

When Harmonious Passion Moves Entrepreneurs: Obsessive Passion as a Boundary Condition of Locomotion Orientation



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Abstract: *Entrepreneurial passion research has typically examined harmonious and obsessive passion separately, leaving less clear how they operate together in relation to Locomotion Orientation. This study examines whether obsessive passion moderates the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation. Using survey data from 315 entrepreneurs in Pakistani SMEs, the findings show that harmonious passion was positively associated with Locomotion Orientation. Obsessive passion strengthened this relationship, although it also showed a negative conditional association with Locomotion Orientation at the mean level of harmonious passion. The results suggest that the self-regulatory relevance of harmonious passion depends partly on the level of obsessive passion with which it coexists. By linking the Dualistic Model of Passion with Regulatory Mode Theory, the study provides a more interactive and conditional understanding of entrepreneurial passion.*

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Passion, Harmonious Passion, Obsessive Passion, Locomotion Orientation, Regulatory Mode Theory

Introduction

Entrepreneurial passion has received substantial attention because it is closely connected with how entrepreneurs engage in venture activities and pursue entrepreneurial goals. Across different conceptualizations of passion, prior research has linked entrepreneurial passion with entrepreneurial behavior, persistence, grit, venture creation, and venture outcomes, although these relationships vary across forms of passion and outcomes (Newman et al., 2021). Recent process-oriented work therefore argues that understanding entrepreneurial passion requires attention not only to whether passion matters, but also to how particular forms of passion are related to entrepreneurial decisions, actions, and outcomes (Schwarte et al., 2023).

In the present study, entrepreneurial passion is conceptualized through the Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP), which distinguishes passion according to the quality of activity internalization rather than according to entrepreneurial role domains. This framework differs from the role-based approach to entrepreneurial passion, which distinguishes passion for activities such as inventing, founding, and developing (Lee & Herrmann, 2021). Within the DMP, harmonious passion (HP) reflects relatively autonomous internalization: individuals value the activity, incorporate it into their identity, and engage in it with a sense of volition. Obsessive passion (OP) reflects controlled internalization, whereby engagement is accompanied by internal or external pressure and a stronger compulsion to remain involved (Vallerand et al., 2003). These different forms of internalization help explain why harmonious passion is generally associated with more flexible and adaptive functioning, whereas obsessive passion is more often associated with rigid engagement and less adaptive outcomes (Vallerand & Paquette, 2024).

Although harmonious and obsessive passion arise through different internalization processes, they need not be treated as mutually exclusive categories. Newman et al. (2021) reviewed person-centered research from several non-entrepreneurial domains showing that individuals can experience relatively high levels of harmonious and obsessive passion simultaneously. At the time of their review, whether comparable intra-individual patterns characterized entrepreneurial activities remained unclear. More recent work has

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developed this mixed-passion perspective further. Waxler (2026), for example, synthesizes research on different combinations of harmonious and obsessive passion and characterizes high harmonious and high obsessive passion as a high-intensity form of pursuit involving exceptional engagement alongside context-sensitive vulnerability. The review also suggests that obsessive passion may, under some conditions, function as an intensity amplifier. Drawing on this emerging configurational literature, the present study examines the coexistence of harmonious and obsessive passion through a variable-centered interaction perspective. Rather than testing passion profiles, we ask whether the level of obsessive passion accompanying harmonious engagement changes the association between harmonious passion and entrepreneurs' self-regulatory orientation.

The self-regulatory outcome examined here is Locomotion Orientation. Regulatory Mode Theory distinguishes locomotion from assessment as two relatively distinct functions of self-regulation. Assessment concerns the comparative evaluation of goals, means, and alternatives, whereas locomotion concerns movement from one state to another and the commitment of psychological resources required to initiate and maintain such movement (Kruglanski et al., 2000). Individuals high in locomotion place greater emphasis on acting, advancing, and maintaining progress than on prolonged comparison among alternatives. Empirical research supports the behavioral relevance of this orientation. Locomotion has been positively associated with intrinsic task motivation and effort investment (Pierro et al., 2006b), as well as job involvement, work effort, and task performance in organizational settings (Pierro et al., 2006a). Locomotion therefore captures an action-oriented mode of self-regulation concerned with maintaining movement during goal pursuit.

Harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation are theoretically compatible, but they are not the same construct. Harmonious passion concerns how an activity is internalized into identity and the quality of an individual's engagement with that activity, whereas Locomotion Orientation concerns how individuals regulate goal pursuit by emphasizing movement and progress (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Vallerand et al., 2003). An entrepreneur may therefore value entrepreneurship, willingly identify with entrepreneurial activity, and retain considerable volition over that involvement without necessarily displaying the same degree of action-oriented self-regulation as another entrepreneur. The distinction makes their relationship theoretically meaningful rather than definitional: harmonious passion captures the motivational quality of entrepreneurial engagement, whereas Locomotion Orientation captures a preferred manner of regulating movement during goal pursuit.

Prior research establishes that passion and locomotion are related, but the direction and passion framework examined have differed across studies. Bélanger et al. (2015) positioned regulatory modes as antecedents of passion and found, across two field studies, that locomotion was positively associated with harmonious passion. Their reasoning was that the experiential involvement and autonomous motivation associated with locomotion facilitate harmonious engagement. This work establishes a connection between the constructs, but it examines locomotion as the focal antecedent of harmonious passion. Entrepreneurship research has also considered passion in relation to regulatory mode from the opposite theoretical ordering. Mueller et al. (2017) found that passion for developing was positively associated with both locomotion and assessment and that these regulatory modes mediated its relationship with grit. Their study did not examine harmonious passion, however. Because passion for developing belongs to the role-based entrepreneurial passion framework rather than the DMP, Mueller et al. provide important but indirect evidence for the relationship examined here.

