM supervisors (Bonner et al., 2017).

We hypothesized that people are more likely to hold the lay belief that obsessive passion is predictive of success in workplaces in which supervisors are focused on bottom-line outcomes.

These beliefs should be unique to obsessive passion and not shared with harmonious passion.¹

The rigid persistence and alternative-goal shielding associated with obsessive passion (Bélanger et al., 2013; Bélanger et al., 2019; Vallerand, 2015) should foster the belief that such an obsessive passion is ideal for achieving success in workplaces that are characterized by a BLM.

Current Research

We tested our hypothesis across three studies. In Study 1, participants imagined that they were human resource managers and rated how suitable different job applicants with varying levels of harmonious and obsessive passion were for different types of jobs, including those involving a supervisor with a BLM. In Study 2, participants imagined that a company wanted to promote an employee and responded to items assessing harmonious and obsessive passion in a way that they believed would either give themselves or another applicant the best chance at getting the job. Some participants, however, were told that the promoted employee would work for a new supervisor who had a BLM. In Study 3, employees reported their own levels of harmonious and obsessive passion for their work, and imagined how they would perform if they were to work with a new supervisor. But once again, some participants were told that the new supervisor would have a BLM. These three studies were intended to provide complementary but cohesive tests of our hypothesis in various workplace contexts; if people hold the lay belief that obsessive passion is conducive to success in workplaces with a BLM, then this lay belief should be reflected in people's perceptions of others (Study 1), the way people present themselves or believe others should present themselves (Study 2), and how people estimate their own

¹ Although harmonious passion entails high levels of time and effort devoted toward work, it also involves pursuing work with a sense of flexibility and balance with other activities. Therefore, harmonious passion should not be perceived as offering performance benefits within a work environment that is focused exclusively on the bottom line.

performance in different workplace environments (Study 3). For each study, we obtained institutional ethics approval and informed consent from each participant.

Study 1

Method

Participants. Participants ($n = 138$) were recruited from Prolific Academic (www.prolific.ac), an online crowdsourcing platform oriented toward academic research that is similar to other crowdsourcing websites used for online psychological studies (e.g., Amazon Mechanical Turk; see Peer, Brandimarte, Samat, & Acquisti, 2017).² The online survey was available to all Prolific users who were over 18 years old. Two additional participants completed the study but were excluded from all analyses because they indicated that they did not answer the survey questions honestly. Participants (71 females, 67 males) ranged from 18 to 63 years old ($M = 34.67$ years, $SD = 10.64$ years), and most identified having a White/European ethnic background (88.4%), and were employed on a full-time (54.3%) or part-time (21.7%) basis. Participants received £1.68 (approximately \$2.16 USD) in exchange for participation.

Procedure and measures. Participants completed an online survey in which they imagined that they were human resource managers at a company that was trying to hire several new employees. They were told that there were several different types of positions needed to be filled, and that they needed to determine which applicants would be best suited for the different types of jobs. To help in the selection process, participants reviewed completed personality questionnaires of four hypothetical applicants.

² Using G*Power software, we determined that we would need to recruit 140 participants in order to have sufficient statistical power (.90) to detect a small to medium effect size ($f = .2$) with an alpha of .05 for both the omnibus within-subjects effect, and the planned comparison of the harmoniously passionate and obsessively passionate groups.

The personality questionnaire that participants evaluated was the Passion Scale (Vallerand, 2015), which includes 6 items measuring harmonious passion, 6 items measuring obsessive passion, and 5 items measuring the passion criteria. The Passion Scale asks respondents to report levels of agreement with each item on a scale from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 7 (*very strongly agree*). The original items of the Passion Scale refer to one's "favorite activity", but were altered in this study to refer to "working" (Birkeland & Buch, 2015; Forest et al., 2010). The items were also re-organized so that the first five items assessed the passion criteria, the next six items assessed harmonious passion, and the final six items assessed obsessive passion; this alteration was made to allow the participants to easily distinguish between the items assessing each variety of passion (Schellenberg & Bailis, 2017).

Participants were presented with four scanned versions of the Passion Scale that had been completed by hand. Following the procedures of Schellenberg and Bailis (2017), the questionnaires depicted applicants who were either harmoniously passionate, obsessively passionate, had mixed passion (i.e., both harmoniously and obsessively passionate), or who were not passionate for working. Different levels of passion were portrayed with responses that indicated different levels of agreement with the Passion Scale items. For instance, the harmoniously passionate questionnaire displayed responses in which "very strongly agree" was selected for all but one of the items assessing harmonious passion and the passion criteria, while "strongly agree" was selected for the remaining item of these scales. "Not agree at all" was selected for all but one of the obsessive passion items, while "very slightly agree" was selected for the remaining obsessive passion item. Items that were not selected at the extreme point of the scale were determined randomly. This same process was used to select item responses for the questionnaires depicting an obsessively passionate applicant (i.e., high agreement with the

passion criteria and obsessive passion items, low agreement with the harmonious passion items), a mixed passionate applicant (i.e., high agreement with all items on the Passion Scale), and the non-passionate applicant (i.e., low agreement with all items on the Passion Scale). Participants were presented with each completed questionnaire in a random order. The four completed versions of the Passion Scale were the only questionnaires that were presented to the participants.

After reviewing each personality questionnaire, participants estimated how well the applicant would perform in different job environments. Following the stem “This applicant would perform well in a job in which...”, participants reported their level of agreement with 19 items on a scale from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 7 (*totally agree*). Items assessed several different job characteristics, such as performance pressure (“...there are high levels of pressure to perform”), competitiveness (“...there is a lot of competition between employees – some employees become more successful than others”), and work-life balance (“...the job duties often conflict with life outside of work”). Embedded within these 19 items were four items adapted from Greenbaum et al. (2012) assessing a supervisor’s BLM: “...the supervisor is solely concerned with profits”; “...the supervisor only cares about the business”; “...the supervisor treats profits as more important than anything else”; “...the supervisor cares more about productivity than employee well-being”. The Cronbach’s alpha for these four items following each applicant questionnaire ranged from .95 to .96; therefore, we combined responses to these four items for each applicant to form a measure of anticipated applicant success when working with a supervisor with a BLM.

