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**The Emergence, Dynamic Psychological Process, and Regulation of
Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion in Shaping the Well-being of
Entrepreneurs**

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

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by

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Abstract

Entrepreneurs are known for their deep emotional attachment and commitment to their ventures. Experiencing such intense positive emotions can paradoxically lead to obsessive entrepreneurial passion (ObEP), an uncontrollable form of passion negatively associated with well-being. Despite the negative consequences of ObEP, entrepreneurs may still develop an uncontrolled emotional bond with their businesses. While research has focused on the benefits of entrepreneurial passion, there is limited research on how obsessive passion forms and its potential effects on well-being are still a topic of debate as prior studies show mixed and inconclusive findings.

As such, our overarching concern is to know why entrepreneurs develop ObEP and how it potentially shapes their entrepreneurial well-being. To examine this research question, we conducted three interrelated studies.

In our first study, we examined the potential drivers of obsessive entrepreneurial passion and its impact on subjective and psychological well-being by employing a quantitative research design. We identified affective entrepreneurial commitment and perceived competitive pressure as two potential drivers of obsessive entrepreneurial passion based on the premise that passion can emerge from internal and social pressure. We found that both drivers can fuel obsessive entrepreneurial passion, which negatively mediates the relationship between affective entrepreneurial commitment and subjective and psychological well-being, as well as the relationship between perceived competitive pressure and both types of entrepreneurial well-being.

In our second study, we used qualitative methods to examine the underlying psychological process between obsessive entrepreneurial passion and well-being. As obsessively passionate entrepreneurs place heightened importance on their self-worth, they tend to cognitively

evaluate themselves and verify their self-worth, paying attention to their own perspectives and those close to them. Thus, such cognitive self-evaluation of entrepreneurs can explain the underlying psychological process between obsessive entrepreneurial passion and well-being outcomes. We introduced a dynamic process model to explain how the cognitive self-evaluation of obsessively passionate entrepreneurs (ObPEs) results in different well-being outcomes due to experienced discrepancies and conflicts. The model portrays four phases: the emergence of ObEP, cognitive evaluation of the self, feelings of self-discrepancies and conflicts, and well-being outcomes. In addition, we explained the detrimental side of obsessive entrepreneurial passion by highlighting the vicious cycle of passion.

In our third study, we proposed a dynamic model to explain how obsessively passionate entrepreneurs can manage negative emotions triggered by stress and regulate their obsessive entrepreneurial passion to shape their well-being. Using the lens of cognitive appraisal theory, we explained that obsessively passionate entrepreneurs will appraise stress as challenges or threats depending on their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with the negative emotions triggered by stress. We highlighted that entrepreneurs who employ approach strategies to cope with negative emotions can regulate their passion by enhancing their level of obsessive entrepreneurial passion without detriment to their well-being. However, using avoidance strategies will cause them to reduce their attachment to business, leading to reduced well-being.

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List of Abbreviations

ObEP	Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion
ObPEs	Obsessively Passionate Entrepreneurs
AEC	Affective Entrepreneurial Commitment
PCP	Perceived Competitive Pressure
PEWB	Psychological Entrepreneurial Well-being
SEWB	Subjective Entrepreneurial Well-being
NA	Negative Affect
PA	Positive Affect
BS	Business Satisfaction
AUT	Autonomy
EM	Environment Mastery
PG	Personal Growth
PR	Personal Relations
SA	Self-Actualization
PIL	Purpose in Life
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modelling
CR	Composite Reliability
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
VIF	Variance Inflated Factor
B	Beta Coefficient
SE	Standard Error
SDT	Self-Discrepancy Theory

List of Publications

Papers accepted and presented at conferences:

1. Fasana, S. F., Gibb, J., & Gilbert-Saad, A. (2022). The emergence of obsessive entrepreneurial passion and its influence on mental well-being. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2022, No. 1, p. 10730). Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510: Academy of Management.
2. Fasana, S. F., Gibb, J., & Gilbert-Saad, A. (2022). A pathway of obsessive entrepreneurial passion: Does affective entrepreneurial commitment and perceived competitive pressure stimulate obsessive passion and harm mental well-being? In *Australian Centre for Entrepreneurship Research (ACERE)*, Melbourne, Australia
3. Fasana, S. F., Gibb, J., & Gilbert-Saad, A. (2024). Taming the fire: A dynamic model of coping strategies to regulate obsessive entrepreneurial passion. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2024, No. 1, p. 14926). Valhalla, NY 10595: Academy of Management.
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6. Fasana, S. F., Gibb, J., & Gilbert-Saad, A. (2025). The psychological process of obsessive entrepreneurial passion: A Blessing or a curse for well-being? In *European Academy of Management*, Florence, Italy.

Note: *All three papers from chapters two to four of this thesis are currently being revised based on feedback received from peer-reviewed conferences and an A* journal.*

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Entrepreneurship is a strong catalyst for economic and social development (Filser et al., 2019; Schumpeter, 1942). Entrepreneurs are crucial in driving positive societal change by introducing innovative solutions and creating jobs, both of which contribute to social well-being. They experience personal growth and overall well-being since they enjoy the freedom and agency that comes with deriving meaning from their work while fulfilling their purpose in life (Shir, 2015; Wiklund et al., 2019). However, the entrepreneurial journey is not always smooth, and entrepreneurs often face various well-being issues that can impede their personal and business success (Schindehutte et al., 2006). Entrepreneurial well-being encompasses positive emotions, satisfaction, mental health, and overall psychological wellness when engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Wiklund et al., 2019). The demanding nature of entrepreneurship, with its long work hours, high stress levels, potential risk of failure, and financial uncertainties (Harris et al., 1999), can impact entrepreneurs' well-being (Buttner, 1992). Nevertheless, entrepreneurs often develop a deep emotional connection to their businesses, leading to an emotional rollercoaster that includes moments of great excitement and success as well as challenges and setbacks that can impede their well-being (Shepherd & Cardon, 2009; Shepherd et al., 2009).

The literature recognizes the deep emotional attachment of entrepreneurs to their venture as *entrepreneurial passion*, defined as an intense positive feeling that entrepreneurs experience through engaging in activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to their self-identity (Cardon et al., 2009). Entrepreneurs passionate about their ventures will likely stay motivated during difficult times (Liang et al., 2018) and work hard (Fisher et al., 2018). Their passion fuels creativity and innovation, driving them to push boundaries, challenge the status

quo, and create value for themselves and society (Cardon et al., 2009). In addition, it deepens their commitment and fortifies their resilience while paving the way for success and peak performance for both the entrepreneur and their ventures (Fisher, 2011). This unwavering dedication is contagious, attracting customers, peers, and investors who prefer passionate entrepreneurs (Murnieks et al., 2016). Ultimately, it improves overall well-being since engaging in desired entrepreneurial activities provides positive feelings and psychological functioning to the entrepreneurs (Chen et al., 2022).

However, pursuing passions may also pose a risk to the well-being of entrepreneurs, owing to the dualistic nature of passion. Vallerand et al. (2003) distinguish between two types of passion, obsessive and harmonious, based on how deeply the activity is integrated into one's identity. Harmonious passion emerges when entrepreneurs fully integrate entrepreneurial activities into their self-identity. This integration is autonomous, meaning they are involved in entrepreneurial tasks without the influence of any external pressures. In contrast, obsessive passion results from a controlled integration of the entrepreneurial activity into their identity due to the intra and interpersonal pressure attached to those activities. Entrepreneurs often demonstrate an obsessive entrepreneurial passion (ObEP) for their ventures as they hold blind love towards their business (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022) and often prioritize business over non-business activities (Stroe, Wincent, & Parida, 2018). Although this brings positive affective outcomes and satisfaction (Lafrenière et al., 2012; Streeb, 2024) to entrepreneurs, they can also experience various negative well-being outcomes such as burnout (de Mol et al., 2018), rigid persistence (Schindehutte et al., 2006), conflict, emotional exhaustion (Bredehorst et al., 2024), social loneliness (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022), and adverse affective outcomes (Streeb et al., 2023).

Despite the negative consequences of ObEP, entrepreneurs may still develop an uncontrolled emotional bond with their businesses and persist with their venture even during the difficult phases (Fisher, 2018; Stroe et al., 2018). In addition, passion research in entrepreneurial settings has mainly emphasized its functional side with numerous beneficial consequences for the entrepreneur, and only limited studies have attempted to investigate how an extreme form of passion is formed and could bring functional and dysfunctional outcomes to the entrepreneur's well-being. Consequently, there has been a call for research on entrepreneurial passion (Newman et al., 2021) to use process models to build an understanding of how emotionally enjoyable or adverse outcomes relate to the development of entrepreneurial passion. To date, inconsistent theoretical applications have hampered the assessment of the mechanisms underlying the relationship between passion and well-being outcomes in an entrepreneurial context. While emphasizing that passion is important for entrepreneurship, most studies neither adequately explain its role in the entrepreneurial process nor how it leads to various psychological and behavioural outcomes (Cardon et al., 2009) using well-established motivation and behavioural theories (Newman et al., 2021). Without a clear theoretical understanding of how ObEP translates into well-being outcomes, researchers and practitioners may lack the necessary insights to guide entrepreneurs in managing their passion effectively. Addressing this gap is essential for developing strategies that enhance entrepreneurial performance and mitigate the potential negative consequences of ObEP. As such, our overarching concern is to know why entrepreneurs develop such an obsessive form of passion and how it could shape their entrepreneurial well-being.

1.2 Research Model

The limited theoretical understanding of ObEP to date and inconclusive findings on its impact on well-being outcomes in the entrepreneurial context (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Streeb, 2024) leads us to focus on three main study areas: (1) the emergence of ObEP; (2) the dynamic psychological process between ObEP and entrepreneurial well-being outcomes; and (3) coping strategies to regulate ObEP that shape entrepreneurial well-being. The research model used to investigate these three research areas is presented in Figure 1.1. The following subsections explain the research problem and the relevant research questions of three subsequent studies of this thesis.

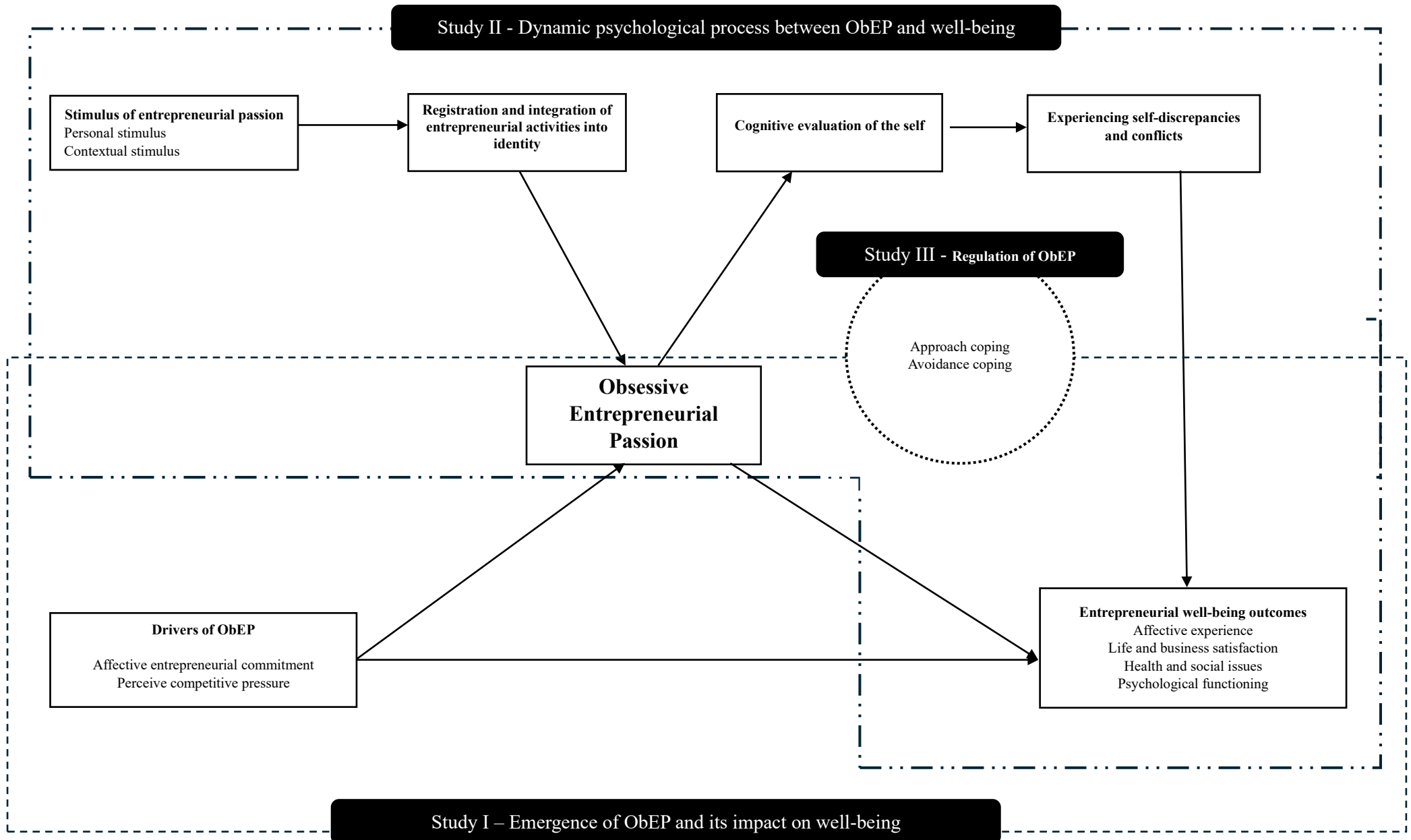


Figure 1.1. Overall research model investigating the role of ObEP in entrepreneurial well-being

1.2.1 Study I: Emergence of Obsessive Passion

As obsessively passionate entrepreneurs (ObPEs) engage in activities with heightened intensity, it can change the nature of their self-meaning in a rigid manner where they feel pressured to become even more involved in the business to preserve their identity (Ho & Pollack, 2014; Stroe et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003). While the identity-related drivers of entrepreneurial passion in general are now well established (Murnieks et al., 2020), entrepreneurial passion is neither fully internally developed nor externally (socially) induced (Stenholm & Nielsen, 2019). Thus, we aim to explore two potential drivers of ObEP that may reflect both internal and social aspects. We adopt two constructs to link entrepreneurs' self and social identity considerations with ObEP and entrepreneurial well-being (i.e., subjective and psychological well-being): *Affective entrepreneurial commitment* (AEC) and *Perceived competitive pressure* (PCP). In line with this, we aim to advance understandings of the emergence of ObEP by asking the following two research questions:

Research question 1(a): *What impact do affective entrepreneurial commitment and perceived competitive pressure have on obsessive entrepreneurial passion?*

Research question 1(b): *How does ObEP affect subjective and psychological aspects of entrepreneurial well-being?*

Research objective 1: *To examine the emergence of ObEP through the perspective of self and social consideration of entrepreneurial identity and to investigate the impact of ObEP on entrepreneurial well-being*

This thesis investigates the above research questions through the study covered in Chapter 2, "The emergence of obsessive entrepreneurial passion and its influence on entrepreneurial well-being." We employ a quantitative research design using structural equation modelling to examine the impact of internal and social pressure on ObEP and the subjective and

psychological entrepreneurial well-being of 218 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka. This study is the first to find that AEC and PCP positively influence ObEP, which negatively affects subjective and psychological aspects of entrepreneurial well-being. We also find that ObEP mediates the relationship between its drivers and both elements of entrepreneurial well-being. We contribute to the passion literature by suggesting that ObEP can be driven by both internal and social pressures on individuals to participate in entrepreneurial endeavours. We also highlight that entrepreneurial passion is not always productive; instead, it may damage both types of entrepreneurial well-being.

1.2.2 Study II: The Dynamic Process of Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion and Well-being

The second study delves into the ongoing debate surrounding the dual impact of ObEP, which simultaneously generates both functional and dysfunctional well-being outcomes for entrepreneurs. The conflicting findings in entrepreneurial contexts highlight the need for further research to clarify this phenomenon (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022). Exploring the intricate psychological mechanisms that connect ObEP and well-being serves to elucidate why research findings are currently ambiguous. We put forward that entrepreneurs' cognitive self-evaluation can play an essential role in navigating functional and dysfunctional outcomes of ObEP. ObPEs often determine their self-worth based on their performance in entrepreneurial activities. This leads them to constantly evaluate their performance and compare themselves with others to validate their worth (Stenseng & Dalskau, 2010), not only from their own perspectives but also from the perspectives of others close to them (Mageau et al., 2011). Thus, evaluating and verifying the self is an essential aspect of their lives (Ho & Pollack, 2014), and the outcomes of self-evaluation may shape the well-being of entrepreneurs (Stenseng, 2008). The questions of the second study and objectives are as follows:

Research question 2: *How does the cognitive self-evaluation of obsessively passionate entrepreneurs shape their well-being?*

Research objective 2: *To explore the underlying dynamic psychological process between ObEP and entrepreneurial well-being.*

The above research question was investigated through the study covered in Chapter 3, “The two faces of obsessive passion: The dynamic psychological process between obsessive entrepreneurial passion and well-being.” We conduct a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 30 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka. Our results introduce a dynamic process model explaining how the cognitive self-evaluation of ObPEs results in different well-being outcomes due to experienced discrepancies and conflicts. The model portrays four phases: the emergence of ObEP, cognitive evaluation of the self, feelings of self-discrepancies and conflicts, and well-being outcomes. We highlight that ObPEs can experience different discrepancies due to their negative and positive self-evaluation. While positive self-evaluation contributes to improved well-being, we put forward a nuanced idea that negative self-evaluation may form a *vicious cycle of obsessive passion*, explaining how adverse discrepancies and conflicts within oneself and with others result in poor well-being. In addition, we reveal how discrepancies and conflicts can serve as motivational drivers for ObPEs to implement diverse strategies to effectively address these challenges on an individual and collective level, ultimately leading to improved well-being outcomes.

1.2.3 Study III: Regulation of Obsessive Passion

While ObPEs experience happiness and thrill owing to their attachment to their business, the rigid pursuit of business goals and objectives can lead to conflict with other parts of their lives, bringing about negative consequences such as burnout and frustration (Vallerand, 2010). In addition, ObPEs tend to experience negative emotions when encountering stressful business

situations (Stroe, Parida, & Wincent, 2018; Thongmanivong, 2020; Zeiler, 2019). Thus, they must cope with stress and its associated negative emotions while regulating their passion to pursue desired outcomes. However, studies outside the entrepreneurial domain report ObEP as detrimental to self-regulation because of its rigid nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Stoeber et al., 2011) and tendency to keep individuals from dealing with problems (Schellenberg et al., 2013; Verner-Filion et al., 2014). Nevertheless, we argue that despite being victims of their passion, ObPEs can also actively regulate their passion and its associated adverse outcomes, as they are responsible agents for dealing with the unique and contextual characteristics associated with entrepreneurship (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; O’Shea et al., 2017). However, we know little about the cognitive process involved in regulating entrepreneurial passion as individuals attempt to strike a balance between their passion for business activities and other aspects of their lives (Bélanger et al., 2019). This paucity of research gives rise to the third research question:

Research question 3: *How do entrepreneurs regulate their obsessive passion to influence their well-being?*

Research objective 3: *To develop a conceptual model that explains how different coping strategies are used to regulate ObEP and shape the entrepreneurial well-being*

To investigate this research objective, we develop a conceptual study (Chapter 4): “Taming the fire: A dynamic model of coping strategies to regulate obsessive passion and shape entrepreneurial well-being.” We build a nuanced conceptual model that proposes ObPEs can appraise stress as challenges or threats depending on their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with the negative emotions triggered by stress. We further suggest they may employ approach coping strategies to manage negative emotions when perceiving business constraints as challenges. Conversely, ObPEs may use avoidance coping strategies when

stressful encounters threaten them. We reveal that entrepreneurs who employ approach strategies to cope with negative emotions can regulate their passion by intensifying their ObEP without detriment to their well-being. Meanwhile, using avoidance strategies will result in a reduced attachment to their business venture, leading to lower well-being. As such, we propose that entrepreneurial well-being may be enhanced by effectively combining and balancing approach and avoidance coping strategies while obsessive passion is consciously regulated.

1.3 Study Context

This research project is set in Sri Lanka, a developing country that has recently recognized entrepreneurship as a key driver for economic progress following a civil conflict and economic stagnation (Lin et al., 2013). Sri Lanka has made remarkable progress in promoting entrepreneurship, as the country has been ranked fourth on the Global Entrepreneurial Network (GEN) Leaderboard (Latiff, 2024). The country has also seen tremendous growth in start-ups and small and medium-scale enterprises, and entrepreneurial businesses have grown by 18 per cent by September 2024 (Kandaramage, 2024). This evidence showcases the strong passion displayed by Sri Lankan entrepreneurs towards their businesses. Recent research also demonstrates that many Sri Lankan entrepreneurs are highly dedicated and actively involved in their businesses with greater passion (John-onwuegbu, 2020).

While passion is crucial for success in entrepreneurship (Fisher et al., 2018), recent research indicates that Sri Lankan entrepreneurs face significant well-being challenges. Factors such as long working hours, high stress levels, and intense commitment to their work are prevalent among these entrepreneurs (Haresankar et al., 2018; Kulatilaka, 2017), potentially impacting their overall well-being. Therefore, exploring ObEP, its drivers, and its implications on well-being in this unique context can provide valuable insights for researchers and practitioners on the importance of effectively managing passion for success. Moreover, previous studies on

entrepreneurial passion have primarily focused on participants from Western countries and then applied their findings to the broader entrepreneurial community (Fisher et al., 2018; Murnieks et al., 2020; Stroe et al., 2018). However, recent studies underline that the impact of ObEP on its outcomes varies depending on the context (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Curran et al., 2015). They highlight that ObPEs can thrive in societies that emphasize collectivism because they feel well-supported when tackling challenges that are otherwise hard to overcome alone. A dedicated study on a developing and collectivist country like Sri Lanka offers researchers the opportunity to examine a diverse entrepreneurial population and to reconsider the applicability and relevance of their findings to these wider contexts.

1.4 Research Philosophy, Methodological Approaches and Data

The philosophical foundation of this research is pragmatism, a perspective that allows for methodological flexibility by integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches while encouraging methodological pluralism and the use of mixed methods (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The pragmatists choose the research methods based on the research question and the practical needs of the situation, enabling them to apply mixed methods in their studies. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) highlight the benefits of utilizing mixed methods, such as surveys and interviews, in a research study, as it allows for the in-depth insights offered by interviews to complement the broad perspective provided by questionnaires. This integration of methods can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic, enabling researchers to address a wider range of research questions and ultimately contribute to theory development and practical applications while mitigating the drawbacks of both methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This study explores the emergence of ObEP and its impact on entrepreneurial well-being through a mixed-methods approach, making pragmatism a suitable guiding paradigm.

Although previous studies proffer that obsessive passion is a dark side of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003), reality can vary contextually. Notably, in an entrepreneurial context, how obsessive passion shapes well-being is debatable, and there may be multiple realities even though obsessive passion is widely identified as detrimental in Western contexts (Ho & Pollack, 2014; Stroe et al., 2018). As such, different research questions emerged, such as what triggers entrepreneurs to become obsessively passionate, the underlying psychological process between ObEP and well-being, and how entrepreneurs can actively regulate the adverse effects of passion on the entrepreneurs' well-being. Thus, this study acknowledges that the reality of ObEP is complex, dynamic, and influenced by objective measures and subjective experiences of entrepreneurs. Rather than committing to a purely realist or relativist ontology, this research adopts a pluralistic view (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011), where this study recognizes that the development of ObEP and its impact on well-being is shaped by measurable factors that could be borrowed from research in other disciplines and tested in an entrepreneurial context. Similarly, this study emphasizes the importance of knowing entrepreneurs' subjective experiences through socially constructed knowledge to understand the research phenomena.

From an epistemological perspective, this study values knowledge generation through multiple methods. The diverse nature of the research questions required us to choose the most effective methods for investigating the phenomena, as we cannot depend on one type of data set (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). As a result, we were able to draw upon a wide range of data and knowledge sources to provide comprehensive answers to our research questions. Knowledge about ObEP and its impact on well-being was acquired through empirical testing (quantitative study), interpretive meaning-making (qualitative study), and theoretical synthesis (conceptual study). The first study focuses on the emergence of ObEP by quantitatively examining the causal relationships between AEC, PCP, and ObEP. Further, it

examines the impact of ObEP on the well-being of entrepreneurs. While most academic research on passion in entrepreneurship is conceptual, recent empirical studies have adopted deductive, quantitative methods (Stroe, 2017). This trend stems from passion research in psychology, where scholars developed valid and reliable passion scales and utilized quantitative tools, which act as models for entrepreneurship scholars. Consequently, entrepreneurship researchers replicate these psychological models while adopting a quantitative approach. Therefore, we adopted the previously available measures as our objective was to identify the factors that trigger ObEP and its impact on well-being. We used self-administered questionnaires, which consisted of 52 seven-point Likert scale questions, to collect data from 218 entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. The partial least square (PLS) structural equation modelling technique was performed using Smart PLS 4 software to analyse the data.

The results obtained from the first study, particularly the negative effect of ObEP on well-being, motivated us to begin our second research question, which focuses on how ObEP shapes well-being by identifying the dynamic psychological process between ObEP and its well-being outcomes. Although our first study suggested that ObEP could be harmful, recent research shows mixed effects on well-being, with both positive and negative consequences. Specifically, the effects of ObEP on well-being are still inconclusive and subject to debate, underscoring the importance of additional research to fully comprehend how ObEP shapes well-being in the entrepreneurial context (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022). Thus, we identified qualitative research design as the potential approach to derive new knowledge inductively by revealing the dynamic psychological process that explains how ObPEs experience both positive and adverse well-being outcomes simultaneously. We adopt an inductive theory-building approach to conduct a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 30 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka. We used continuous comparison techniques and open-coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1998) to analyse the data while developing and expanding the theory.

The third study, a conceptual model, reflects a pragmatic approach by synthesizing findings from previous literature to deliver actionable strategies to solve problems (Weick, 1995). Conceptual papers typically adopt a problem-focused approach, seek to bridge existing theories in interesting ways, link work across disciplines, provide multi-level insights and broaden the scope of our thinking (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015). While the findings of the quantitative study highlight that ObEP is detrimental to well-being, the qualitative study highlighted that ObPEs are not victims of their own passions. Instead, they can employ strategies to tackle their ObEP and its adverse outcomes. As such, we used a conceptual approach in our third study since it allows for integrating insights from our quantitative and qualitative studies to develop a conceptual framework explaining how entrepreneurs can manage and regulate their obsessive passion using approach and avoidance-based strategies.

A comprehensive overview of the collected data and the study types used to address the research questions is provided in Table 1.1. This thesis draws upon two distinct and original datasets, each serving a unique purpose: a quantitative data set and a qualitative dataset. Detailed descriptions of each study, including design choices and sample characteristics, can be found in the corresponding chapters of this thesis.

Table 1.1. Overview of methodological approaches, data, and major contributions

	Study I	Study II	Study III
Title	The emergence of obsessive entrepreneurial passion and its influence on entrepreneurial well-being	The two faces of obsessive passion: The dynamic psychological process between obsessive entrepreneurial passion and well-being	Taming the fire: A dynamic model of coping strategies to regulate obsessive passion and shape entrepreneurial well-being
Core concepts	Affective entrepreneurial commitment, perceived competitive pressure, ObEP, subjective and psychological well-being	ObEP, cognitive self-evaluation, discrepancies and conflicts, entrepreneurial well-being outcomes	ObEP, threat and challenge appraisal, approach and avoidance coping, regulation of ObEP
Type of research	Quantitative study	Qualitative study	Conceptual development
Data	Self-administered questionnaires filled out by 218 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka	Semi-structured interviews with 30 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka	Not applicable
Analytical procedure	Structural equation modelling using SmartPLS 4	Manual thematic content analysis while organizing data using QSR NVIVO 14	Not applicable
Major Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers of obsessive passion, which reflects the self and social aspects of identity consideration • The dark side of entrepreneurial passion by highlighting the negative consequences of ObEP on well-being • Mediation role of ObEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychological process between ObEP and well-being • The vicious cycle of ObEP • Advancement of self-discrepancy theory • Individual and collective strategies to handle adverse discrepancies and conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal methods of ObPEs during stressful situations • Coping strategies to deal with adverse outcomes of ObEP • Regulation of ObEP and its impact on entrepreneurial well-being

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured around a series of articles and comprises five chapters. In Chapter 1, we present the background of the study and the overarching theoretical framework that ties together the individual studies of this thesis by explaining the overall research problems, aims, and relevant research questions. The next three chapters include the articles presented in the format of research papers ready for publication. In Chapter 2, we discuss the emergence of ObEP and its impact on well-being outcomes. In Chapter 3, we explain the dynamic psychological process between ObEP and well-being outcomes. In Chapter 4, we focus on how ObPEs employ different strategies to regulate their ObEP and shape their entrepreneurial well-being. We summarize the main findings of this thesis in Chapter 5 and put them into context by developing an overview of the findings from the three research papers, in addition to discussing their contributions and the future research directions they offer.

1.6 Ethical Approval

We involve the participation of human subjects in collecting the primary data for this research. Thus, we obtained ethical approval from the Waikato Management School Human Research Ethics Committee to conduct this study (Appendix 1).

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Chapter 2 The Emergence of Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion and its Influence on Entrepreneurial Well-being

Abstract

Experiencing intense positive emotions can paradoxically lead to obsessive entrepreneurial passion, an uncontrollable form of passion negatively associated with well-being. However, little is known about the drivers and implications of this form of passion. As entrepreneurial passion emerges from internal and external pressures, we suggest affective entrepreneurial commitment and perceived competitive pressure as two potential drivers of obsessive entrepreneurial passion. Findings reveal that both drivers can fuel obsessive entrepreneurial passion, which negatively mediates the relationship between affective entrepreneurial commitment and subjective and psychological well-being, as well as the relationship between perceived competitive pressure and both types of entrepreneurial well-being. Our findings elucidate the emergence of obsessive entrepreneurial passion that goes beyond the effect of this emotion on venture performance by uncovering its “dark side” for entrepreneurial well-being.

Keywords: Obsessive entrepreneurial passion, affective entrepreneurial commitment, perceived competitive pressure, subjective well-being, psychological well-being

2.1 Introduction

Entrepreneurs often embark on an emotionally demanding journey that requires continuous hard work in an uncertain environment. During this process, they typically develop an emotional bond (Lahti et al., 2019) and blind love toward their business venture (Branzei & Zietsma, 2003). The value and emotional significance associated with venture ownership enable them to identify as entrepreneurs in society (Murnieks et al., 2014). While acknowledging the functional outcomes of emotional attachment to a venture, the accompanying intensity of this attachment can also lead to *obsessive entrepreneurial passion* (ObEP), an intensely positive emotion for engaging in entrepreneurial activities with a hard-to-control nature (Ho & Pollack, 2014). As entrepreneurs passionately engage in their business activities with heightened intensity, this process can change the nature of their self-identity in a rigid manner where they feel pressured to become even more involved in the business (Ho & Pollack, 2014; Stroe et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003). While the identity-related drivers of entrepreneurial passion in general are now well established (Murnieks et al., 2020), entrepreneurial passion is neither fully internally developed nor externally (socially) induced (Stenholm & Nielsen, 2019).