What remains less clear from this literature is whether harmonious passion is associated with Locomotion Orientation when harmonious passion is treated as the focal predictor, and, more centrally, whether this relationship varies with the obsessive passion that accompanies harmonious engagement. Harmonious passion provides a relatively autonomous and self-endorsed basis for engagement, whereas obsessive passion introduces controlled pressure and greater difficulty disengaging from the passionate activity (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). Emerging mixed-passion research suggests that these motivational qualities can coexist and that the implications of one form of passion may depend partly on the other

(Newman et al., 2021; Waxler, 2026). This raises the possibility that obsessive passion represents a boundary condition of the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship.

Against this background, we ask whether the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation depends on the level of obsessive passion that accompanies harmonious engagement. We examine this question in a sample of 315 entrepreneurs by testing obsessive passion as a moderator of the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation. The study therefore focuses on whether the behavioral relevance of harmonious passion for action-oriented self-regulation differs according to the level of obsessive passion experienced by the entrepreneur, rather than treating harmonious and obsessive passion only as separate predictors.

This approach offers three related theoretical contributions. First, it advances an interactive application of the DMP to entrepreneurship. Existing research has generated substantial knowledge about the separate associations of harmonious and obsessive passion with entrepreneurial outcomes, while emerging mixed-passion research indicates that the two forms of passion can coexist within individuals (Newman et al., 2021; Waxler, 2026). By testing their interaction, the present study examines whether the behavioral implications of one form of passion depend on the level of the other without claiming to conduct a person-centered profile analysis. Second, the study identifies obsessive passion as a potential boundary condition of the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation. In doing so, it connects the DMP with Regulatory Mode Theory while complementing earlier work that either positioned locomotion as an antecedent of harmonious passion (Bélanger et al., 2015) or examined regulatory modes downstream of a different, role-based form of entrepreneurial passion (Mueller et al., 2017). Third, the study develops a more conditional account of obsessive passion. Rather than treating its controlled character as necessarily beneficial or detrimental across outcomes, we examine whether obsessive passion alters the extent to which harmonious engagement is associated with Locomotion Orientation.

Harmonious Passion and Locomotion Orientation

The conceptual distinction between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation provides a basis for expecting a positive relationship. Harmonious passion reflects involvement in which entrepreneurial activity is valued and incorporated into identity through relatively autonomous internalization. Entrepreneurs engage in the activity willingly and retain a sense of volition over their involvement (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). Locomotion Orientation concerns a different aspect of goal pursuit. Rather than explaining why an activity is valued or how it becomes part of identity, it emphasizes initiating movement and maintaining progress toward goal-related states (Kruglanski et al., 2000). The proposed relationship thus rests on the compatibility between self-endorsed engagement and action-oriented self-regulation, not on treating the two constructs as equivalent.

When entrepreneurial activity is autonomously valued, entrepreneurs have a self-endorsed reason to remain involved rather than depending solely on external contingencies or an internal sense of compulsion. Such involvement is relevant to locomotion because continued movement requires psychological and behavioral resources to be directed toward action. Regulatory-mode research shows that individuals higher in locomotion report stronger intrinsic task motivation and greater effort investment (Pierro et al., 2006b). In organizational settings, locomotion has also been associated with greater job involvement, effort, and task performance (Pierro et al., 2006a). These studies do not establish harmonious passion as an antecedent of locomotion, but they show that locomotion is compatible with an internally involving and effortful form of goal pursuit. Harmonious passion may therefore provide a motivational basis for such movement because entrepreneurial engagement remains personally meaningful and self-endorsed.

Related evidence comes from entrepreneurship research. Minh et al. (2025) found in two-wave data that harmonious passion was positively associated with entrepreneurial persistence and subsequently obtained experimental evidence consistent with a positive effect of harmonious passion on persistence. Persistence, however, is not the same as Locomotion Orientation. Entrepreneurial persistence refers to continued pursuit

despite obstacles, conflicting demands, or attractive alternatives, whereas Locomotion Orientation reflects a broader self-regulatory orientation toward movement, initiation, and progress. Although indirect, this evidence indicates that harmonious passion can be associated with continued goal-directed behavior rather than remaining only an identity-related or affective experience.

The argument developed here extends rather than restates prior research. Bélanger et al. (2015) examined the relationship in the opposite direction by positioning locomotion as an antecedent of harmonious passion, while examined passion for developing rather than harmonious passion. Existing research therefore establishes connections among passion, self-regulation, and continued entrepreneurial action without directly establishing the focal HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship. Building on the autonomous engagement associated with harmonious passion, we expect entrepreneurs with stronger harmonious passion to report a stronger orientation toward initiating and maintaining movement in pursuit of their entrepreneurial goals.

H1: Harmonious entrepreneurial passion is positively associated with entrepreneurs' locomotion orientation.