Finally, for each applicant, participants answer three manipulation-check questions assessing the extent to which the applicant was passionate (“This applicant is passionate about

working”), harmoniously passionate (“This applicant feels that working is in harmony with his/her life”), and obsessively passionate (“This applicant feels obsessed with working”) about working on a scale from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 7 (*totally agree*). The last section of the survey asked participants to report demographic information and to answer an open-ended question regarding whether or not they were honest in their responses throughout the survey.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. Using repeated measures ANOVA, we tested if the applicants depicted by the four questionnaires were rated as having different levels of overall passion, harmonious passion, and obsessive passion for their work. First, ratings of overall passion differed between the four questionnaires, $F(2.76, 378.56) = 452.96, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.77$.³ Using planned contrasts, we found that the harmoniously passionate ($M = 5.38, SD = 1.80$), obsessively passionate ($M = 5.75, SD = 1.48$), and mixed passionate applicants ($M = 6.46, SD = 1.08$) were rated as being more passionate about work than the non-passionate applicant ($M = 1.28, SD = 0.92$), $F(1, 137) = 1209.85, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.90$ (see Table 1). Next, ratings of harmonious passion for work differed between the four questionnaires, $F(2.34, 320.01) = 314.26, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.70$. The harmoniously passionate ($M = 5.41, SD = 1.66$), and mixed passionate applicants ($M = 6.14, SD = 1.40$) were rated as having more harmonious passion for work than the obsessively passionate ($M = 2.15, SD = 1.88$) and non-passionate applicants ($M = 1.47, SD = 1.11$), $F(1, 137) = 596.09, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.81$. Finally, ratings of obsessive passion for work differed between the four questionnaires, $F(2.14, 292.48) = 497.70, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.78$. The obsessively passionate ($M = 5.78, SD = 1.48$), and mixed passionate applicants ($M = 6.48, SD = 1.08$) were rated as having more obsessive passion for work than the harmoniously passionate (M

³ When sphericity could not be assumed, results using the Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment were interpreted.

= 2.20, $SD = 1.81$) and non-passionate applicants ($M = 1.22$, $SD = 0.81$), $F(1, 137) = 5104.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.97$. Overall, these results indicate that the four personality questionnaires had the intended effect of portraying applicants with different amounts of overall passion, harmonious passion, and obsessive passion.

Main analysis. Our main analysis tested the hypothesis that estimates of job success would be higher for the obsessively passionate applicant compared to the harmoniously passionate applicant in a job in which the supervisor had a BLM. Overall, estimates of job success with a supervisor with a BLM differed between the four questionnaires, $F(2.71, 371.21) = 194.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.59$. A planned contrast revealed that estimates of job success were higher for the obsessively passionate applicant ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.51$) compared to the harmoniously passionate applicant ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.47$), $F(1, 137) = 20.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.13$, $d = 0.507$.⁴ The mixed passionate applicant had the highest estimate of success ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.32$), whereas the non-passionate applicant has the lowest estimate of success ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 1.06$). All pairwise comparisons were significant (see Table 1).⁵

Supplementary analysis. The Supplementary File presents the estimates of job success for the four applicants in all the job environments that were assessed in this study (Table S1). We inspected the estimates to determine if the harmoniously passionate and obsessively passionate applicants were predicted to perform differently in any other job environment. The harmoniously passionate applicant was estimated to perform better than the obsessively passionate applicant in jobs in which employees are able to prevent their job from getting in the

⁴ Cohen's d for the repeated-measures comparison was calculated using the online calculator developed by Lenhard and Lenhard (2016), which uses the formula presented by Dunlap, Cortina, Vaslow, and Burke (1996).

⁵ We did not find any potential univariate outliers ($|Z| > 3.0$) for job success estimates of the harmoniously passionate and obsessively passionate workers with a supervisor with a BLM.

way of their life outside of work ($M_{HP} = 4.78$, $SD_{HP} = 1.69$; $M_{OP} = 3.88$, $SD_{OP} = 1.96$), and in which employees are allowed plenty of free time during evenings and weekends to pursue their hobbies and leisure activities ($M_{HP} = 5.00$, $SD_{HP} = 1.54$; $M_{OP} = 4.18$, $SD_{OP} = 1.97$). However, the obsessively passionate applicant was estimated to perform better than the harmoniously passionate applicant in jobs in which most of the other employees are consumed with their jobs ($M_{HP} = 4.04$, $SD_{HP} = 1.61$; $M_{OP} = 4.94$, $SD_{OP} = 1.57$). There were no other significant differences of estimated job success between the harmoniously and obsessively passionate applicants.

Brief discussion. These results support the hypothesis that people believe that obsessive passion is conducive to success in workplaces with a BLM. In comparison to applicants portrayed as having either high levels of harmonious passion or low passion for their work, participants estimated that highly obsessively passionate workers would achieve higher levels of performance when working for supervisors with a BLM. This perceived performance advantage appeared to be unique to BLM environments – in almost all of the other workplace attributes that we assessed (reported in the Supplementary File), obsessive passion was not perceived as conferring any performance advantages over harmonious passion. One consistent result was that applicants portrayed as having high levels of both harmonious and obsessive passion (i.e., mixed passion) were estimated to achieve the highest level of success when working for a supervisor with a BLM and in almost all of the other workplace attributes that we assessed. People with high harmonious and obsessive passion for work may be perceived as being most flexible to adapt to different situations at work, including periods of time or tasks that involve a focus on bottom-line outcomes and those that are focused on subordinate goals. Consequently, having mixed passion could facilitate work performance by allowing workers to access either variety of passion on different days or tasks (Schellenberg et al., 2019). But despite the potential perceived

benefits of having high harmonious passion in addition to high obsessive passion, direct comparisons showed that obsessive passion was viewed as being more important for success in BLM contexts than harmonious passion. We return to the topic of mixed passion as part of the General Discussion.

Study 2

In Study 1, participants imagined being human resource managers and estimated the success of job applicants in different job environments. In Study 2, participants played the opposite role and instead adopted the perspective of a worker who was applying for a promotion. The purpose of this role-reversal was to test whether the effect of people's lay beliefs about obsessive passion – observed in Study 1 – generalizes to the way people present themselves or believe others should present themselves when applying for a promotion. Our specific goal was to determine if people would present themselves differently, or believe others should present themselves differently, if they were applying for a promotion that would result in working for a new supervisor with a BLM. We hypothesized that people would report, or believe others should report, having higher levels of obsessive passion toward their work if they were applying to work with a supervisor with a BLM as compared to having no knowledge of the supervisor.