To capture these internal and social forces that fuel the entrepreneurial passion, we employed two constructs that could potentially explain the emergence of ObEP and its links to entrepreneurial well-being (i.e., subjective and psychological well-being): *Affective entrepreneurial commitment* (AEC) and *Perceived competitive pressure* (PCP). AEC refers to an entrepreneur's emotional attachment to a venture, representing a core aspect of that individual's deep structural identity (Meyer et al., 2006), which can lead to personal and social costs if that identity is compromised (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Although the entrepreneur's strong emotional commitment toward their business venture may provide a logical basis for the intensification of ObEP and its impact on outcomes, this proposition still needs empirical

support (Murnieks et al., 2020). We adopt AEC as a potential antecedent of ObEP since both constructs focus on the entrepreneur's positive affective bond with their business (Han et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 1993; Vallerand et al., 2003) and having commitment and passion toward their business endeavour gives meaning to their self-identification (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Vallerand et al., 2003). Therefore, linking AEC to entrepreneurial passion may provide a more insightful explanation for the emergence of ObEP and its influence on well-being compared to other individual-level constructs. Similarly, PCP refers to the degree to which the owner perceives competition in the business industry (Lertwongsatien & Wongpinunwatana, 2003). We selected this construct as a potential trigger of ObEP since it involves a social consideration of identity. Indeed, the behaviour of entrepreneurs is shaped by how they perceive themselves in relation to others (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011). In addition, how others view entrepreneurs is also argued to influence their motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Murnieks et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs may passionately engage in entrepreneurial pursuits in a bid to gain favourable societal affirmation by building a positive identity where they outperform their competitors. Thus, competitive pressure is a form of social pressure that may also determine the level of entrepreneurial passion, which, in turn, may result in favourable and unfavourable consequences for entrepreneurs. Based on these premises, our first research question is: *What impact do affective entrepreneurial commitment and perceived competitive pressure have on obsessive entrepreneurial passion?*

At present, research on the outcomes of ObEP remains inconclusive. While ObEP has been associated with negative affect and psychological ill-being (Bredehorst et al., 2024; Streeb et al., 2023), recent studies have linked it to positive outcomes (Lafrenière et al., 2012; Streeb, 2024). Our second research question is thus: *How does ObEP affect subjective and psychological aspects of entrepreneurial well-being?*

We use structural equation modelling to examine the impact of internal and social pressure on ObEP and subjective and psychological entrepreneurial well-being with 218 entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. Results reveal that affectively committed entrepreneurs experience improved subjective and psychological well-being since commitment helps them to identify as venture owners. However, ObEP negatively and partially mediates this relationship. When entrepreneurs are affectively committed to their business, the inner pressure caused by the emotional attachment to gain an entrepreneurial identity will likely result in ObEP and negatively impact entrepreneurial well-being. Similarly, we discovered that PCP also fuels ObEP, resulting in negative subjective and psychological well-being due to the negative full mediation effect of ObEP. Entrepreneurs may experience anxiety and distress if they fail to conform to their socially prescribed identity (Burke & Reitez, 1991). Thus, PCP places a greater burden on entrepreneurs as they need to work hard to sustain their image in the market (Mia & Clarke, 1999; Wei et al., 2015). As such, entrepreneurs may become obsessively passionate about their business activities to outperform their rivals. Their unwillingness to withdraw from business activities (Vallerand et al., 2003) may then lead to adverse well-being issues.

Our study contributes to the entrepreneurship literature in three ways. Our core contribution is to add nuance to the understanding of ObEP and its development. We address the call to uncover the antecedents of ObEP (Stenseng et al., 2015; Murnieks et al., 2020) by emphasizing that the positive feelings emerging from AEC and the stress developed through PCP can fuel ObEP. As such, we contribute to the existing literature by suggesting that passion can be driven by internal and social pressures on individuals to participate in entrepreneurial endeavours. Second, we address Shepherd's (2019) call to examine the dark side of entrepreneurship by focusing on the negative side of entrepreneurial passion, which is mainly linked with positive outcomes in prior studies (Cardon et al., 2009; Newman et al., 2019). We reveal that entrepreneurial passion is not always productive and, instead, may impair both types of

entrepreneurial well-being. This finding signals to entrepreneurs the importance of managing the level and valence of their entrepreneurial passion. Third, we focus on the role of ObEP as a mediator of the relationship between internal and social pressures to engage in business activities and both types of entrepreneurial well-being. We highlight that although AEC can result in enhanced well-being (Meyer & Maltin, 2010), the rigid nature of ObEP can impair these positive impacts, resulting in poor entrepreneurial well-being. Furthermore, in driving entrepreneurs to excessively focus on their business, ObEP may also offer an explanation for why poor entrepreneurial well-being arises from PCP.

2.2 Literature Review

Research on passion in entrepreneurship has been dominated by two frameworks put forward by Cardon et al. (2009) and Vallerand et al. (2003), respectively. Cardon's framework analyzes passion for specific entrepreneurial activities (i.e., passion for inventing, developing, and founding), which offers meaningful identity to entrepreneurs, while Vallerand's *Dualistic Model of Passion* (DMP) takes a global assessment of passion. While we adopt the identity component of entrepreneurial passion as defined by Cardon, our study primarily builds on the DMP since it considers both positive and negative forms of passion. This unique combination allows us to go beyond passion as a solely positive feeling toward a business while integrating essential identity aspects (Leitch & Harrison, 2016). The DMP classifies passion as harmonious or obsessive based on how individuals internalize the activities into their self-identities. Harmonious passion is derived from an autonomous internalization of the activity into the person's identity. In contrast, obsessive passion emerges when individuals have an intense desire to engage in an activity and cannot control their inclination toward this activity, sometimes to the point of dependence. Thus, obsessively passionate individuals internalize an activity into their identity in a controlled manner, causing detrimental effects on their lives (Vallerand et al., 2003).

2.2.1 Entrepreneurial Identity

Passion is viewed as a self-contained internal force that assists individuals in engaging in activities that give them meaningful identity (Cardon et al., 2009). As such, identity plays a critical role in the development of passion. An entrepreneurial identity is a “cognitive schema” that sets out what it means to be an entrepreneur (Shepherd & Haynie 2009). The meanings of these identities are derived from social roles attributed to individuals by society based on the expected behaviours attached to each role (e.g., entrepreneur, father, community leader). Thus, consideration of self and society plays an essential role in determining an individual’s passion. Notably, people with an obsessive passion seem to derive a higher sense of identity from their activity than people with a harmonious passion (Mageau et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2003). The dualistic model of passion suggests that obsessive passion emerges when people experience pressure from internal and external factors to engage in beloved activities (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Houliort, 2019) since this pressure leads individuals to persist with the activity to protect their self-identity. As a result, entrepreneurs develop ego-invested structures such that their self-worth becomes dependent upon engaging and performing well in the activity associated with their identities (Bouizegarene et al., 2018; Hodgins & Knee, 2002). They feel compelled to engage in entrepreneurial activities for fear of losing their identity as well-performing entrepreneurs (Murnieks et al., 2020). When this engagement becomes compulsive, their entrepreneurial well-being may be harmed.

Thus, using an identity theory lens, we examine AEC and PCP as two potential drivers of ObEP and investigate their impact on entrepreneurial well-being. Although prior studies have identified a few drivers of ObEP, such as affective inter-personal commitment (Murnieks et al., 2020), negative affectivity (Gülbahar & Özkan, 2023), role overload (Stroe et al., 2018), and job fit (de Mol et al., 2018), we aim to investigate ObEP by focusing on both internal and social considerations of passion. Scholars who use identity concepts to explain the emergence of

passion mainly view passion as an inner drive, yet social considerations also shape passion and need more empirical support (Murnieks et al., 2020). Thus, we examine the emergence of ObEP that assumes pressure from self and others (competitors) will play an important role in fuelling the fire of ObEP that, in turn, impacts well-being. The following section explains the reason for choosing AEC and PCP as the potential drivers of ObEP and the argument pertaining to the proposed hypotheses.

2.2.2 Affective Entrepreneurial Commitment and Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion

An internal perspective on entrepreneurial passion focuses on factors internal to entrepreneurs that lead to engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Gardner et al., 2021; Iso-Ahola, 1995). Accordingly, AEC is an inner sense that reflects the entrepreneur's emotional attachment to the venture and the relative strength of self-identification obtained by being involved with that venture (Tang, 2008). Identity theorists view commitment as a component of the individuals' identification because commitment to a specific role imparts them with a stable set of self-meanings (Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Entrepreneurs are emotionally committed to engaging in related entrepreneurial activities (Tasnim & Singh, 2016) because the willingness to be attached to the business is associated with the individual's deep structural identity (Meyer et al., 2006). Similarly, we assume that affectively committed entrepreneurs may highly value their entrepreneurial role since it defines their identity. This may result in intrapersonal pressure to be obsessively passionate about their business as they will spend much time and energy to be affirmed as successful entrepreneurs. Murnieks et al. (2020), who call for further empirical work in this regard, also suggest that affective organizational commitment may fuel the passion of entrepreneurs, owing to their strong ties toward their firms. Although prior studies argue that affective commitment in an organizational context can drive passion toward a job (Tasnim, 2014), we believe intense affective commitment is likely to induce ObEP because the emotional attachment to their business is so compelling, if not uncontrollable. Both AEC and ObEP

constructs emphasize the entrepreneurs' emotional connection with their business (Han et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 1993; Vallerand et al., 2003), offering an enhanced understanding of an entrepreneur's self-identity (Burke & Reitzes, 1991; Vallerand et al., 2003). Therefore, linking AEC with ObEP passion will offer a more relevant explanation for the emergence of ObEP and its influence on well-being. Accordingly, we hypothesize as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Affective entrepreneurial commitment positively influences obsessive entrepreneurial passion.

2.2.3 Perceived Competitive Pressure and Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion

While internal pressure created through AEC can increase ObEP, the societal perspective of entrepreneurial passion focuses on the social pressures that push entrepreneurs to engage in entrepreneurial activities intensely (Mageau et al., 2009). Prior studies highlight that the pathways toward entrepreneurial passion that comprise identity elements related to social considerations have yet to be fully uncovered (Murnieks et al., 2020). The perceived pressure from extreme market competition may also push entrepreneurs to intensively engage in entrepreneurial activities (Moreira et al., 2020). Competitive pressure is the degree of competition within the business's industry (Lertwongsatien & Wongpinunwatana, 2003), and we consider the entrepreneur's *perceived* level of competitive pressure. This is because the effects of competitive pressure depend largely on the entrepreneur's awareness of rival moves and their motivation to respond to them; entrepreneurs unaware of rival actions cannot perceive a need to respond to those actions (Chen & Miller, 1994; Zucchini & Kretschmer, 2011). By responding to PCP, entrepreneurs distinguish themselves and gain an identity as well-performing entrepreneurs in their industry (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). Identity theory also emphasizes that considering others' viewpoints and reactions to oneself can influence motivation (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Entrepreneurs are motivated to think and act differently

from rivals to gain a competitive edge (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). As such, entrepreneurs may behave rashly when engaging in business activities to preserve their identity (Tu et al., 2022). Recent work on entrepreneurial passion highlights rivalry and revenge as external sources of passion in forming a new venture (Bolinger & Bolinger 2019). However, the authors did not specify the type of passion that emerged from fierce competition. We assume that PCP can drive obsessive passion by creating pressure to engage in entrepreneurial activities because failure to defeat competitors may harm the entrepreneur's identity. Accordingly, we hypothesize as follows:

***Hypothesis 2:** Perceived competitive pressure positively influences obsessive entrepreneurial passion.*

2.2.4 Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial Well-being

Entrepreneurial well-being can be viewed as a combination of positive affect, satisfaction, absence of negative affect, and psychological functioning concerning entrepreneurial activities (Wiklund et al., 2019). Extant literature identifies two types of well-being: subjective well-being and psychological well-being. Subjective (or hedonic) well-being is a self-reported measure of one's life quality in terms of satisfaction and balance with positive and negative affect. Conversely, psychological (or eudaimonic) well-being is a perception of one's engagement with the existential challenges of life (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff, 1989). Subjective well-being includes a cognitive component, such as one's satisfaction with life, and affective components. Affective components include the presence of positive emotions (e.g., joy, happiness, excitement) and the absence of negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, anxiety) (Diener et al., 1999; Fredrickson, 2009; Seligman, 2002). Psychological well-being comprises autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, personal relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Keyes et al., 2002). We consider both aspects of well-

being due to their relevance for entrepreneurs since they reflect commonly experienced issues among this population and are interrelated with entrepreneurial passion.

Extant literature indicates entrepreneurs often experience elevated subjective and psychological well-being compared to paid employees (Hessels et al., 2018; Nikolaev et al., 2020; Millán et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2020). However, entrepreneurial work is highly demanding and more stressful than waged work due to the unique challenges and complexities (Cardon & Patel, 2015) of entrepreneurship, which may harm the well-being of entrepreneurs (Wach et al., 2020). Empirical studies have consistently argued that harmonious passion positively predicts subjective and psychological well-being (e.g., Curran et al., 2015; Rousseau & Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2007; Vallerand et al., 2008). Yet, findings on the impact of obsessive passion on entrepreneurial well-being have not been as clear (Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2019).

ObEP could benefit businesses by improving entrepreneurial persistence, performance, and growth (Fisher, 2011; Klaukien et al., 2013). In the organizational context, obsessive passion has also been found to have a positive link with employees' job satisfaction (Burke et al., 2015). However, when entrepreneurs become passionate, they are likely to become more defensive and rigid, which may prevent them from experiencing positive affect, leading to heightened feelings of negativity (Vallerand, 2015). Due to the rigid nature of obsessive passion, entrepreneurs may worry and become frustrated if they cannot engage in entrepreneurial activities or if these activities conflict with other roles (Vallerand, 2015). When these negative emotions and conflicts escalate, entrepreneurs may eventually experience poor life satisfaction (an element of subjective well-being).

Similarly, ObEP may also influence the psychological well-being of entrepreneurs. Extant studies highlight mixed findings between obsessive passion and dimensions of psychological well-being. A rigid and defensive style of ObEP may lead to self-closure from intrapersonal

and interpersonal experiences (Aron et al., 1992) and a poor integrative experience during task engagement (Hodgins and Knee, 2002). Further, ObPEs may risk losing their close others owing to their devotion to their business, which harms their relationship quality (Philippe et al., 2010). Although obsessive passion positively correlates with entrepreneurial performance (Fisher et al., 2018), it leads to less than optimal functioning within the confines of the passionate activity because of the lack of flexibility that it entails, culminating in reduced self-growth overall in the person's life outside of the passionate activity (Vallerand & Rapaport, 2017). Similarly, ObPEs experience poor autonomy even though entrepreneurs are commonly identified as autonomous individuals (Vallerand, 2012). This is because ObPEs can find themselves experiencing an intense desire to partake in the business activity they view as important and enjoyable. In this scenario, the passion for business can be framed as dominating the entrepreneurs.

While it would be reasonable to assume that the intense attachment of entrepreneurs to their businesses may damage their subjective and psychological well-being, the literature is more nuanced. Despite the negative impact of obsessive passion on psychological well-being, this intense emotion is regarded as a positive predictor of the individual's purpose in life, which is one of the key dimensions of psychological well-being (Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2019). Entrepreneurs can have a greater sense of purpose in life since engaging in an activity about which they are greatly passionate excites them (Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2019). Obsessive passion has also been found to have a positive link with subjective vitality (an aspect of psychological well-being) in a highly competitive environment (Li, 2010). ObPEs also seek self-affirmation that they are doing well without realizing the negative consequences of extreme passion (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022). We argue that when ObPEs intensively engage in business to preserve their entrepreneurial identity, they may struggle to balance their business and personal life, potentially resulting in social loneliness and increased mental strain.

While obsessive passion may drive entrepreneurs to achieve their business goals, this comes at the cost of having non-business goals fall by the wayside (Mageau et al., 2009). Thus, even if obsessive passion may produce some positive outcomes, we believe that it has the capacity to erode both types of entrepreneurial well-being. Accordingly, we test the following hypothesis:

***Hypothesis 3a:** Obsessive entrepreneurial passion negatively influences subjective entrepreneurial well-being.*

***Hypothesis 3b:** Obsessive entrepreneurial passion negatively influences psychological entrepreneurial well-being.*

2.2.5 The Mediating Role of Obsessive Passion between Affective Entrepreneurial Commitment and Entrepreneurial Well-being

It is possible for affectively committed entrepreneurs to feel that their self-concept (identity) becomes meaningless when they believe they are not directly defined in relation to their business venture (Meyer et al., 2006). AEC reflects the strong commitment and the emotional repercussions if the entrepreneurial identity is compromised (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Affectively committed entrepreneurs may feel satisfaction, comfort, and good psychological functioning when their identity is enacted (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Outside entrepreneurial contexts, empirical studies in organizational psychology support a negative link between work commitment on the one hand and job stress (Yeh et al., 2007) and burnout (Miller et al., 1990; Reilly, 1994) on the other. Maltin (2006) reports that occupational affective commitment negatively impacts role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion while positively impacting happiness and life satisfaction. These findings signal that affectively committed entrepreneurs may experience increased subjective well-being. Similarly, employees who are committed to their organizations out of a sense of emotional attachment are likely to experience more engagement, vitality, personal expressiveness, and professional efficacy (elements of

eudaimonic well-being) than employees who are not committed in this way (Maltin, 2011). Accordingly, we posit that AEC will positively influence both aspects of entrepreneurial well-being.

While AEC drives entrepreneurial well-being, we posit that ObEP could negatively mediate the positive relationship between these two constructs. Indeed, an entrepreneur with a high level of AEC may not feel the need to withdraw from their entrepreneurial activities even in difficult times due to their emotional attachment to the venture. Shepherd et al. (2011) suggest that affective commitment to an organization determines the individual's ability to continue with their project even during project failure. Thus, higher AEC may cause entrepreneurs to feel compelled or obligated to continue engaging in their entrepreneurial activities, which may eventually reduce entrepreneurial well-being. Entrepreneurs who are affectively committed to their venture can experience the excitement of being involved in the activities of their venture and achieving the goals associated with their venture (Sharma & Irving, 2005). However, obsessive passion may emerge when this excitement overwhelms the entrepreneur, potentially dampening the positive relationship between AEC and entrepreneurial well-being. Hence, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4a: *Obsessive entrepreneurial passion negatively mediates the relationship between affective entrepreneurial commitment and subjective entrepreneurial well-being.*

Hypothesis 4b: *Obsessive entrepreneurial passion negatively mediates the relationship between affective entrepreneurial commitment and psychological entrepreneurial well-being.*

2.2.6 The Mediating Role of Obsessive Passion Between Perceived Competitive Pressure and Entrepreneurial Well-being

Entrepreneurs distinguish themselves and build a positive identity in their industries by responding to competitive pressure (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). Competitive pressure experienced by entrepreneurs is one of the challenge stressors identified by Rauch et al. (2007), which triggers entrepreneurs to develop and improve their potential by providing positive feedback that their business is running well, in turn increasing eudaimonic (psychological) well-being (Ryff, 2019). Recent studies, however, show that leaders in organizations are under increasing pressure because of the growing competitiveness and complexity of the global economy (Roche et al., 2014), which affects their well-being (Nielsen & Daniels, 2012). Entrepreneurs may experience anxiety and distress if they fail to perform well, as their entrepreneurial identities are at stake (Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Thus, they may view competitive pressure as challenging their distinctive identity (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). Although competitive pressure triggers entrepreneurs to engage in more innovative and explorative actions (Abebe & Angriawan, 2014), the intense competition and task requirements associated with entrepreneurship may make entrepreneurs vulnerable to stress-related issues such as strain and reduced satisfaction (Rauch et al., 2007). The increased pressure to outcompete rivals may negatively influence subjective and psychological entrepreneurial well-being.

Further, ObEP can be seen as a potential mediator of the relationship between PCP and entrepreneurial well-being. ObPEs may feel compelled to engage in entrepreneurial activities when the venture is successful to affirm their egos (Vallerand & Verner-Filion, 2013; Murnieks et al., 2020). As a result, entrepreneurs are pressured to perform as prescribed by prevailing identity standards and to outcompete relevant competitors (Vallerand & Houliort, 2019). Navigating a highly competitive and stressful environment, however, may elicit maladaptive

behavioural manifestations of obsessive passion, such as avoiding failure at all costs and beating others to protect one’s ego (Sheard & Golby, 2009). ObPEs may feel compelled to devote most of their time, effort, and other resources to their venture in order to stay competitive. This may result in negative affective outcomes, reduced life satisfaction, and poor psychological functioning. Although the negative relationship between PCP and entrepreneurial well-being is consistent with previous research (Bakker et al., 2009; Rauch et al., 2007), we argue that obsessive passion may be the reason for this negative impact. Our study sets out to confirm this relationship by hypothesizing:

Hypothesis 5a: *Obsessive entrepreneurial passion negatively mediates the relationship between perceived competitive pressure and subjective entrepreneurial well-being.*

Hypothesis 5b: *Obsessive entrepreneurial passion negatively mediates the relationship between perceived competitive pressure and psychological entrepreneurial well-being.*

Figure 2.1 illustrates our proposed model.

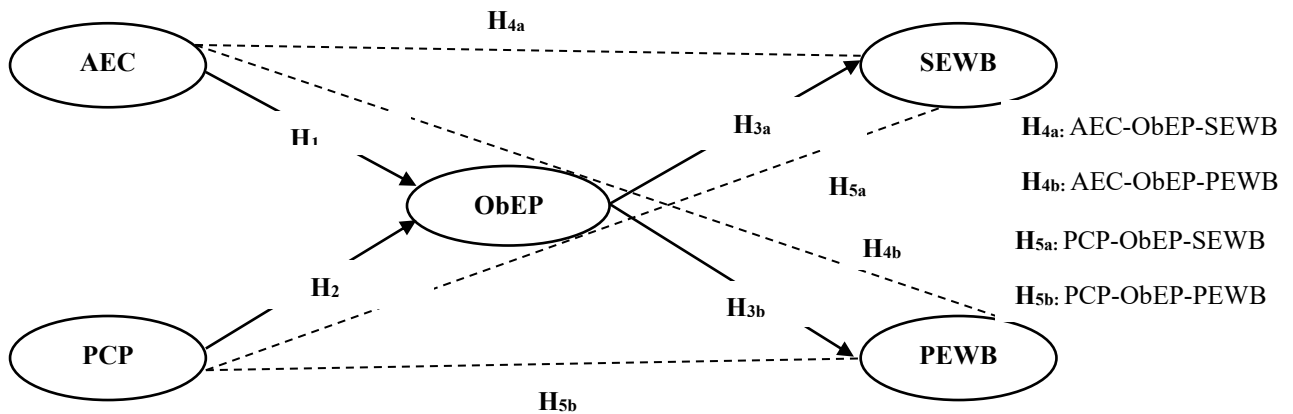


Figure 2.1. Proposed Structural Model

Notes: Age and gender are added as control variables into the model. Dashed lines represent relationships that are not included in the hypothesis development.

2.3 Data and Methodology

2.3.1 Sample and Data Collection

This study takes place in Sri Lanka, a developing country that has recently recognized entrepreneurship as a means to foster economic progress following a prolonged period of civil conflict and economic stagnation (Lin et al., 2013). In Sri Lanka, many entrepreneurs passionately engage in business activities (John-onwuegbu, 2020). Although passionate engagement in business is essential for success (Fisher et al., 2018), recent studies indicate that Sri Lankan entrepreneurs often put strain on their well-being. Working hard, committing to long working hours, and suffering from high stress levels are significant trends among these entrepreneurs (Haresankar et al., 2018; Kulatilaka, 2017) that potentially hinder their entrepreneurial well-being. A study of ObEP and its drivers and implications in this novel context will benefit scholars and practitioners by offering insight into the importance of managing entrepreneurial passion for success. Moreover, a study of ObEP in Sri Lanka has the added benefit of providing empirical evidence from a developing economy. Thus far, research on entrepreneurial passion has tended to focus on Western contexts, from which the findings are generalized to the entire entrepreneurial community (Fisher et al., 2018; Murnieks et al., 2020; Stroe et al., 2018). This study's focus on entrepreneurs within a developing economy offers an opportunity to test the generalizability of these prior findings and to understand ObEP within a specific cultural context.

We recruited individuals who had already begun business with the intent of making a profit (Kirzner, 1997) and who were still actively involved in entrepreneurial activities. As outlined by Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007), the entrepreneurial activities in which the individuals engaged had to be significant in shaping how the individuals saw themselves. As passion can fluctuate over short periods when entrepreneurs first start their ventures (Gielnik et al., 2017),

we limited our sample to entrepreneurs who had been active for at least three years. We used self-administered questionnaires to collect data through emails and face to face and contacted participants via multiple means, including universities that offer courses to entrepreneurs, Sri Lankan government authorities, and ministries. Prior works indicate that using multiple channels to approach entrepreneurs is more effective than relying on a single source as it helps to reach a broad range of entrepreneurs (Gielnik et al., 2015; Murnieks et al., 2020). We initially drafted the questionnaires in English and then worked with language and subject experts to professionally translate them into Sinhala and Tamil. This process followed the back-translation procedure recommended by Brislin (2000) to ensure accuracy and clarity. In addition, we conducted a pilot survey with five business faculty members and five entrepreneurs to identify and address potential issues in our questionnaire.

A total of 2,150 entrepreneurs were invited to participate in this study. Of the 482 who agreed to participate, 218 completed and returned the questionnaire. Using a sample size of 218 is deemed appropriate, as previous research in the field of entrepreneurial passion has also employed a comparable sample size, enabling us to achieve our desired level of statistical significance (e.g., Cardon & Kirk, 2015; Murnieks et al., 2020). Our sample comprised 81% males and 19% females, with an average age of 34 years old. This is representative of the demographic profile of entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka, which are predominantly males (Adikaram & Razik, 2023; Jayasinghe, 2016) and with an average age of between 30 and 40 years (International Labour Organization, 2023; Jayathilaka & Sachitra, 2020). Participants had an average of six years of experience in their current business, and 35% had completed secondary education, with 16% holding a bachelor's degree. A total of 46% of business owners had more than five employees. Although, on average, participants spent 40 hours a week on their business, 74% reported spending more than 40 hours at work. Our sample revealed that 80%

worked during their holidays, and 70% worked while sick. These characteristics indirectly signal that these entrepreneurs are highly committed and engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

2.3.2 Measures

2.3.2.a Independent Variables

Our conceptual framework consists of two independent variables (AEC and PCP). To assess AEC, we adopted the scale developed by Tang (2008) and extracted the four items related to affective commitment, which aligns with extant entrepreneurship studies (Indrawati et al., 2015). PCP was measured using a competitive intensity scale developed by Jaworski and Kohli (1993). We asked entrepreneurs about the extent to which they perceived that their industry has intense market competition. The original scale consists of six reflective items to measure the level of perceived competitors' behaviour, ability, and resources to differentiate their business activities. We removed two non-significant items to improve the internal consistency and validity of the scale (Hair et al., 2011).

2.3.2.b Mediating Variable

We measured the proposed mediating variable (ObEP) using the six reflective items from the passion scale by Vallerand et al. (2003), which has been validated by various studies in the entrepreneurial domain (Fisher et al., 2018; Stroe et al., 2018). The obsessive passion element of this binary passion scale can be used separately to investigate the obsessive aspect of entrepreneurial passion (Fu et al., 2022; Gülbahar & Özkan, 2023; Tu et al., 2023). This scale assesses the degree of entrepreneurs' desire and feelings to engage in entrepreneurial activities and their difficulties controlling their desire. Additionally, we assessed the extent to which entrepreneurs are passionate about their entrepreneurial activities to ensure that the sample does not contain any entrepreneurs who lacked passion. These items reflect the degree to which participants invest time in their entrepreneurial activity, consider it essential, value it, and view

it as a passion for them (Bélanger et al., 2013). The threshold to be considered passionate is typically above four on the seven-point Likert scale (Mageau et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2003). In our sample, all 218 participants were regarded as passionate entrepreneurs as they rated their passion above this threshold level.

2.3.2.c Dependent Variable

Entrepreneurial well-being is the dependent variable comprising two higher-order constructs: subjective entrepreneurial well-being and psychological entrepreneurial well-being. Subjective entrepreneurial well-being is reflective-formative-formative, wherein the first order has reflective indicators while the second and third order have formative dimensions. In reflective models, the indicators are affected by the underlying construct, whereas in formative models, the indicators define the construct (Hair et al., 2011). Psychological entrepreneurial well-being is reflective-formative: the first order has reflective indicators, while in the second order, the dimensions are formative. We adopted Wiklund and colleagues' (2019) definition to measure entrepreneurial well-being since they cover both subjective and psychological aspects of entrepreneurial well-being through three elements: positive and negative affect, satisfaction with business (subjective well-being), and psychological functioning (psychological well-being). All three scales used to measure the components of entrepreneurial well-being are widely accepted and used by researchers from various disciplines. We adopted nine items Nikolaev and colleagues (2020) used to capture positive and negative affect since this scale is validated in the entrepreneurial context.

We employed the satisfaction with life scale (Diener et al., 1985) to measure the degree to which our participants were satisfied with their business ventures. Although the scale was developed to measure people's conscious evaluation of their lives and is a cognitive appraisal of their well-being, studies from different disciplines have used it to weigh participant satisfaction with work, entrepreneurship (Sherman et al., 2016), sports (Vallerand et al., 2006),

and leisure (Stenseng et al., 2011). The third component of well-being was the entrepreneurs' psychological functioning. This was assessed using the eudaimonic well-being scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), comprising six sub-scales: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations, and self-acceptance. We removed seven non-significant items (one from the negative affect scale and six from the eudaimonic well-being scale) to enhance the internal consistency and validity of the scales (Hair et al., 2011).

2.3.2.d Control Variables

We included two demographic factors, age and gender, as control variables to explore the possible source of variations in our dependent variables that can contribute to the development of entrepreneurial passion (Murnieks et al., 2020) and well-being (Dijkhuizen et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2021). Table 2.1. provides the means, standard deviation, and correlations of variables.