Obsessive Passion as a Boundary Condition

The relationship proposed in H1 may vary depending on the level of obsessive passion that accompanies harmonious engagement. Although harmonious and obsessive passion reflect distinct forms of internalization, they can coexist within the same individual (Newman et al., 2021). This coexistence is theoretically important because entrepreneurs may experience autonomous and controlled forms of involvement at the same time, allowing the motivational quality of one form of passion to operate in the presence of the other. Harmonious passion provides a relatively autonomous basis for involvement, whereas obsessive passion reflects more controlled engagement, marked by internal or external pressure and greater difficulty disengaging from the activity (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). The moderation argument therefore concerns how these coexisting forms of passion operate together rather than whether one replaces the other.

Obsessive passion is also associated with sustained and intense involvement. Fu et al. (2022) It is described as involving repeated, difficult-to-control, and long-term engagement with an activity. In an entrepreneurial context, their findings suggest that perceived obsessive passion can signal tenacity and commitment to potential cofounders, although its implications depend on the activity toward which the passion is directed. This does not make obsessive passion inherently beneficial, but it does suggest that it can be accompanied by a strong tendency to remain involved. Waxler (2026) review of mixed passion develops a similar idea, characterizing high harmonious/high obsessive passion as a high-intensity form of pursuit and suggesting that obsessive passion may, under some conditions, operate as an intensity amplifier.

This possibility is relevant to Locomotion Orientation because locomotion emphasizes initiating action and maintaining movement toward goal-related states. When obsessive passion is relatively low, harmonious passion should still be positively associated with Locomotion Orientation because entrepreneurial involvement remains personally valued and self-endorsed. At higher levels of obsessive passion, however, harmonious engagement coexists with a stronger controlled pull to remain involved. The entrepreneur not only values the activity but also experiences greater pressure to continue engaging and greater difficulty disengaging from it. Because Locomotion Orientation concerns continued movement rather than the psychological quality of that movement, the additional persistence associated with obsessive passion may strengthen the extent to which harmonious engagement is reflected in action-oriented self-regulation.

Obsessive passion is therefore proposed as a boundary condition of the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship, rather than as an alternative source of autonomous motivation. Harmonious passion remains the self-endorsed basis for engagement, while obsessive passion may add intensity to that involvement. When harmonious passion is stronger, the coexistence of these motivational qualities may be associated with a stronger orientation toward continued movement. In this sense, the expected interaction is consistent with

the possibility of intensity amplification, although the present study does not directly test that mechanism. The contribution of this argument lies in considering how the two forms of passion operate together, rather than treating their implications as entirely independent.

Stronger Locomotion Orientation should not be interpreted as evidence that obsessive passion becomes adaptive, nor should high levels of both forms of passion be treated as an optimal state. Obsessive passion remains associated with rigidity, reduced control over engagement, and conflict with other areas of life (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). Waxler (2026) Similarly, it describes high harmonious/high obsessive passion as a combination of strong engagement and context-sensitive vulnerability. The argument here is therefore deliberately limited: when the outcome is Locomotion Orientation, obsessive passion is expected to strengthen the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation, without implying broader psychological benefits.

H2: Obsessive passion positively moderates the relationship between harmonious passion and entrepreneurs' Locomotion Orientation, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger at higher levels of obsessive passion.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Data were collected through a single-wave online survey of entrepreneurs operating in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan. Convenience sampling was used, and approximately 650 entrepreneurs were contacted, mainly through WhatsApp, and invited to participate. The survey link was shared online through the same platform. Data collection continued for approximately two to four months.

A total of 338 questionnaires were returned. After screening the responses for completeness, cases with missing or incomplete information were removed, leaving a final usable sample of 315 respondents. Informed consent was obtained before participation, and respondents were assured that their information would remain anonymous.

As shown in Table 1, the sample was predominantly male, with 292 men (92.7%) and 23 women (7.3%). Most respondents were between 31 and 45 years of age (201, 63.8%), followed by those aged 46–60 years (97, 30.8%), 15–30 years (15, 4.8%), and above 60 years (2, 0.6%). In terms of education, 126 respondents (40.0%) held a BS degree, 91 (28.9%) a master’s degree, 85 (27.0%) an MPhil/MS degree, 4 (1.3%) a PhD, and 9 (2.9%) reported other qualifications. Most respondents were married (262, 83.2%), while 52 (16.5%) were single and 1 (0.3%) reported another marital status.

Table 1
Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	292	92.7
Female	23	7.3
Age		
15-30	15	4.8
31-45	201	63.8
46-60	97	30.8
Above 60	2	0.6
Education		
BS	126	40.0
Master’s	91	28.9
M.Phil./MS	85	27.0
PhD	4	1.3
Others	9	2.9

Characteristic	n	%
Marital Status		
Married	262	83.2
Single	52	16.5
Other	1	0.3

Note. N = 315. Percentages may not total exactly 100.0 because of rounding.

Measures

All focal constructs were measured using established scales. The responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Harmonious passion was measured with the seven-item scale developed by Vallerand et al. (2003). A sample item was, “Running this business allows me to live a variety of experiences”. Obsessive passion was assessed using the corresponding seven-item scale from Vallerand et al. (2003). A sample item was, “Running this business is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it.” Locomotion Orientation was assessed using the locomotion subscale of the Regulatory Mode Questionnaire developed by Kruglanski et al. (2000). Representative items include “I don’t mind doing things even if they involve extra effort.” The initial measurement model included all 12 items. During measurement-model assessment, however, L12 showed a comparatively low standardized factor loading of 0.41 and was therefore excluded from the final measure. All subsequent analyses were conducted using the 11 retained items.

