

## Postive Work Events and Outcomes: Affective Events Perspective

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### Abstract

*The basic aim of the current study was to investigate the mediating role of positive affect in the relationship between positive work events and thriving and between positive work events and passion, in the light of Affective events theory. The data was collected in a time lagged design( one month gap) from 507 employees working in service-based organizations located in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Based upon the empirical findings it was concluded that positive work events serve as an important source for actualizing positive emotions at work and in turn, one becomes a passionate and thriving at work. This study was a unique contribution to the literature of affective events theory, as there is a scarcity of evidence on the existence of the unique proposed model. Moreover, this study will be useful for the managers who can deliberately exert effort in creating positive events in the form of healthy interactions so that benefits can be reaped in form of a passionate and thriving workforce.*

**Keywords:** Positive work events, Positive affect, Thriving, Passion, Affective Events Theory(AET)

### Introduction

The research on positive workplace events is a vital topic of inquiry but there is a need to identify the new and unexplored positive work-related outcomes (Ohly and Schmitt, 2015; Merlo, Shaughnessy & Weiss, 2017). Moreover, the literature reports that positive work events generate positive affect which leads to increased task performance, creativity, negotiation, problem-solving, and prosocial behavior (Erol-Korkmaz, 2010; Miner & Glomb, 2010; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). However, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence that positive work events generating positive affect lead to experience thriving and develop

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passion at work. Therefore, studying these two outcome variables have unique significance, as a thriving and passionate workforce help organizations realize a competitive advantage and sustainable performance (Boyatzis, McKee, & Goleman, 2002, Fritz, Lam, & Spreitzer, 2011; Prem, Ohly, Kubiceki, & Korunka, 2017; Spreitzer & Porath, 2012, 2014; Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2012; Walumbwa, 2017; Gerbasi et al., 2015). Moreover, there is a dearth of research on the determinants of passion (Bouizegarene, Bourdeau, Leduc, Lessard, Houffort & Vallerand, 2017; Gong, Schooler, Wang & Tao, 2018). Moreover, there is sparse work on thriving as a topic of inquiry (Walumbwa, 2017; Niessen, Sonnentag, & Sach, 2012).

Based on AET the current study proposes that the postive work events trigger positive emotions and employees start to thrive and develop passion for their work and job. AET suggests that events experienced at work are the proximal causes of the affective states of employees and these affective experiences have a direct influence on the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Therefore based upon the assertion of AET, two simple mediation models are proposed.

### Literature Review

#### *Positive work events leads to Thriving and Passion*

There is a dearth of empirical studies to validate the existence of relationship between Positive work events and thriving. Therefore, the underlying argument can be generated based upon the socially embedded model of thriving at work. As it suggests that learning and vitality take place in social environment (Spreitzer et al., 2005). This signifies that social interactions with others play a role, where we remodel our behaviors by observing others. Vitality is based upon zest which is deeply rooted in relationship with others which is termed as relational resources (Niessen, Sonnentag & Sachi; 2012; Brown and Duguid 1991, Gherardi et al., 1998; Wenger, 1998). Learning is also possible when it takes place in an amicable and stress free positive interactions among supervisor, coworkers and subordinates. Moreover, The current study proposes that positive work events lead to passion but there is a dearth of empirical studies which validate it. Therefore, the current study takes the support of the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, et al, 2003) based upon the Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This theory signifies that people engage in different so as to satisfy three basic needs. These needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Therefore, one will feel competent when one is consulted and is appreciated for task

achaivements. Moreover, the need for relatedness will be satisfied when coworker show team spirit and cooperation. Similarly, one can feel autonomous when a supervisor gives reasonable discretion in decision making. Hence, when all of the three needs are satisfied then an employee may engage in their jobs passionately. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H<sub>1a</sub> Positive work events have a positive relationship with Thriving

H<sub>1b</sub> Positive work events have a positive relationship with Passion

*Positive work events and positive affect*

Based on AET and numerous studies it is well established that postive work events generate positive affect. Different studies have found that positive emotions are elicited in reponse to a variety of postive work events like achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement or growth, like goal achievement incidents, receiving recognition, acts of colleagues, involvement in decision making, having an influence or control over others, acts of management (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959; Basch and Fisher, 2000; Basch and Fisher, 2004; Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002; Mignonac and Herrbach, 2004)