Table 2.1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Matrix of Latent Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gender	0.19	0.39	1.00						
Age	34.19	10.28	-0.04	1.00					
AEC	4.35	0.65	-0.05	-0.1	1.00				
PCP	3.76	0.75	-0.01	-0.08	0.38***	1.00			
ObEP	4.15	1.35	-0.01	-0.16*	0.56***	0.45***	1.00		
SEWB	n/a	n/a	0.02	0.43***	-0.06	-0.16*	-0.31***	1.00	
PEWB	n/a	n/a	0.03	0.46***	-0.03	-0.15*	-0.20**	0.43***	1.00

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ (2-tailed) n= 218

2.3.3 Common Method Bias Consideration

As psychological indicators are notoriously difficult to measure or observe directly (Price et al., 2015), we relied on subjective indicators that are widely used and well-validated in various entrepreneurial studies (Akomea et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2022; Fisher et al., 2018; Indrawati et al., 2015; Nikolaev et al., 2020). However, using self-reported constructs and cross-sectional data may lead to bias in quantitative studies. Thus, we adopted both procedural and statistical

remedies. For the procedural remedies, we first designed the questions with different scale endpoints and counterbalanced the order of questions in the questionnaire (Podsakoff et al., 2003). During data collection, we assured respondents that the data would be kept confidential and anonymous. In addition, we emphasized there were no right or wrong answers (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Finally, we performed Harman's single-factor test. The results failed to reveal a single dominant unrotated principal component and did not produce a huge variance (Eigenvalue: 7.32, Cumulative variance: 19%), indicating that common method bias is not a significant issue with respect to our findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). For the statistical remedies, we followed the correlation matrix procedure, and the results did not show a large correlation ($r > 0.9$) among any of the principal constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2020) (Table 2.1.). In summary, the above remedies ensured that common method bias was unlikely to be present in our data and allowed us to begin testing our hypotheses.

2.4 Results

We investigated the interrelationship between AEC, PCP, ObEP, and subjective and psychological aspects of entrepreneurial well-being. The partial least square (PLS) structural equation modelling technique was performed using Smart PLS 4 software. We employed this technique to test our model since it facilitates complex models consisting of both formative and reflective constructs and requires a smaller sample size (at least 100) (do Valle 2016; Hair 2019). We first report the reliability and validity statistics of the reflective and formative constructs before assessing the structural model.

2.4.1 Reliability and Validity of Reflective Constructs

We adopted four complementary ways (Hair et al., 2011) to assess the reliability and validity of the reflective measures (i.e., AEC, PCP, ObEP, positive affect, negative affect, business satisfaction, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance). First, we calculated the composite reliability (CR) of the constructs, which is robust and comparable to Cronbach's alpha (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and should exceed the threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). The CR values of constructs in this study range from 0.71 to 0.93, indicating satisfactory to excellent internal consistency. Second, we analyzed the average variance extracted (AVE), which shows the amount of variance explained by the latent variable in relation to the observed variance due to measurement error (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values in this study are greater than the cut-off level of 0.5, indicating good convergent validity. Third, we evaluated the outer loadings to capture the individual item reliability, which should be above 0.7 or close. The outer loadings for nine reflective items were insignificant (less than 0.4) and were removed from the measurement model to improve the CR and AVE (Bagozzi et al., 1991; Hair et al., 2011). The factor loadings of the remaining reflective items indicate good reliability (see Table 2.2.). Fourth, we assessed the discriminant validity of the constructs using two criteria. The first approach, cross-loading, reveals that each item's loadings are higher on its respective construct than its loading on other constructs. The next approach is the Fornell-Larcker criterion, in which the square root of the AVE of each latent variable should exceed its correlation with other latent variables (see Table 2.3.). Both measures support the constructs' discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016).

Table 2.2. Reflective Construct Measurement Properties: Internal Reliability Tests

First-order constructs/Indicators	Factor loadings	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Affective Entrepreneurial Commitment (AEC)		0.88	0.65
AEC1-> AC	0.72		
AEC2-> AC	0.82		
AEC3-> AC	0.84		
AEC4-> AC	0.82		
Perceived Competitive Pressure (PCP)		0.80	0.51
PCP1-> PCP	0.66		
PCP2-> PCP	0.84		
PCP3-> PCP	0.66		
PCP5-> PCP	0.67		
Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion (ObEP)		0.88	0.55
ObEP_1> ObEP	0.66		
ObEP_2> ObEP	0.61		
ObEP_3> ObEP	0.71		
ObEP_4> ObEP	0.83		
ObEP_5> ObEP	0.85		
ObEP_6> ObEP	0.74		
Positive Affect (PA)		0.93	0.81
PA1->PA	0.91		
PA2->PA	0.90		
PA3->PA	0.89		
Negative Affect (NA)		0.90	0.63
NA1-> NA	0.80		
NA3-> NA	0.65		
NA4-> NA	0.86		
NA5-> NA	0.82		
NA6-> NA	0.83		
Business Satisfaction (BS)		0.86	0.56
BS1->BS	0.58		
BS2->BS	0.87		
BS3->BS	0.83		
BS4->BS	0.84		
BS5->BS	0.57		
Autonomy (AUT)		0.72	0.56
AUT1->AUT	0.76		
AUT2->AUT	0.73		
Environmental Mastery (EM)		0.74	0.60
EM1->EM	0.87		
EM3->EM	0.66		
Personal Growth (PG)		0.73	0.58
PG2->PG	0.66		
PG3->PG	0.85		

Positive Relations (PR)		0.88	0.78
PR1->PR	0.86		
PR3->PR	0.90		
Self-Actualization (SA)		0.73	0.58
SA1->SA	0.65		
SA3->SA	0.86		
Purpose in Life (PIL)		0.73	0.57
PIL1->PIL	0.76		
PIL2->PIL	0.75		

Table 2.3. Fornell and Larcker Criterion and Square Root of Average Variance Extracted

AEC	PCP	ObEP	PA	NA	BS	AUT	EM	PG	PIL	PR	SA
0.80											
0.39	0.71										
0.56	0.45	0.74									
-0.04	-0.12	-0.22	0.90								
-0.13	-0.28	-0.32	0.47	0.80							
0.00	-0.03	-0.18	0.34	0.15	0.75						
-0.05	-0.08	-0.15	0.12	0.13	0.07	0.75					
-0.07	-0.20	-0.22	-0.12	0.52	0.24	0.29	0.77				
0.12	-0.06	-0.05	0.10	0.22	0.07	0.12	0.41	0.76			
-0.01	-0.07	-0.06	0.00	0.16	0.09	-0.01	0.30	0.45	0.75		
0.00	-0.09	-0.16	0.28	0.39	0.09	0.00	0.41	0.26	0.27	0.88	
0.01	-0.10	-0.16	0.27	0.38	0.34	0.01	0.48	0.35	0.27	0.31	0.76

Note: The square root of AVE for the first-order constructs (in bold) is shown on the diagonal of the matrix; non-diagonal values show the correlations among the first-order constructs. n=218.

2.4.2 Reliability and Validity of Formative Constructs

The first endogenous variable, subjective entrepreneurial well-being, is the higher-order construct (reflective-formative-formative) composed of a second-order construct: positive and negative affect, and a first-order construct: business satisfaction. We measured positive and negative affect through first-order reflective constructs, namely, positive affect and negative affect. The next endogenous variable, psychological entrepreneurial well-being, is also a higher-order construct (reflective-formative) measured through six first-order reflective constructs: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. We assessed the indicator's outer weights, the significance of weights, and the multicollinearity of indicators to determine the reliability and validity of the formative

constructs (Table 2.4.) (Hair et al., 2019). Further, we followed the repeated indicator approach and inner factor weighting scheme through the PLS-SEM algorithm to estimate the higher-order latent variable. This approach is suggested for the reflective-formative models (Becker et al., 2012). First, we used bootstrapping to confirm the significance of weights and created subsamples up to 5000. The results show that the outer weights for all the formative items are significant ($t\text{-value} > 1.96$ and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$) and higher than the recommended weight for an indicator (> 0.1) (Lohmöller, 1989). Second, the multicollinearity among the formative constructs was evaluated by performing variance inflation factor (VIF) and ensured that the first-order and second-order constructs were not highly redundant in forming their next-level constructs. VIF values for all the sub-constructs were less than the threshold value of 3.0 (Hair et al., 2019) and strongly support the conceptualization of formative construct ‘entrepreneurial well-being’.

Table 2.4. Higher-Order Constructs (Subjective and Psychological Entrepreneurial Well-being) Measurement Properties: Outer Weights and Multicollinearity

Formative Constructs	Outer Weights	t-value	p-value	Collinearity (VIF)
Second-Order Constructs				
Positive and Negative Affect (PANA)				
PA-> PANA	0.59	18.31	0.00	1.28
NA->PANA	0.58	16.45	0.00	1.28
Psychological Entrepreneurial Well-being (PEWB)				
AUT->PEWB	0.17	5.84	0.00	1.15
EM->PEWB	0.35	14.03	0.00	1.58
PG->PEWB	0.22	10.30	0.00	1.44
PR->PEWB	0.25	10.71	0.00	1.27
SA->PEWB	0.30	13.90	0.00	1.38
PIL->PEWB	0.19	8.56	0.00	1.32
Third-Order Constructs				
Subjective Entrepreneurial Well-being (SEWB)				
PANA->SEWB	0.67	20.59	0.00	1.10
BS->SEWB	0.58	17.13	0.00	1.10

2.4.3 Test of Structural Model and Mediating Effects

Our measurement model reported appropriate reliability and validity, so we assessed the structural model to confirm our hypothesis. To evaluate the extent to which each predictive variable contributes to the explained variance of the endogenous variable and its relative significance, we estimated path coefficients, R^2 and p -values (at 0.001, 0.01, and 0.05 level) (Table 2.5). We added the participants' age and gender as the control variables into our model. Although age significantly predicted the variations in both types of well-being, gender did not reveal any significant results. This could be due to the fewer female participants in our sample, as male entrepreneurs constitute the vast majority of Sri Lanka's entrepreneurial population, with female participation comprising only 10% (Adikaram & Razik, 2023; Jayasinghe, 2016). We found that age predicted a positive relationship with both types of entrepreneurial well-being. Model 2 in Table 5 shows the results with the control variables. The PLS results for testing the predictive validity of constructs indicate that all five hypotheses are confirmed. We tested the path coefficients to determine the direct and indirect effects. First, we examined the direct relationship between ObEP and its antecedents. Accordingly, the results confirmed the first hypothesis: that AEP positively influences ObEP, as the direct effect of AEP on ObEP was positive and significant ($\beta=0.45$, $p=0.000$). Similarly, PCP was also found to be a key antecedent of ObEP as it depicted a significant positive direct effect ($\beta=0.27$, $p=0.000$).

Second, we tested the implications of ObEP on both aspects of entrepreneurial well-being (hypotheses 3a and 3b). We confirmed that ObEP negatively and significantly influences subjective entrepreneurial well-being ($\beta=-0.32$, $p=0.000$) and psychological entrepreneurial well-being ($\beta=-0.20$, $p=0.010$).

Third, we explored the mediation effect of ObEP on the relationship between its antecedents (AEC and PCP) and both aspects of entrepreneurial well-being. First, we checked the direct effect of AEC on subjective and psychological entrepreneurial well-being, respectively. Results revealed that AEP positively influences subjective entrepreneurial well-being

($\beta=0.18, p=0.007$) and psychological entrepreneurial well-being ($\beta=0.20, p=0.005$). We then checked the mediation effect to test our fourth hypothesis. The results revealed that ObEP shows partial negative mediating effects between AEC and both aspects of entrepreneurial well-being ($\beta=-0.14, p=0.000$ and $\beta=-0.10, p=0.017$). We repeated the same steps to test hypothesis five, and the results demonstrated the insignificant negative direct effect between PCP and both aspects of entrepreneurial well-being ($\beta= - 0.06, p=0.429$ and $\beta=-0.11, p=0.090$). However, we observed that ObEP fully mediates the above links, resulting in negative and significant indirect effects ($\beta=0.-0.10, p=0.003$ and $\beta=-0.05, p=0.022$).

Finally, we used a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure to estimate the coefficient of determination (R^2). From the PLS path model estimation diagram (Figure 2.2), we found the overall R^2 to be substantial for both endogenous constructs (Cohen, 1988, 1992), namely, subjective entrepreneurial well-being ($R^2 = 0.26, p=0.000$) and psychological entrepreneurial well-being ($R^2 = 0.27, p=0.000$). Further, our two antecedents, AEC and PCP, jointly explain 39% of the variance ($p=0.000$) of the endogenous constructs of obsessive passion, indicating that both antecedents have good predictive validity (Cohen, 1992; Hair et al., 2010). In addition, we assessed the curve-linear relationship between independent, dependent, and mediating variables. However, it did not yield significant results.

Table 2.5. Path Relationship of Latent Variables

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ (2-tailed) $n = 218$ $B =$ Beta Coefficient $SE =$ Standard Error

	Model 1		Model 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Direct Effects Between Latent Variables				
AEC- ObEP (<i>H1</i>)	0.46***	0.06	0.45***	0.06
PCP- ObEP (<i>H2</i>)	0.28***	0.05	0.27***	0.06
ObEP- SEWB (<i>H3a</i>)	-0.38***	0.07	-0.32***	0.07
ObEP- PEWB (<i>H3b</i>)	-0.26***	0.08	-0.2**	0.08
AEC- SEWB	0.18*	0.07	0.18**	0.07
AEC- PEWB	0.19*	0.08	0.20***	0.07
PCP- SEWB	-0.06	0.08	-0.06	0.07
PCP- PEWB	-0.12	0.07	-0.11	0.07
Age- ObEP			-0.09	0.06
Age – SEWB			0.39***	0.07
Age – PEWB			0.44***	0.06
Gender- ObEP			0.02	0.12
Gender – SEWB			0.10	0.16
Gender – PEWB			0.13	0.15
Indirect Effects (Mediation) Between Latent Variables				
AEC - ObEP - SEWB (<i>H4a</i>)	-0.17***	0.04	-0.14***	0.04
AEC - ObEP - PEWB (<i>H4b</i>)	-0.12***	0.04	-0.10**	0.04
PCP - ObEP - SEWB (<i>H5a</i>)	-0.11***	0.03	-0.10***	0.03
PCP - ObEP - PEWB (<i>H5b</i>)	-0.07***	0.03	-0.05*	0.02
R -Square				
Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion	0.39***	0.05	0.39***	0.05
Subjective Entrepreneurial Well-being	0.13**	0.04	0.26***	0.05
Psychological Entrepreneurial Well-being	0.10*	0.04	0.27***	0.06

Figure 2.2. shows the results of the path relationship after adding the control variables.

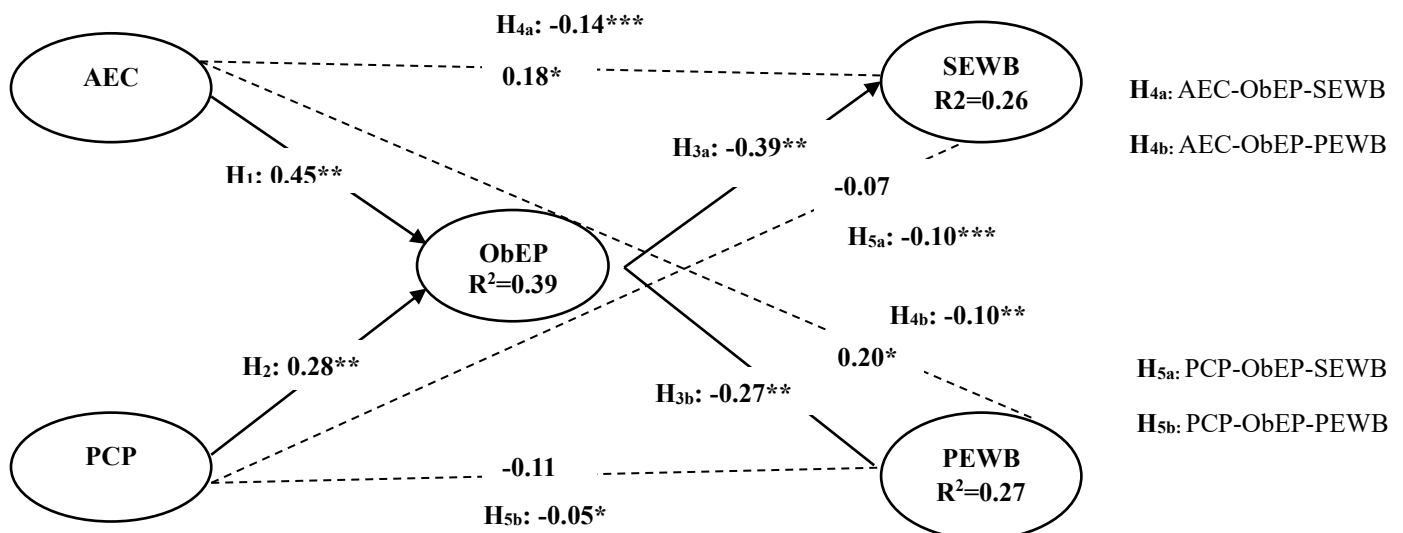


Figure 2.2. Structural Model

Notes: Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 5a, and 5b show the mediation effects between independent and dependent variables. Results are controlled for age and gender * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ (2-tailed)

2.5 Discussion

The contribution of this study is threefold. Our first and core contribution addresses a call to identify and examine the antecedents of entrepreneurial passion (Cardon et al., 2012; Murnieks et al., 2020). We do so by using the lens of identity theory, which draws to the heart of the origin of passion (Stenseng et al., 2015). The findings support that passion for entrepreneurial activities is not just a trait observed among entrepreneurs (Stroe et al., 2018). Instead, it is developed based on the pressure from internal and social factors to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This engagement supports entrepreneurs in maintaining their identity. In addition, we found AEC to be an internal factor that creates inner pressure to engage in entrepreneurial activities in order to protect their identity. Murnieks and colleagues (2020) proposed that affective interpersonal commitment could elicit ObEP since entrepreneurs want to protect their entrepreneurial identity. Similarly, AEC can also enhance ObEP for the same reason. A failure to conform to normative expectations in identity performance will influence one's self-concept (Stroe et al., 2018). Therefore, entrepreneurs will work hard to affirm their entrepreneurial identity, which may result in internal pressure to be obsessively passionate about their business. Prior work has argued that entrepreneurial passion is likely a determinant of AEC since it shapes individuals' desire to behave entrepreneurially and binds them to their goals (Tasnim & Singh, 2016). In contrast, we explain that entrepreneurs high in AEC will feel a positive affective state from being entrepreneurs, which drives them to be obsessive about their business.

We also uncovered a significant positive relationship between PCP and ObEP. In addition to supporting prior work where entrepreneurial passion is assumed to be generated from positive experiences (Cardon et al., 2009; Gielnik et al., 2015), we offer a more nuanced perspective on entrepreneurial passion by emphasizing that the stress developed through PCP can also fuel ObEP. ObPEs possess ego-invested identities (Vallerand et al., 2019), according to which their

identity is determined by how well they perform compared to competitors. This external pressure triggers them to engage in entrepreneurial activities obsessively to affirm their identity as successful entrepreneurs over their rivals. Our findings partially align with a recent study emphasizing that entrepreneurs are passionate about initiating or persisting in entrepreneurial ventures due to their rivalry or desire for revenge against others (Bolinger & Bolinger, 2019). However, we extend these works by explaining that PCP, due to the actions of rivals, will increase ObEP. Entrepreneurs are not engaging in entrepreneurial activities only because of pure self-drive; they also feel compelled to do so if they want to outperform competitors and continue to affirm their entrepreneurial identity. Future empirical endeavours could compare the link between PCP and different types of entrepreneurial passion to validate our findings.

The second contribution of our study is the revelation of the dark side of ObEP. While prior studies typically paint a positive picture of ObEP for entrepreneurs and their ventures (Fisher et al., 2018; Klaukien et al., 2013; Murnieks et al., 2016), we found that ObEPs likely suffer from subjective and psychological well-being issues. We found that ObEP leads to reduced subjective entrepreneurial well-being, such as negative affect and reduced business satisfaction. A possible explanation for this divergent result is that the prioritization of business-related activities over non-business activities may eventually consume entrepreneurs and create conflict with other non-entrepreneurial commitments (Bouizegarene et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003). Thus, negative affect and conflict resulting from ObEP can reduce subjective entrepreneurial well-being. Our findings align with studies highlighting ObEP's unfavourable impact on related measures of subjective entrepreneurial well-being, such as entrepreneurial burnout (de Mol et al., 2018) and poor work satisfaction (Thorgren & Wincent, 2013).

We also emphasize that ObEP can result in poor psychological entrepreneurial well-being. Although a few studies have highlighted the positive impact of obsessive passion on some dimensions of psychological well-being, such as a greater sense of purpose in life and

excitement (Yukhymenko-Lescroart & Sharma, 2019) and self-affirmation (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022), our findings point at reduced overall psychological entrepreneurial well-being. This contradiction may find its basis in the heavy investment of ObPEs in their ego-invested entrepreneurial identity and to devote themselves to their ventures to maintain their sense of self. Ultimately, the difficulty of simultaneously balancing business and personal commitments may result in social isolation and strain. In addition, intense engagement would let them achieve their business purpose at the cost of achieving non-business purposes as they prioritize passionate goals (Mageau et al., 2011). As the stakes may appear higher for obsessively passionate individuals (e.g., maintaining their identity and self-esteem, achieving business goals), the failure to realise them may have a more devastating psychological impact and represent a greater blow to their well-being. Our study effectively responds to calls for research on individual-level outcomes of ObEP, such as well-being (Thorgren & Wincent, 2015). To our knowledge, we are the first to explore ObEP with subjective and psychological components of entrepreneurial well-being in an entrepreneurial context. Our use of Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to find the direct and indirect impact of entrepreneurial passion on entrepreneurial well-being strengthens our findings further since it helps to test our theoretical framework from a causal predictive view and provides a path model that designates the relationship between constructs and indicators (Hair et al., 2019; Sander & The, 2014).

Our third contribution pertains to how internal and social pressures to engage in business activities lead to reduced entrepreneurial well-being through ObEP. We found that AEC positively influences entrepreneurial well-being, and ObEP mediates this relationship. Affectively committed entrepreneurs experience improved subjective and psychological well-being (e.g., Bridger et al., 2007; Grawitch et al., 2007; Meyer, 2014) since it consolidates their identity as venture owners. Taking part in entrepreneurial activities represents the realization

of one's potential through purposeful, authentic, and self-organized activities that can result in the fulfilment and full function of one's life (Shir et al., 2019). Thus, the positive feelings gained through engaging in entrepreneurial activities provide comfort and happiness, resulting in higher business satisfaction (an element of subjective entrepreneurial well-being) and enhanced psychological functioning (psychological entrepreneurial well-being). However, we found that the mediation effect of obsessive passion buffers the positive relationship since entrepreneurs internalize these entrepreneurial identities in a controlled manner (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The close emotional attachment to their ventures fuels an overwhelming desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities and occupy much space from their overall identity. Thus, obsessive passion is likely to come into conflict with other aspects and commitments of entrepreneurs' lives, resulting in reduced subjective and psychological entrepreneurial well-being.

In addition, we uncovered the mediation role of obsessive passion in the relationship between PCP and both types of entrepreneurial well-being. Perceptions of fierce market competition put more burden on entrepreneurs as they need to work hard to sustain their identity, which will negatively influence entrepreneurial well-being. Entrepreneurs may experience anxiety and distress if they fail to conform to socially prescribed identities (Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Comparing competitive status and reacting to competitive pressure cause entrepreneurs to feel frustration and emotional exhaustion during the entrepreneurial process (Williamson et al., 2022). Because entrepreneurs who perform well in the entrepreneurial role gain ego confirmation from their competitors, their business, and non-business associates (Murnieks et al., 2020), any threat to this identity poses a great risk. Contrary to expectations, this study did not support the above assumption due to the insignificant negative link between PCP and both types of entrepreneurial well-being, and future research is needed in this area.

Our study, however, found that ObEP fully mediates the relationship between PCP and subjective and psychological entrepreneurial well-being. This finding suggests that

entrepreneurs may not experience severe negative well-being when they perceive higher competitive pressure. Instead, they may view their competition as the factor that heightens their focus during work which, in turn, may spur efficiency and performance. However, when entrepreneurs fixate on their rivals, they may become obsessive about their business since this is enmeshed with their self-identity. Feelings of being outperformed by rivals are thus more than just being outdone in the market; one's identity is essentially threatened. Such ObPEs may then be unwilling to take breaks from their business activities, leading to adverse subjective and psychological entrepreneurial well-being issues. Although more competition is beneficial to business ecosystems by fostering innovative and proactive actions (Abebe & Angriawan, 2014), opening business opportunities, and improving the economic performance of countries (Stucke, 2013), our study pinpoints that, at the individual level, competition results in poor entrepreneurial well-being due to ObEP. Notably, entrepreneurs in developing economies such as Sri Lanka face intense competition, along with various economic and financial obstacles. The nation witnessed a striking increase of 18% in entrepreneurial businesses between 2023 and 2024 (Kandaramage, 2024). Compared to the previous years, the appreciation of the Rupee and the decline in commodity prices have intensified competition within several industries (Economynext, 2025). This intense competition can drive entrepreneurs to intensively engage in their business activities to surpass their competitors, often neglecting their personal well-being. Our finding provides insights that when entrepreneurs perceive market competition as a threat to their identity, they must act tactfully against it while controlling their intense emotions. Entrepreneurs who are unprepared to deal with the stress of the intense market competition may need to consider pursuing industries with less competition as a viable option.

2.6 Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

First, our study was designed based on cross-sectional data, which does not allow the analysis of how emotions such as passion and subsequent behaviours of entrepreneurs evolve over time (Jachimowicz, 2019). Common method variance is another typical issue that can arise when relying on self-reported data. However, we addressed this issue by taking some statistical and procedural remedies (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The sample in this study is drawn from the Sri Lankan context, representing a novel context for studying entrepreneurial passion but potentially limiting the generalizability of our findings. We thus call for future studies that could analyze the phenomena over time and in different countries. It would also be interesting to collect data from referred persons (e.g., family members, friends, and peers) instead of only focusing on entrepreneurs. This may serve to strengthen findings through data triangulation (Jack & Raturi, 2006) while minimizing common method biases (Chang et al., 2010).

The second limitation pertains to the validity of the scales used in this study. The scales used were well-recognized and had been carefully translated back and forth from their original languages. Yet, the translation of scales represents a potential threat to the validity of the present research (Heggstad et al., 2019). We encourage future researchers to replicate our findings by using other methods, such as experimental and observation research design, instead of relying on translated questionnaires. Moreover, we investigate only the antecedents of ObEP and its outcomes, as our primary motive is to contribute to the literature on the dark side of entrepreneurial passion. It would be interesting to know whether the antecedents shown herein will stimulate other forms of passion, namely harmonious passion or domain-related passion (passion for inventing, finding, and developing), and their impact on entrepreneurial well-being. Since different types of entrepreneurs experience distinct forms of entrepreneurial passion (Cardon et al., 2009), it may have varying effects on both entrepreneurial subjective and psychological well-being. As the nature of passion and its association with other factors

could vary based on the entrepreneurs' gender (Murnieks et al., 2020), future research can examine the role of gender/sex in developing obsessive passion and its effect on both types of entrepreneurial well-being. Finally, although more competition benefits business ecosystems, it can create negative implications at the individual level. We invite future researchers to examine how the impact of recommendations at the ecosystem level (e.g., to policymakers) to make the markets more competitive may lead to adverse effects at the individual level.

2.7 Conclusion

The emotions and emotional intensity of individuals can play decisive roles in one's well-being. ObEP is an intense emotion that can negatively impact entrepreneurs' lives. Given the limited focus on ObEP thus far, we argue for the importance of exploring the drivers of obsessive passion and its implications on entrepreneurial well-being. We draw on identity theory to explain why entrepreneurs are often obsessively passionate about their business activities despite their negative consequences. Our study highlights that entrepreneurs become obsessively passionate about business activities due to internal and social pressure. We found that this pressure can come from an urge to be involved in entrepreneurial activities, such as AEC, and stress developed through PCP. Both factors fuel obsessive passion and negatively impact entrepreneurs' subjective and psychological well-being. These findings have the potential to benefit entrepreneurs, as knowing the drivers of obsessive passion would inform them of its negative implications and possibly lead to entrepreneurs taking action to regulate the factors that stimulate it.

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Chapter 3 The Two Faces of Obsessive Passion: The Dynamic Psychological Process Between Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion and Well-being

Abstract

Experiencing obsessive entrepreneurial passion can simultaneously bring functional and dysfunctional well-being outcomes to entrepreneurs. However, why such passion generates these mixed findings in an entrepreneurial context remains unclear. As obsessively passionate entrepreneurs place heightened importance on their self-worth, they tend to cognitively evaluate themselves and verify their self-worth, paying attention to their own perspectives and those close to them. Thus, such cognitive self-evaluation of entrepreneurs can explain the underlying psychological process between obsessive entrepreneurial passion and well-being outcomes. We conducted a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 30 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka to study this phenomenon. Our results introduce a dynamic process model explaining how the cognitive self-evaluation of ObPEs results in different well-being outcomes due to experienced discrepancies and conflicts. Our model portrays four phases: the emergence of ObEP, cognitive evaluation of the self, feelings of self-discrepancies and conflicts, and well-being outcomes. We highlight that ObPEs can experience different discrepancies due to their negative and positive self-evaluation. While positive self-evaluation contributes to improved well-being, negative self-evaluation may lead to a vicious cycle of obsessive passion, causing adverse discrepancies and conflicts within oneself and with others, resulting in poor well-being. In addition, we highlight how the discrepancies and conflicts experienced by entrepreneurs motivate them to strategically address the adverse outcomes of passion.

Keywords: Obsessive entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial well-being outcomes, cognitive self-evaluation, discrepancies and conflicts

3.1 Introduction

Well-being is an integral part of entrepreneurs' lives as it enables them to effectively overcome challenges while achieving what they want out of life (Williamson et al., 2021). It is also vital for their ventures' success, which requires paying attention to the strength of their physical and mental health (Stephan, 2018). Entrepreneurial well-being is a combination of positive affect, satisfaction, absence of negative affect, and psychological functioning concerning entrepreneurial activities (Wiklund et al., 2019). There are multiple ways in which the well-being of individuals can be improved. One way to facilitate well-being is to engage in happiness-related activities, as these activities generate positive affective outcomes within individuals and produce feelings of accomplishment (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Passionate engagement in entrepreneurial activities may produce positive affective experiences, satisfaction, and personal fulfilment for entrepreneurs (Wiklund et al., 2019). Their strong inclination and dedication to their business venture lead to a heightened sense of importance and motivate them to invest their time and energy into its growth and success (Vallerand, 2008).