Age, education, and marital status were included as covariates in the final moderation model. Age was entered using its ordered category coding, while education was represented through dummy-coded comparisons with BS as the reference category and marital status through dummy-coded comparisons with Married as the reference category. These variables were included because preliminary bivariate analyses indicated that each was associated with Locomotion Orientation. They were treated as control variables rather than as theoretically central constructs in the proposed model.

Analytical Strategy

Data analysis proceeded in several stages. First, descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and reliability coefficients were examined for the study variables, with internal consistency assessed using Cronbach’s alpha. Confirmatory factor analysis was then conducted to evaluate the measurement model comprising harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and Locomotion Orientation. Standardized factor loadings and overall model-fit indices were examined to assess the adequacy of the measurement structure.

Convergent validity was evaluated using standardized factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with the corresponding interconstruct correlations. Given the conceptual proximity between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation, the hypothesized three-factor model was also compared with an alternative two-factor model in which harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation were combined into a single factor.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using Hayes’ PROCESS macro, Model 1. Locomotion Orientation was specified as the dependent variable, harmonious passion as the focal predictor, and obsessive passion as the moderator. Harmonious passion and obsessive passion were mean-centered before constructing the interaction term. Age, education, and marital status were included as covariates in the final moderation model. The moderation effect was evaluated by examining the interaction coefficient and the change in explained variance associated with the interaction term. To interpret the interaction, the conditional effect of harmonious passion on Locomotion Orientation was examined at lower, middle, and higher levels of obsessive passion, with statistical inference based on 95% confidence intervals.

Results

Measurement Model and Reliability

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the measurement model comprising harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and Locomotion Orientation. In the initial model, L12 had a comparatively weak standardized factor loading of 0.41 and was therefore excluded from the final Locomotion Orientation measure. The resulting three-factor model, comprising the seven harmonious passion items, seven obsessive passion items, and 11 retained locomotion items, yielded $\chi^2 = 893.78$, $df = 272$, $\chi^2/df = 3.29$, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.08, and AIC = 999.78. Overall, these indices indicated an adequate, although not uniformly strong, fit to the data.

Internal consistency was strong for all three constructs. Cronbach’s alpha was 0.95 for harmonious passion, 0.96 and 0.97 for obsessive passion, and Locomotion Orientation, respectively. The standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.53 to 0.94 for all items. Table 2 reports the fit indices for the hypothesized and alternative measurement models.

Table 2
Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Alternative Model Comparison

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	AIC
Three-factor model	893.78	272	3.29	0.94	0.94	0.08	999.78
Two-factor model	1718.64	274	6.27	0.86	0.85	0.13	1820.64

Note. In the alternative two-factor model, Harmonious Passion and Locomotion Orientation were combined into a single factor. The three-factor model used the final 11-item Locomotion measure (L1–L11).

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Harmonious passion had a CR of 0.95 and an AVE of 0.75, obsessive passion a CR of 0.96 and an AVE of 0.79, and Locomotion Orientation a CR of 0.98 and an AVE of 0.80. All CR values exceeded 0.70, and all AVE values exceeded 0.50, providing evidence of convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square roots of AVE were 0.86 for harmonious passion, 0.89 for obsessive passion, and 0.90 for Locomotion Orientation. The corresponding latent correlations were –0.32 between harmonious and obsessive passion, 0.84 between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation, and –0.51 between obsessive passion and Locomotion Orientation. In each case, the square root of AVE was greater than the relevant interconstruct correlation. This also held for the strongest association, between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation, where the latent correlation of 0.84 remained below the square roots of AVE for harmonious passion (0.86) and Locomotion Orientation (0.90). Even so, the size of this association points to considerable empirical closeness between the two constructs.

As an additional assessment of construct distinctiveness, the hypothesized three-factor model was compared with an alternative two-factor model in which harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation were represented as a single factor. The alternative model demonstrated substantially poorer fit, $\chi^2 = 1718.64$, $df = 274$, $\chi^2/df = 6.3$, CFI = 0.86, TLI = 0.85, RMSEA = 0.13, and AIC = 1820.64. The deterioration in model fit relative to the three-factor solution provides additional evidence that harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation are empirically distinguishable. Convergent and discriminant validity statistics are reported in Table 3.

Table 3*Convergent and Discriminant Validity*

Variable	CR	AVE	1	2	3
1. Harmonious Passion	0.95	0.75	0.86	0.94	0.94
2. Obsessive Passion	0.96	0.79	−0.32	0.89	
3. Locomotion Orientation	0.98	0.80	0.84	−0.51	0.90

Note. CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. Bold diagonal entries are the square roots of AVE ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$); off-diagonal entries are latent correlations. Locomotion Orientation is based on L1–L11.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Harmonious passion had a mean of 3.83 (SD = 1.12), obsessive passion had a mean of 3.45 (SD = 1.32), and Locomotion Orientation had a mean of 3.49 (SD = 1.04). The bivariate correlations among the focal variables were consistent with the proposed relationships. Harmonious passion was strongly and positively correlated with Locomotion Orientation, $r = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$, whereas obsessive passion was negatively correlated with Locomotion Orientation, $r = -0.49$, $p < 0.001$. Harmonious and obsessive passion were also negatively related, $r = -0.25$, $p < 0.001$. Descriptive statistics and reliability estimates for the focal constructs are presented in Table 4.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics and Reliability*

Variable	M	SD	α	CR	AVE
Harmonious Passion	3.83	1.12	0.95	0.95	0.75
Obsessive Passion	3.45	1.32	0.96	0.96	0.79
Locomotion Orientation	3.49	1.04	0.97	0.98	0.80

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. Locomotion Orientation is based on the final 11-item measure (L1–L11).