Therefore it is hypothesized that

H<sub>2</sub> Positive work events have a significant positive relationship with Positive affect

*Positive Affect And Thriving And Passion*

The socially embedded model of thriving suggest that positive affective resources helps one to thrive (Sprietzer, 2005; Porath et al., 2012). Moreover, different sets of studies signify a positive association between postivie affect and passion (Vallerand et al, 2003; Wakefield and Wakefield, 2016; Philippe, et al, 2010). Therefore it is hypothesized that:

H<sub>3a</sub> Positive work events have a positive relationship with thriving

H<sub>3b</sub> Positive work events have a positive relationship with Passion

*Mediating Role Of Positive Affect Between Positive work events And Thriving And Passion*

The overarching theory of the presented model is the affective events theory (Weiss & Corpanzano, 1996) According to this theory the positive work events generate positive affect, which leads one to experience thriving and passion. This means, that postive affect is generated in reponse to positive events related with supervisors, coworkers,

subordinates and management. Consequently, positive affect leads the employees to experience energy and learning and develop love and passion for their work and job

Therefore based upon the cited literature it is hypothesized that:

H<sub>4a</sub> Positive affect mediates in relationship between positive work events and thriving

H<sub>4b</sub> Positive affect mediates in relationship between positive work events and passion

### Research Methodology

Survey method was used by collecting data with self reported questionnaire including 67 items from 4 measures. Positive work events was adapted from the work events inventory developed by Erol-Kurkmaz and Sumer (2012) with five subscales with 28 items (task relevant events, relationship with supervisor, coworker, subordinate and organizational policies). Positive affect was measured with 15 items adapted from the Job affective well being scale developed by Van, Fox, Spector and Kelloway (2000) with an alpha reliability of 0.86. Passion was measured by 14 item, with two subscales consisting up of harmonious passion (7 items) and obsessive passion (7 items). This scale was developed by Vallerand and colleagues (2003) having alpha reliability of .89. Thriving was measured with 10 items developed by Proath et. al (2011), including two subscales, vitality and learning. And each subscale consisted up of five items each.

The data was collected in a time lagged design composed of 3 time spans having 1 month gap. At T1 positive work events were measured, at T2 positive affect was measured and at T3 thriving and passion were measured. Initially 900 questionnaires were distributed to the employees working in different public and private sector organizations and 822 completed questionnaires were returned. At T2 only 822 questionnaires were distributed and in return 780 completed questionnaires were returned. At T3, 780 questionnaires were distributed to those who had returned previously, and in return 542 completed questionnaires were received. The final sample size after disposing off incomplete and matching three time data was 507, and the response rate for the three times data turned out to be 56.3 percent. This sample was working in private, semi government and public sector organizations based in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. There were 27 % female and 73 % male respondents. The average age was 29.5 years. Approximately 62% had a masters degree, with specialization in marketing ( 25 %), banking and finance (24%), HRM (20%), IT & Software (23 %).

## Results

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	Mea n	S D	AV E	CR	MS V	1	2	3	4
1. PE	3.4	.74	.50	.782	.151	(.941)			
2.PA	3.3	.61	.430	0.93	.132	.212*	(.931)		
3. THRV E	3.6	.45	.478	.899	.216	.191*	.226*	(.892)	
4. PSION	3.2	.68	.411	.902	.100	.162*	.146*	.396*	(.911)

Note: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), n=507, PAE, Postive affective events; PA, Positive Affect, THRV E, Thrive; PSION, Passion

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the study variables, which include the bivariate correlations. It can be inferred from the table that positive work events have a positive but weak (Gogtay & Thatte, 2017) correlation with positive affect( $r=.212$ ), Thriving( $r=.191$ ) and passion( $r=.162$ ).