However, passion may lead to undesired outcomes if entrepreneurs cannot control their desire to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Fasana et al., 2022; Stroe et al., 2018). When passion escalates and transforms into an uncontrollable obsession, this may arouse negative emotions and debilitate the well-being of individuals (Vallerand et al., 2003) and, in turn, compromise the performance of the venture (Ho & Pollack, 2014). Because of these performance implications, we seek to determine whether the happiness resulting from passion always persists in entrepreneurs, and we aim to uncover the underlying psychological process that impairs their well-being. The literature recognizes this intense passion as *obsessive entrepreneurial passion* (ObEP), resulting from a controlled internalization of entrepreneurial activities into one's identity (Vallerand et al., 2003). Although studies portray obsessive

passion as detrimental, recent research reveals mixed findings, which include both positive (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Farah et al., 2022; Lafrenière et al., 2012; Streeb, 2024) and adverse well-being outcomes (Bredehorst et al., 2024; de Mol et al., 2018; Schindehutte et al., 2006; Tu et al., 2022). However, why ObEP should generate such mixed outcomes in an entrepreneurial context remains unclear and warrants further investigation (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022). Our investigation of the underlying psychological process between ObEP and entrepreneurial well-being serves to explain the potential cause behind these inconclusive findings and help entrepreneurs take action to improve their well-being.

As such, entrepreneurs' cognitive self-evaluation of entrepreneurs can play an essential role in navigating functional and dysfunctional outcomes of ObEP. Obsessively passionate entrepreneurs (ObPEs) rely heavily on their business ventures to derive self-worth, which is decided based on how well they perform in their entrepreneurial endeavours (Mageau et al., 2011). ObPEs tend to evaluate their performance and compare themselves with their counterparts to verify their self-worth (Stenseng & Dalskau, 2010). Because their sense of self is shaped by their entrepreneurial undertaking, they place great value on their entrepreneurial identity (Mageau et al., 2011), which is informed by their self-perceptions and others' perceptions of them. Thus, evaluating and verifying the self is an essential aspect of their lives (Ho & Pollack, 2014), and the outcomes of these self-evaluations may shape the well-being of entrepreneurs (Stenseng, 2008). Hence, our overarching research question is, "How do obsessively passionate entrepreneurs' cognitive self-evaluation shape their well-being?". We employed self-discrepancy theory (SDT) (Higgins, 1987) as a framework to study our research phenomena because it explains how individuals are likely to experience discomfort when they hold conflicting or incompatible beliefs about themselves.

We conducted a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 30 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka. While passion research tends to rely on quantitative research designs (Halonen &

Lomas, 2014), we employ a qualitative design to deepen our understanding of this phenomenon and to capture entrepreneurial passion's intricate and multifaceted nature, providing a more nuanced and holistic perspective than the static view of passion.

Our results introduce a dynamic process model explaining how the cognitive self-evaluation of ObPEs results in different well-being outcomes due to experienced discrepancies and conflicts. The model portrays four phases: the emergence of ObEP, cognitive evaluation of the self, feelings of self-discrepancies and conflicts, and well-being outcomes. In the first phase, *emergence of ObEP*, entrepreneurs become passionate about their business due to various personal and contextual factors. These factors could lead them to become obsessively passionate about their venture when they register and integrate recognized stimuli into their identity in a controlled fashion. The second phase consists of the *cognitive evaluation of the entrepreneur's self*. ObPEs often self-evaluate to validate themselves by comparing their current status with the desired self-guides from their own and others' perspectives (Stenseng, 2008). Self-guides are the standard for self-evaluation, including personal and social goals or norms one aspires to achieve (Higgins, 1987). This evaluation leads to the next phase, *experiencing discrepancies and conflict*. ObPEs can experience positive, negative, or no discrepancies during their self-evaluation. If the ObPEs believe that they have exceeded their self-guides, this results in a positive discrepancy. Conversely, a negative self-evaluation, wherein the ObPEs believe that they have fallen short of their self-guides, may provide the basis of a *vicious cycle of obsessive passion*, causing adverse discrepancies and conflicts within oneself and with others. The final phase is *well-being outcomes*, which involves the range of improved and poor well-being outcomes experienced by ObPEs as a result of their discrepancies and conflicts.

The contribution of our study is fourfold. First, the overall contribution of our study is to explain the psychological process between ObEP and well-being. By introducing a dynamic

model, we respond to why ObEP can benefit or harm entrepreneurs' well-being (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Stenseng et al., 2011). Second, although prior studies have emphasized the various detrimental outcomes of obsessive passion in both entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial domains (Ho & Pollack, 2014; Stroe et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003), we advance the notion of ObEP as a “vicious cycle”. In doing so, we highlight the underlying mechanism of how ObPEs experience adverse well-being outcomes in an entrepreneurial context. This cycle consists of three stages: experiencing adverse discrepancy, degree of discrepancy, and conflict escalation. While prior studies identify intrapersonal conflict as one outcome of obsessive passion (Seguin-Levesque et al., 2003; Stenseng, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2003), we emphasize that ObEP may also cause interpersonal conflict due to the adverse discrepancies that stem from unmet goals and failing the expectations of close others.

The third contribution of our study concerns cognitive and affective factors that may interplay between self-discrepancies and their emotional outcomes (Schlechter et al., 2022) as we examine how the adverse self-discrepancies of ObPEs can negatively impact well-being through conflicts and their associated adverse outcomes. We suggest that discrepancies do not always result in the expected specific emotions stated by the SDT, such as anxiety and depression, and are not limited to individual-level discomforts. Failing to meet self-guides can also lead to interpersonal issues and emotional outcomes, namely conflict, disagreements, disappointment, anger, and aggression, in addition to anxiety and depression. Therefore, our study deeply explores the interpersonal consequences of discrepancies, and we propose that failing to meet self-guide could result in aggression-related emotions, which is the third specific emotional discomfort of self-discrepancy. Finally, our model illustrates how adverse discrepancies and conflicts can serve as a motivating force to address well-being issues. Our model also highlights the different strategies entrepreneurs can use to respond effectively to feelings of failure and inadequacy. Although research suggests that ObPEs struggle to

disengage from their business activities (Stroe et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003), we propose that they can still be motivated to take some actions individually or collectively to improve their well-being.

3.2 Theoretical Background

3.2.1 Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion and Well-being

Passion is at the core of entrepreneurship since starting a venture is fuelled by one's desire to follow one's passion (Cardon et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial passion is an intense positive feeling that entrepreneurs experience through engaging in activities associated with their venture, which, in turn, is meaningful and salient to their self-identity (Cardon et al., 2009). Literature highlights various positive outcomes of passion, such as opportunity recognition (Bao et al., 2017), higher persistence during difficult times (Liang et al., 2018), hard work (Fisher et al., 2018), motivation (Ruskin et al., 2016), venture performance (Feng & Chen, 2020), success (Chen et al., 2022), and overall entrepreneurial well-being (Chen et al., 2022). Entrepreneurial passion enhances one's well-being since the individual engages in activities that they feel passionate about, providing them with positive feelings and boosting their psychological functioning.

However, studies also suggest that passion may yield poor well-being outcomes such as poor self-reflection, poor relationships, and less adaptability (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Fisher & Langan-Fox, 2009; McGrath, 1999). The Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP) by Vallerand et al. (2003) provides a possible explanation for why passion may generate both positive and negative outcomes. The model categorizes two forms of passion, harmonious and obsessive, based on how passionate activities are internalized into one's identity. Harmonious passion is a type of passion that motivates individuals to voluntarily participate in a desired activity that gives them a meaningful identity. In contrast, obsessive passion drives individuals to engage

in their desired activities by internalizing them into their identity in a controlled manner. Such individuals subsequently lose control over the activities and feel constant pressure or an internal compulsion to engage in them, resulting in rigid persistence.

Although research suggests that harmonious passion is favourable to individuals in generating positive well-being outcomes (Forest et al., 2011; Ho et al., 2011; Manchiraju & Sadachar, 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003), obsessive passion still has mixed and inconclusive findings in the entrepreneurial context. Research suggests ObEP is associated with burnout as entrepreneurs fixate on their ventures and become consumed by them (de Mol et al., 2018). ObPEs tend to experience endogenous fear of failure and may be driven by embarrassment, shame, and an ever-present dread of having their self-worth devalued (Tu et al., 2022). Their compulsion to pursue their passion leads to long work hours, persistence under extreme conditions (Schindehutte et al., 2006), emotional exhaustion (Bredehorst et al., 2024), and negative affective outcomes (Streeb et al., 2023). They also have low in-degree network centrality as they are less inclined to engage with their peers (Ho & Pollack, 2014) and are at higher risk of experiencing social loneliness (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022).

Although the adverse effects of ObEP on well-being are recognized, researchers have recently emphasized its positive effects. For example, ObEP drives most entrepreneurs to perform entrepreneurial actions (Thorgren & Wincent, 2015). This intense drive compels them to continuously strive for business success, leading to increased effort, persistence, performance, and an ability to recognize and seize opportunities (Fisher et al., 2018; Tu et al., 2023). Such individuals typically express long-term commitment to their business and high levels of motivation (Fu et al., 2022). Thus, investors tend to favour ObPEs (Galindo-Martín et al., 2023; Murnieks et al., 2016). ObEPs also remain focused on their businesses and experience positive affect (Streeb, 2024), deriving great satisfaction when they evaluate themselves as successful

(Lafrenière et al., 2012). They are also found to have an elevated level of subjective well-being (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022).

The mixed effects of results, particularly regarding ObEP and its impact on well-being, are inconclusive and open to debate, highlighting the need for additional research to fully comprehend the effects of obsessive passion in the entrepreneurial context. (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022). Granted, the mixed findings relating to the effects of ObEP may be due to the different contexts in which this phenomenon is being examined (De Molet et al., 2018). Bayraktar and Jiménez (2022) suggest that passion is context-specific and that entrepreneurial passion can comprise unique cases compared to passion in other domains. This is because the emotional attachment of entrepreneurs to their business is akin to blind love, and founders of ventures may be more blind to the faults of their venture (Branzei & Zietsma, 2003). In addition, entrepreneurs often refer to their businesses as their “babies” and are ready to make significant sacrifices for them (Cardon et al., 2005). The unique attitudes that comprise the nature of ObEP make it a compelling phenomenon for investigation. Our examination of the underlying psychological process between ObEP and entrepreneurial well-being may help explain why obsessive passion has been associated with such mixed effects. Our findings may guide entrepreneurs to take the necessary actions to navigate their passion towards improved well-being.

Furthermore, there has been a call in the research agenda on entrepreneurial passion (Newman et al., 2021) to use process models to build an understanding of how emotionally enjoyable or adverse outcomes relate to the development of entrepreneurial passion. At present, there are mixed findings relating to the effects of entrepreneurial passion, which may be the result of inconsistent theoretical applications and advancement when assessing the mechanisms underlying the relationship between passion and well-being. Scholars have utilized a range of theories, including social identity, self-regulation, self-determination, emotional contagion,

and conservation of resources, to study entrepreneurial passion and its predictors and outcomes (Newman et al., 2019). Despite the range of theories employed, studies show that previous passion-related research has typically failed to obtain an adequate contribution of different established theories of motivation for unveiling how passion impacts individual entrepreneurs and those around them (Newman et al., 2019).

Focusing on motivational theories is essential since entrepreneurial passion is denoted as an intense positive emotion, which has a motivational effect that stimulates entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles and remain engaged in their business activities (Cardon et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial passion motivates them to persist in activities with increased commitment over a long period despite obstacles, setbacks, demanded sacrifices, and other aversive experiences (Fu et al., 2022; Moeller, 2013). ObPEs display the attributes of strong desire, motivation, and persistence toward their entrepreneurial activities while being active agents in managing the outcomes of their passion (Streeb et al., 2023). Thus, it is essential to identify how they may enhance or compromise their well-being due to their intense passion and how they are motivated to manage issues, leading to enhanced well-being outcomes.

3.2.2 View of Cognitive Self-Evaluation in the Context of Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion

Prior research shows that individuals' cognitive self-evaluation (i.e., self-appraisal/self-assessment) is a powerful motivation tool since self-evaluative outcomes help individuals understand the positive and negative consequences of their actions. In addition, cognitive self-evaluation motivates them to employ necessary strategies to deal with these consequences (Dijkstra et al., 1999; Korsgaard, 1996). Self-evaluation originates from comparing what individuals have accomplished with their goals, norms, or standards. People will experience either negative or positive outcomes of self-evaluations depending on whether the standards or goals are met (Bandura, 1986; Dijkstra et al., 1999). Thus, ObPE's self-evaluative

outcomes may potentially explain why they experience positive and negative well-being outcomes and reveal how their motivations to manage these outcomes.

ObPEs rely heavily on their passionate activities to derive self-worth, which is decided based on how well they perform in those activities (Mageau et al., 2011). As such, they tend to evaluate their performance against their goals and norms while comparing themselves with their counterparts to verify their self-worth (Stenseng & Dalskau, 2010). Similarly, ObPEs place a greater emphasis on their identity as entrepreneurs (Mageau et al., 2011), viewing themselves not only through their own lens but also through the eyes of others. Due to the intrapersonal pressures associated with the motivation to engage in the activity, such as to increase self-esteem, gain social acceptance, feelings of superiority, and achievement of goals (Mageau et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 2003), they may become hard-wired to act in ways to gain recognition and verify their identities through the eyes of them and others. Thus, evaluating and verifying the self is essential to their lives (Ho & Pollack, 2014).

While highlighting the importance of cognitive self-evaluation to the ObPEs, the outcomes of this self-evaluation may influence their well-being differently. Positive self-evaluation, as a result of the entrepreneur meeting their own and social goals/norms or owing to a high level of congruence between one's self-view and others' views of them, may provide satisfaction and social approval, prompting favourable well-being outcomes. However, cognitive self-evaluation may also result in poor well-being when the entrepreneur feels that they have failed to meet their own or social goals and norms due to an intense desire to engage in business. While emphasizing the adverse well-being outcomes due to these discrepancies, they may also motivate ObPEs to take action accordingly to improve their well-being. Although earlier studies have held a more passive view of obsessive passion, wherein the affected individuals do not take subsequent actions to influence the positive and negative

consequences (Curran et al., 2015; Pollack et al., 2020; Vallerand, 2015), recent studies have framed ObPEs as active agents who are motivated to shape the outcomes of their passion (Streeb et al., 2023). Thus, self-evaluation and associated outcomes from this evaluation may play an essential role in shaping the well-being of ObPEs, yet this question has not been specifically addressed.

One such self-evaluative mechanism is outlined in self-discrepancy theory a theoretical framework that illuminates how ObPEs' self-evaluation can lead to different well-being outcomes. The theory was introduced by Higgins (1987) to explain the association between self-evaluation and the affective states of individuals. Individuals may hold different self-representations, such as one's actual self, one's ideal self, and one's ought self. The specific relations between these self-representations generate different affective states. The actual self refers to the attributes that an individual believes they possess. The ideal self and the ought self are self-guides that function as motivational standards for self-evaluation. The ideal self is the attributes an individual would ideally like to possess (hopes and aspirations), while the ought self is the attributes an individual believes are their responsibility to possess (duties and obligations). All three self-representations can reflect the individual's own perspective or the perspective of significant others (family, peers, and friends). Typically, individuals evaluate their actual selves against the evaluative self-guides. They may experience discrepancies when they cannot meet their self-guides, resulting in a range of uncomfortable feelings, such as agitation (arising from fear, guilt, and self-contempt) and dejection (triggered by disappointment, dissatisfaction, and shame).

Although self-discrepancy theory is mainly used to study how inconsistencies between the individuals' actual selves and pertinent self-guides create negative psychological states, the theory also may be viewed from a motivational perspective, given that Higgins (1987)

contended that various forms of self-discrepancies can result in different motivational states. Nevertheless, the studies investigating self-discrepancies in the context of obsessive passion thus far have only highlighted the adverse outcomes (Stenseng, 2008; Stenseng et al., 2015; Stenseng et al., 2011). Indeed, self-discrepancies may serve as a motivational force for entrepreneurs to take action to change their approach, in a bid to minimize the inconsistencies between their actual selves, and their ideal and ought selves. Even so, the experience of self-discrepancy may demotivate and fuel adverse emotional reactions, hindering entrepreneurs from overcoming the negative experience. Higgins (1987) asserts that individuals feel negative emotions when they perceive the discrepancies to be significant in their lives. Since ObPEs evaluate their entrepreneurial activities as possessing greater importance in their lives (Stenseng, 2008), those who perceive that they have fallen short of their self-guides may be motivated to take actions to close this gap and quell the negative emotions that arise from recognizing this discrepancy.

While studies in the non-entrepreneurial domain have attempted to investigate self-evaluations and the perceived discrepancies that arise from these evaluations, such as discrepancies relating to body image, internet addiction, and customer buying behaviour, only a handful of studies have investigated the phenomenon in the context of obsessive passion (Stenseng, 2008; Stenseng et al., 2011, 2015). However, these studies have adopted quantitative techniques and objectively measured the phenomena, and the subjective experiences of entrepreneurs in this regard have yet to be explored. As ObPEs tend to evaluate themselves against their personal or social goals and standards, it is crucial to understand the subjective experiences of the entrepreneurs regarding the role of cognitive self-evaluation and associated discrepancies in the context of ObEP and how it helps shape their well-being. We therefore take up an overarching research question: *“How do the cognitive self-evaluations of obsessively passionate entrepreneurs shape their well-being?”*

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Research Design

We adopt an inductive theory-building approach to conduct a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 30 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka. As Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) suggest, qualitative research is more exploratory and open to new insights than quantitative research. A qualitative approach is ideal to examine in depth the link between ObEP and entrepreneurial well-being. It also complements existing passion research, which has primarily adopted quantitative designs (Halonen & Lomas, 2014). These studies have focused on individual passion and well-being-related outcomes (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2011; Ho & Pollack, 2014; Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2008) without allowing participants the opportunity to elaborate on how their experiences of passion lead to favourable and unfavourable outcomes (Halonen & Lomas, 2014). Thus, adopting a qualitative research design will assist our understanding of the entrepreneurs' subjective experience of passion and how it leads to different well-being outcomes (Suddaby, 2006) while providing an opportunity to model their meanings and understandings (Gioia et al., 2013). Given the limited theoretical foundation on how ObEP leads to favourable and unfavourable outcomes and how entrepreneurs respond to adverse outcomes, we followed the qualitative study rules where the related research concepts and categories emerged during the process of collecting and conceptualizing the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The overall research question and objectives were identified during the data collection process, enabling a flexible approach to prevent a priori conceptions and theories from being imposed on the participants and data (Urquhart, 2022).

3.3.2 Data Collection

3.3.2.a Sampling Techniques

We used purposive sampling techniques followed by snow-balling to approach our participants since it allowed us to choose individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Many researchers have highlighted that entrepreneurs often become obsessively passionate about their business pursuits and have underlined the significance of obsessive passion in the entrepreneurial setting (Fisher et al., 2018; Streeb et al., 2023; Stroe et al., 2018), which makes it a suitable area for our research query. For this study, we sought a sample with diverse attributes concerning their age, gender, and tenure in their business venture (Table 3.1.). For example, we approached entrepreneurs who have initiated and run their businesses for less than three years. This is because nascent entrepreneurs typically display more ObEP, given the intensity of the experiences related to the early-stage venture (Murnieks et al., 2016; Stroe et al., 2018). In addition, these participants were deemed ideal for experiencing relatively fresh passion experiences and being able to recall these experiences without time bias (Davidsson & Gordon, 2012). That said, we also sought entrepreneurs with long-term tenure in their businesses to ensure that we could collect data in relation to the broader range of strategies they used to address with the various well-being outcomes of ObEP being experienced (Streeb, 2024). Our intent to seek a diverse sample in terms of the ages and genders of entrepreneurs was also a key consideration when we approached potential participants for this study.

We had a list of 218 entrepreneurs from our previous quantitative study, from which we picked 50 entrepreneurs who earned higher scores for ObEP (above five on the seven-point Likert scale) and invited them via email to participate in our qualitative study. While conducting our survey, we obtained the email addresses of most participants who wished to receive the outcomes of our quantitative study, and we used those contact details to reach them for our

subsequent qualitative study. However, of the 50 who were invited, only 17 accepted our invitation. They also openly accepted that they often experience ObEP and are interested in further sharing their experiences and thoughts on entrepreneurial passion. Thus, we found them to be ideal participants in our qualitative study. While we conducted interviews with them, several suggested a few more entrepreneurs from their business network who also shared similar characteristics of ObEP. These suggestions led to the recruitment of seven further participants. We received consent from them to participate in the interviews, and we were able to collect rich data related to our research question. We then identified six further participants from our personal contacts, all of whom fit our criteria for having high levels of passion. We asked a series of cross-questions to ensure that those selected from the referrals and personal contacts demonstrated ObEP, such as “Do you think business is the only thing that keeps you turned on?” and “How would you prioritise your business over personal activities?”. Using multiple sampling methods in our study helped us gather sufficient participants who offer detailed and comprehensive insights into the phenomenon being investigated (Gill, 2020). We conducted interviews until we reached a point where no new theoretical knowledge relevant to our research questions was obtained, ensuring theoretical saturation (Bowen, 2008).

3.3.2.b Conducting Interviews

Three pilot interviews and the remaining 27 took place between July 2022 and January 2023 (Table 3.1.). Pilot interviews were conducted to understand the entrepreneurs’ background and their passionate involvement in their business, while follow-up interviews gathered in-depth knowledge on the intensity of the passion, the well-being outcomes of participants, the intervening mechanisms and processes involved, and the strategies they used to deal with negative consequences of passion. However, we included all three pilot interviews in our analysis, as they also provided rich information about the problem we investigated. The primary author conducted all interviews, which lasted between 30 and 180 minutes. It is

common for interview durations to vary in qualitative research, as participants may differ in how much they elaborate on responses, their engagement level, and availability. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility, where some participants may provide shorter, more concise answers while others offer lengthy, detailed narratives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Patton, 2014). We administered 25 interviews in the entrepreneurs' native languages (Sinhala or Tamil) and five interviews in English. Field notes were also taken to support recordings. The primary author transcribed all 30 interviews, which were then proofread by both PhD supervisors. Additionally, the author translated the twenty-five interviews from Tamil and Sinhala, which were subsequently cross-checked by professional language and subject experts to ensure accuracy. In addition, supplementary data was gathered from persons deemed close to participants (e.g., partners, parents, and friends) to enrich and validate participant responses. However, this data was limited to validating participant responses, and further research may rely more extensively on close others. Further, materials from entrepreneurs' social media profiles, LinkedIn, press releases, and company websites were used to understand their backgrounds and passionate engagement with their businesses to triangulate the data gathered from the interviews.

3.3.2.c Interview Guide

Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom or in person and transcribed verbatim to ensure reliability (Eisenhardt, 1989). In addition to collecting data on aspects we deemed important, this interview style also enabled us to discuss relevant follow-up questions with participants (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1998). To minimize the risk of social desirability bias (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), we frequently assured participants about the confidentiality and anonymity of their data and reminded them that they could terminate the interview at any time. We also highlighted that there are no right or wrong answers and that they could be candid about their perceptions and experiences (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

The interview guide consisted of five sections with 56 questions in total. We did the pilot study with 48 questions, which allowed us to realise the need for an additional eight questions that we included for the main waves of data collection. First, we asked participants about their personal and business backgrounds (i.e., “Could you please describe your personal and business background?”). Second, we asked questions about their perceived passion for their business, the sources of this passion, the recognition they had gained, and their social acceptance as entrepreneurs (i.e., “How would you describe your passion?” and “To what extent would you say that being a passionate entrepreneur enhances your social acceptance?”). Third, we asked about their relationships and involvement with the business, the experiences associated with the business, and any difficulties they may have had in managing their business and personal lives (i.e., “How would you explain your bond with your entrepreneurial activity?”). Fourth, we asked questions about the well-being outcomes they had experienced because of their passion (i.e., “To what extent do you think your passion for the business has generated positive and negative feelings?”). Finally, we asked about their perceptions and motivations for dealing with positive and negative outcomes of ObEP (i.e., “How would you regulate your intense passion for entrepreneurial activities with activities in other life domains?”).

Table 3.1. Sample Overview

ID	Age	Sex	Year of Commencement	Education	Number of Employees	Industry	Serial Entrepreneur	Date of Interview	Length of Interview	Total Transcribed Words
Int A	30	M	2018	Bachelors	10	Food Processing	4	1/07/2022	2:26	11484
Int B	38	M	2017	Bachelors	30	Information Technology/Engineering	4	2/09/2022	2:18	15364
Int C	30	M	2018	Bachelors	6	Advertising/Branding	2	17/07/2022	2:17	7921
Int D	28	F	2019	Masters	2	Gifts and Stationeries	1	28/07/2022	1:14	4932
Int E	45	F	2015	Bachelors	12	Early Childhood Centre	1	8/12/2022	0:45	4283
Int F	32	M	2020	Bachelors	6	Mineral processing	3	21/08/2022	3:03	11796
Int G	40	M	2014	Bachelors	20	Software Developing	3	24/07/2022	1:40	11288
Int H	28	M	2000	Bachelors	4	Seafood Trading	3	22/12/2022	1:18	2850
Int I	52	F	2015	High School	20	Spice Trading	2	11/01/2023	1:28	3996
Int J	39	M	2020	MBA	12	Seafood Trading/Restaurant/Consulting	2	3/10/2022	0:36	5849
Int K	43	M	2008	Bachelors	27	Engineering	3	24/11/2022	1:21	6940
Int L	37	M	2013	PhD	15	Garments trading	2	19/07/2022	1:55	9358
Int M	33	F	2019	Bachelors	3	Baking/Cake Decorating	2	24/07/2022	1:53	5369
Int N	55	M	2016	Masters	1000	Machinery and equipment production/Health care/Renewable energy/Agriculture	4	11/02/2023	0:33	3702
Int O	24	M	2018	Bachelors	2	Social media/Landscaping/Cut foliage exporting	1	15/07/2022	1:19	6563
Int P	28	M	2020	Bachelors	5	Tour guide agent	2	10/07/2022	2:03	6991
Int Q	35	M	2016	Masters	60	Restaurant chain	4	15/10/2022	0:39	4367
Int R	34	M	2017	Bachelors	6	Spice Trading	2	12/10/2022	1:04	3612
Int S	40	M	2015	Masters	3	Coconut and salt manufacturing	7	2/10/2022	1:00	4236
Int T	38	F	2018	Bachelors	3	Travel Agency	3	17/07/2022	1:27	10643
Int U	65	M	1949	High School	1000	Textiles/Garments/Retailing	4	5/09/2022	1:17	6169
Int V	55	M	2006	Professional courses	15	Vehicle dealing	2	12/10/2022	0:43	3706
Int W	42	M	2017	Bachelors	1	Couch and Training Institute	2	23/11/2022	1:30	8934
Int X	56	M	2015	High School	300	Herbal drink manufacturing	4	15/12/2022	1:20	4390
Int Y	48	M	2004	Diploma	33	Furniture dealing	2	20/10/2022	1:13	4487
Int Z	59	M	1998	Bachelors	160	Pharmaceutical Trading	2	20/09/2022	0:52	4825
Int ZA	30	M	2019	Bachelors/CIM	4	Business service providers	3	15/08/2022	1:21	3708
Int ZB	39	M	2017	High School	4	Textiles/Garments/Retailing	3	12/01/2023	1:28	8734
Int ZC	40	M	2018	Masters	3	Engineering/constructions	3	1/07/2022	1:37	9376
Int ZD	43	M	2017	Bachelors	15	Media Entrepreneur	3	17/08/2022	1:20	6540

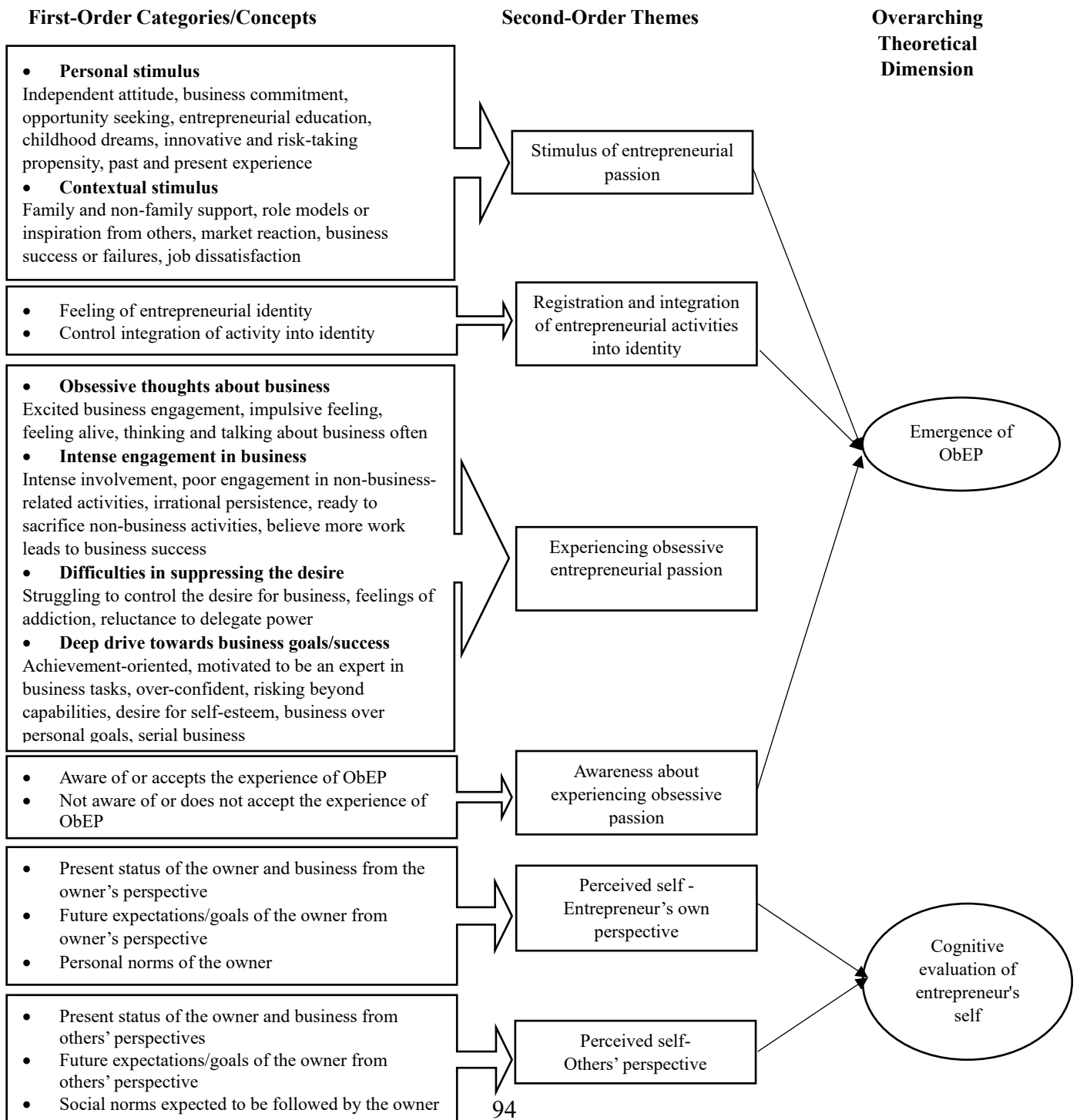
3.3.3 Data Analysis

We used continuous comparison techniques and open-coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1998) to analyse the data while developing and expanding the theory. This continuous comparison method sees data collection and analysis done iteratively (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Our author team performed the data analysis independently over several iterations. QSR NVivo 14 was used to organize 415 pages of transcription data from 30 interviews with 187,431 words in total, the field notes taken during and after the interviews, and some secondary sources about entrepreneurs in three rounds. All transcripts were verified with participants for accuracy.