Methods

Participants. Undergraduates ($n = 355$) enrolled in an introductory psychology course participated in this study in exchange for course credit. Additional participants ($n = 72$) completed the study but were excluded from all analyses because they indicated on an integrity-

check item that they did not follow the survey instructions.⁶ Participants (278 females, 77 males) ranged from 17 to 40 years old ($M = 19.17$ years, $SD = 3.15$ years), and most often identified having a White/European ethnic background (47.9%). Participants were randomly assigned to complete one of two versions of an online survey.⁷

Online survey – Other version. Those assigned to the *other version* of the online survey ($n = 181$) read the following instructions:

We would like you to imagine that a company would like to promote an employee. Many employees want the promotion because it would be a great career opportunity. The employee who earns the promotion would work for a new supervisor.

Participants randomly assigned to the *BLM condition* ($n = 88$) then read the following description about the new supervisor: “The new supervisor who the promoted employee would work for is solely concerned with profits. The new supervisor only cares about the business and treats profits and productivity as being more important than anything else, including employee well-being.” This wording was adapted from items assessing a supervisor’s BLM (as per Study 1) developed by Greenbaum and colleagues (2012). Those assigned to the *control condition* ($n = 93$) did not see a description of the supervisor.

Next, all participants were told that the company had asked each applicant to complete a brief questionnaire about their attitudes and feelings about working at the company as part of the application procedure, and that the new supervisor would evaluate the questionnaire responses

⁶ We suspect that many participants did not follow the instructions properly because they were asked to answer questionnaire items in a way that they thought they or somebody else *should* answer them in order to attain a promotion. These instructions were therefore different than what normally accompanies online questionnaires, which usually ask participants to report their own feelings and attitudes.

⁷ Using G*Power software, we determined that we would need 215 participants to complete each survey version in order to have sufficient statistical power (.80) to detect a small to medium effects size ($d = .35$) with an alpha of .05 (one-tailed). We were slightly below this targeted sample size because participants who did not follow the survey instructions were excluded.

and use them to decide which applicant to promote. Participants were then presented with a questionnaire and asked to answer the questions in a way that they thought the employee who would be most likely to earn the promotion would answer them. This questionnaire was the Passion Scale which, like Study 1, was adapted to refer to “working”. Responses to the Passion Scale were used to assess expected levels of harmonious passion ($\alpha = .86$), obsessive passion ($\alpha = .86$), and passion quantity (i.e., the passion criteria; $\alpha = .87$) for the employee most likely to earn the promotion.

After completing the Passion Scale, participants answered two manipulation-check questions assessing the extent to which the new supervisor who the promoted employee would work for (a) is only concerned with profits, and (b) cares about employee well-being. Both items were assessed on a scale from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 7 (*totally agree*). The last section of the survey asked participants to report demographic information and to answer an open-ended question regarding whether or not they responded to the questions on the Passion Scale in a way that they thought would give an employee the best chance at getting the promotion.

Online survey – Self version. Those assigned to the *self version* of the online survey ($n = 174$) completed the same procedure as those in the *other* version. However, participants completing this version of the survey read the following instructions:

We would like you to imagine that you work for a company and have applied for a promotion. You really want the promotion because it would be a great career opportunity. If you get the promotion, you would work for a new supervisor.

Participants randomly assigned to the *BLM condition* ($n = 90$) then read the following description about the new supervisor: “The new supervisor who you would work for if you get the promotion is solely concerned with profits. The new supervisor only cares about the business

and treats profits and productivity as being more important than anything else, including employee well-being.” Those assigned to the *control condition* ($n = 84$) did not see a description of the supervisor. Participants then completed the same procedures as the *other version*, but adapted for the self perspective: they were told that the new supervisor would evaluate each applicant’s responses on a personality questionnaire, and then they completed the items from the Passion Scale in a way that they thought would give them the best chance at getting the promotion. They then answered the same demographic and manipulation-check items. Responses to the Passion Scale were used to assess the levels of harmonious passion ($\alpha = .75$), obsessive passion ($\alpha = .69$), and passion quantity ($\alpha = .86$) that the participants expected would give them the best chance at getting the promotion.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. We first compared the responses to the two manipulation-check items between the two experimental conditions (see Table 2). The results supported the intended manipulation with both survey versions. Among participants who completed the *other version* of the online survey, participants in the BLM condition reported that the new supervisor would be more concerned with profits than those in the control condition, $t(178.71) = 8.30, p < .001, d = 1.23$, and reported that the new supervisor would care less about employee well-being than those in the control condition $t(150.93) = -9.62, p < .001, d = -1.42$. Among participants who completed the *self version* of the online survey, participants in the BLM condition reported that the new supervisor would be more concerned with profits than those in the control condition, $t(162.31) = 8.28, p < .001, d = 1.25$, and reported that the new supervisor would care less about

employee well-being than those in the control condition $t(149.71) = -11.02, p < .001, d = -1.66$.^{8,9}

Main analysis. Our main analysis involved comparing passion scores between both experimental conditions among participants assigned to the other and self versions of the survey (Table 2). For participants completing the *other version*, participants in the BLM condition reported that the applicant who would be most likely to earn the promotion would respond with higher obsessive passion than those in the control condition, $t(172.17) = 5.11, p < .001, d = 0.76$. Also, estimated levels of harmonious passion for the successful applicant were lower in the BLM condition compared to the control condition, $t(168.49) = -4.59, p < .001, d = -0.68$. There were no differences in estimated levels of passion quantity between the two conditions, $t(178.98) = 1.50, p = .137, d = 0.22$.

For participants completing the *self version*, participants in the BLM condition responded with higher obsessive passion than those in the control condition, $t(150.09) = 8.55, p < .001, d = 1.28$. Reported levels of harmonious passion did not differ between the two conditions, $t(172) = 0.11, p = .909, d = 0.02$, whereas reported passion criteria scores were higher in the BLM condition compared to the control condition, $t(163.11) = 4.20, p < .001, d = 0.64$.¹⁰

Brief discussion. These results again support the hypothesis that people believe that obsessive passion can lead to success in workplaces that focus on bottom-line outcomes. When thinking about how they (the self version) or somebody else (the other version) should present themselves when applying for a job promotion, participants reported that higher levels of

⁸ We interpreted t -tests that did not assume equal variances in order to be consistent across all tests.