The convergent validity of any variable is established if AVE > .50 (Chin, 1998) but an AVE equal to 0.40 can be accepted if the composite reliability is higher than 0.60. (Huang, Wang, Wu and Wang, 2013; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, the AVE of all study variables is acceptable as it fall in range between .40 to .50 with CR value ranging between .70 to .90. The discriminant validity of all variables was established as  $MSV < AVE$  (Hair, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Table 2 Paired Analysis

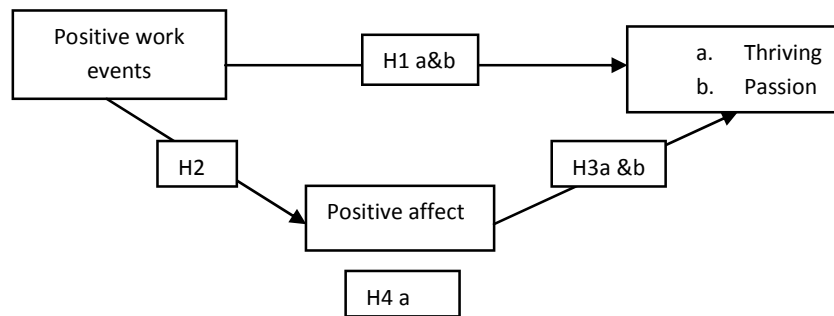
Model Test	X <sup>2</sup>	df	X <sup>2</sup> /df	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMR	RMSEA
5 factor PWE	1186.474	333	3.563	.924	.900	.900	.100	.071
1 factor THRV E	116.067	24	4.836	.970	.963	.959	.036	.081
2 factor THRV E	131.231	30	4.374	.967	.958	.951	.031	.082
1 factor PSION	418.347	60	6.972	.931	.921	.902	.120	.080
2 factor PSION	286.668	68	4.216	.958	.946	.929	.053	.080
All Dv's								
1 factor (THRV E and PSION combined)	1947.783	179	10.881	.800	.785	.755	.194	.140
2 factor (THRV E and PSION)	1103.925	185	5.967	.935	.923	.910	.082	.083
1 factor(PWE,PA, THRV E)	12559.746	1896	6.624	.612	.578	.555	.146	.105

&amp;PSION)

4 factor 7594.609 1870 4.061 .945 .922 .910 .085 .055  
(PWE,PA,  
THRVE  
&PSION)

Note: PWE, Postive work events; PA, Positive Affect, THRVE, Thrive; PSION, Passion

Table 2 shows the results of confirmatory factor analyses, which reveals that in every time the unrestrained the single factor model did not provide a better fit as compared to multiple factor model. Moreover, all model fit indices were within range (Kline, 2005; Steiger, 2007; Tabachnik, Fidell & Ullman, 2007).



**Figure1: The conceptual model of the study**

Table 3 Model Fit of Hypothesized model

Model Test	X <sup>2</sup>	Df	X <sup>2</sup> /df	CFI	NFI	GFI	RMSEA	RMR
Indirect paths ( PWE → A → THRVE & PSION)(Hypothesized Model)	6090.342	2109	2.8	.95	.9	.89	.07	.050
Direct Path (PWE → THRVE and PSION)	3697.91	1198	3.0	.88	.8	.78	.07	.064

Note: PWE, Postive work events; PA, Positive Affect, THRVE, Thrive; PSION, Passion

The results from Table 3 showed that the indirect paath provided the best results for model fit indices ( $\chi^2 = 6090.342$ ,  $df = 2109$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.8$ , CFI = 0.95, NFI = 0.91, GFI = 0.89, RMR = .070, and RMSEA = 0.05)

*Hypothesis testing*

Table 4

Direct Effects					
Hypotheses	Path	B	C.R.	SE	
H1 a	PWE → THRVE	.316***	4.433	.071	
H1 b	PWE → PSION	.355***	5.383	.066	
H2	PWE → PA	.189***	5.697	.033	
H3 a	PA → THRVE	.192*	3.258	.059	
H3 b	PA → PSION	.251***	4.726	.053	
Indirect Effects					
Hypotheses	Path	Indirect Effect	95 % CI	LLCI	ULCI
H4a	PWE → PA → THRVE	.075	.034	.176	.009
H4b	PWE → PA → PSION	.097	.049	.163	.009

Notes: Gender & Designation was controlled for all models. \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$ , \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ , \* $p \leq 0.05$ . T2, time 2; T3, time 3 P. Events, Positive affective events; Thrv, Thriving; pssn, passion.