In the first round, we used manual open coding, where we read the transcripts and supplementary sources line-by-line according to what appeared important to generate 216 first-order codes (Charmaz, 2014; Thomas, 2006). We continued to read the interview transcripts multiple times and cross-checked the emerging categories with already-coded data until we reached saturation. We followed Brown's (2008) systematic coding procedure to clarify the point of saturation. This procedure helps to compare newly collected data with previously collected and coded data and decide whether those codes are relevant for generating theoretical categories and concepts related to the research phenomena. This systematic open coding process resulted in grouping the relevant codes into a set of first-order categories, using the participants' words, where possible, in describing these categories.

In the second round, we started axial coding by grouping first-order categories into broader second-order themes. We identified concept similarities and the relationship between categories at the conceptual level. We worked iteratively with the literature to generate these new themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). By following this process, we generated further abstract-level second-order themes. Where possible, we maintained the participants' words for their descriptions. In the third round, we further identified and grouped multiple second-order codes

into more abstract levels, resulting in aggregated theoretical dimensions (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015), of which the data structure arising from this process is shown in Figure 3.1. Later, we used the aggregate dimensions to develop our theoretical model (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). During data collection, the authors frequently met to discuss the emergent data patterns and to ensure accuracy and credibility in interpretation. This process led to several data structure iterations. We also contacted several participants to discuss the findings, and their suggestions were then considered in the analysis.



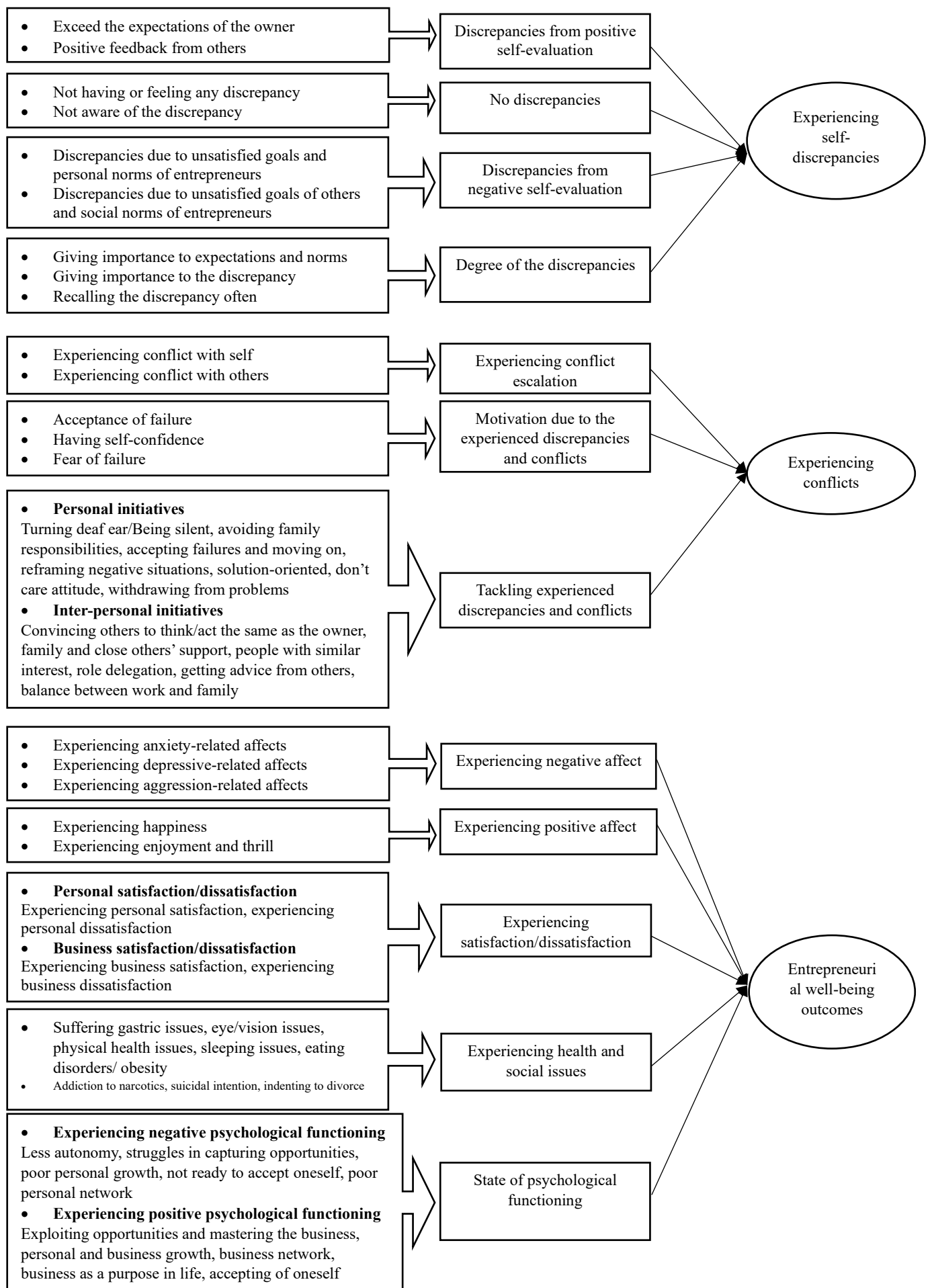


Figure 3.1. Data Structure

3.4 Results

This section explains our findings and introduces the dynamic process model (Figure 3.2). Our model clarifies how the cognitive self-evaluation of ObPEs results in favourable and unfavourable well-being due to the types of discrepancies and conflicts experienced. It also uncovers the motivational response of entrepreneurs to handle these discrepancies and conflicts. The process model consists of four phases: the emergence of ObEP, cognitive evaluation of the entrepreneur's self, experiencing discrepancies and conflicts, and well-being outcomes. The overarching theoretical stages are represented in the aggregate dimensions. The distinct representative categories and quotes are visible in the second-order themes and the first-order concepts. Table 3.2. overviews first-order concepts and includes quotes supporting the findings. The arrows pointing forward show the subsequent stages of the process, while arrows pointing back indicate that the process is not static but iterative and reciprocal.

3.4.1 Emergence of Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion

3.4.1.a Stimulus of entrepreneurial passion

The emergence of passion begins when the entrepreneur is exposed to different stimuli that evoke strong emotions and drive toward their business. While some entrepreneurs may be born with an innate passion for business, various stimuli can also ignite their passion. These stimuli can be personal or contextual factors that inspire and motivate entrepreneurs to pursue their business activities enthusiastically. Personal stimuli relate to the entrepreneur's internal motivations, while contextual stimuli stem from the entrepreneur's encounters with the external environment. Both personal and contextual factors individually or collectively contribute to entrepreneurial passion. Participants in our study acknowledged that learning about the stimuli that motivated them would help them maintain their passion throughout their entrepreneurial

journey. Many participants indicated that independence was a key reason for developing their passion.

Small trees never grow under a big tree. Either the big tree must die, or that little tree has to be planted in a different place to grow. So, I thought I would start a few businesses independently. That is how my passion journey began. (Int_O)

3.4.1.b Registration and integration of entrepreneurial activities into identity

In the next stage of our model, entrepreneurs become aware of the different types of stimuli that elicit their passion, and these are integrated into their self-identity. In doing so, they begin to form an entrepreneurial identity, which becomes central to their self-identity. In other words, being an entrepreneur defines who they are. Although this integration process can occur freely and autonomously, ObPEs internalize their business into their identities in a controlled fashion. Due to their intense urge to engage in entrepreneurial activities or to gain recognition and social acceptance, they feel compelled to register those meanings into their identities. An entrepreneur expressed this as follows.

My love for a business is uncontrollable. I could earn more profit from it. I get more recognition and more social acceptance. So, I need to have the title of "entrepreneur". (Int_F)

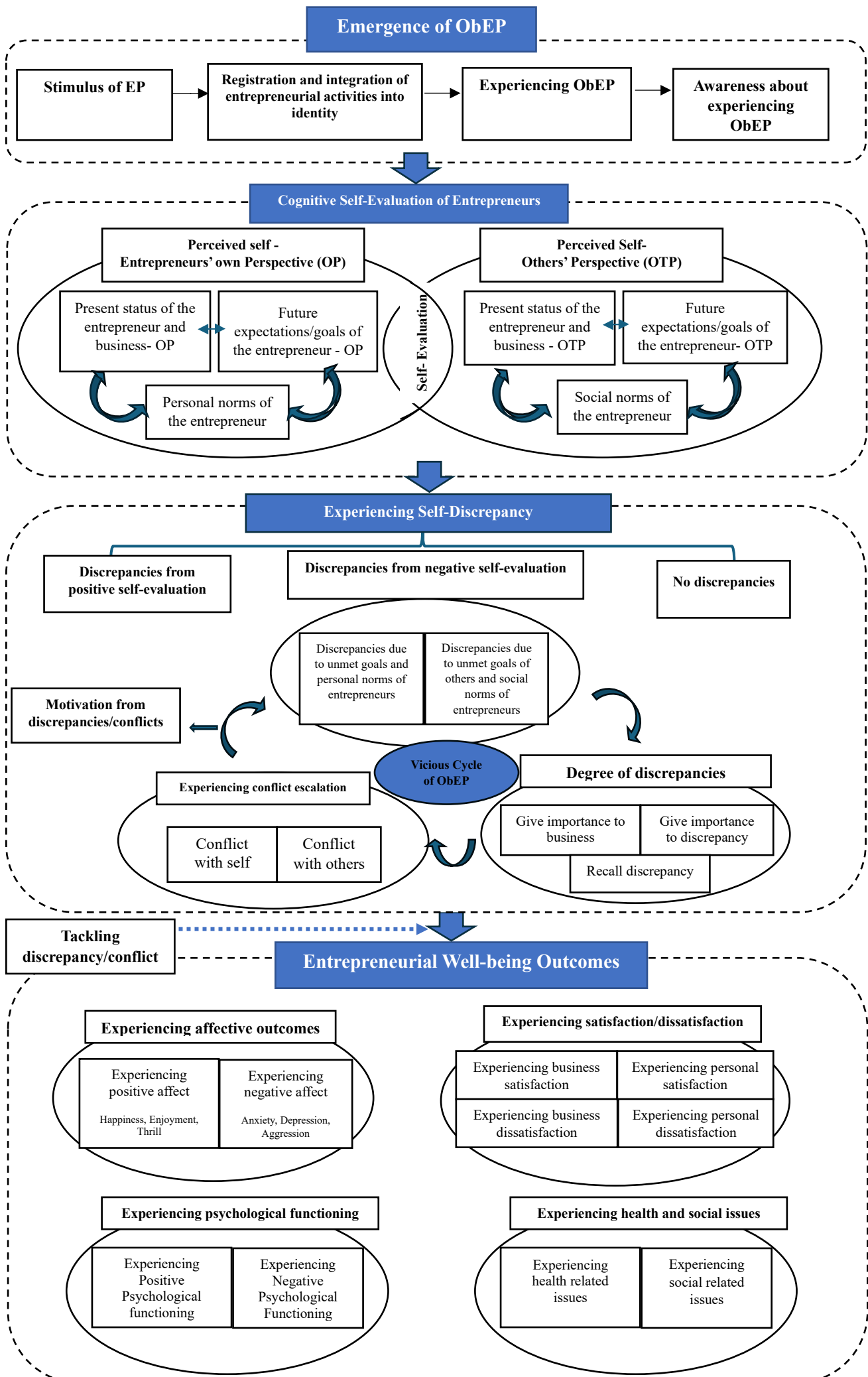


Figure 3.2. Dynamic Process Model of Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion and Well-being

3.4.1.c Experiencing obsessive entrepreneurial passion

Following the integration of an entrepreneurial identity into their sense of self, entrepreneurs may begin to experience ObEP. We found that ObPEs reflect four main attributes. First, they often have obsessive thoughts about their business and hold impulsive attitudes toward it. Their business is foremost in their minds, reflecting their excitement at being involved in entrepreneurial activities while taking risks at any cost. ObPEs are emotionally dependent on their work, and they struggle to distinguish themselves from it. Second, the engagement of ObPEs in tasks relating to their business can be characterized as intense. These tasks take priority over everything else, occupying disproportionate space in the entrepreneurs' lives. ObPEs will continue to engage in business activities even in difficult times, reflecting their attitude of irrational persistence. Their lay belief that their devotion to their business will result in higher performance compels them to sacrifice everything for their business. Another attribute of ObPEs is struggling to suppress their desire to engage in every business-related task so that delegation to others is nearly impossible. Finally, ObPEs are achievement-oriented individuals. The drive to succeed at all costs enables them to surpass their capabilities, which in turn helps to promote their self-confidence and sense of achievement. However, it also means that their business goals inevitably take priority over everything else.

3.4.1.d Awareness about experiencing obsessive passion

Although many entrepreneurs may become obsessively passionate towards their business, not all are aware of the obsessive nature of the passion. We propose that recognizing the obsessive nature of their passion is a prerequisite for entrepreneurs to understand the effects of ObEP and take the necessary steps to manage it. In our sample, many participants were willing to acknowledge that they have experienced ObEP, while few were either unaware of or denied its obsessive nature. Unlike typical work settings, which may stipulate set working hours and hold performance reviews, the entrepreneurial working context is largely determined by the

entrepreneur, who may not necessarily set any limitations on themselves. As such, these individuals may struggle to take an objective view of their commitment to their venture, even though such awareness is important in managing ObEP. When reflecting on this aspect, one entrepreneur stated,

I have an obsessive passion for our business because I do not mind controlling my passion. I have an eternal love for it. (Int_A)

3.4.2 Evaluation of Entrepreneur's Self

After ObPEs understand and acknowledge their experience of ObEP, they begin a cognitive self-evaluation process to appraise themselves as they place high importance on their self-worth. This process involves a comparison between where the entrepreneurs see themselves currently and the future goals and objectives they seek to achieve. Similarly, they compare themselves with what they ought to follow, such as the norms and standards. The comparison draws from two perspectives: the entrepreneurs' perception of the self from their own perspective and the perception of the self from others' perspective. For example, Int_D stated,

I always compare my current progress with my future goals, as this helps me know where I am now (...). I know others are also interested in seeing what I am doing, when I am failing, and what my achievements are. They have certain expectations of me. (Int_D)

3.4.2.a Perceived self – Entrepreneurs' own perspective

The self-worth of ObPEs is largely shaped by the success of their business venture and how well they engage in and perform their entrepreneurial activities. As such, they often evaluate themselves by assessing their progress toward their set goals. Many participants observed that they were goal-oriented and wanted to make a difference in their business. Many also acknowledged their craving for more money, fame, and success. In addition to comparing

themselves with their achievements, they are also cautious in adhering to their own norms. ObPEs possess specific norms and standards regarding their professional and personal lives, such as not being ready to compromise their business goals or doing anything for their business. They are hesitant to abandon these standards if doing so jeopardizes their involvement with business, affecting their self-worth. An entrepreneur reflects the own norm as follows:

If I want to do something, I will definitely do it mostly. I will do it immediately without considering anything. That's me. (Int_ZA)

3.4.2.b Perceived self - Others' perspective

ObPEs also place great importance on how they are perceived by others. They want to gain the social acceptance provided by others and protect their identity not only from their own eyes but also through the eyes of others. When someone speaks poorly about their business and its performance or dislikes their work, it feels like a personal attack because their identity is heavily invested in their venture. As a result, intensely engaging in entrepreneurial activities and performing well becomes something of a compulsion to maintain their sense of being socially accepted. ObPEs are also aware of the expectations held of them by those close to them. These expectations can vary widely, such as the anticipation of spending quality time with the entrepreneur or believing that the entrepreneur should hold a regular job. The cognitive self-assessment of entrepreneurs is thus shaped by how they see themselves in relation to where others want them to be or what social norms others want them to adhere to. As one participant noted,

Others value my success through the profit I earn. They think that I am not performing well compared to my competitors. So, I need to put more effort. (Int_F)

3.4.3 Experiencing Self-discrepancy

Following their cognitive self-evaluation, ObPEs may experience one of three outcomes: discrepancies from positive self-evaluation, discrepancies from negative self-evaluation, and no discrepancies.

3.4.3.a Discrepancies from positive self-evaluation

ObPEs experience positive discrepancies when they judge themselves to have achieved or exceeded their own goals or norms and those held of them by others. They also experience positive self-discrepancies when they hear positive feedback from themselves and others. Due to the intense engagement in entrepreneurial activities, ObPEs are motivated to exploit more opportunities and to excel further, resulting in positive addiction. Putting in additional effort in entrepreneurial tasks can lead to business success beyond what they expect, resulting in positive feedback from others. As one participant remarked,

Of course, the goals I have already achieved are things I never thought of before. It means I accomplished more than what I targeted. (Int_C)

3.4.3.b Discrepancies from negative self-evaluation

Negative discrepancies are characterized by the failure of ObPEs to reach their own goals or norms or their inability to meet the expectations placed on them by others. Due to the intense desire for business, entrepreneurs wish to take challenges in an uncertain environment by overlooking their adverse outcomes. Overzealousness and confidence may complicate their thinking process, sometimes overriding the need for logical thinking and reasoning. Thus, their extreme confidence pushes them to take risks beyond their capabilities and lets them persist in business even if it fails. As such, they find difficulties achieving the desired goals according to their expectations and those of others, resulting in negative discrepancies.

Similarly, their relentless focus on business can unwittingly harm their personal and significant others' norms. Their focus on business overshadows their loved one's needs, resulting in negligence of the norms they should adhere to. Although entrepreneurs want to connect more with their families and close ones, they fail due to their ObEP, resulting in adverse discrepancies. One remarked that,

Because of the business, I have less time with my friends, Facebook, or other forums. I miss them badly. (Int_M)

3.4.3.c Not experiencing discrepancies

Although most ObPEs experience discrepancies, in some instances, they may not recognize that they have experienced discrepancies, be they positive or negative. This is because these individuals are simply driven by their obsession with their business as opposed to recognizing or reflecting on the obsession and the outcomes it may generate. They possess a "don't care attitude" and do not worry about anything, even if they fail to satisfy others' expectations and demands. There is little attempt made to manage their ObEP as they do not know the positive and negative discrepancies resulting from their obsessive involvement in the business. As one participant asserted,

I never come across any negative situations because I don't care what others think about me. (Int_Q)

3.4.3.d The degree of the discrepancies

Depending on the type of discrepancy experienced, ObPEs will reach either functional or dysfunctional outcomes. While positive discrepancies enhance the well-being of entrepreneurs, negative discrepancies result in conflict escalations. The intensity of this conflict escalation will vary based on the degree of discrepancy experienced. As such, the degree of discrepancies plays a moderative role between experienced discrepancies and their associated outcomes.

Typically, ObPEs will prioritize their own goals and norms ahead of others. They try to convince close others to follow their goals and norms instead of valuing others' priorities, which frequently opens the way to increased conflicts. Similarly, ObPEs often give higher importance to the negative discrepancies and ruminate about them. For example, they chase their goals at any cost, so they cannot simply accept failures and will frequently think about them. In addition, due to their over-involvement in business, they struggle to satisfy the other norms and demands, which also causes them to keep ruminating about discrepancies and create a conflict situation. As one participant observed,

When I have business issues, even if I am driving, I still think of how to solve them.

I have a habit of repeatedly thinking about them. (Int_G)

3.4.4 Experiencing Conflicts

3.4.4.a Experiencing conflict escalation

While discrepancies from a positive self-evaluation enhance an ObPE's well-being outcomes, discrepancies from a negative self-evaluation are likely to result in conflict escalation. Many of our participants acknowledged that they either consciously or unconsciously have undergone the conflict phase, which may take one of two forms. The first is conflict with oneself, wherein the ObPE experiences a mental struggle for falling short of the goals and norms they had set for themselves and/or which others had set for them. This process disturbs their peace of mind and may result in adverse affective outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and aggression. The second form of conflict is interpersonal, wherein the priorities and desires of ObPEs clash with those held by others close to them. ObPEs' focus on their business dominates their cognitive and behavioural patterns and causes them to overlook the concerns of their loved ones, deteriorating healthy relationships. As one participant observed:

Having less time for myself and the family would be the biggest downside of my passion. It creates many issues between me and my family. (Int_G)

While explaining the dynamic process of ObEP, we identified three key stages where ObPEs' negative self-evaluation leads to conflict and adverse well-being outcomes: experiencing the discrepancies from self-evaluation, recognizing the degree of these discrepancies, and escalation of conflict. We refer to these stages as the *Vicious Cycle of Obsessive Passion*. ObPEs who fail to effectively manage their obsession with their business at these critical junctures may suffer significant negative well-being. Equally, experiencing negative discrepancies and the escalation of conflict may motivate ObPEs to change tack and undertake necessary actions to rebalance their priorities. As a result, discrepancies and conflict escalation may function as a double-edged sword.

3.4.4.b Motivation due to the experienced discrepancies and conflicts

Although the negative discrepancies escalate conflicts, conscious awareness can motivate entrepreneurs to reduce those issues and face disputes successfully. Many participants indicated that it was not until they had experienced negative discrepancies and their associated consequences that they felt compelled to rein in their obsessive approach towards their business. Indeed, the acceptance of failure that they had fallen short of expectations, be it their own or those of others, and fear of achieving future goals were the catalysts for rectifying their direction. It signals them to make diligent decisions related to business in the future while improving their self-confidence in recovering from such failures. As such, participants asserted that they are motivated to employ various strategies to tackle experienced discrepancies and conflicts.

3.4.4.c Tackling experienced discrepancies and conflicts

Several participants recognized that, while it was difficult to divert their focus away from their business, the responsibility for managing their passion and obsession was theirs alone. To manage their obsession, participants undertook both approach and avoidance strategies. Typically, approach strategies were employed when participants held strong personal and social values and found it important to balance their own and close others' desires. They tended to employ avoidance strategies when experiencing the adverse side of their passion, so they no longer want to suffer. However, their key concern is how these strategies will be employed by the ObPEs. We found that they use personal and interpersonal level initiatives as needed to address the discrepancies and conflicts. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that every strategy will lead to positive results for our participants, and many reported the need to take a temporary step back to mitigate the risk of such discrepancies and conflicts.

Many participants demonstrated a sense of accountability by using personal-level strategies to overcome the issues. Some recalled making a conscious decision not to respond when they faced criticisms from others in a bid to prevent conflicts from escalating. They also distance themselves from troubling issues, which would be the most preferred way for them to maintain focus on their business. Some participants avoid non-work-related obligations to concentrate fully on their business and reach goals. Others talked about the role of optimism and courage when facing challenges, but these tended to take place when the ObPEs felt confident in their ability to tackle the given issues. ObPEs reported shifting their perspectives on challenging situations so that, if a resolution was not directly apparent, they would reframe their view to maintain a positive outlook and avoid conflict escalation. For example, one participant commented:

In moments of disagreement with my loved ones, I proactively focused on fond memories and shared laughter to diffuse tension and promote harmony. (Int_X)

Several participants also recalled the need to accept their failures if everything else had failed. In these instances, they strove to glean lessons from their setbacks and to move forward.

In addition to attempting to address their issues alone, participants also reported their efforts to seek support from others during their times of need. The most common strategy involved open communication with loved ones to express and promote their personal wishes. Often, this enabled them to persuade others to comply with their requests. Cultivating a robust support system was another method identified. Many successful ObPEs credited their loved ones as pillars of strength, providing them with what they needed to overcome obstacles. Other strategies included being with similar-minded individuals who also share a passion for business or seeking advice from business experts so that they felt better equipped to navigate challenges, resolve conflicts, and achieve their goals. Finally, several participants identified the importance of delegating tasks to others. Although this could be challenging for ObPEs, as it potentially represents a loss of control, several have learned that entrusting others with tasks can lighten their load and create a more sustainable work environment. Ultimately, they found that delegating tasks is a strategic decision that allows them to focus on what truly matters.

3.4.5 Entrepreneurial Well-being Outcomes

The discrepancies and conflicts experienced during the cognitive self-evaluation process can positively or negatively affect the well-being of ObPEs. Based on our participants' responses, we grouped entrepreneurial well-being outcomes into four components: experiencing positive and negative affect, experiencing life and business satisfaction or dissatisfaction, experiencing health and social issues, and the positive and negative state of psychological functioning during the entrepreneurial journey.

3.4.5.a Experiencing positive and negative affect

ObPEs often experience positive affective outcomes such as happiness, pride, enjoyment, and the thrill of being involved in entrepreneurial pursuits. They achieve a higher level of enjoyment and find immense pleasure when they achieve or exceed their business-related expectations due to their strong involvement and commitment to their business. They often start businesses that align with their interests, making the entrepreneurial journey a source of joy. They are driven by the thrill of solving complex problems in an unpredictable environment. Learning, mastering the tasks, and adapting to changing circumstances become a positive addiction, fuelling their desire to achieve greater success, which results in greater happiness and pride in their lives. As one participant reflected:

I believe that having an extremely passionate and dedicated mindset allows me to truly enjoy and excel in my business. (Int_O)

However, the vicious cycle of passion can lead to a downward spiral of negative affective outcomes. We contend that ObPEs experience a combination of three types of adverse outcomes: anxiety-related affect, depressive-related affect, and aggression-related affect. First, ObPEs are overwhelmed with anxiety-related affect when they feel pressure to meet societal norms, such as spending time with close ones and satisfy their needs, which can lead to fear and tension. Similarly, they feel guilt and unease when they have unmet goals and tend to blame themselves should they fall short compared to their competitors.

Second, ObPEs may also experience depressive symptoms such as disappointment and shame. Many participants observed that they felt discouraged, overwhelmed, and depressed when they failed to achieve their goals. These emotions can lead to a cascade of negative consequences and increase their stress levels significantly. They may also struggle to be fully present with their loved ones while they are preoccupied with their venture. In addition, a prolonged period

of depression and sadness may limit their cognitive ability, leading to other long-term mental issues. The third negative affective experience is aggression-related affect. This is especially prevalent among ObPEs, as prolonged feelings of anxiety and depression can erode self-compassion and damage one's relationships with others. When faced with adverse discrepancies such as criticism or negative feedback, ObPEs may encounter conflicts and become angry at themselves and others, leading to heightened aggression. This can lead to outbursts of violent behaviour as they struggle to cope with ongoing criticism. An ObPE stated,

My friends ask why I work on weekends and after hours. I get pretty angry when I hear them because repeatedly explaining them [*sic*] irritates me. (Int_L)

3.4.5.b Experiencing satisfaction/dissatisfaction

Participants in our study reported feeling both satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding their lives and businesses. Generally, their satisfaction with their businesses exceeded their satisfaction with their lives. Their enthusiasm for their venture and their view of work as enjoyable rather than tedious gave them immense satisfaction. They prioritize their business success and goals to measure their level of satisfaction. They shield themselves from outside opinions and remain undistracted, viewing their work as enjoyable rather than tedious, which gives them immense business satisfaction. When they reach business satisfaction, they assume they are also satisfied with life.

That said, participants also reported feelings of dissatisfaction with their venture and their lives, particularly when they experienced adverse discrepancies and conflicts. In these situations, their emotions were in constant flux, which impacted their overall life satisfaction and ultimately hindered their ability to thrive and reach their full potential. Many participants talked about their aspirations to achieve success, recognition, and financial gain but noted that even after reaching these milestones, they often found themselves seeking more, leading to ongoing

feelings of discontentment. Overall, their experiences were akin to a roller coaster ride wherein their life and business satisfaction fluctuated based on the positive and negative discrepancies they experienced. As one participant commented,

The ObPE may be satisfied with his business. Still, in terms of other elements of his life, he misses certain things and is dissatisfied. (Int_L)

3.4.5.c Experiencing health and social issues

Some participants in our study acknowledged that they endure significant health and social-related consequences due to the accumulated negative discrepancies and conflicts. Their relentless drive often leads to detrimental habits like neglecting meals, experiencing digestive problems, excessive screen time on computers and phones, poor posture resulting in back pain and injuries, eating disorders, obesity, and disrupted sleep patterns. These issues arise from the intense focus and time commitment entrepreneurs pour into their work, ultimately impacting their overall health and mental well-being. Due to their unwavering dedication to their business, several participants admitted to facing a myriad of social issues, such as alcohol addiction, suicidal thoughts, the breakdown of important relationships, and divorce. A few confessed to feeling overwhelmed by the challenges they encountered, with some expressing shock that they had not succumbed to suicide amidst the chaos. To escape their problems, some turned to drugs and engaged in harmful behaviours, exacerbating their mental health issues. One participant commented:

I think ObPEs even go crazy. They tend to drink alcohol and become addicted to drugs. I know some of my friends were like that. (Int_H)

3.4.5.d State of psychological functioning

The final well-being outcome that ObPEs experience is psychological functioning, which demonstrates whether they experience positive or negative life engagement related to realizing

personal and business growth, experiencing autonomy, exploring and exploiting opportunities, maintaining networks, and accepting themselves. As already noted, ObPEs often struggle to maintain a healthy psychological balance. While they relish the freedom as entrepreneurs, they also struggle with the lack of autonomy since their intense dedication to their work can limit their ability to detach from it, making it difficult to see beyond their immediate tasks. Moreover, their intense business attachment limits their capacity for critical thinking and problem-solving, making it difficult for them to identify and capitalize on market opportunities. In addition, they experience negative discrepancies and conflicts when their work overwhelms them. The additional effort they must exert to address these issues may lead to mental fatigue, limiting their ability to make informed decisions. Some participants were aware that they failed to prioritize self-care and that the contacts they made were geared towards cultivating business networks rather than being socially oriented. Due to the egotistical nature of ObEP, they expressed the struggle to accept their current selves even though they experienced discrepancies and conflicts.