⁹ Cohen's d values were calculated using descriptive statistics with an online calculator provided by Lee Becker: <https://www.uccs.edu/~lbecker/>

¹⁰ The main analyses were repeated with extreme responses removed, as identified using boxplots (between 0 and 7 participants were excluded for each analysis). The results did not change in any meaningful way with extreme responses removed.

obsessive passion would be required to attain the promotion if the new supervisor had a BLM. One competing hypothesis is that people's lay beliefs about passion are centered on passion quantity (i.e., passion amount), rather than specific passion varieties (i.e., harmonious and obsessive passion). This study obtained inconsistent support for this interpretation; there were no significant differences in passion criteria scores between the two conditions in the *other* version, but passion criteria scores were higher in the BLM condition compared to the control condition in the *self* version. However, the only consistent finding across both survey versions was the one associated with our hypothesis; obsessive passion scores were higher in the BLM condition compared to the control condition, and the sizes of these effects were stronger than the associations found with harmonious passion and the passion criteria.

Study 3

The purpose of Study 3 was to extend the findings from the previous two studies to situations in which people estimate their success in different job environments based on their own levels of obsessive passion. If people hold the lay belief that obsessive passion is conducive to success in workplaces with a BLM, then this lay belief should be reflected in how they estimate their own performance in different workplace environments. Specifically, people with high levels of obsessive passion toward their work should predict that they would achieve high levels of success if they were to work for a supervisor with a BLM.

Methods

Participants. Employees ($n = 418$) were recruited from Prolific Academic.¹¹ Prolific users complete a screening questionnaire upon initial registration with Prolific Academic, and to be invited to participate in the current study they must have reported on the screening questionnaire that they were (a) 18 years of age or older, and (b) a full-time employee. Two additional participants were excluded from all analyses because they reported on an integrity-check item that they did not answer the survey questions honestly. Participants (228 males, 182 females, 8 either did not report a gender or did not identify as either male or female) ranged from 18 to 61 years old ($M = 34.19$ years, $SD = 9.52$ years), and most identified having a White/European ethnic background (88.3%). Participants had been employed at their current job for an average of 7.09 years ($SD = 7.39$ years), and most (97.4%) were still employed full time when they participated in this study. Participants received £0.66 (approximately \$0.90 USD) in exchange for participation.

Procedure and measures. Participants completed an online survey that consisted of two sections. In the first section, participants answered items from the Passion Scale to assess levels of harmonious and obsessive passion for working at their current job. Each item was answered on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 7 (*completely agree*). Responses from both subscales were averaged to create overall scores of harmonious ($\alpha = .90$) and obsessive passion ($\alpha = .89$).

¹¹ Using G*Power software, we determined that we would need 395 participants to detect a small effect size (R^2 increase = .02) with the following parameters: alpha = .05, power = .80, number of tested predictors = 1, total number of predictors = 4 (obsessive passion, experimental condition, obsessive passion $\times$ experimental condition interaction, and harmonious passion). We aimed to recruit at least 415 participants (i.e., an additional 5%) to account for participants who might need to be removed due to dishonest responding. After the data were collected, we learned that our analysis should also include the harmonious passion $\times$ experimental condition interaction as a covariate. We therefore included this interaction effect in all regression analyses, and should note that incorporating this additional predictor into our power analysis would have yielded an identical number of required participants.

In the second section, participants were randomly assigned to imagine themselves in one of two scenarios related to their current job. Participants randomly assigned to the *BLM condition* read the following scenario:

Please imagine that your current supervisor (i.e., the person to whom you directly report) has been replaced by a new supervisor. The new supervisor has been hired from a different company/organization, so you have never worked with this person before. You recently met the new supervisor at a meeting that was held with all the employees at your company/organization, [and it was clear that the new supervisor is solely concerned with profits. At the meeting, you learned that the new supervisor only cares about the business and treats profits and productivity as being more important than anything else, including employee well-being.]

Participants randomly assigned to the *control condition* read the same scenario, but without the section describing the new supervisor as only concerned with profits and productivity (i.e., excluding the section enclosed in brackets).

Finally, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 7 (*totally agree*), participants answered six questions about how they thought they would feel and react in the situation described in the scenario. Two items assessed *estimated success* (“I would perform well working for the new supervisor” ; “I would succeed working for the new supervisor”), two items assessed *estimated enjoyment* (“I would be happy working for the new supervisor”, “I would enjoy working for the new supervisor”), one item assessed *estimated relationship quality* (“The new supervisor and I would have a good working relationship”), and one item assessed *intentions to quit* (“I would consider leaving my job if I worked for the new supervisor”).

Participants then answered two additional questions that served as checks for the scenario

manipulation: “The new supervisor would only be concerned with profits and productivity”, and “The new supervisor would care about employee well-being”. Descriptive statistics and correlations are reported in Table 3.

Results and Discussion

Scenario effects. The effects of the scenario manipulation on the outcome variables are reported in Table 4. First, compared to those in the *control condition*, participants in the *BLM condition* reported that the new supervisor would be more concerned with profits and productivity and less concerned about employee well-being. These results support the intended scenario manipulation. Second, compared to those in the *control condition*, participants in the *BLM condition* reported that they would expect to be less successful, have less enjoyment, have a worse working relationship with the new supervisor, and have greater intentions to quit when working for the new supervisor. These results indicate that people generally have less favorable attitudes toward supervisors with a BLM.

Moderation analysis. Our main analysis tested if the effects of the scenario manipulation depended on levels of obsessive passion for work. We tested this using moderated regression analyses with the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2017). Each regression analysis included (a) obsessive passion (mean centered), (b) the scenario condition (dummy coded: 0 = control condition; 1 = BLM condition), (c) the obsessive passion $\times$ condition interaction, and (d) both harmonious passion (mean centered) and the interaction between harmonious passion (mean centered) and the scenario condition as covariates (PROCESS Model 1). A significant obsessive passion $\times$ condition interaction would indicate that the association between obsessive passion and an outcome variable was moderated by the scenario manipulation. Our hypothesis predicted that obsessive passion would predict greater estimated success when working for a supervisor

with a BLM. Anticipated success was therefore our focal outcome variable, but we also tested the moderating effect of obsessive passion with the other outcome variables to explore if obsessive passion moderated any other outcomes.