Among the demographic variables, age was negatively correlated with Locomotion Orientation, $r = -0.26$, $p < 0.001$, whereas education, $r = 0.17$, $p = 0.002$, and marital status, $r = 0.13$, $p = 0.024$, were positively associated with Locomotion Orientation. These variables were therefore retained as covariates in the final moderation analysis. The bivariate correlations among the study variables are reported in Table 5.

Table 5*Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variable Pair	r	p
Harmonious Passion – Locomotion Orientation	0.82	< 0.001
Obsessive Passion – Locomotion Orientation	−0.49	< 0.001
Harmonious Passion – Obsessive Passion	−0.25	< 0.001
Age – Locomotion Orientation	−0.26	< 0.001
Education – Locomotion Orientation	0.17	0.002
Marital Status – Locomotion Orientation	0.13	0.024

Note. Correlations are observed composite-score correlations. Latent correlations are reported separately in Table 3. Locomotion Orientation is based on L1–L11.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses were tested using Hayes' PROCESS Model 1, with harmonious passion specified as the focal predictor, obsessive passion as the moderator, and Locomotion Orientation as the outcome. Harmonious passion and obsessive passion were mean-centered before construction of the interaction term. Age was

entered using its ordered category coding (1 = 15–30 years, 2 = 31–45 years, 3 = 46–60 years, and 4 = above 60 years). Education was represented by four dummy variables, with BS as the reference category (Master's, MPhil/MS, PhD, and Other), and marital status by two dummy variables, with Married as the reference category (Single and Other).

The overall model was significant, $R = 0.88$, $R^2 = 0.7755$ (77.55%), $MSE = 0.25$, $F(10, 304) = 105.03$, $p < 0.001$. Harmonious passion was positively associated with Locomotion Orientation at the mean level of obsessive passion, $b = 0.57$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 16.79$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.51, 0.64]. This finding supports H1. Obsessive passion showed a negative conditional association with Locomotion Orientation at the mean level of harmonious passion, $b = -0.32$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = -11.21$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [-0.38, -0.26].

More centrally, the interaction between harmonious and obsessive passion was positive and significant, $b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 4.38$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.21]. The interaction explained additional variance in Locomotion Orientation, $\Delta R^2 = 0.0142$ (1.42%), $F(1, 304) = 19.20$, $p < 0.001$. Thus, the positive relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation became stronger as obsessive passion increased, supporting H2.

None of the covariates reached conventional levels of statistical significance in the final model. Age was negatively associated with Locomotion Orientation, $b = -0.07$, $p = 0.29$. Relative to BS, the coefficients were $b = 0.08$, $p = 0.27$ for Master's; $b = 0.14$, $p = 0.09$ for MPhil/MS; $b = 0.07$, $p = 0.80$ for PhD; and $b = 0.18$, $p = 0.30$ for Other education. Relative to Married, the coefficients were $b = 0.13$, $p = 0.13$ for Single and $b = 0.01$, $p = 0.98$ for Other marital status. The final moderation model is reported in Table 6.

Table 6a

Moderation Analysis Predicting Locomotion Orientation

Panel A. Focal Effects

Predictor	b	SE	t	p	95% CI
Harmonious Passion	0.57	0.03	16.79	< 0.001	[0.51, 0.64]
Obsessive Passion	-0.32	0.03	-11.21	< 0.001	[-0.38, -0.26]
HP × OP	0.14	0.03	4.38	< 0.001	[0.08, 0.21]

Table 6b

Panel B. Covariates

Covariate	b	SE	t	p	95% CI
Age	-0.07	0.06	-1.07	0.29	[-0.19, 0.06]
Master's vs. BS	0.08	0.08	1.10	0.27	[-0.07, 0.24]
MPhil/MS vs. BS	0.14	0.08	1.72	0.09	[-0.02, 0.30]
PhD vs. BS	0.07	0.26	0.26	0.80	[-0.44, 0.57]
Other education vs. BS	0.18	0.17	1.04	0.30	[-0.16, 0.52]
Single vs. Married	0.13	0.09	1.52	0.13	[-0.04, 0.31]
Other marital status vs. Married	0.01	0.51	0.03	0.98	[-0.98, 1.01]

Table 6c

Panel C. Model Summary

Statistic	Value	p
R	0.88	
R ²	0.7755	
MSE	0.25	
F(10, 304)	105.03	< 0.001
ΔR ²	0.0142	
F-change (1, 304)	19.20	< 0.001

Note. N = 315. Outcome = Locomotion Orientation. HP = Harmonious Passion; OP = Obsessive Passion. HP and OP were mean-centered before construction of the interaction term. Age was coded 1 = 15–30 years, 2

= 31–45 years, 3 = 46–60 years, and 4 = above 60 years. For Education, BS was the reference category, and four dummy variables represented Master’s, MPhil/MS, PhD, and Other education. For Marital Status, Married was the reference category and two dummy variables represented Single and Other. Locomotion Orientation is based on L1–L11.