While it is true that ObPEs experience challenges in their psychological functioning, they also find a positive aspect of their state of being. Many successful entrepreneurs recognized that maintaining a strong focus and dedication to their business promoted opportunities and success, as they can consistently work hard and stay alert to changes in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. When they achieved their goals, they became even more motivated to seek new opportunities and to excel further. A few participants perceived that they were inspiring role models for young entrepreneurs and viewed their business achievements as a reflection of their personal growth, further driving their passion and dedication. For these individuals, their business gave purpose and meaning to their lives. While participants exhibited egotistical tendencies, they also acknowledged their accountability for their passion and any related discrepancies. They were willing to confront their flaws and take proactive measures to address them,

demonstrating that they are not purely ignoring their current selves and are ready to accept who they are. Finally, the robust business networks they built by actively engaging with diverse stakeholders also enhanced their psychological functioning. One participant noted:

Due to my addiction to the business, I ended up building a vast business network that helped me to succeed in my business in various ways. (Int_J)

3.5 Discussion

The lack of theoretical understanding of ObEP and the inconclusive findings to date on its impact on well-being outcomes in the entrepreneurial context (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Streeb, 2024) led us to explore how the cognitive self-evaluation of obsessively passionate entrepreneurs shapes their well-being. We found that entrepreneurs often experience discrepant self-evaluation outcomes and conflicts, which can positively or negatively affect their well-being. We also found that ObPEs who experienced negative discrepancies may then be motivated to avoid adverse well-being outcomes. The contribution of our study is fourfold. First, we uncover the intricate relationship between ObEP and well-being by revealing the dynamic psychological processes at play. Utilizing SDT as a framework, we contribute to the ongoing debate on whether experiencing obsessive passion is healthy or unhealthy for entrepreneurs and their well-being (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Stenseng et al., 2011). Our dynamic process model consists of four phases: emergence of ObEP, cognitive evaluation of the self, experiencing self-discrepancies and conflicts, and entrepreneurial well-being outcomes. In our model, we argue that the positive and negative consequences of ObEP mainly depend on the entrepreneur's cognitive self-evaluation. ObPEs often evaluate themselves by comparing their actual status with the self-guides such as personal and social goals or norms. This process of cognitively evaluating oneself can generate various forms of discrepancies.

Previous research on obsessive passion and associated self-discrepancy has shown that it can lead to negative self-discrepancies (Stenseng et al., 2015; Stenseng et al., 2011). We reveal that ObPEs may not always encounter such negative discrepancies. We argue that ObPEs could also experience favourable discrepancies from positive self-evaluation when they meet or exceed their self-guides, enhancing their overall well-being. However, due to their intense attachment to business activities, they neglect non-business activities, hindering them from meeting some of their self-guides. This negative discrepancy may cause interpersonal conflicts and compromise their well-being. Our study highlights the salient role played by cognitive self-evaluation in determining the well-being of ObPEs.

A second contribution of our study lies in our introduction of the nuanced concept, the “vicious cycle of ObEP.” This framework elucidates the mechanisms through which ObPEs may encounter poor well-being. The cycle consists of three stages: discrepancies from negative self-evaluation, degree of discrepancy, and conflict escalation. Since ObPEs give utmost priority to their business activities rather than non-business activities (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Fasana et al., 2022; Stroe, 2017), they typically experience greater discrepancies from negative self-evaluations. Repeated exposure to these discrepancies escalates conflict with themselves and their loved ones. Where prior empirical studies have focused on the intrapersonal conflicts triggered by ObEP (Seguin-Levesque et al., 2003; Stenseng, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2003), we find that ObEP can also lead to interpersonal conflicts. This is because others in the lives of ObPEs may feel that they are not being sufficiently prioritized. The unsatisfied goals of their loved ones and social norms can bring negative images and criticisms to the entrepreneurs, triggering a conflict between them and their close others, leading to poor well-being. We argue that the intensity of the conflicts with oneself and with others can be determined by the degree of negative discrepancy experienced by the ObPEs. In particular, ruminating about their negative discrepancies can keep ObPEs feeling stuck, overwhelmed, and unproductive.

The third contribution focuses on furthering our understanding of SDT. The theory posits that a greater discrepancy between one's actual status and one's self-guide results in emotional discomfort and well-being issues (Higgins, 1987). However, there is a further lack of knowledge about cognitive and affective factors in the relationship between self-discrepancies and their associated emotional outcomes (Schlechter et al., 2022). Our study explains how the self-discrepancy of ObPEs is linked to poor well-being by revealing the role and effects of intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. We highlight that negative discrepancies cause intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts due to the disparities between their actual status and self-guides, leading to poor well-being outcomes.

In addition, the theory proposes that different types of self-discrepancies will result in various psychological discomforts, including dejection-related emotions (such as disappointment, dissatisfaction, and shame) and agitation-related emotions (such as fear, guilt, and self-contempt) (Higgins, 1987). However, we argue that discrepancies do not always result in these two types of emotions, nor are their effects necessarily limited to the intrapersonal domain. While not meeting self-guides could result in self-related emotional and behavioural outcomes, it can also create various interpersonal problems and emotional outcomes such as inter-conflicts, disagreement, disappointment, anger, and aggression as SDT argues how one could live by adhering to one's own and others' expectations and what could be the emotional consequences if the person does not live up to these expectations. Recent research also pinpoints a lack of tendency to adopt an interpersonal or social lens in the study of self-discrepancy (Lee, 2023). Thus, we further grounded and studied the interpersonal outcomes of discrepancies. Our consideration of this aspect of self-discrepancy revealed that interpersonal conflicts can generate aggression-related emotions, such as anger and violence, in addition to dejection-related and agitation-related emotions.

Finally, although prior works highlight that individuals with obsessive passion are victims of their own passions since it is difficult for them to self-regulate (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Stoeber et al., 2011), leading to negative consequences (Stenseng et al., 2011), we reveal that ObPEs do, in fact, have some agency to navigate the adverse outcomes of ObEP into positive ones or at least minimize its impacts temporarily. The experience of negative discrepancy and intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts can act as catalysts by motivating them to take steps to break the evil face of passion. They can employ strategies to tackle their ObEP and its adverse outcomes at the individual level or by developing a supportive system with the help of others, depending on the situation.

3.5.1 Practical Implications

Understanding the nature of ObEP and the underlying psychological process between ObEP and its associated well-being outcomes has practical implications for entrepreneurs, as they can use this knowledge to make informed decisions about managing their passion in a way that promotes their overall well-being. By identifying the specific behaviours and thought patterns that contribute to perpetuating the vicious cycle of ObEP, we provide valuable insights for both aspiring and established entrepreneurs to recognize and address these harmful tendencies. Our comprehensive examination of the underlying causes driving this phenomenon enables us to reveal a few practical strategies entrepreneurs can follow to break free from the grips of ObEP and foster healthier, more sustainable practices in their passionate endeavours.

Although we have examined the negative aspects of ObEP, we have also revealed when ObEP may yield favourable well-being outcomes for entrepreneurs. When channeled effectively, ObEP can fuel motivation, resilience, success, and improved well-being in the entrepreneurial journey. By recognizing the importance of ObEP and prioritizing their well-being, entrepreneurs can create a fulfilling and sustainable career that brings success in both their personal and professional lives.

3.5.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Our study advances our understanding of the dynamic process of how ObEP emerges and impacts the well-being of entrepreneurs. In doing so, we provide a foundation for several potential research areas. First, we recommend further investigating this process among entrepreneurs at various stages of venture creation to examine how this process evolves. It would also be valuable to explore how ObEP is managed during various entrepreneurial activities, such as inventing new products or services, founding new organizations, and developing organizations rather than the overall business to reach entrepreneurial well-being. These lines of inquiry are likely to provide valuable insights into how entrepreneurs may improve their overall well-being.

Second, our study primarily explored this phenomenon at the individual level of analysis, and it would be interesting to include close others during the interviews, such as family members, friends, subordinates, and any other key stakeholders who have the potential to be impacted by the entrepreneur's passion. Although we included them in our study for data triangulation (Jack & Raturi, 2006) and to minimize the bias raised by self-reported interviews, data from close others could extend the understanding of how they influence and are influenced by the obsessive passion of entrepreneurs, when and how they intervene, and what the mechanisms of such interventions entail. These inquiries present promising avenues for further research and can shed light on the dynamics of obsessive passion within an entrepreneurial setting.

Third, exploring the interplay between ObEP and well-being among entrepreneurs of different genders and age groups could provide valuable insights. Considering that passion and its outcomes may vary based on these demographic factors (Murnieks et al., 2020), future research needs to investigate how gender and age influence the development of ObEP, its consequences, and the underlying psychological mechanisms. In addition, comparing ObPEs with their harmonious counterparts may shed light on how these individuals differ in cultivating and

managing their passion to achieve positive well-being outcomes. Moreover, examining the cognitive processes, such as self-serving bias or cognitive dissonance, that entrepreneurs use to justify high levels of well-being (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022) would be a fruitful area of future inquiry since it will reveal how entrepreneurs evaluate and justify their well-being status without any bias.

Finally, while our primary focus was on how the self-evaluation of ObPEs shapes their well-being, our research began by exploring the underlying motivations driving the passion of entrepreneurs and how it ultimately transforms into an ObEP. This step was taken to confirm that our participants were truly passionate about their businesses and embodied the qualities of ObEP. We found that entrepreneurial identity plays a key role in this stage since how entrepreneurs register and integrate recognized stimuli into their identity determines their passion. However, we did not deeply examine identity formation and its process, as these concepts are well-researched in non-entrepreneurial contexts. Yet, conducting future research in an entrepreneurial context could provide valuable insights due to the unique nature of entrepreneurs.

3.6 Conclusion

Our study provides new knowledge on the interplay between ObEP, cognitive self-evaluation, its associated discrepant outcomes, conflict escalation, motivation to address discrepancies and conflicts, and overall entrepreneurial well-being. We highlight that the positive or negative consequences of ObEP hinge on how entrepreneurs cognitively evaluate themselves through their own and others' perspectives and the discrepancies that arise during this evaluation process. By examining how discrepancies in self-evaluation can impact motivation and overall well-being, we offer valuable insights for entrepreneurs looking to harness their passion positively and productively.

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3.8. Appendix

Table 3.2 Representative Quotes Illustrating the First-Order Categories, Second-Order Themes and Overarching Dimension

Representative Quotes from the Data	First- Order Categories/ Codes	Second- Order Themes	Overarchi ng theoretical Dimension
<p>I don't think I want to report to anyone. I just wanted to prove that I can do something big. I wanted to build something from scratch without depending on any others (Int_Q)</p> <p>There must be a great deal of commitment as well. I am having an intense commitment to doing my business that drives my passion (Int_V)</p> <p>I am a person who has a good understanding of market trends and opportunities, which motivates me to run my business with passion (Int_Y)</p> <p>I needed to have some knowledge of the subject. I chose the degree program called Entrepreneurship. That gave me an impetus to develop my passion for business (Int_C)</p> <p>I have always been interested in business. I dreamed of building a brand and having it out in the market. So, that has been a dream I have had for a long time (Int_J)</p> <p>If there are new challenges, new things, or new opportunities, I am really passionate about all those things (Int_F)</p> <p>In fact, when I first got into this business, I had no idea whether it was right or wrong. So, with that feeling, I entered the business, but as I got the experience, I became interested in doing more and more business (Int_C)</p>	<p>Personal stimulus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent attitude • Business commitment • Opportunity seeking • Entrepreneurial education • Childhood dreams • Innovative and risk-taking propensity • Past and present experience 	Stimulus of entrepreneurial passion	Emergence of ObEP
<p>My mom was the person behind my entire success. She said, if you are 100% Sure, it's fine. Just go and start your business. My father also. During my childhood age, he used to share many of his experiences with me (Int_B)</p> <p>Bill Gates and Warren Buffett are big people. I have seen them, and I got my passion by seeing them. Those kinds of people impact me. When I see them, I recall their passion and admire them (Int_ZC)</p> <p>The competition in my field is higher than the others. So, I should be innovative every day. If not, I will lose my customers. So, I am passionate about finding new things and innovations (Int_D)</p>	<p>Contextual Stimulus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and non-family support • Role models or inspiration from others • Competitive pressure 		

<p>I first took the clients from one level, but now I target advanced-level clients. Of course, with success, desires for business increase. It increases the level of targets (Int_D)</p> <p>When people see failures, they are still passionate about their business. That is what happened to me. The business failures I experienced gave me a drive and passion for doing something to reach success (Int_K)</p> <p>We work under someone but are unsatisfied. We make up our minds as we tend to forget bad things and continue to work. We are not happy with our job. That is a constant loop. So, I am passionate about starting a business (Int_J)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business success or failures • Job dissatisfaction 		
<p>I want to hear that I am the owner of this company. Yeah, that is right. “Business identity” (...). Business identity is my identity. In fact, my identity should be the identity of my business (Int_A)</p> <p>Because of my business, I have recognition or identity. I have more identity now. Previously, I worked somewhere, and now I am an entrepreneur. I got lots of recognition and identity from my business as an entrepreneur (Int_I)</p>	<p>Sense of entrepreneurial identity</p>	<p>Registration and integration of entrepreneurial activities into identity</p>	
<p>My love for a business is uncontrollable. I could earn more profit from it. I could get more recognition and earn more social acceptance. So, I need to have the title of “entrepreneur” (Int_F)</p> <p>All my goals are related to business. So, if I do not cover them up, it will affect my business and identity. That is the main reason for all my hard work (Int_D)</p>	<p>Control integration of activity into identity</p>		
<p>Involving in my business is an excitement and thrill for me. It is something very interesting. I hope it does not run out. (Laughing) (Int_N)</p> <p>My passion for business is like a hungry rat. It never gets tired; it always looks for food (Int_K)</p> <p>I feel like I am alive. It is a heat inside you, like a fire in your belly; you just need to step out and do something. It is not a choice. I did not start this for money or any other thing. I really had to go for it and start. That is the feeling I have for my business (Int_K)</p> <p>Even during my sleep, and then from the time I woke up, I started thinking of my business. That is what normally a businessperson would do. 24 hours of thinking. Even when I am sleeping, I dream about business (Int_ZC)</p> <p>When I talk with my friends or the network, I usually talk about business (Laughing). I am always focused on starting a new business or adding something new to my existing business. I feel it is ineffective if I do not talk about business during those conversations (Laughing) (Int_R)</p>	<p>Obsessive thoughts about business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excited business engagement • Impulsive feeling • Feeling alive • Thinking and talking about business often 	<p>Experiencing obsessive entrepreneurial passion</p>	
<p>I am supposed to be involved in my business operations. If somebody would tell me, “Do not worry about the business; I will take care of it, and you can be free, get all the money you need, invest and get</p>	<p>Intense engagement in business</p>		

<p>profit". At that point, I might be demotivated and unhappy because I am passionate about getting involved in those activities (Int_L)</p> <p>I like to do business work most of the time. I do not like to go outstations. Mom tells me to marry (...). I postpone it because of my business. My biggest target is my business. I do not have time to think about other things (Int_C)</p> <p>Passion has an evil side. I do not like to be the second. We lost and failed in the business journey, but in the end, success will come. All these failures will teach us several things. So, the winner is the person who does not give up in any circumstances. That is why I take it as an evil thing. I mean, we cannot give up anything easily (Int_F)</p> <p>I had to sacrifice people. I come home from work late at night and leave the next morning; I sacrificed my family time, social activities, and fun moments. I sacrificed all of them. These are golden sacrifices (Int_Z)</p> <p>Although others say it is not good, I feel being obsessed with business always brings benefits. I do not feel like I am wasting my time. I am proud of myself. Yeah. I think everybody should be involved in business like that (Int_D)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense involvement • Poor engagement in non-business-related activities • Irrational persistence • Ready to sacrifice non-business activities • Believe more work leads to business success 		
<p>I mean, business is like my baby (Excited). So, we always want what is best for our kids. The same way I look at my business. It is tough to control my attachments to the business. Yeah, 100% (Int_Q)</p> <p>I think we need to have that business addiction to become an entrepreneur. We cannot do business without that addiction. Business is my passion. I am addicted to that (Int_ZA)</p> <p>I want to make all my business decisions. I do not want to give that power to anyone. Simply, it is something like this. I write a script and hire the actors, and those actors act according to my script (Int_A)</p>	<p>Difficulties in suppressing the desire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling to control the desire • Feeling of addiction • Reluctance to delegate power 		
<p>I am a person who pursues goals. I definitely need a target. I want a new goal for tomorrow. I like to live with those goals. Because of that thirst, I can bring my business to a better place (Int_V)</p> <p>Intense attachment to my business provides benefits because I enjoy my involvement in business. I am learning new things and getting updated on new trends. I become a business expert (Int_P)</p> <p>My passion for business is kind of overconfidence. Because of that passion, some people say I am always overestimating myself (Int_F)</p> <p>There might be an optimum point, but once we go ahead with that one, we might fall due to the risk we are taking. That is the calculated risk. But, due to my passion, I am taking more risks than I could take (Int_F)</p>	<p>Deep drive toward business goals/success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement oriented • Motivated to be an expert in business tasks • Over-confident • Risking beyond capabilities • Desire for self-esteem 		

<p>I am getting an image because of too much involvement in business. So, without any expectation, unconsciously, it improves my self-esteem (Int_P)</p> <p>I prioritize my business goals because if we achieve our business goals only, we will be able to achieve our personal goals. If I give priority to my personal goals, I will not be able to achieve my business (Int_H)</p> <p>I will start another business. So, that confidence is still there. I am building the business and trying to reach some level. When it reaches success, I will start something else. So that is me (Int_G)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business over personal goals • Serial business 		
<p>I know I am obsessed with my business. But I am okay with that (Int_B)</p> <p>It is obvious that I have an obsessive passion for our business because I do not mind controlling my passion. I have an eternal love for it (Int_A)</p>	<p>Aware of or accepts the experience of ObEP</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Awareness about ObEP</p>	
<p>I am unsure what kind of attachment or love I have towards my business, and I never thought about it. But, still, I love my business (Int_ZB)</p> <p>I do not know whether I am passionate or not, but I am involved in my business more than anything (Int_H)</p>	<p>Not aware of or does not accept the experience of ObEP</p>		
<p>All my capability and my capacity are now reserved for my business purposes and myself (Int_F)</p> <p>My business is currently connected to me. My business is part of me and depends on me (Int_A)</p> <p>Currently, I am working too much, I don't have time to speak with family and friends (Int_G)</p>	<p>Present status of the owner and business from the owner's perspective</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Perceived self - Entrepreneur's own perspectives</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Cognitive evaluation of the self</p>
<p>If I do not have any of relationships/family commitments, then I will engage full-time with my business (Int_H)</p> <p>Developing an international brand has been one of my craziest dreams. Whatever the product or outlet wise, either way, expanding... expanding... I want to expand and grow locally and then move internationally (Int_J)</p>	<p>Future expectations/goals of the owner from the owner's perspective</p>		
<p>I do not want to change my relationship with business based on others. I do not listen to anyone (Laughing). If I want to do something, I will definitely do it most of the time (Int_B)</p> <p>Basically, I do not care about other relatives or whoever. I will do what I like. So, if I go for such a relationship, I must proportionate my time and allocate part of my time to my partner and children. Of course, there would be a barrier if I did not manage it properly. So, I am not interested in those relationships (Int_F)</p>	<p>Personal norms of the owner</p>		

<p>People close to me ask me what you are doing with so much debt. Am I crazy? But they think that I am crazy (Laughing). Most of the time, my mother demotivates me (Laughing). She is scared about the current position of my business. She says, “If you continue like this, you will get into trouble (Int_A) They think (close others) that I am excessively attached to business or maybe I am after money. That is why I do not spend time with people. They think I am into business rather than prioritizing other stuff (Int_L)</p>	<p>Present status of the owner and business from others’ perspectives</p>	<p>Others’ Perspectives Perceived Self-</p>	
<p>I used to hear this from my mother for years; she used to say, okay, this person’s daughter is attached to this company; this person’s son is attached to that company. So, I felt that my mother might have wanted me to be in that kind of job where she could proudly tell her friends that her son is attached to this particular company (Int_L) My parents always wanted me to get married. But I am not interested in it since I want to do my business (Int_T)</p>	<p>Future expectations/goals of the owner from others’ perspectives</p>		
<p>Others measure the success of our business based on how much revenue we make and the value of our business. So, we should run behind success. Otherwise, we will be undervalued (Int_B) I have arguments with my mother-in-law. She has a negative attitude towards me. She perceives that I am not performing my role as a good mother due to too much business engagement (Int_G)</p>	<p>Social norms expected to be followed by the owner</p>		
<p>I wanted to be here as a guy who would achieve a unique business status. I have achieved those goals more than I expected today, and I am happy (...) I always believe in dealing with problems and winning the hurdles. That’s what motivated me to be who I am today (Int_B) My addiction to business helped me achieve goals than I expected and reach the place where I am now (Int_ZA)</p>	<p>Exceed the expectations of the owner</p>	<p>Discrepancies from positive self-evaluation</p>	<p>Experiencing self-discrepancies</p>
<p>I get positive feedback on social media. Sometimes, I put my projects in FB groups. They have an impression of my products, although I am in the initial stage. They take advice from me and value me as a “Guru” (Int_C) I always get positive feedback. I didn’t get any negative emotions because of the nature of the business. That means there is no loss. If you lose only, you will have negative feedback and negative feelings (Int_S)</p>	<p>Positive feedback from others</p>		

<p>I do not worry if I fail to satisfy others' demands; I normally take that decision after considering everything (Int_A) I will show others that I can achieve all those things by doing my business successfully. I never get a negative feeling that I'm not achieving. Because I know I'm right (Int_R)</p>	<p>Not having or feeling any discrepancy</p>	<p>Not experiencing discrepancy</p>	
<p>Fortunately, I haven't been in that (discrepant) situation (Laughing). I don't want to sound too cocky. But I never experienced a failure (Int_Q) As I can remember, nothing like (missing family/friends and events) has happened to me yet. I am not sure (Int_R)</p>	<p>Not aware of the discrepancy</p>		
<p>Personally, I will doubt my competencies when I fail or cannot achieve my goals. It impacts my self-esteem. We have already failed to launch a product into the market. I tried every way to make it successful because I am passionate about it. And when I failed at every angle, I decided this would not work anymore (Int_B) Although I wanted to attend, I could not attend my sister's wedding due to my business work (sad). She had left a gap in every photo from her wedding to insert my picture. Whenever I see that, I realize I made a mistake (Int_A)</p>	<p>Discrepancies due to unsatisfied goals and personal norms of entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Discrepancies from negative self-evaluation</p>	
<p>When I get inferior remarks from society, it's a difficult feeling to tolerate. Since my business in Sri Lanka, I have always struggled to face society. In addition to facing the challenges in business, facing society and justifying yourself to society has been a difficult task (Int_L) My parents expect me to be with them physically as they feel happier when I am with them. I want to meet them directly. But I can't arrange all this stuff. Unfortunately, I could not be with my wife as well. I couldn't give up my tasks because I was involved in the business. Sometimes, when I go out with friends, I receive business calls. But my friends don't like it. They expect me to give my total time to them (Int_ZC)</p>	<p>Discrepancies due to unsatisfied goals of others and social norms of entrepreneurs</p>		
<p>The passion of my life is doing my business. I have a lot of fun with this business, and there are many interesting things about it. Yes, I tell her (partner) to change for me, but I will not change my interest (Int_A) If people close to me do not have a similar interest in my business same as me, then I will change relationships with them (Laughing), not with my business (Int_F)</p>	<p>Giving importance to expectations and norms</p>	<p>Degree of discrepancies</p>	
<p>When I fail, I am overwhelmed by how others view me and how they think about me. Of course, the people I competed with were a lot ahead of me (Int_C) Sometimes, my father will not understand me. My wife sometimes will not understand me. They can't understand my passion for business. It disturbs me a lot (Int_W)</p>	<p>Giving importance to the discrepancy</p>		

<p>Even though I accept failures and am willing to get up after I fail, I still think about those failures until I overcome them (...). I don't want to lie that I am not worrying about my business while away. No, definitely, I will think about the business (Int_B)</p> <p>I will repeatedly think about the loss. Sometimes, if customers come into my store and do not buy products from me, I think about that. Yeah. Why didn't they buy from me? And how do I sell it to a customer? (Int_D)</p>	<p>Recalling the discrepancy often</p>		
<p>There will surely be a conflict if others cannot understand my passion. I'm more worried about it, and it will have a greater impact on me. It is like a conflict with my mind (...). I have not achieved some of my goals. The most disheartening aspect is the lingering thought that I could have accomplished it. I yell myself (Int_B)</p> <p>It is not easy for a businessman to manage the work and house together. I'm actually struggling to do that. It is important to balance both family and work. But I feel I am not that much. I am disappointed myself. I'm struggling to manage the relationships (with close others) and the business. So, it is a continuous battle within me (Int_G)</p>	<p>Experiencing conflict with self</p>	<p>Experiencing conflict escalation</p>	<p>Experiencing conflicts</p>
<p>Evaluating the quality of products takes time. So, our staff meetings could go beyond 8.00 on Friday nights. My husband is not very happy about it (sad face). Sometimes, he says, Oh, you worry too much and just do what you can and leave the rest. But I'm not happy with that. So, these sometimes trigger conflicts between us (Int_E)</p> <p>We tend to neglect our family because even at home, we constantly think about business. Even on the nights, we work and totally neglect our families. While in bed, we are thinking of what I can do tomorrow. When we wake up, we want to work on our plans. We are always at the workplace. We never come home on time. Sometimes, my wife calls and asks, "Are you coming for lunch or dinner?". But I have no time, or I forget the promises. So yes, when we can't balance the time between work and family, our family is neglected. Then we start having problems (Int_J)</p>	<p>Experiencing conflict with others</p>		
<p>There are times I feel sorry for myself. And then I think it is okay to miss things. That is how I get back to normal. I assumed that what I did was right, and I recovered myself. I am motivated and continue working. I think we always have problems in business that we must solve them somehow (Int_A)</p> <p>Let's say the projects are failing now. But still, in my mind, there are thoughts like a mantra: I can reach them. I can reach them. So, although I work on my business 24 x 7, failures are apparent, and they are unavoidable (Int_G)</p>	<p>Acceptance of failure</p>	<p>Motivation due to the experienced discrepancies</p>	

<p>After my first business failed, I waited until I started my second business. I was frustrated during that period. But I was confident that what I did was right, and I could do better next time (Int_C) Everything was ruined when my business caught fire, but I had the energy to start it all from scratch. Because these are not things we brought with us. I have the energy to start it all from the beginning, whatever happens (Int_Y)</p>	<p>Having self-confidence</p>		
<p>Unachieved goals bring out fear in me, and that fear poses a question: for example, if I continue like this, will I have to close down my business? And if I need to close my business now, oh no. I cannot even imagine it. I will not close. That sad emotion will again push me up to work further (Int_J) We had to protect our brand image. So, that negative image among clients creates a kind of fear that forces us to do something to remove those black marks and work more (Int_B)</p>	<p>Fear of failure</p>		
<p>I balance all of them by remaining silent and being deaf ear (laughing). It is not easy to manage such situations. But if I say something, there will be arguments. It would hurt me. Then. I need to solve those problems by myself. So, I feel it would be nice to be quiet by that time (Int_A) My idea was to start a business, create jobs, and build a good brand. Other than that, I did not focus on my family. I do not want to take those responsibilities. I know that is a big responsibility. I am really scared to take it (Int_C) There may be failures coming up; we need to accept them. But accept, and again, just accept that it is not enough. We need to accept and understand why it went wrong (Int_G) Though there are conflicts, we can make our partner happy and satisfied. I can do something different. So, I usually do something to make her happy, and that conflict will be masked sooner. I bring some gifts for her (Int_W) I do not care. What I say is when people negatively comment about me, “Did I ask for money from anyone?”. I have my own business and am still surviving, and I’m not asking for money or support or looking for a job. I am still confident that I can run my business (Int_T) There would be a stage where we might have to withdraw. If we have the attitude of taking on any challenge, that’s great. But then there will be some things where we can’t move forward, and we will have to give up (Int_N)</p>	<p>Personal initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning deaf ear/Being silent • Avoiding family responsibilities • Accepting failures and moving on • Reframing negative situations, solution-oriented • Don’t care attitude • Withdrawing from problems 	<p>Tackling experienced discrepancies and conflicts</p>	
<p>I cannot convince my business about my family’s desires, but I can tell my family about the business. In such cases (when the family does not like intense involvement in business), I will explain to them the benefits of my business. My business has given my wife and children good recognition, and they also have an excellent economic background. I explain everything to them (Int_V)</p>	<p>Inter-personal initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convincing others to think/act the same as the owner 		

<p>Even if the person is crazy about the business, if the family members and his close circle support that person and show the same interests as that entrepreneur, then that entrepreneur will be more successful than others (Int_L)</p> <p>I choose my friends strategically. If they tend to help my business and have similar interests, then I try to get involved. If not, I don't engage with them because they will pull me back from my business (Int_D)</p> <p>In the early stage, it was a mistake. But I understand the mistake now. Now, it is almost delegating tasks. So, right now, what I'm doing is delegating my work to everybody (Int_G)</p> <p>If there is a difficult problem, I take advice from someone. I have contact with people who have good experience and knowledge about this field; they are always there to support me. I am getting help from them as well (Int_O)</p> <p>Allocating time for my non-business activities is hard, but I still put some effort into focusing on other stuff. Instead of complaining about my struggles, trying something is always better (Int_Y)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and close others support • People with similar interest • Role delegation • Getting advice from others • Balance between work and family 		
<p>People told me that others who are at your age have good jobs. They are stable, and they have their own properties. I felt a kind of pressure. When people compare me to others, I feel frustrated. When I have problems, I do not talk much. I have frustration (Int_C)</p> <p>I feel guilty because my only problem right now is that I have less time to spend on other things due to my business activities. I am curious about it and worrying. It is impossible to imagine what will happen to my future (Int_M)</p>	Experiencing anxiety-related affects	Experiencing negative affect	Experiencing well-being outcomes
<p>I feel really bad when I cannot achieve my targets. If I can't achieve my goals or if I have difficulty in achieving my goals, I get a bit worried. I only get depressed when I can't achieve my targets (Int_D)</p> <p>When I do not achieve my goals, I feel so down. I worry because things are not moving the way I want. Nothing is correct. Such feelings I get. So, it creates so many negative problems and tremendous stress (Int_ZC)</p>	Experiencing depressive-related affects		
<p>In fact, when my relatives told me negative things like that, it made me very angry. I got angry at them. Because they are the ones who influence my parents (Int_C)</p> <p>In the early stages of business and even now, I have a lot of stress, hypertension, being aggressive, and all these negativities. Doctors told me this happens as I take too much load. I always serve too much on my plate (Int_Z)</p>	Experiencing aggression-related affects		