Results of these analyses are presented in Table 5, and simple slopes are plotted in Figure 1. Obsessive passion interacted with the scenario condition in each analysis. Simple slopes revealed that obsessive passion predicted greater levels of estimated success, enjoyment, and relationship quality in the BLM condition, but not in the control condition. In contrast, obsessive passion predicted greater intentions to quit in the control condition, but not in the BLM condition.¹² This interactive effect was unique to obsessive passion; we did not find any interactive effects between harmonious passion and the scenario condition. In general, harmonious passion predicted positive ratings regardless of experimental condition (see Table 3).¹³

Brief discussion. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that people believe that obsessive passion leads to success in contexts that are solely focused on the bottom line. Levels of obsessive passion for work predicted greater estimated job success when imagining working for a new supervisor with a BLM. This same pattern was found with estimates of job enjoyment and the quality of the relationship with the new supervisor, although we note that

¹² The main analyses were repeated with 2 extreme responses removed, as identified with Mahalanobis distance scores (critical $\chi^2 = 20.516$, $df = 5$, $p < .001$). The results did not change in any meaningful way with these extreme responses removed.

¹³ For exploratory purposes, we also tested a model that included the harmonious passion $\times$ obsessive passion interaction and the harmonious passion $\times$ obsessive passion $\times$ condition interaction. Although not hypothesised, we found a significant effect for the harmonious passion $\times$ obsessive passion $\times$ condition interaction in predicting anticipated job success, $b = -0.29$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .001$. However, for participants with both low (-1 SD) and high ($+1$ SD) harmonious passion, simple slopes indicated that obsessive passion positively predicted estimates of success in the BLM condition only. This finding again supports our hypothesis that people believe that obsessive passion is the necessary ingredient for success in workplaces focused on the bottom line. We include more details about this exploratory analysis as part of the Supplementary File.

these estimates were all highly correlated with one another (Table 3). The pattern of results obtained with estimates of intentions to quit, which was correlated with the other outcome variables to a lesser extent, could suggest that obsessive passion for work predicts a lower capacity to tolerate change or the unknown in the workplace (i.e., a new supervisor), but that this change is more manageable if it involves the addition of a supervisor with a BLM.

General Discussion

Obsessive passion toward work predicts a host of maladaptive outcomes, including psychological distress, burnout, and work-life conflict (see Vallerand, 2015). This led us to wonder why obsessive passion remains a prominent feature of many workplaces, and if there are certain contexts in which people believe nonetheless that having high levels of obsessive passion is desirable and can help their work performance. We suspected that one such context involves a workplace that adopts a BLM by focusing exclusively on specific performance outcomes (e.g., productivity) and ignoring other goals (e.g., employee well-being). In three studies, we found support for our hypothesis that people hold the lay belief that obsessive passion is conducive to success in workplaces with a BLM. Evidence in support of this hypothesis was obtained from different perspectives, including perceptions of others (Study 1), the way people presented themselves and believed others should present themselves (Study 2), and estimates of one's own success (Study 3). In all cases, participants believed that, in workplaces characterized by a BLM, they and others would be more likely to achieve success with high levels of obsessive passion. Lay beliefs about passion may thus be a force that promotes and sustains a positive norm of obsessive passion in workplaces focused exclusively on bottom line outcomes.

This research focused on estimates of job success in scenarios that involved some type of job transition, including hiring for a new job, applying for a promotion, and adjusting to a new

supervisor. The implication that can be drawn from this paradigm is that lay beliefs about passion affect the job selection process and job choice decisions. Specifically, people may be more attracted to workplaces focused on bottom line outcomes, and believe others should seek out opportunities in companies focused on bottom line outcomes, if they or others have high levels of obsessive passion toward their work. This research thus points to lay beliefs as playing a role in decisions that are made by both employees (e.g., which companies to apply to, how to present oneself in a job interview) and employers (e.g., whom to hire or promote). But people's lay beliefs about passion could also have implications for teams, groups, or organizations that are well-established. For instance, there is evidence that lay beliefs are contagious and can transfer from one person to another (Burkley, Curtis, & Hatvany, 2017). This means that, in workplaces characterized by a BLM, the lay belief that obsessive passion facilitates performance could spread among workers and cultivate a work culture that values being obsessed toward the job. Another intriguing possibility is that workplaces adopting a BLM could cause employees' obsessive passion to increase. Workplaces with a BLM involve many features that have been posited to facilitate obsessive passion (Schellenberg & Bailis, 2015; Trépanier, Fernet, Austin, Forest, & Vallerand, 2014; Vallerand, 2015), including high levels of performance demands and controlling, transactional-oriented styles of leadership (Bonner et al., 2017; Greenbaum et al., 2012; Wolfe, 1988). This leads to the possibility that workplaces with a BLM are not only more likely to attract and accept highly obsessive workers, but that they are also likely to promote the growth of obsessive passion toward work even further. Research is needed to test the hypothesis that environments with a BLM promote the growth of obsessive passion.

The belief that obsessive passion leads to success in environments focused on bottom-line outcomes is not necessarily inaccurate in light of previous research, or shown to be inaccurate by

the current research. Amiot, Vallerand, and Blanchard (2006), for example, studied the psychological adjustment of elite Canadian hockey players and found that, among those selected to a highly-competitive league, obsessively passionate athletes reported better psychological adjustment than harmoniously passionate athletes. Although this study did not directly assess BLM, the structure and value system of highly-competitive hockey leagues in Canada often involve the core features of a BLM, including a focus on specific outcomes (i.e., winning), at the expense of other priorities (e.g., interpersonal relationships, academics). And although this study did not measure performance, it did support the hypothesis that there are certain environments that exhibit a better fit with people with obsessive passion. Other research has linked obsessive passion with behaviors and tendencies that would likely facilitate performance in an environment with a BLM, including goal shielding (Bélanger et al., 2013; Bélanger et al., 2019), immoral behaviour (Bureau, Vallerand, Ntoumanis, & Lafrenière, 2013), aggression toward others in competitive situations (Donahue, Rip, & Vallerand, 2009), and rigidly persisting in tasks despite safety or injury risks (Rip, Fortin, & Vallerand, 2006; Vallerand et al., 2003). However, it is important to acknowledge that social norms, including the extent to which a work environment follows a BLM, are often misperceived (e.g., Prentice & Miller, 1993). For instance, workers could believe that their supervisor and coworkers each adopt a BLM toward their work when they do not, thus leading to the mistaken belief that the entire workplace adopts a BLM. So, although it may be accurate to believe that highly obsessively passionate workers are best suited to achieve success in environments with a BLM, people's assessment of the extent to which a workplace adopts a BLM could be inaccurate.