Conditional Effects

Examination of the conditional effects further clarified the interaction. At relatively low obsessive passion (16th percentile), harmonious passion was positively associated with Locomotion Orientation, $b = 0.33$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 4.02$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.17, 0.49]. At the middle value of obsessive passion (50th percentile), the association was stronger, $b = 0.65$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 23.21$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.60, 0.71]. At relatively high obsessive passion (84th percentile), the relationship was stronger still, $b = 0.76$, $SE = 0.04$, $t = 21.24$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.69, 0.83].

Thus, harmonious passion was positively associated with Locomotion Orientation across all examined levels of obsessive passion, but the magnitude of this association increased progressively as obsessive passion increased. Accordingly, H1 and H2 were supported. The conditional effects of harmonious passion at low, middle, and high levels of obsessive passion are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Conditional Effects of Harmonious Passion at Levels of Obsessive Passion

Level of OP	Percentile	Centered OP Value	b	SE	t	p	95% CI
Low OP	16th	−1.7347	0.33	0.08	4.02	< 0.001	[0.17, 0.49]
Middle OP	50th	0.5510	0.65	0.03	23.21	< 0.001	[0.60, 0.71]
High OP	84th	1.2653	0.76	0.04	21.24	< 0.001	[0.69, 0.83]

Note. OP = Obsessive Passion. OP was mean-centered before analysis. Conditional effects are reported at the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles of OP. The centered moderator values shown are those reported by PROCESS. Locomotion Orientation is based on L1–L11.

Discussion

This study examined whether the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation varies with the level of obsessive passion that accompanies harmonious engagement. Harmonious passion was positively associated with Locomotion Orientation, whereas obsessive passion showed a negative conditional association with Locomotion Orientation at the mean level of harmonious passion. At the same time, the interaction between harmonious and obsessive passion was positive: the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship became stronger as obsessive passion increased. Harmonious passion remained positively associated with Locomotion Orientation across the examined levels of obsessive passion. The pattern therefore points to a conditional relationship in which the self-regulatory relevance of harmonious passion depends partly on the obsessive passion with which it coexists.

The positive association between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation supports H1. Harmonious passion reflects relatively autonomous and self-endorsed involvement in an activity, whereas Locomotion Orientation concerns the regulation of goal pursuit through initiating action and maintaining movement (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024; Kruglanski et al., 2000). Their relationship is therefore meaningful without implying that they are the same construct. Entrepreneurs who willingly value and identify with their venture activities may have a motivational basis for remaining engaged in goal-directed movement, even though the present design does not establish that harmonious passion precedes or produces Locomotion Orientation.

This interpretation is consistent with, but directionally distinct from, Bélanger et al. (2015). Their work positioned regulatory mode as an antecedent of passion and found that locomotion was positively associated

with harmonious passion. The present study places harmonious passion as the focal predictor and Locomotion Orientation as the outcome. Because the data are single-wave, the findings should not be read as establishing the reverse causal direction. Rather, they suggest that the close connection between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation may also be relevant when the theoretical question begins with the motivational quality of passion.

Mueller et al. (2017) provide related evidence from entrepreneurship, although within a different passion framework. They found that passion for developing was positively associated with locomotion and assessment, which in turn were related to grit. Passion for developing is a role-based form of entrepreneurial passion and is not equivalent to harmonious passion. The current results therefore extend this line of work by showing that an autonomously internalized form of entrepreneurial passion is also associated with Locomotion Orientation.

Evidence concerning entrepreneurial persistence points in a similar direction but should remain conceptually separate. Minh et al. (2025) found that harmonious passion was positively associated with entrepreneurial persistence and reported experimental evidence consistent with greater persistence under higher harmonious passion. Persistence concerns continued pursuit despite obstacles, conflicting demands, or alternatives, whereas Locomotion Orientation reflects a broader preference for movement, initiation, and progress. The persistence findings therefore provide indirect rather than direct support. They nevertheless show that harmonious passion can be associated with continued goal-directed behavior rather than functioning only as an identity-related or affective experience.

H2 addresses the more distinctive part of the model. Harmonious and obsessive passion are not mutually exclusive, and prior work indicates that both can coexist within the same individual (Newman et al., 2021). The current study does not identify passion profiles; instead, the interaction provides variable-centered evidence that the association between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation changes as obsessive passion varies. Obsessive passion therefore operates here as a boundary condition of the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship rather than simply as a second independent predictor.

The nature of that boundary condition is consistent with the controlled involvement associated with obsessive passion. Obsessive passion involves pressure to remain engaged and greater difficulty disengaging from the passionate activity (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). Fu et al. (2022) similarly describe obsessive passion in terms of repeated, difficult-to-control, and long-term engagement and show in an entrepreneurial context that its implications can depend on the activity toward which that passion is directed. Waxler (2026) develops a related mixed-passion perspective, characterizing high harmonious/high obsessive passion as a high-intensity form of pursuit that combines strong engagement with context-sensitive vulnerability. The review also suggests that obsessive passion may, under some conditions, operate as an intensity amplifier.

Applied to the current results, one possible interpretation is that obsessive passion adds controlled intensity to an already self-endorsed form of engagement. Harmonious passion provides the autonomous basis for involvement, while obsessive passion may strengthen the pull to remain engaged. As harmonious passion becomes stronger, this combination may be more closely associated with continued action-oriented self-regulation. This interpretation is consistent with the observed positive interaction, but intensity, urgency, persistence, and difficulty disengaging were not measured as mediators. Intensity amplification should therefore be treated as a theoretical explanation for the pattern rather than as a mechanism demonstrated by the data.