<p>Due to my passion, I was able to achieve my target. When we achieve a target, for example, the number of units or products I sold out in the market, I am happy at the end of the day (Int_Z)</p> <p>There is a positive side to extreme passion. I have a vision for my business. So, passion helps me to work towards my goals. I feel so happy when I reach my goals. It happens due to my passion for my business (Int_ZC)</p>	<p>Experiencing happiness</p>	<p>Experiencing positive affect</p>	
<p>When we are more passionate, we will thrive. When we are addicted, or business is the only thing that matters, then our business is basically who we are. I mean, we cannot separate us from our business. We are thrilled (Int_J)</p> <p>I think being obsessively passionate helps me to think about business more. Being addicted is a benefit as I enjoy my involvement in business. Thinking about business too much brings benefits to me. New ideas, innovations, profits, and expansion of the business. On the other hand, it pushes me to achieve my targets. Achieving targets makes me thrilled. Yeah, I do not know what will happen to others. But it is natural for me to enjoy it (Int_P)</p>	<p>Experiencing enjoyment and thrill</p>		
<p>I am satisfied with my life. Actually, It is because of my business. I have achieved my business and personal goals. I have also achieved in terms of my relationships as well. So, I am satisfied with my life. My business is not a barrier to me. Actually, it helps me achieve both my personal and business goals (Int_M)</p> <p>I am not as satisfied with my personal life as I think. I want to travel more. But I do not focus on those things due to my business. I need to have a free mind to do all this; otherwise, I will get stressed. We used to go to the Gall Face (beach spot) on Saturdays and have fun in the early days. Now I am a little stressed as I cannot do those things. Of course, due to my business activities, I have been unable to do the things I want to do during my free time (Int_C)</p>	<p>Personal satisfaction/dissatisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing personal satisfaction • Experiencing personal dissatisfaction 	<p>Experiencing satisfaction/dissatisfaction</p>	
<p>The person being obsessively passionate is satisfied with his business. But not in certain things in his life. If I look at the business's overall performance, I mean not only just monetary gains but all aspects of business, I am satisfied. I remain content regarding the time that I spend because I get to see the operations become better, good earnings and my team members become happy (Int_L)</p> <p>I am not a person who is satisfied easily. If I am satisfied at any point, then that is where my problem begins. Then, I will not be able to chase my business goals. If I believe I am successful, I will stop everything. Thus, being satisfied means my business will not grow beyond that level. All my things will be negative. I mean, I will have to experience less satisfaction (Int_A)</p>	<p>Business satisfaction/dissatisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing business satisfaction • Experiencing business dissatisfaction 		

<p>When I am into business, I skip meals. And I need to go through much work. This creates gastric-related issues and all those things (Int_B)</p> <p>I had a vision issue due to overworking with computers as I need to engage with lots of programming and developing software (Int_G)</p> <p>I think I am letting myself down. There is no proper self-care. I am trying to meet the business requirements at the cost of my personal life in terms of mental and physical health. So that is where that gap is (Int_E)</p> <p>I do not get that much sleep. During busy times, I do not even groom myself properly, and I do not think I take care of myself (Int_D)</p> <p>I eat much food because I am thinking about my business issues while eating and ultimately gain weight (Int_ZA)</p>	<p>Suffering gastric issues, eye/vision issues, physical health issues, sleeping issues, eating disorders/obesity</p>	<p>Experiencing health and social issues</p>	
<p>To get rid of business issues, I began to consume more alcohol, which further impacted my health. (Int_A)</p> <p>Surprisingly, I'm not committing suicide myself (Laughing). However, some entrepreneurs commit suicide after reaching such a bad mental state (Int_F)</p> <p>If your wife does not understand your passion for business, the best thing to get a divorce is not your business but the wife (Laughing). I was in a relationship for about two and a half years. But when our views became different, which happened after I started my business, we were broke up (Int_B)</p>	<p>Addiction to narcotics, suicidal intention, indenting to divorce</p>		
<p>I feel those passion days are a bit controlling me, which I want to control. But mostly business control me (Int_E)</p> <p>Entrepreneurs with an obsessive passion for the business will easily recognize those opportunities and respond quickly (...). But, if he exceeds his capacity and takes risks beyond his limit, he will not be able to manage anything because we all have limits to our own capacity (Int_R)</p> <p>One of the major issues I saw in myself is that this over-passion has sometimes overtaken my logical thinking and curved my growth (Int_B)</p> <p>When I made mistakes, I never realized that. Even when I am working, I make decisions quickly. When people look at me, they say, "What the hell is this man doing?". I am a person with more ego than all the others. Of course, everybody does that. When I likely accept my mistake, my ego clashes (Int_B)</p> <p>I do not have any friends as I do not have time or things to discuss with them. External contacts feel not real. That doesn't mean I stay away from people; I have connections based on what I'm doing (business networks) (Int_K)</p>	<p>Experiencing negative psychological functioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less autonomy • Struggles in capturing opportunities • Poor personal growth • Not ready to accept the self • Poor personal network 	<p>Experiencing psychological functioning</p>	

<p>I am exploiting market opportunities and business trends. Entrepreneurs can find those opportunities easily if they are obsessively involved in that business. They will find the right market opportunities and learn a lot (Int_X)</p> <p>Being overly passionate helps me to reach my business goals. So I will have more recognition for myself. That identity will increase. As such, I can grow further than my present status (Int_M)</p> <p>I usually network with other parties, corporate clients, and restaurants. I overcome issues by networking. I always try to hunt people. Yeah, I have the capacity for headhunting. Most often, I can capitalize on those opportunities as I am highly involved with my businesspeople (Int_P)</p> <p>I feel that addiction to business would make entrepreneurs' lives more meaningful and purposeful in doing business. Also, as important, they might feed themselves, happier and satisfied about it as well (Int_J)</p> <p>I know obsessively passionate entrepreneurs do not allow society to change themselves. They do not like to hear criticism. They do not allow others to change them. But in my case, if it is good for me and rational, I will accept such changes (Int_F)</p>	<p>Experiencing positive psychological functioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploiting opportunities and mastering the business • Personal and business growth • Business network • Business as a purpose in life • Accept the self 		
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Chapter 4 Taming the Fire: A Dynamic Model of Coping Strategies to Regulate Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion

Abstract

Entrepreneurial well-being is integral to entrepreneurs' lives, enabling them to effectively overcome challenges while achieving business success. Passionate engagement in entrepreneurial activities enhances well-being by generating positive outcomes. However, when entrepreneurial passion becomes obsessive, this can also lead to poor well-being outcomes. Obsessively passionate entrepreneurs (ObPEs) enjoy being attached to their businesses but experience greater stress and negative emotions due to the rigid and controlling nature of their passion. Thus, it is critical for entrepreneurs to regulate their passion while coping with stress and associated negative emotions to pursue desired outcomes. To address this issue, we propose a dynamic model to explain how obsessively passionate entrepreneurs can manage negative emotions triggered by stress and how they may regulate their obsessive entrepreneurial passion to shape their well-being. Using the lens of cognitive appraisal theory, we explain that obsessively passionate entrepreneurs will appraise stress as challenges or threats depending on their goals, beliefs, and ability to access the resources to cope with the negative emotions triggered by stress. We show that entrepreneurs who employ approach strategies to cope with negative emotions regulate their passion by enhancing their level of obsessive entrepreneurial passion without detriment to their well-being. However, using avoidance strategies will cause them to reduce their attachment towards their business, which leads to compromised well-being.

Keywords: Obsessive entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial well-being, cognitive appraisal, approach and avoidance coping, regulation of obsessive entrepreneurial passion, Stress and negative emotions

4.1 Introduction

Well-being, described as the experience of satisfaction, positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and psychological functioning, is an essential outcome of engaging in entrepreneurship (Wiklund et al., 2019; Nikolaev et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial well-being can be improved in many ways, including via passionate engagement in entrepreneurial activities (Cardon et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2022; Stephan, 2018), as these activities generate positive affective outcomes, satisfaction, and feelings of accomplishment (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Vallerand, 2008). Entrepreneurial passion is an emotion that can fuel business success (Staniewski & Awruk, 2018). It is often regarded as "the heart" of entrepreneurship (Baum & Locke, 2004; Cardon et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2009) since thinking and acting entrepreneurially draws on a deep passion, which ignites creativity, persistence, resilience, and venture performance (Cardon et al., 2009). Wiklund et al. (2019) argue that experiencing greater well-being is a key motivation for becoming involved in entrepreneurial endeavours.

However, intense passionate engagement in business activities, referred to as *obsessive entrepreneurial passion (ObEP)*, can also lead to poor well-being outcomes (Fasana et al., 2022; Gülbahar & Özkan, 2023; Vallerand et al., 2003). ObEP emerges when entrepreneurs internalize entrepreneurial activities in a controlled fashion, adhering to internal and external pressure and related contingencies (Vallerand et al., 2003). Entrepreneurs with a strong obsessive passion can enjoy the attachment to their business, but this drive has the potential to consume them, leading to conflict with other parts of their lives and inviting the risk of burnout and frustration (Vallerand, 2010). In addition, obsessively passionate entrepreneurs (ObPEs) tend to experience negative emotions when encountering stressful business situations (Stroe et al., 2018; Thongmanivong, 2020; Zeiler, 2019). It is critical for them to cope with stress and its associated negative emotions while regulating their passion to pursue desired outcomes.

Effective regulation encompasses processes that involve adjusting the intensity or duration of internal feeling states or motivational states to promote social adaptation or to attain personal goals (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004). One type of regulation is coping. Coping refers to individuals' cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage and adapt to challenging and stressful situations (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). In dealing with stress, entrepreneurs can oscillate between taking active steps to address the issues head-on (*Approach coping*) and temporarily distancing from these venture-related problems (*Avoidance coping*) (Uy et al., 2013). Studies outside the entrepreneurial domain report obsessive passion as detrimental to self-regulation because of its rigid and controlling nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Stoeber et al., 2011) and its tendency to keep individuals from dealing with problems (Schellenberg et al., 2013; Verner-Filion et al., 2014). Our conceptual study puts forward a processual regulation model where ObPEs can consciously try to manage their passion by effectively coping with the negative emotions triggered by stressful situations.

Most ObPEs tend to perceive situations as more stressful than entrepreneurs who do not have ObEP (Zeiler, 2019) and, therefore, may require heightened levels of self-regulation to navigate the unique and contextual characteristics associated with entrepreneurship (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; O'Shea et al., 2017). However, little is known about the cognitive process involved when individuals seek to regulate their passion to achieve balance in their lives (Bélanger et al., 2019). Although prior studies have examined the antecedents and outcomes of ObEP (Newman et al., 2019; Thongmanivong, 2020), few have focused on the regulative aspects of ObEP. This potentially leads to a skewed and static perspective of ObEP, where entrepreneurs are understood as passive victims of their passions rather than as active agents. We seek to redress this by developing a conceptual model that addresses the following research question: *How can entrepreneurs regulate their obsessive passion in shaping their well-being?*

In addressing this research question, our study extends the regulative perspective on entrepreneurial passion by developing propositions that build on cognitive appraisal theory. We offer strategies to cope with the negative emotions triggered by stress and regulate ObEP. Although previous studies highlight the regulation perspective of entrepreneurial passion and coping with negative emotions independently, our study proposes a dynamic model that integrates into a single framework the following components: appraising stressful situations in an entrepreneurial context, coping with stress and negative emotions, and regulating ObEP and its associated well-being outcomes. By developing this conceptual model, our study makes three primary contributions to the literature on ObEP regulation and coping strategies to deal with stress and negative emotions.

First, we explain how ObPEs appraise stressful situations (*primary appraisal*). Higher levels of stress are often observed among ObPEs due to their intense involvement in their business (Zeiler, 2019). Previous studies indicate that ObPEs tend to appraise stressful situations as threats (Lavoie et al., 2021; Zeiler, 2019), but we argue that they also have the capacity to appraise these stressful situations as challenges. Drawing on cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), we contend that the appraisal of stressful situations as challenges or threats largely depends on one's goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with the negative emotions triggered by stress.

Second, we describe how the appraisal outcomes of stressful situations impact ObPEs' selection of coping strategies to deal with negative emotions (*secondary appraisal*). We suggest that their strategies may not always be avoidance-oriented. They may vary based on how the stressful situations are appraised while considering their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with negative emotions triggered by stress. ObPEs may employ approach coping strategies to manage negative emotions if they perceive business constraints as challenges, believing they are vital for achieving business goals. They may tackle these

challenges by accessing the appropriate resources (e.g., supportive peers, family, financial capabilities, skills, and prior experience). In contrast, when stressful situations are perceived as threatening, ObPEs may use avoidance coping strategies to alleviate the negative consequences.

Third, we explain how coping strategies to manage negative emotions in stressful situations may facilitate the regulation of their obsessive passion and shape their well-being. We suggest that entrepreneurs may intensify their ObEP when they employ approach strategies to cope with negative emotions triggered by stress. Strategies such as effectively facing challenges, showing strong commitment, exploring and exploiting more opportunities, or mastering entrepreneurial activities can yield positive business outcomes that may lead entrepreneurs to intensify their passion further. Although previous studies have concluded that ObPEs experience poor entrepreneurial well-being (Vallerand et al., 2003; Stroe et al., 2018), we suggest that regulating their ObEP through adopting approach coping strategies will alleviate the negative emotional outcomes of ObEP and enhance their well-being.

In contrast, entrepreneurs who employ avoidance strategies, such as manipulating negative situations, hiding problems from others, avoiding facing challenges, or suppressing goals to cope with negative emotions, may temporarily distance themselves from engaging in entrepreneurial activities that create stress. This withdrawal may reduce their level of ObEP and provide a form of temporary respite. However, studies also indicate that avoidance strategies may lead to negative emotions and other mental health issues due to being away from business-related issues without directly dealing with them (Uy et al., 2013). Thus, we suggest that avoidance-based strategies to cope with negative emotions tend to result in poor well-being.

In addition to our theoretical contributions, we highlight some implications for practice. Regulating one's passion for entrepreneurial activities is critical to entrepreneurs, given the stressful nature of their work (O'Shea et al., 2017). We suggest enhancing entrepreneurial well-being can be achieved by effectively combining and balancing approach and avoidance coping strategies while consciously regulating their obsessive passion. Further, entrepreneurs must be aware of their beliefs, goals, and resources to cope with negative emotions while choosing strategies. The mismatch between their personal characteristics (e.g., goals, beliefs, and resources) and chosen strategies may amplify stress and well-being issues.

4.2 Theoretical Background and Propositions

4.2.1 Entrepreneurial Passion and Well-being

Passionate entrepreneurs experience greater well-being, a key motivator for their involvement in entrepreneurial endeavours (Wiklund et al., 2019). Although entrepreneurial passion is typically seen as advantageous for individuals and societies, scholars recognize its potential downsides, commonly known as the "dark side" of entrepreneurial passion (Shepherd, 2019). Due to the rigid and controlled nature of passion, it can sometimes harm the entrepreneurs' lives and well-being. The dualistic Model of Passion by Vallerand et al. (2003), which elucidates the double-edged sword effects of entrepreneurial passion, is pertinent to our study. According to Vallerand et al. (2003), entrepreneurial passion is a strong inclination towards entrepreneurial pursuits that promotes the entrepreneur's self-identity. He categorizes passion into two types: *obsessive passion* and *harmonious passion*. Obsessive entrepreneurial passion refers to a controlled internalization of activities into the entrepreneur's identity and is contingent on various factors such as self-esteem, external rewards, social acceptance, or pressure (Vallerand et al., 2003). As a result, ObEP becomes less of a choice and is more influenced by internal and external forces, making it less intentional and autonomous

(Vallerand, 2015a; Vallerand et al., 2003). In contrast, harmoniously passionate entrepreneurs willingly engage in entrepreneurial activities that hold significance for their identity but do not dominate their sense of self. Such entrepreneurs manage to achieve a balance between their business commitments and other aspects of their lives (Vallerand, 2015a; Vallerand et al., 2003).

Research suggests most entrepreneurs are driven by an obsessive passion to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Thorgren & Wincent, 2015). This intense drive compels them to continuously strive for business success, leading to increased effort, persistence, improved performance, and a heightened ability to recognize and seize opportunities (Fisher et al., 2018; Tu et al., 2023). Investors tend to favour entrepreneurs with obsessive passion (Murnieks et al., 2016), but ObEP can have detrimental consequences for entrepreneurial well-being (Vallerand, 2015c). Indeed, ObPEs experience negative emotions due to the conflict with other aspects of their lives (Seguin-Levesque et al., 2003), psychological distress (Vallerand, 2010), and obstruction of in-task cognition (Curran et al., 2015). Such entrepreneurs feel they cannot help but engage in running their ventures and that nothing can come between them and their venture (Shepherd et al., 2022), a mindset that risks poor well-being outcomes.

4.2.2 Regulation of Obsessive Passion for Entrepreneurial Activities

Owing to its negative consequences, obsessive passion must be regulated if entrepreneurs are to achieve well-being (Bélanger et al., 2019; Luxford et al., 2022). ObEP is an emotion, and effective emotional regulation involves all processes that modulate the intensity or duration of internal feeling states or motivational states to achieve social adaptation or one's own goals (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004). Studies outside the entrepreneurial domain have reported obsessive passion as detrimental to regulation because of its rigid and controlling nature (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Stoeber et al., 2011). Scholars also suggest that obsessive passion is associated

with greater impulsivity, activity addiction, and low self-regulatory capacity (Bélanger et al., 2013; Orosz et al., 2016; Stenseng et al., 2011), which explains how low levels of regulation could account for a negative association between obsessive passion and well-being outcomes. ObPEs tend to perceive adverse situations as more stressful than others (Zeiler, 2019), experience greater negative emotions (Curran et al., 2015; Vallerand, 2010) and, therefore, may require heightened levels of self-regulation to navigate the unique and contextual characteristics associated with entrepreneurship (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; O'Shea et al., 2017). Streeb et al. (2023) also suggest that entrepreneurs can shift from being passive victims of obsessive passion to active agents, shaping their passion for maximizing benefits and mitigating its detrimental consequences. However, little is known about the cognitive process that accounts for how passionate individuals balance their passionate activities with other aspects of their lives (Bélanger et al., 2019).

Thus, our conceptual model demonstrates how entrepreneurs regulate their obsessive passion to shape their well-being. Individuals can regulate their emotions in various ways, and coping is one way to regulate their negative emotions triggered by stress (Rieffe et al., 2014). We argue that ObPEs, when encountering stressful situations, may try to regulate their obsessive passion by adopting different coping strategies. In the entrepreneurial context, obsessive passion is commonly referred to as the blind love entrepreneurs hold towards their businesses (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022). Blind love, however, may cultivate overconfidence (Cardon et al., 2005). Entrepreneurs with excessive confidence and optimism are better equipped to handle the challenges of workload, time pressures, uncertainty, and work demands (Busenitz & Barney, 1997; Robinson & Marino, 2015). We contend that ObPEs may be able to balance their business activities with other aspects of their lives by employing the appropriate coping strategies to deal with negative emotions triggered by stress and can experience greater well-

being. Based on these premises, the conceptual model was developed to explain how entrepreneurs can regulate obsessive passion in shaping their well-being.

4.2.3 Extension of the Regulation Perspective of Entrepreneurial Passion

We draw on the integrated model of entrepreneurial passion developed by Schwarte et al. (2023) to put forward our conceptual model. We used this model for conceptual clarity as it synthesizes the three leading perspectives on entrepreneurial passion. Our study attempts to extend *the regulation perspective* of entrepreneurial passion, as our primary concern lies in how entrepreneurs may regulate their obsessive passion to enhance their entrepreneurial well-being. This model starts with the stimulus, an external work-related, hobby-related, or entrepreneurial-specific event that leads entrepreneurs to engage in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs then incorporate these activities into their self-identities. The regulation perspective argues that entrepreneurs vary in how they internalize entrepreneurial activities into their self-identities (Vallerand et al., 2003). ObPEs may feel compelled to find an activity important due to internal and external pressure, and activity occupies a disproportionate space in entrepreneurs' identities. Ultimately, this controlled internalization causes them to experience conflict and negative emotions (Vallerand et al., 2003). Although their regulation perspective explains the process of how the controlled internalization of entrepreneurial activities into self-identities results in negative emotional experiences, it does not address how entrepreneurs can cope with these negative emotions and regulate their obsessive passion to achieve favourable outcomes. To address this question, our study uses cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) as a lens to develop a dynamic model of self-regulation of ObEP.

4.2.4 Cognitive Appraisal Theory and a Dynamic Model of Obsessive Passion Regulation

Studies on regulation highlight that the choice of coping strategies to deal with negative emotions depends on how individuals appraise stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Sakakibara & Endo, 2016; Simões et al., 2021). Cognitive appraisal is one of the pivotal components in understanding how exposure to work demands and situations can produce different reactions in individuals (Simões et al., 2021). Thus, we take cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) as a lens to develop a model of self-regulation of ObEP. This framework enables us to conceptualize how individuals perceive an event or situation, evaluate its level of stressfulness, and explore personal goals, beliefs, and resources for coping with negative emotions during stressful situations.

The cognitive process appraises three key points: (a) If a situation or event poses a risk to individuals' overall well-being; (b) whether individuals have enough personal resources to handle the demands of the situation; and (c) if the chosen regulative strategy for addressing the situation is effective (Lazarus, 1991). We extend prior work that has focused on how individuals' selection of regulation strategies is influenced by their subjective appraisal of the situation and their self-assessment of regulatory capacity in such situations (Kobylińska & Kusev, 2019; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Sakakibara & Endo, 2016; Simões et al., 2021). Cognitive appraisal occurs in a two-stage process: primary appraisal, which evaluates stressful situations, and secondary appraisal, which focuses on coping with the negative emotions triggered by stress (Gomes et al., 2017; Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In a similar vein, we propose a dynamic structure for regulating ObEP, which entails three key stages: *cognitive appraisal*, *regulative action*, and *well-being outcomes* (Figure 4.1). The process begins with entrepreneurs cognitively appraising stressful situations and interpreting their outcomes. We propose that entrepreneurs may potentially consider two elements in appraising these situations: (a) the level of perceived/experienced stress in the entrepreneurial

environment and associated negative emotional outcomes and (b) their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with those negative emotions in stressful situations. This will be followed by a regulative action phase in which entrepreneurs may respond to negative emotions experienced by adopting different coping strategies. Based on the employed coping strategies, entrepreneurs may tend to regulate their ObEP by either enhancing or minimizing it. Finally, by regulating their ObEP, they can shape their well-being outcomes. The following section explains the regulative process of ObEP in detail.

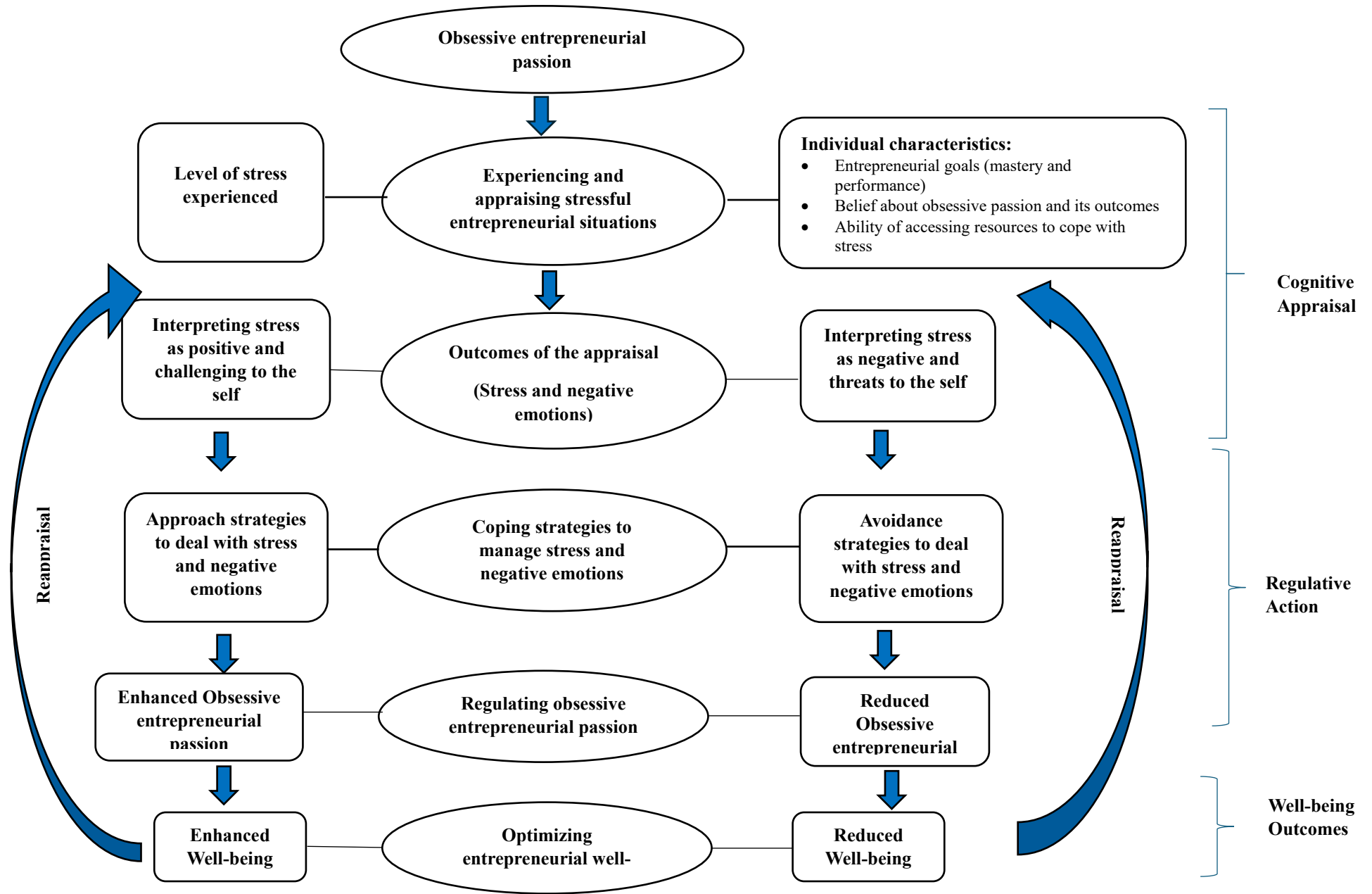


Figure 4.1. Dynamic Model of Regulating Obsessive Entrepreneurial Passion

➡ Sequence of the regulation stages **—** Dimensions of stages

4.2.4.a Phase I: Cognitive appraisal: Appraisal of stressful entrepreneurial situations and interpretation of appraisal outcomes (Challenge and threat appraisals)

Level of stress in the entrepreneurial environment and feeling of negative emotions

The first stage of our conceptual model explains how ObPEs cognitively appraise stressful business situations and interpret the experienced stress and negative emotions as threats or challenges. ObPEs may consider two potential criteria when appraising and responding to stressful situations. The first criterion is the extent to which they experience stress and its associated negative emotions due to their ObEP. Entrepreneurs are accountable for performing a diverse array of tasks (Douglas & Shepherd, 2000; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). Owing to the inherent demands of these tasks, entrepreneurs typically face elevated levels of stress in comparison to non-entrepreneurs (Buttner, 1992; Harris et al., 1999). These tasks may bring more stress to entrepreneurs who are obsessively passionate about entrepreneurial activities than to harmoniously passionate entrepreneurs (Zeiler, 2019). This is because harmoniously passionate entrepreneurs can freely engage in entrepreneurial activities and can have a balanced life (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Ho & Pollack, 2014). Indeed, research has indicated that autonomously self-determined individuals perceive work environments as low in stress (Léveillé et al., 2000; Parker et al., 2016; Tassell & Flett, 2007).

In contrast, ObPEs internalize entrepreneurial activity into their self-concept in a controlled manner due to specific internal and external pressures (i.e., self-esteem, social acceptance, and feelings of self-worth and self-enhancement) (Vallerand et al., 2003). Their intense engagement makes them struggle to balance their business activities with other life domains. By comparison, individuals lacking autonomous self-determination perceive work environments as stressful (Léveillé et al., 2000; Tassell & Flett, 2007). In addition, ObPEs also feel pressured to meet the expectations of important stakeholders, including strategic partners, investors, and even their own family members (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2007).

Consequently, the fear of failure in entrepreneurial endeavours becomes an inevitable aspect of their journey (Bélanger et al., 2013), and the appraisal of stressful work situations typically generates various negative emotions such as anxiety, burnout, frustration, guilt, and rumination.

However, entrepreneurs' responses to these outcomes may depend on how they appraise and interpret stressful situations (i.e., Jamieson et al., 2018). Lazarus (2006) suggests two significant types of primary appraisals, namely, challenge and threat appraisals. Challenge appraisals occur when an individual perceives a stressful situation as an opportunity for personal development or gain. Threat appraisals arise when an individual perceives a demand or stressor as potentially causing harm or loss. Studies have found that individuals with obsessive passion tend to appraise stressful situations as threats. This is because their passionate activities hold a significant place in their identities, making their self-esteem and life satisfaction dependent on their performance of those activities (Lafrenière et al., 2012; Mageau et al., 2011; Vallerand, 2010).

We propose that ObPEs can, however, appraise business constraints as challenges that represent opportunities for personal growth, development, and overall well-being. This is because ObPEs are more opportunity-oriented and more capable of recognizing opportunities than those without obsessive passion (Tu et al., 2022). ObPEs are highly achievement-oriented (Verner-Filion et al., 2017), determined to become masters in their activities (Vallerand et al., 2007; Verner-Filion et al., 2017), and exhibit persistence in the face of challenging circumstances (Lee, 2020; Vallerand et al., 2003; Walsh & Cunningham). They are recognized as identity-fused entrepreneurs who have a strong sense of loyalty and responsibility toward their business venture (Newson et al., 2016; Swann et al., 2015), which leads them to work aggressively (Buhrmester et al., 2018), feel strong energy, and maintain high tolerance to overcome obstacles to achieve their entrepreneurial goals (Lee, 2020). Studies have also found

that obsessive passion may lead individuals to be more functional in highly competitive environments (Amiot et al., 2006), even though the competitive nature of the environment is stressful (Mia & Clarke, 1999).

Further, they are obligated to not only pursue their own goals but also meet their stakeholders' expectations. (Tu et al., 2022; Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2007). When entrepreneurs seek avenues to achieve these entrepreneurial values, goals, and external expectations, they can mobilize their cognition, alertness, and ability to gather a wide range of information (Tu et al., 2022). They may use this to promote the possibility of surviving in stressful situations and facing challenges. Involvement in entrepreneurial activities and achieving success is crucial, as they tend to prove themselves (Lafrenière et al., 2012; Tu et al., 2022). This cognitive belief may provide a major impetus for continuously engaging in entrepreneurial activities and achieving business goals, even during stressful situations. Thus, it is emphasized that ObPEs do not always appraise and interpret stressful situations as threats. Instead, they may perceive them as challenges that bring growth and development opportunities.

Individual characteristics: Entrepreneur's goals, beliefs, and the ability to access resources to cope with negative emotions triggered by stress

We also posit that the response of ObPEs to a stressful situation may be contingent on a second aspect: their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with negative emotions. Psychology research shows that individual characteristics/differences (e.g., goals, values, beliefs, and personal resources) can impact how one appraises a stressful situation (Lazarus, 2006; Ziegler, 2001). These internal factors determine how individuals perceive and interpret stressors they encounter and may serve as the motivational basis for cognitive appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Ultimately, individual differences in the appraisal process may alter the effects of challenge and threat appraisals. Studies have highlighted that obsessively

passionate individuals tend to perceive stressful situations as threats (Zeiler, 2019). However, our study proposes that ObPEs differ in their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with negative emotions. This difference could determine how they appraise and interpret stress and negative emotions as challenges or threats.