An interesting finding that emerged from Study 1 was that participants consistently estimated that the applicant depicted as having high levels of both harmonious and obsessive

passion (i.e., mixed passion) would achieve the highest level of performance in all types of work environments, including those characterized by a BLM. This finding suggests an alternative and more nuanced lay belief about passion in the workplace: performance is best achieved in BLM environments when one has high levels of *both* obsessive and harmonious passion (i.e., with mixed passion; see Schellenberg et al., 2019). However, we believe this research provides much stronger support for the lay belief that obsessive passion is the necessary ingredient for success in workplaces focused on the bottom line. First, in Study 1 participants believed that applicants depicted as having high levels of obsessive passion and low levels of harmonious passion would perform better than applicants with either high levels of harmonious passion and low levels of obsessive passion or low levels of both passion dimensions, indicating that obsessive passion was viewed as being more important for work performance in BLM environments than harmonious passion. Second, in Study 2 participants reported that both themselves and others would need higher levels of obsessive passion to earn a promotion to work for a supervisor with a BLM compared. In contrast, ideal levels of harmonious passion to earn the promotion were no different in the *self version* and, in the *other version*, were in fact *lower* in the BLM condition compared to the control condition. Third, exploratory analyses from Study 3 (reported in detail in the Supplementary File) revealed that predicted success scores in a BLM environment for participants with high obsessive passion and low harmonious passion (i.e., pure obsessive passion) were no different than those with high levels of both obsessive and harmonious passion (i.e., mixed passion). This finding is inconsistent with the alternative lay belief and again shows that, when estimating job performance in BLM environments, what matters is *the extent to which one is obsessively passionate toward the job*. Based on these findings, we conclude that the best

representation of people's lay beliefs is that obsessive passion is viewed as being necessary for success in workplaces with a BLM.

Lay beliefs about a BLM and obsessive passion might have implications beyond the workplace. First, this specific lay belief might be present in other domains such as academics, athletics and performance arts. Like the participants in the current research, performers in other domains may predict that they and others would perform better in BLM contexts with high obsessive passion. Second, and from a much broader perspective, changes in the extent to which people focus on bottom-line outcomes may affect people's general feelings about being obsessed toward the activities that they love. For example, in a team, organization, or society that values success, any shift that increases a focus toward bottom-line outcomes should also increase people's positive attitudes toward obsessive passion. These shifts could occur during periods of downsizing, austerity, economic recession, intensifying competition, zero-sum interactions, cost-cutting, belt-tightening, and work intensification and extensification (Lu, 2009). Essentially, any event or trend that could indicate that a group values a BLM should also bring about more positive attitudes toward an obsessive mode of functioning. This proposition is an important topic for future research.

A key feature of this research was that each study approached lay beliefs about obsessive passion from a different perspective using different methods: Study 1 focused on the perceptions of others, Study 2 focused on both the way people presented themselves and believed others should present themselves, and Study 3 focused on estimates of one's own success. Therefore, this research replicated the observed effect while revealing various ways in which lay beliefs about obsessive passion can impact employees. In addition to contributing to our understanding of how lay beliefs affect the workplace, this research makes an important contribution to the

literature on passion by showing that people hold the lay belief that obsessive passion facilitates success in environments characterized by a BLM, suggesting that environments with a BLM may be an additional force that affects the initial and ongoing development of obsessive passion (e.g., Mageau et al., 2009; Schellenberg & Bailis, 2015). Finally, and more generally, this research complements the majority of passion research that has focused on the outcomes associated with both harmonious and obsessive passion (e.g., Curran et al., 2015; Vallerand, 2015) by studying the lay psychology of passion and the *perceived* outcomes associated specific passion varieties. Understanding lay beliefs about passion, and how these beliefs can be context-dependent, can help explain the decisions people make and the advice people give to others based on their views about passion, and reveals the extent to which these views align with empirical evidence.

Conclusion

People rely on their lay beliefs to help make decisions, form expectations, set goals, and generally navigate their social world (e.g., Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Molden & Dweck, 2006). The present research studied people's lay beliefs about passion in the workplace and focused specifically on the performance outcomes that people believe are linked with harmonious and obsessive passion varieties (Vallerand, 2015). In three studies, we found consistent support for the hypothesis that people hold the lay belief that obsessive passion is associated with success in workplaces with a BLM. The implication from this finding is that obsessive passion – rather than harmonious passion or passion quantity – is believed to facilitate performance in specific types of workplaces (i.e., those characterized by BLMs), and that this context-specific belief influences estimates of one's own success and the success of others. More research on this topic is needed to focus on lay beliefs about passion in other domains, the interplay over time between

a BLM and obsessive passion within teams or organizations, and the extent to which these beliefs are accurate.

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Table 1

Study 1: Estimated job performance of employees based on completed Passion Scales that depicted employees with strong levels of harmonious passion, obsessive passion, mixed passion, or low levels of passion towards their work.

	Passion Group			
	Harmonious Passion	Obsessive Passion	Mixed Passion	Non- passionate
Estimated job performance with a supervisor with a bottom-line mentality	3.76 (1.47)	4.52 (1.51)	5.19 (1.32)	1.73 (1.06)
Manipulation-check items				
Passionate about work	5.38 (1.80)	5.75 (1.48)	6.46 (1.08)	1.28 (0.92)
Harmonious toward work	5.41 (1.66)	2.15 (1.88)	6.14 (1.40)	1.47 (1.11)
Obsessed with work	2.20 (1.81)	5.78 (1.48)	6.48 (1.08)	1.22 (0.81)

Note. Means (with standard deviations) are reported. Each mean within each row differs at $p < .05$.

Table 2

Study 2: Ideal passion scores provided by participants assigned to the other and self versions of the online survey.