Table 4 shows that the direct path model provides support for H1a( $\beta=.371, p<.001$ ) and H1b( $\beta=.253, p<.001$ ), H2 ( $\beta=.321, p<.001$ ), H3a( $\beta=.267, p<.001$ ), H3b ( $\beta=.212^*, p<.01$ ). In addition, in order to test the indirect effects bias corrected confidence method was utilized, the results provided support for the two indirect effects. H4a revealed the mediating role of positive affect in relationship between positive work events and thriving (indirect effect=.075, CI 95 %, [.034, .176],  $p<0.01$ ). H4b showed that positive affect mediated the relationship between positive work events and passion (Indirect effect=.097, CI 95%, [.097, .163],  $p<0.01$ ).

**Discussion & Conclusion**

In, the light of affective events theory this study provided the empirical evidence of positive relationship between positive work events, thriving and passion. It means that when employee experience positive work events in connection with supervisors, coworkers and subordinates then they will experience thriving. Moreover, such events will make them more passionate about their jobs. The relationship with thriving is based upon the socially embedded model of thriving (Niessen, Sonnentag & Sachi, 2012; Brown & Duguid 1991, Gherardi, et al. 1998; Spreitzer et al, 2005). The current study established that positive work events had a positive relationship with positive affect which is in line with a range of studies (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959; Basch & Fisher, 2000; Grandey, Tam & Brauburger, 2002; Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004). This finding suggests that positive affect is generated when employees

experience events in relationship with supervisor, coworker and subordinates and the management. This is in line with the affective events theory (Weiss & Corpanzano, 1996). Positive affect had a positive relationship with both thriving and passion which is line with findings of many studies. (Porath et al., 2012; Boyatzis et al., 2002; Tucker, 2002; Vallerand, 2003; Ho, Wang & Lee, 2011; Wakefield & Wakefield, 2016; Phillipe, et al, 2010). This asserts that when employees experience a range of positive emotions they experience more energy and learn more, and start loving their jobs and their job becomes central to their self. Moreover, the results confirmed the indirect path or the mediation of postive affect. This is in accordance with the affective events theory (Weiss & Corpanzano, 1996) which suggest that when employees experience positive events at workplace while interacting with their bosses, coworkers and subordinates and management then they feel positive emotions which leads them to experience thriving and develop passion at work.

A major limitation of the current study was that suffered from common method bias as the data was collected through self reporting. However, the study design addressed this issue by adopting a time lagged design (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Self selection bias was another limitation due to convenience sampling, in the first wave. But in the subsequent time waves the respondents who filled the questionnaires were selected for the second and third waves. So, the influence of self selection bias is unlikely in the succeeding set of results (Nauman, Fatima & Haq, 2018). Keeping in view the affective events theory, in future studies the affective mediation can be tested with a different set of work attitudes like subjective career success and both affective and judgment based behaviors like helping behavior and decision to work less productively.

This study has added theoratically to the existing literature of AET, positive affect, thriving and passion. The underlying reason for it is that there is scarcity of evidence from the existing literature on relationship between positive work events and thriving and passion. Moreover, the proposed mediation model has yet not been empirically tested.

This study will be useful for the managers, as they can concentrate on creating healthy relationships which will enhance the occurance of postive events in interactions. Morevoer, the current study shows that in such circumstances positive emotions are generated which lead to thriving and passion. Moreover, the thriving employee's co create their environment to get energy and develop learning opportunities i.e. they craft their jobs according to their needs. Such thriving people in

addition, explore and find new endeavors and they have the ability to adjust to changing circumstances (Leiter & Baker, 2010). And as a result of thriving different relational, affective and knowledge based resources are produced, which creates a positive impact on productivity of the organizations.

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