The negative conditional association of obsessive passion with Locomotion Orientation also matters for interpreting the interaction. At the mean level of harmonious passion, greater obsessive passion was associated with lower Locomotion Orientation. Given its controlled and potentially rigid character, obsessive passion may be less compatible with the self-directed movement represented by Locomotion Orientation (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). Yet this association changes as harmonious passion

increases. When harmonious passion is stronger, the controlled persistence associated with obsessive passion may coexist with a stronger self-endorsed basis for engagement, strengthening the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship. This does not imply that obsessive passion becomes adaptive. Rather, its association with action-oriented self-regulation appears to depend partly on the motivational context in which it occurs.

This pattern is consistent with broader calls to view entrepreneurial passion as a process whose implications depend on surrounding conditions rather than assuming uniform effects (Schwarte et al., 2023). Fu et al. (2022) similarly show that the implications of obsessive passion can vary depending on its entrepreneurial target. The current findings extend this conditional perspective by showing that the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship also varies across levels of obsessive passion. The interaction explained only a modest amount of additional variance beyond the main effects and covariates. Its value, therefore, lies less in improving prediction. The more important point is that the strength of the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship changed depending on the level of obsessive passion. This gives the interaction theoretical importance even though its additional explanatory power was relatively small.

The HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship became stronger as obsessive passion increased. This finding, however, should not be taken to mean that obsessive passion improves psychological functioning. Obsessive passion still carries costs. It has been associated with rigidity and reduced control over engagement (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). Waxler (2026) also does not treat high harmonious/high obsessive passion as an ideal combination. Instead, this pattern reflects intense engagement, but at the same time it may involve context-sensitive vulnerability. Locomotion Orientation only tells us about movement and progress toward goals. It does not tell us whether this movement is always appropriate or flexible, or whether it supports well-being. Therefore, an entrepreneur may keep moving strongly toward a goal while still experiencing psychological or strategic costs that were not captured in this study.

The strong relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation also needs to be considered carefully. The two constructs were strongly associated in this study. This does not mean they are the same, but it does suggest that their conceptual separation should not be overstated. Harmonious passion concerns the quality of internalization and engagement, whereas Locomotion Orientation concerns the regulation of goal pursuit through movement and progress (Vallerand et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). The measurement analyses supported treating them as distinct: the discriminant-validity criteria were satisfied, and the model combining harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation into a single factor fit substantially worse than the hypothesized three-factor model. At the same time, the magnitude of their relationship suggests that their conceptual and empirical boundaries remain closely connected and warrant continued examination.

The findings therefore support a more conditional account of entrepreneurial passion. Harmonious passion was consistently positively associated with Locomotion Orientation, but the strength of that relationship varied with obsessive passion. Obsessive passion showed a negative conditional association with Locomotion Orientation at the mean level of harmonious passion while also strengthening the positive HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship. Understanding the self-regulatory relevance of entrepreneurial passion may therefore require attention not only to harmonious and obsessive passion separately, but also to how the two forms of passion coexist within the same motivational context.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the Dualistic Model of Passion by examining harmonious and obsessive passion as coexisting forms of passion rather than only as separate predictors. Prior research shows that both forms of passion can be present within the same individual, while more recent work has drawn attention to how their combinations may matter for engagement (Newman et al., 2021; Waxler, 2026). The analysis here remains variable-centered and does not identify passion profiles. Instead, the significant interaction shows that the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation varies with the level of obsessive

passion. This extends the DMP by emphasizing that the implications of one form of passion may depend partly on the other, rather than being understood only through their independent associations.

A second contribution concerns the connection between passion and self-regulation. Prior work has linked passion with regulatory mode, but through different theoretical directions and passion frameworks. Bélanger et al. (2015) positioned locomotion as an antecedent of harmonious passion, whereas Mueller et al. (2017) examined passion for developing, a role-based form of entrepreneurial passion, in relation to locomotion and assessment. The contribution here is therefore not that passion and locomotion are related per se. Rather, the findings identify obsessive passion as a boundary condition of the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship. In doing so, the study connects the DMP with Regulatory Mode Theory by showing that the association between autonomously internalized passion and action-oriented self-regulation differs depending on the obsessive passion that accompanies harmonious engagement.

The findings also point to a more conditional understanding of obsessive passion. At the mean level of harmonious passion, obsessive passion was negatively associated with Locomotion Orientation, but it also strengthened the positive relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation. This makes it difficult to characterize obsessive passion as simply adaptive or maladaptive. Within the DMP, obsessive passion reflects controlled involvement marked by pressure, rigidity, and difficulty disengaging (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Paquette, 2024). Mixed-passion research further suggests that the implications of this intensity may depend on the motivational context in which it occurs (Waxler, 2026). Against this background, the present findings are consistent with the possibility that obsessive passion functions as an intensity-amplifying boundary condition when stronger harmonious engagement is already present. This does not imply that obsessive passion becomes beneficial; rather, its self-regulatory relevance appears to vary with the form of passion with which it coexists.