	Other			Self		
	BLM	Control	<i>d</i>	BLM	Control	<i>d</i>
Ideal Passion						
Obsessive Passion	4.14 (1.54)	3.10 (1.19)	0.76**	4.62 (1.72)	2.78 (1.07)	1.28**
Harmonious Passion	5.03 (1.26)	5.78 (0.92)	-0.68**	5.45 (1.19)	5.43 (1.11)	0.02
Passion Criteria	5.97 (1.19)	5.72 (1.11)	0.22	6.25 (1.03)	5.53 (1.21)	0.64**
Manipulation Check						
Supervisor only cares about profits	5.43 (1.92)	3.17 (1.74)	1.23**	5.50 (2.11)	3.20 (1.53)	1.25**
Supervisor cares about employee well-being	3.04 (2.18)	5.59 (1.29)	-1.42**	2.68 (2.21)	5.73 (1.37)	-1.66**

Note. Means (with standard deviations) are reported for the bottom-line mentality (BLM) and control conditions. Cohen's *d* values were calculated using descriptive statistics with an online calculator provided by Lee Becker: <https://www.uccs.edu/~lbecker/> * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 3

Study 3: Descriptive statistics, correlations, and partial correlations among study variables across conditions

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Harmonious Passion	4.11	1.32			.15**	.10*	.13**	-.01
2. Obsessive Passion	2.23	1.28	.47**		.13*	.21**	.16**	.22**
3. Estimated Success	4.16	1.58	.23**	.22**				
4. Estimated Enjoyment	3.55	1.77	.22**	.29**	.80**			
5. Estimated Relationship Quality	3.89	1.61	.23**	.25**	.79**	.82**		
6. Intentions to Quit	3.05	1.91	.11*	.24**	-.29**	-.29**	-.28**	

Note. $N = 418$. * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$. Partial correlations between each passion type (controlling for the other passion type) are reported above the diagonal.

Table 4

Study 3: Scenario reactions.

	BLM	Control	<i>d</i>
Estimated Reaction to Scenario			
Success	3.43 (1.65)	4.91 (1.08)	-1.06
Enjoyment	2.56 (1.65)	4.54 (1.25)	-1.35
Relationship Quality	3.18 (1.64)	4.62 (1.21)	-1.00
Intentions to Quit	3.78 (1.84)	2.32 (1.69)	0.83
Manipulation Check			
New supervisor only cares about profits	5.70 (1.62)	3.15 (1.59)	1.59
New supervisor cares about employee well-being	2.36 (1.76)	4.24 (1.42)	-1.18

Note. Means (with standard deviations) are reported for the bottom-line mentality (BLM) and control conditions. All differences are significant at $p \leq .01$. Cohen's *d* values were calculated using descriptive statistics with an online calculator provided by Lee Becker:

<https://www.uccs.edu/~lbecker/>

Table 5

Study 3: Estimated reactions to scenario task.

	Success			Enjoyment			Relationship Quality			Intentions to Quit		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Main Regression												
HP	0.30	0.08	<.001	0.31	0.08	<.001	0.29	0.08	<.001	-0.11	0.10	.303
OP	0.01	0.08	.918	0.06	0.08	.469	0.05	0.08	.592	0.64	0.11	<.001
Condition	-1.55	0.13	<.001	-2.05	0.13	<.001	-1.50	0.13	<.001	1.45	0.17	<.001
HP × Condition	-0.08	0.11	.493	-0.17	0.11	.139	-0.10	0.11	.402	0.06	0.14	.651
OP × Condition	0.29	0.11	.012	0.47	0.11	<.001	0.32	0.12	.007	-0.50	0.15	.001
Simple Slopes												
OP @ Control	0.01	0.08	.918	0.06	0.08	.469	0.05	0.08	.592	0.64	0.11	<.001
OP @ BLM	0.30	0.08	<.001	0.53	0.08	<.001	0.36	0.08	<.001	0.14	0.10	.185

Note. HP = Harmonious passion; OP = Obsessive passion. Condition was dummy coded as 0 = control condition and 1 = bottom-line mentality condition (BLM). Passion variables were mean-centered. Each analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2017). Unstandardized beta values are reported.

Figure 1. Relationships between obsessive passion and estimated success (Panel A), enjoyment (Panel B), relationship quality (Panel C), and intentions to quit (Panel C) for participants randomly assigned to the bottom-line mentality (BLM) and control conditions. Simple slopes are plotted at 1 standard deviation (*SD*) below and above the mean. All regression models control for both harmonious passion and the interaction between harmonious passion and the scenario condition.

Supplementary File

Table S1

Study 1: Estimated job performance of employees in different work environments based on survey scores depicting employees with strong levels of harmonious passion, obsessive passion, mixed passion, or low levels of passion toward their work.

	Passion Group			
	Harmonious Passion	Obsessive Passion	Mixed Passion	Non- passionate
“This applicant would perform well in a job in which...”				
...the supervisor has a bottom-line mentality. ^a	3.76 ^a (1.47)	4.52 ^b (1.51)	5.19 ^c (1.32)	1.73 ^d (1.06)
...there are high levels of pressure to perform.”	4.97 ^a (1.55)	5.26 ^{a,b} (1.46)	5.82 ^c (1.24)	1.47 ^d (1.90)
...there is a great deal of time pressure.”	4.93 ^a (1.52)	5.11 ^{a,b} (1.51)	5.83 ^c (1.24)	1.45 ^d (1.03)
...there is a lot of competition between employees.”	4.93 ^a (1.38)	5.11 ^{a,b} (1.62)	5.70 ^c (1.34)	1.54 ^d (1.06)
...salary raises, bonuses, and promotions are dependent on how employees perform.”	5.20 ^a (1.37)	5.37 ^{a,b} (1.53)	5.79 ^c (1.14)	1.91 ^d (1.51)
...employees who do not perform well are immediately fired.	4.54 ^a (1.62)	4.65 ^{a,b} (1.84)	5.18 ^c (1.71)	1.67 ^d (1.33)
...the hours are long and often unpredictable.”	4.27 ^a (1.65)	4.61 ^{a,b} (1.85)	5.67 ^c (1.34)	1.50 ^d (1.08)
...employees are expected to reply immediately to work-related emails and telephone calls, even when they are not at work.”	4.31 ^a (1.64)	4.63 ^{a,b} (1.89)	5.78 ^c (1.36)	1.49 ^d (1.12)
...the job duties often conflict with life outside of work.”	3.98 ^a (1.71)	3.66 ^{a,b} (2.02)	5.28 ^c (1.64)	1.58 ^d (1.33)
...employees are able to prevent their job from getting in the way of their life outside of work.”	4.78 ^a (1.69)	3.88 ^b (1.96)	4.91 ^{a,c} (1.79)	2.83 ^d (2.14)
...employees are not provided with many vacation days or time off from work.”	3.69 ^a (1.75)	3.83 ^{a,b} (1.97)	5.23 ^c (1.58)	1.58 ^d (1.31)
...employees are expected to work longer than a typical 40-hour work week.”	3.97 ^a (1.74)	4.13 ^{a,b} (2.05)	5.66 ^c (1.53)	1.51 ^d (1.17)
...it is difficult to take time off for vacations, personal days, or even sick days.”	3.59 ^a (1.81)	3.94 ^{a,b} (2.00)	5.28 ^c (1.59)	1.43 ^d (1.09)