The strong association between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation also qualifies the contribution of this study. The two constructs are closely connected, but they capture different processes: harmonious passion concerns how an activity is internalized and experienced, whereas Locomotion Orientation concerns how goal pursuit is regulated through movement and progress (Vallerand et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). The measurement results supported treating them as distinct despite the magnitude of their relationship. The contribution, therefore, is not based on presenting harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation as unrelated, but on showing how these closely connected motivational and self-regulatory processes are associated and how that association changes across levels of obsessive passion.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that entrepreneurs should consider not only how strongly they feel about their ventures, but also that the nature of that involvement is very important. Harmonious passion was positively associated with Locomotion Orientation; this suggests that self-endorsed engagement may support continued movement toward entrepreneurial goals. Obsessive passion, however, should not be viewed as something entrepreneurs need to increase deliberately. Although it strengthened the HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship, it also showed a negative conditional association with Locomotion Orientation.

For entrepreneurship educators, and incubators, the practical issue is to encourage progress without encouraging rigid involvement. Support should leave room for reflection as well as action. Stronger Locomotion Orientation does not necessarily mean better entrepreneurial judgment, especially when assumptions change or a chosen course is no longer effective. Regulatory Mode Theory distinguishes locomotion from assessment as separate self-regulatory functions (Kruglanski et al., 2000). Entrepreneurs may therefore need to keep moving while remaining willing to reassess priorities and change strategy when necessary.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations need to be considered here. The first is the single-wave survey design. Because all variables were measured at one point in time, the study cannot establish which construct comes first or make a causal claim. Harmonious passion was positioned theoretically as the focal predictor of Locomotion Orientation, but the data do not show that it actually precedes changes in Locomotion Orientation. This issue becomes more important because Bélanger et al. (2015) examined the relationship in the opposite direction, with locomotion treated as an antecedent of harmonious passion. Longitudinal and cross-lagged research could help determine whether the relationship works in one direction, is reciprocal, or changes over time. Where feasible, experimental designs could also be used to examine short-term changes in passion-related and self-regulatory processes.

All focal constructs were measured through entrepreneurs' self-reports. This is appropriate for constructs such as passion and self-regulatory orientation, but relying on a single respondent and a single method leaves open the possibility that perceptual or common-method influences affected the observed associations. The present design does not show that these influences explain the findings, and the measurement analyses supported the distinctiveness of the focal constructs. Even so, future studies could strengthen the evidence by using more than one source of information. Self-reports could be combined with behavioral indicators of goal movement, repeated assessments over time, or ratings from cofounders, mentors, or other knowledgeable observers. These additional sources may provide a fuller picture where they are theoretically appropriate.

The sampling approach and study context also place limits on how widely these findings can be generalized. The participants came from SMEs in Pakistan and were recruited through convenience sampling. The sample was also heavily male, with 92.7% men and only 7.3% women. Because of this, the findings should not be assumed to apply in the same way across other entrepreneurial populations. Replication across countries, industries, venture stages, and more gender-balanced samples would help show whether the same relationships appear in different settings. Comparative research could also examine whether the interplay between harmonious and obsessive passion changes across cultural, institutional, or venture-level contexts.

The study draws on mixed-passion and configurational reasoning, although the analysis itself remains variable-centered. The significant interaction indicates that the relationship associated with one form of passion depends on the level of the other, but it does not establish distinct passion profiles. A useful next step would therefore be to examine these combinations more directly through latent profile analysis or other person-centered approaches. Such work could compare entrepreneurs characterized by high harmonious/low obsessive passion, low harmonious/high obsessive passion, high levels of both, or low levels of both, and assess whether these combinations correspond with different self-regulatory patterns. Where the theoretical interest lies in the combination or correspondence between the two forms of passion, polynomial or related profile-based techniques may also offer a useful extension.

This study did not examine the mechanisms underlying the positive $HP \times OP$ interaction. The Discussion therefore treats intensity, pressure, persistence of engagement, and difficulty disengaging as possible explanations rather than tested mediating processes. Future work could examine these mechanisms more explicitly, including effort intensity, urgency, persistence, cognitive rigidity, and difficulty disengaging. It would also be useful to move beyond Locomotion Orientation and consider whether the same interplay between harmonious and obsessive passion is associated with other self-regulatory and entrepreneurial outcomes, such as assessment orientation, strategic flexibility, disengagement, well-being, burnout, or decision processes. This would help clarify whether the stronger HP–Locomotion Orientation relationship found at higher levels of obsessive passion is specific to action-oriented regulation or reflects a broader pattern across behavioral and psychological outcomes.

Conclusion

This study examined whether the relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation varies with the level of obsessive passion accompanying harmoniously passionate engagement. Harmonious passion was found to be positively associated with Locomotion Orientation. Obsessive passion showed a negative conditional association with Locomotion Orientation at the mean level of harmonious passion. At the same time, obsessive passion strengthened the positive relationship between harmonious passion and Locomotion Orientation. These findings point to a conditional pattern in which the self-regulatory relevance of harmonious passion depends partly on the obsessive passion with which it coexists.

By connecting the Dualistic Model of Passion with Locomotion Orientation from Regulatory Mode Theory, the study supports a more conditional understanding of entrepreneurial passion. Obsessive passion should not be viewed as generally beneficial because its association with Locomotion Orientation was not uniformly positive. Rather, its self-regulatory relevance appears to depend partly on the motivational context provided by harmonious passion. Entrepreneurial passion is therefore not only about which form of passion an entrepreneur experiences, but also about how harmonious and obsessive passion operate together in relation to self-regulatory movement.

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