...employees are allowed plenty of free time during evenings and weekends to pursue their hobbies and leisure activities.”	5.00 ^a (1.54)	4.18 ^b (1.97)	4.57 ^{b,c} (1.84)	3.67 ^d (2.34)
...most of the job duties are performed alone.”	4.67 ^a (1.36)	4.87 ^{a,b} (1.43)	5.36 ^c (1.33)	2.51 ^d (1.66)
...most of the other employees are consumed with their job.”	4.04 ^a (1.61)	4.94 ^b (1.57)	5.71 ^c (1.30)	1.78 ^d (1.25)
Manipulation-check items				
Passionate about work	5.38 ^a (1.80)	5.75 ^b (1.48)	6.46 ^c (1.08)	1.28 ^d (0.92)
Harmonious toward work	5.41 ^a (1.66)	2.15 ^b (1.88)	6.14 ^c (1.40)	1.47 ^d (1.11)
Obsessed with work	2.20 ^a (1.81)	5.78 ^a (1.48)	6.48 ^c (1.08)	1.22 ^d (0.81)

Note. Means (with standard deviations) are reported. Means within each row that do not share a superscript differ at $p < .05$. All items were answered on a seven-point rating scale.

^a Estimates of job performance with a supervisor with a bottom-line mentality was our focal dependent variable and was assessed with four items. All other dependent variables were assessed with single-item measures.

Study 3 – Exploratory Analyses

We explored if the positive association between obsessive passion and estimated success that was found in the BLM condition (and not in the control condition) depended on levels of harmonious passion. We focused exclusively on estimated success because this was our focal outcome variable. We tested this with the same regression model that we report in our main document, but with the addition of the harmonious passion $\times$ obsessive passion interaction and the harmonious passion $\times$ obsessive passion $\times$ condition interaction. Again, we conducted this analysis with the PROCESS macro in SPSS (PROCESS Model 3; Hayes, 2017).

The results are presented in Table S2. Of note was the significant harmonious passion $\times$ obsessive passion $\times$ condition interaction, $b = -0.29$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .001$. We interpreted this interaction by inspecting the effect of obsessive passion on estimates of success in both the BLM

and control conditions for participants low ($-1\ SD$) and high ($+1\ SD$) in harmonious passion. With both low and high harmonious passion, obsessive passion was a positive predictor of estimated success in the BLM condition and not in the control condition, although the size of the relationship between obsessive passion and success in the BLM condition was stronger with low harmonious passion compared to high harmonious passion (see the simple slopes reported in Table S2). This finding means that obsessive passion positively predicted estimates of success with a new supervisor with a BLM for participants with both low and high harmonious passion, which is in line with the conclusions we draw from the analysis reported in the main document. A visual plot of these relationships is shown at the end of this supplementary document in Figure S1.

This exploratory analysis also allowed us to compare estimates of success for participants characterized by high obsessive passion and low harmonious passion (i.e., pure obsessive passion subtype) and those characterized by high levels of both obsessive and harmonious passion (i.e., mixed passion subtype; see Schellenberg et al., 2019). This comparison directly addresses the alternative interpretation that people hold the lay belief that, in environments characterized by a BLM, performance is best achieved when one has high levels of *both* obsessive passion and harmonious passion. To directly compare these two passion subtypes, we re-specified the regression model using the PROCESS macro and specified harmonious passion as the independent variable, and both obsessive passion and the scenario effect as moderating variables (PROCESS Model 3); this analysis produces the identical results as reported in Table S2, but allows the PROCESS macro to produce simple slopes that compare the pure obsessive passion subtype to the mixed passion subtype (i.e., the conditional effect of harmonious passion on estimates of success with high obsessive passion in the BLM condition). The results showed

that, in the BLM condition, predicted success scores with a pure obsessive passion ($\hat{y} = 4.24$) did not differ from predicted scores with mixed passion ($\hat{y} = 4.04$), $b = -0.08$, $SE = .13$, $p = .548$.

This result does not support the alternative lay belief that people equate having high levels of both harmonious and obsessive passion with the highest levels of success in BLM environments. It is, however, in line with our hypothesis that people hold the belief that obsessive passion is the necessary ingredient for success in workplaces focused on the bottom line. We discuss this alternative lay belief and finding in more detail as part of the General Discussion in the main document.

Table S2

Study 3: Regression analysis predicting estimated success from harmonious passion, obsessive passion, the scenario condition, and their interactions.

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Main Regression			
HP	0.35	0.08	<.001
OP	-0.10	0.09	.327
Condition	-1.31	0.14	<.001
HP × Condition	-0.19	0.11	.102
OP × Condition	0.56	0.14	<.001
HP × OP	0.11	0.06	.054
HP × OP × Condition	-0.29	0.08	.001
Simple Slopes			
Low HP			
OP @ Control	-0.24	0.15	.113
OP @ BLM	0.71	0.16	<.001
High HP			
OP @ Control	0.05	0.08	.524
OP @ BLM	0.23	0.08	.006

Note. HP = Harmonious passion; OP = Obsessive passion. Condition was dummy coded as 0 = control condition and 1 = bottom-line mentality condition (BLM). Passion variables were mean-centered. Each analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2017). Unstandardized beta values are reported.

Figure S1

Note. Relationships between obsessive passion and estimated success for participants randomly assigned to the bottom-line mentality (BLM) and control conditions with low and high harmonious passion. Simple slopes are plotted at 1 standard deviation (SD) below and above the mean.