First, our model highlights how the appraisal of stressors as either challenges or threats is dependent on the goals held by ObPEs. As already noted, ObPEs are highly achievement-oriented and want to achieve mastery over their pursuits (mastery or learning goals) (Verner-Filion et al., 2017). They aim to develop expertise by acquiring skills and mastering the art of dealing with various situations (Dweck, 1986). They actively seek out challenges and strongly desire to learn new information, explore new techniques, and acquire new skills in any activity they undertake. Such individuals tend to react positively to challenging circumstances, even when faced with failure, as they approach tasks with an optimistic mindset (Drawbaugh, 2017). The obsessive nature of passion drives them to engage in deliberate practices, enabling them to confront frustrating and discouraging situations, ultimately leading to exceptional performance over an extended period (Vallerand, 2015b). This is because the activity individuals are passionate about is important and meaningful to them, and they can cope with the stress of repeated failure while seeking task mastery (Vallerand, 2015b). Thus, when ObPEs have mastery goals, they will likely perceive stressful situations as challenges instead of threats.

That said, ObPEs can, of course, appraise and interpret stressful situations as threats. This tends to occur when they possess performance goals, which are strongly associated with obsessive passion. Individuals with obsessive passion tend to set goals in a normative manner (Verner-Filion et al., 2017) because engaging in their passionate activities promotes their self-worth (Mageau et al., 2011). As a result, they may rely on external standards and comparisons with peers when setting their goals (Verner-Filion et al., 2017). In this respect, ObPEs may seek to either outperform others and gain positive evaluation (performance-approach goals) or avoid

negative evaluation (performance-avoidance goals) when facing business constraints (Vallerand, 2015b). Research indicates that both performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals are driven by a fear of failure (Elliot, 1997; Elliot & Church, 1997). The detrimental consequences of performance goals appear only when individuals face obstacles or difficulties (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Thus, we propose that ObPEs can also appraise stressful situations as threats when they hold performance goals since their primary aim is to protect their self-worth by avoiding failure and negative judgements.

Second, our model suggests that the appraisal and interpretation of stressful situations as either challenges or threats will depend on the entrepreneur's belief about their obsessive passion and its consequences. Research reveals that obsessively passionate individuals have different lay beliefs about the causes and consequences of passion, which can influence their expectations, decisions, and motivations (Schellenberg et al., 2022). Many believe that obsession enhances work performance and generates positive workplace outcomes (Schellenberg et al., 2022); indeed, some popular entrepreneurs recommend that one should not start or even work for a firm unless it is an obsession (Agrawal, 2015; Cuban, 2012). This belief about obsessive passion is stronger in individuals or organizations with a bottom-line mentality, emphasizes the singular objectives (e.g., profits, productivity, performance outcomes), and pays little attention to other goals (e.g., individual well-being, personal relationships) (Schellenberg et al., 2022). This mentality triggers them to achieve bottom-line outcomes by any means necessary, including cutting corners and opting for quick-fix solutions (Bonner et al., 2017; Greenbaum et al., 2012; Schellenberg et al., 2022). Thus, ObPEs may believe that persisting in entrepreneurial activities, even in difficult situations, enhances their performance and success. In such instances, ObPEs are inclined to appraise and interpret stressful situations as challenges instead of threats.

The ability of ObPEs to access resources to cope with stress and negative emotions is the third factor that determines whether they appraise and interpret stressful situations as challenges or threats. These resources include intelligence, cognitive ability, money, social skills, education, supportive family and friends, physical attractiveness, health, and energy (Lazarus, 2006). When an individual has ample resources that exceed the demand, less stress is perceived (Lazarus, 2006). Conversely, Individuals who experience problems doing their work or coping with job demands would have to devote greater attention and resources to overcoming these difficulties or meeting the demands (Ho et al., 2011). Although ObPEs may sometimes lack cognitive resources because conflicting thoughts and negative emotions prevent them from fully absorbing their job tasks and lead to tunnel vision (Bridekirk et al., 2016; Ho et al., 2011; Stroe et al., 2020), we propose that ObPEs can appraise stressful situations as favourable when they possess resources such as prior experience and skills dealing with business constraints, supportive family, and friends.

Lazarus (2006) states that individuals with prior experience are more inclined to see stressful situations as challenges instead of threats. Research on start-up experiences and coping styles (Uy et al., 2013) indicates that prior experience can be a source of knowledge that helps entrepreneurs to decide and act in moments of uncertainty and time pressure (Duchesneau & Gartner, 1990). Prior experience is frequently utilized as a substitute for learning (Huckman & Pisano, 2006; Politis, 2005), encompassing not just knowledge (Quiñones et al., 1995) but also skills, routines, and habits (Dokko et al., 2009). Individuals with more entrepreneurial experience display higher levels of entrepreneurial passion (Türk et al., 2020). Thus, ObPEs with greater entrepreneurial experience are more likely to appraise and interpret stressful situations as challenges compared to their less experienced counterparts.

Obsessive passion may also relate to assessing the situation as less threatening when things are going well (Lavoie et al., 2021), such as when the ObPEs have supportive peers, family, and

friends. ObPEs can thrive in societies that emphasize collectivism (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Curran et al., 2015) because they feel well-supported when tackling challenges that are otherwise hard to overcome alone. In such societies, the family's emotional support can help reduce the adverse effects of entrepreneurial stress and promote the ObPE's overall well-being. (Leung et al., 2020). Thus, ObPEs may not find stressful situations to be threats when they have support from their families and friends. Hence;

***Proposition 1:** Obsessively passionate entrepreneurs' appraisal of stressful situations as either challenges or threats depends on their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with negative emotions triggered by stress.*

4.2.4.b Phase II: Regulative action: Coping strategies to deal with negative emotions in stressful situations and regulate obsessive entrepreneurial passion

Following the primary appraisal, the secondary appraisal commences and involves the ObPEs' coping with negative emotions triggered by stressful situations (Gomes et al., 2017; Lazarus, 1991). Coping refers to individuals' cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage and adapt to challenging and stressful situations (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). The coping strategies available to an individual to deal with negative emotions can be broadly divided into approach and avoidant strategies (Fields & Prinz, 1997). Approach coping is problem-oriented coping (Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), wherein the individual seeks to directly tackle the problem by taking action to change the stressful situation. Avoidance coping is an emotion-focused coping (Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) strategy in which individuals temporarily shy away from stressful situations or briefly disengage to find relief from the negative consequences of the stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Holahan & Moos, 1987). As ObPEs tend to experience higher negative emotions, they can use coping to respond to the demands of venture-related stress. In doing so, they may oscillate between taking active steps

to tackle their challenges head-on and temporarily distancing themselves from these challenges (Uy et al., 2013).

Approach and avoidance mechanisms are predominant in the self-regulatory tendencies of passion (Vallerand et al., 2007), which could promote using different coping strategies to deal with negative stress and negative emotions. Studies in non-entrepreneurial domains have reported that obsessively passionate individuals tend to employ avoidance coping strategies when dealing with stressful situations (Schellenberg et al., 2013; Verner-Filion et al., 2014). However, this is not to say that ObPEs never use approach strategies. We argue that ObPEs can also try to manage their negative emotions by employing approach strategies. Consequently, they may regulate their ObEP by modifying their intense involvement towards business activities based on the outcomes of employed strategies.

Approach coping strategies to deal with negative emotions in stressful situations and regulate obsessive entrepreneurial passion

ObPEs who appraise stressful situations as challenges can employ approach coping strategies to deal with stress and negative emotions. When ObPEs experience challenge stress and negative emotions triggered by stress, they may still retain their motivation to pursue their business activities. As discussed earlier, their quest to achieve business goals despite difficulties will prevent them from getting away from their business endeavours. They may psychologically adjust to the given situation (Amiot et al., 2006) since ObPEs believe that intense involvement in the business will result in positive outcomes such as business success and recognition (Schellenberg et al., 2022). In particular, when ObPEs have a strong support network such as family, friends and peers, they are better placed to engage in their business activities freely without or with fewer work-family conflicts (Rupert et al., 2009). Supportive people with similar interests to passionate entrepreneurs would be great resources during

stressful times, as they can render emotional and physical support when ObPEs become vulnerable.

Thus, we argue that ObPEs are not always avoidance-oriented, and they could potentially use approach strategies such as effectively facing challenges, showing strong commitment, exploring other possibilities, exploiting more opportunities, or mastering entrepreneurial activities to cope with their stress and negative emotions. In these instances, ObPEs may further intensify their passion by engaging more in entrepreneurial pursuits through individual effort, together with the support of others, while continuing to confront stressful situations. Thus, we propose that using approach strategies will intensify their ObEP since the objective of ObPEs is to enjoy expected positive outcomes (e.g., success advancement, income, self-esteem, or social recognition) from engaging in business.

Avoidance coping strategies to deal with negative emotions in stressful situations and regulate obsessive entrepreneurial passion

If ObPEs appraise stressful situations as threats rather than as challenges, they may respond by opting to pursue avoidance coping strategies. This tends to occur when they feel overwhelmed by stress and negative emotions due to the mismatch between the demands of their work and the available resources to handle it. These demands may come in various forms, such as increased competition in the market, fear of failure, and role overload. The higher workload and commitment demand the entrepreneurs invest extra time and energy to survive stressful situations, which may result in work-family conflicts and negative emotions, eventually draining their cognitive resources that could have been channelled towards coping with the stressful business situations (Stroe et al., 2018). ObPEs may consequently employ avoidance coping strategies such as manipulating negative situations, hiding the problems, avoiding facing challenges, or suppressing goals to withdraw from the stressful situation temporarily.

ObPEs possess an ego-invested nature in which their self-worth depends on their entrepreneurial performance (Lafrenière et al., 2012; Mageau et al., 2011). When ObPEs are confronted with stressful situations that may expose their performance as subpar, they are inclined to worry about the judgments they may receive if they fail to perform well (Lafrenière et al., 2012; Schellenberg et al., 2013). Thus, protecting their self-worth and avoiding loss or negative judgements are primary concerns for ObPEs (Stroe et al., 2020). Due to these reasons, they may employ avoidance strategies.

We suggest that using avoidance coping strategies to suppress stress and negative emotions may help entrepreneurs regulate ObEP by reducing their intense involvement in business activities. Since ObPEs have experienced significant negative impacts due to their intense passion, they may decide to restrict their passion until they recover from such stressful situations. While a temporary withdrawal from these venture-related issues may alleviate their negative emotions and stress, a prolonged withdrawal period may yield negative consequences (Uy et al., 2013) since the ObPE's identity and feelings of self-worth are heavily invested in the venture.

4.2.4.c Phase III: Entrepreneurial well-being outcomes

The third phase of the conceptual model explains how regulating ObEP, by coping with stress and negative emotions, shapes entrepreneurial well-being. Although previous studies suggest that ObPEs experience poor entrepreneurial well-being (e.g., work-family conflict, negative affect, and burnout), we suggest that the act of regulating their obsessive passion by coping with negative emotions may shape their well-being differently. Accordingly, entrepreneurs who adopt approach strategies to cope with negative emotions and regulate their ObEP can experience greater well-being due to achieving expected positive outcomes. Prior studies have shown that when entrepreneurs achieve goals and perform better, they experience greater well-being (Stephan, 2018). In addition, having supportive family and friends would reduce the

potential work-family conflict and buffer the adverse outcomes of intense involvement in business (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Curran et al., 2015; Leung et al., 2020). Studies in the entrepreneurial context also highlight that entrepreneurs generally assess their well-being as greater than the employees, even though they work longer hours, experience more stress, have irregular schedules, and have higher workloads than the employees (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Shir et al., 2019). Thus, although ObEP may dominate their lives, ObPEs have the ability to appraise stressful situations as challenges due to their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with negative emotions triggered by stress align with this approach. This would further enhance their obsessive passion for their business and potentially improve their entrepreneurial well-being.

***Proposition 2:** Obsessively passionate entrepreneurs employ approach strategies when they perceive stress and negative emotions as challenges that enhance their passion and, in turn, increase their well-being when compared to avoidance strategies.*

In contrast, entrepreneurs who employ avoidance strategies to cope with negative emotions and stress may experience a temporary improvement in their well-being. As already discussed, adopting avoidance strategies may temporarily help entrepreneurs get respite from stressful situations (Roth & Cohen, 1986). However, in the long run, empirical studies have found that avoidance coping mechanisms predicted increased distress (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987; Jex et al., 2001), anxiety, and mental health issues (Uy et al., 2013). Certainly, ObPEs may still ruminate about their entrepreneurial activities despite being physically apart from their business activities (Vallerand et al., 2003). Rumination is positively associated with emotional exhaustion and prevents ObPEs from engaging in other activities, resulting in poor well-being (Carpentier et al., 2012; Donahue et al., 2012). Hence:

Proposition 3: *Obsessively passionate entrepreneurs employ avoidance strategies when they perceive stress and negative emotions as threats that will reduce their passion and, in turn, reduce their well-being when compared to approach strategies.*

Our *dynamic* model for regulating ObEP serves to extend prior work such as Schwarte et al. (2023), Newman et al. (2019), and Thongmanivong (2020), which mainly focus on the origin, experience, and outcomes of passion. Although they highlight the importance of the regulation perspective of entrepreneurial passion, their models focus less on coping with adverse outcomes and reappraising the situation when passion backfires. Lazarus (1984) highlights that the cognitive appraisal process continues with the reappraisal of situations. Reappraisal is an ongoing process that constantly reassesses a situation when new information presents. This crucial step occurs throughout the entire process and has the potential to alter an individual's perception of a given situation. We suggest that regulating ObEP is a continuous process, and entrepreneurs can actively regulate their passion based on updated information received from their reappraisal. As such, ObPEs may oscillate between taking active steps to enhance and reduce their intense involvement in business by effectively managing negative emotions through coping strategies, which will help them minimize the adverse impacts of ObEP on their well-being.

4.3 Study Implications

4.3.1 Implications for Theory

Our study contributes to passion regulation literature in general and ObEP regulation and coping strategies with stress and negative emotions specifically by proposing a conceptual model of how ObEP is regulated and its associated well-being outcomes. Given the dearth of research on regulating ObEP (Perrewé et al., 2014) and the lack of consensus on the relationship between obsessive passion and well-being (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Lafrenière et al., 2012; Li, 2010; Philippe et al., 2010; Stenseng et al., 2011; Vallerand, 2015c; Youngtaek, 2023), we embrace the inherent complexity of passion regulation to propose a nuanced conceptual model. While prior studies typically emphasize obsessive passion as detrimental to self-regulation, our model explains that entrepreneurs can actively manage their obsessive passion to maximize their well-being while avoiding adverse outcomes by effectively coping with negative emotions triggered by stress. In contrast to previous studies which approach the regulation perspective of entrepreneurial passion and the management of negative emotions and stress independently, we propose a dynamic model that integrates the following components: the appraisal of stressful situations in an entrepreneurial context, coping with stress and negative emotions, and regulating ObEP and its associated well-being outcomes.

In doing so, first, we attempt to extend our understanding of stress in entrepreneurship by explaining how ObPEs appraise stressful situations (*Primary appraisal*). ObPEs experience greater stress and feel various negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, frustration, conflict, and burnout) when trying to balance their business activities with non-business activities while striving to meet their own and important stakeholders' expectations (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2007). Although prior work has found that ObPEs have tended to appraise stressful situations as threats (Lavoie et al., 2021; Vallerand et al., 2021; Zeiler, 2019), we

argue that they can still appraise stressful situations as challenges. We suggest that the appraisal of stressful situations as challenges or threats depends on their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with the negative emotions triggered by stress.

Second, our model contributes to the literature on coping by explaining how the appraisal outcomes of stressful situations impact ObPEs' selection of coping strategies to deal with negative emotions. We suggest entrepreneurs can oscillate between approach and avoidance coping strategies to regulate their obsessive passion depending on how they appraise stressful situations as either challenges or threats. These appraisals are, in turn, shaped by their goals, beliefs, and ability to access resources to cope with negative emotions. Although obsessive passion in entrepreneurs is mostly framed as avoidance-oriented, our study reveals that their strategies are not stable. Our study is the first to propose that ObPEs may also employ approach coping strategies to deal with business constraints when they appraise them as challenge stress, believing they are vital for achieving business goals. Their goal of excelling in their entrepreneurial pursuits also provides the basis for seeing these challenges as opportunities to learn more and to grow. ObPEs are particularly well placed to effectively tackle such challenges when they possess the needed resources (i.e., supportive peers, family, financial capabilities, skills, and prior experience).

In contrast, when stressful situations are perceived as threatening, ObPEs may use avoidance coping strategies to alleviate the negative emotions triggered by stress. ObPEs tend to worry about their self-worth (Stroe et al., 2020) and are more likely to view stressful situations as threatening when they have limited resources to cope with negative emotions (Zeiler, 2019). We argue that ObPEs are not always avoidance-oriented and that the selection of coping strategies to deal with negative emotions will be determined by whether they appraise stressful situations as threats or as challenges.

Third, our study contributes to the literature on ObEP regulation and well-being by explaining how coping strategies to deal with negative emotions in stressful situations may help entrepreneurs regulate their obsessive passion and shape their well-being. We propose that entrepreneurs who employ approach coping strategies to deal with stress and negative emotions may intensify their ObEP by engaging more in business activities, even in difficult situations. Given that approach strategies are more likely to yield positive business outcomes than avoidance strategies, it is unsurprising that ObPEs should seek to deepen their involvement in their business activities, even as they undergo difficulties. The employment of approach strategies may ultimately lead to greater well-being since the ObPEs are immersed in activities for which they have a passion. Although ObEP controls entrepreneurs' lives (Vallerand et al., 2003; Stroe et al., 2018), the positive outcomes, such as success, income earned due to their passion, and the time and effort invested in entrepreneurial activities may have different weight in entrepreneurs' subjective evaluation of their well-being (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022; Shir et al., 2019). As such, ObPEs who use approach coping strategies to cope with stress and negative emotions may interpret their well-being positively due to the favourable outcomes of ObEP.

In contrast, entrepreneurs who employ avoidance strategies to cope with negative emotions may gain temporary respite from the activities that cause them stress. Their withdrawal may also potentially reduce their level of ObEP. However, given the nature of obsessive passion, a long-term withdrawal from their business may result in poor entrepreneurial well-being, such as anxiety and other mental health issues (Uy et al., 2013).

4.3.2 Implications for Practice

Our study highlights several practical implications for entrepreneurs. Regulating one's passion for entrepreneurial activities is critical as the nature of entrepreneurial work typically involves high levels of stress (O'Shea et al., 2017). It is important to regulate ObEP since the obsessive

nature of this passion may lead to work-family conflicts, a chronic lack of control, burnout, and a reduction of the entrepreneur's well-being (Schellenberg et al., 2013; Vallerand, 2015c). We suggest that entrepreneurial well-being may be achieved by effectively balancing approach and avoidance coping strategies and by conscious efforts to regulate one's obsessive passion. Although individuals use a variety of coping strategies to deal with negative emotions and thereby regulate their ObEP, these strategies are not inherently good or bad (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Depending on the specific individual, their circumstances, and their general approach to life, the chosen coping strategy may enhance or reduce the entrepreneur's well-being (Uy et al., 2013). Thus, we suggest that entrepreneurs, when deciding on their coping strategy, must be aware of their beliefs, goals, and resources available to cope with negative emotions. A mismatch between their personal characteristics (e.g., goals, beliefs, and resources) and their chosen strategy may amplify stress and compromise their well-being. Taking conscious and active control of their ObEP will help entrepreneurs transform from being victims of their passions to active agents who can effectively shape their obsession towards business activities while attaining optimal well-being outcomes.

In addition, ObPEs should develop an acute awareness of their passion and its impact on their well-being (Streeb, 2024). Regular self-reflection on their attachment to their business can help them recognise when their passion is becoming detrimental (Fisher, 2011). Strategies such as journaling, mindfulness practices, or seeking feedback from mentors and peers can facilitate a better understanding of their emotional investment and help them determine whether their passion is enhancing or harming their well-being. As such, they can take timely and necessary action to regulate their passion.

4.4 Future Research Directions

Our research enhances understanding of obsessive passion by introducing a dynamic model for regulating ObEP. In doing so, we provide a foundation for several potential research areas. First, we suggest conducting a more in-depth analysis of the regulation process among entrepreneurs at different stages of venture creation to understand how it evolves. It would also be beneficial to investigate how ObEP is regulated for specific activities, such as creating new products or services, founding new businesses, and developing businesses, rather than solely focusing on ObEP for overall business activities to reach well-being (Adomako & Ahsan, 2022; Cardon et al., 2009; Milanese, 2018). These inquiries present promising avenues for further research and can shed light on the dynamics of obsessive passion regulation within different entrepreneurial settings.

Second, exploring the regulation process of ObEP to reach well-being among entrepreneurs of different genders and age groups could provide valuable insights. Considering that passion and its outcomes may vary based on these demographic factors (Murnieks et al., 2020), future research needs to investigate how gender and age influence the regulation of ObEP, its consequences, and the underlying psychological mechanisms. In addition, comparing the regulation process of ObPEs with their harmonious counterparts may shed light on how these individuals differ in using different strategies to regulate their passion for achieving positive well-being outcomes.

Finally, we recommend employing different methodological approaches to examine the regulation process of ObEP among entrepreneurs, such as surveys, interviews, and observations that use longer timeframes. Using longitudinal studies, future research can also investigate whether the strategies resulting in favourable well-being outcomes are sustained or fade away in the long run due to intense passion ObPEs.

4.5 Conclusion

Drawing from cognitive appraisal theory, our study delved into how entrepreneurs effectively manage their passion to shape their well-being. Our conceptual framework encompasses both the cognitive and behavioural aspects of passion regulation, shedding light on how these individuals strategically manage their intense passion. We emphasise that ObPEs who utilize approach strategies to manage negative emotions effectively maintain and even boost their levels of obsessive entrepreneurial passion without adversely affecting their overall well-being. Conversely, those who employ avoidance strategies tend to weaken their emotional attachment to their business, resulting in compromised well-being.

4.6 References

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Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications, and Future Research Directions

5.1 Introduction

In this thesis, we investigated the role of obsessive entrepreneurial passion in shaping entrepreneurial well-being. The overall thesis is guided by three research questions, providing insights into the emergence of ObEP, the dynamic psychological process between ObEP and the well-being outcomes of entrepreneurs, and the coping strategies used to regulate ObEP and shape entrepreneurial well-being. We conducted three separate studies using mixed research design, namely quantitative, qualitative, and conceptual development. As such, we make various nuanced theoretical contributions to the passion literature in the context of entrepreneurship. In addition, we provide several practical implications for practicing entrepreneurs, educators, and stakeholders by emphasising the importance of understanding the nature of ObEP, its functional and dysfunctional outcomes, and the importance of managing ObEP effectively.

Figure 5.1. provides a comprehensive overview of the main findings, conclusions, and contributions from the three studies that make up this thesis.

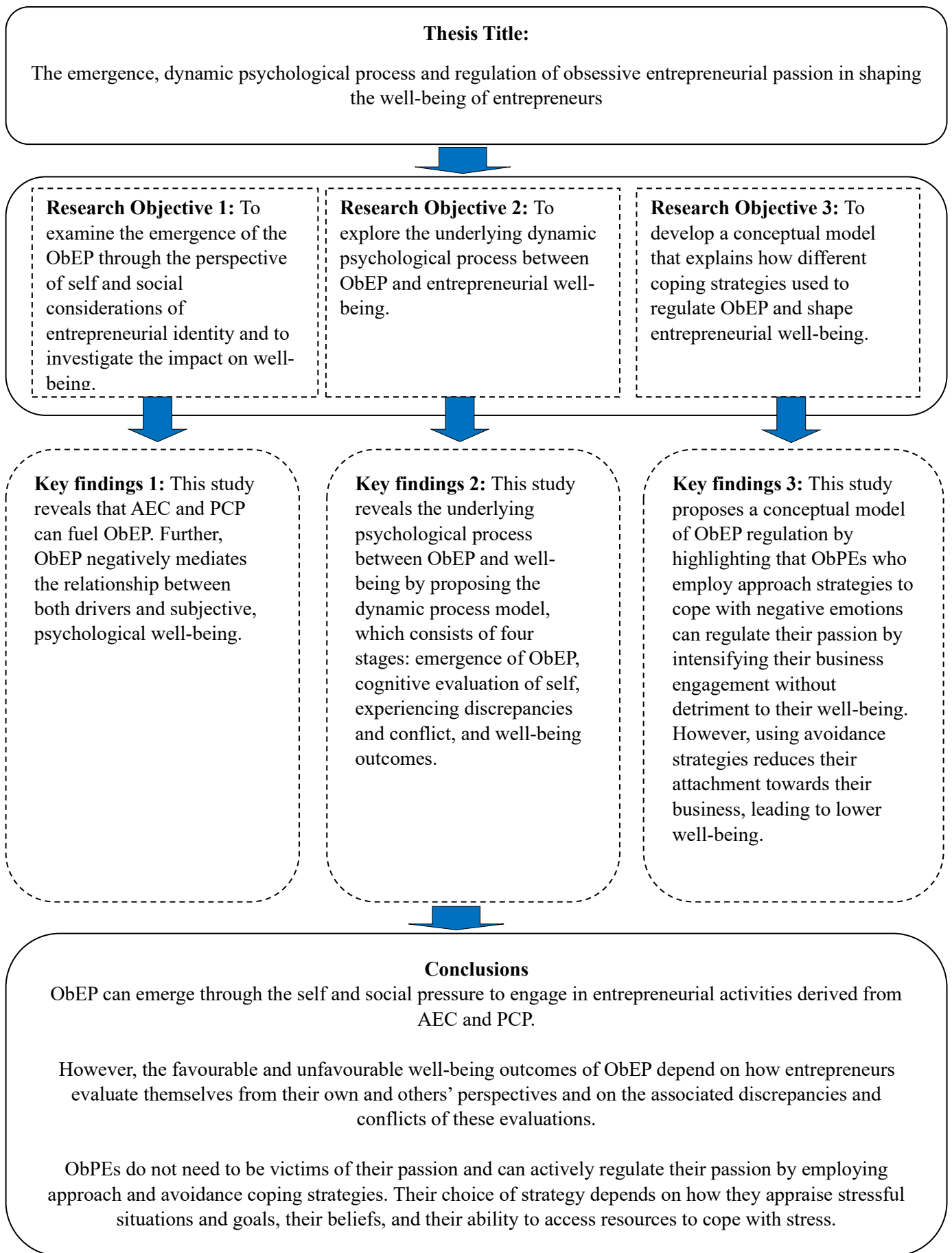


Figure 5.1. PhD Thesis Overview

5.2 Integration of Main Findings

This section integrates the findings from three studies to illustrate how they collectively address the central research question and contribute to both theory and methodology. The overarching aim of this thesis was to investigate the role of obsessive entrepreneurial passion (ObEP) in shaping entrepreneurial well-being. Each study played a crucial role in building upon the previous one, creating a logical progression that deepened our understanding of ObEP and its impact on entrepreneurial well-being.

The first study established the foundation by identifying factors that trigger ObEP, specifically AEC and PCP, and demonstrating the negative impact of ObEP on entrepreneurial well-being. The insights gained from this study set the stage for the second study by revealing the need to explore the psychological mechanisms through which ObEP influences well-being outcomes. Building upon the first study's findings, the second study introduced a dynamic process model explaining how ObEP affects well-being through four key stages. The study illustrates that ObEP is not always negative, and the favourable and unfavourable well-being outcomes are determined by how entrepreneurs evaluate themselves and experience discrepancies. Notably, the negative well-being outcomes of ObEP are not immediate but emerge from self-discrepancy experiences and conflicts, thus explaining the variability in well-being impacts observed in the previous study. These findings further motivated us to explore how ObEPs can regulate their ObEP to shape their well-being through our third study. As such, we developed a conceptual model of ObEP regulation, demonstrating that entrepreneurs can actively manage their passion through approach and avoidance coping strategies. It revealed that while approach strategies can help entrepreneurs maintain their passion without compromising well-being, avoidance strategies may lead to detachment and lower well-being.

By integrating the findings from these three studies, this thesis provides a holistic understanding of ObEP and its impact on well-being. The thesis expands the passion literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how obsessive entrepreneurial passion develops, operates, and can be regulated. Unlike prior research that often-viewed passion as a static trait, our findings underscore its dynamic and context-specific nature. In addition, the thesis adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative, qualitative, and conceptual approaches. This triangulation enhances the robustness of findings and provides a comprehensive perspective on ObEP and entrepreneurial well-being. Finally, policymakers and educators can encourage entrepreneurs to be consciously aware of their passion and its management. A detailed summary of the findings of each study and the relevant theoretical contributions is presented in the following section.

5.2.1 Examining the Emergence of the ObEP through the Perspective of Self and Social Consideration of Entrepreneurial Identity and their Impact on Well-being

In the first study, we investigated the emergence of ObEP and its implications on entrepreneurial well-being through two research questions. The first one aimed at investigating AEC and PCP as two potential drivers of ObEP, while the second one aimed at exploring the impact of ObEP on two types of entrepreneurial well-being: subjective and psychological well-being. Since entrepreneurs become passionate about their business to gain meaningful self-identity (Cardon et al., 2009), we explore two identity-related drivers of ObEP using the lens of identity theory. We chose AEC and PCP as the potential drivers of ObEP as these constructs reflect self and social considerations of entrepreneurial identity. We employed structural equation modelling to study the phenomena, using a sample of 218 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka. The findings revealed that AEC and PCP positively influence ObEP, which in turn negatively predicts subjective and psychological well-being. In addition, we found that ObEP

plays a partial mediation role between AEC and both types of well-being and a full-mediation role between PCP and associated well-being outcomes.

Our first study offers several contributions by adding nuance to our understanding of ObEP and its development. Specifically, we address the call to identify the factors that lead to ObEP by highlighting the role of positive emotions from AEC and the stress induced by PCP in fuelling entrepreneurial passion. Our findings contribute to existing literature by showing that passion can be influenced by both internal and external pressures on individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Second, we contribute to the dark side of entrepreneurial passion by emphasising that although ObEP can drive various positive outcomes for entrepreneurs, it can also negatively affect entrepreneurs' well-being.

5.2.2 Exploring the Underlying Dynamic Psychological Process between ObEP and Entrepreneurial Well-being

In the second study, we investigated the underlying psychological process between ObEP and well-being outcomes by emphasizing the role of the entrepreneur's cognitive self-evaluation in this process. Although our findings from the first study revealed a negative link between ObEP and well-being, prior research has reported mixed findings on the effects of obsessive passion on entrepreneurial well-being outcomes. In addition, research calls for psychological process models to study entrepreneurial passion and its emotional and affective outcomes (Newman et al., 2021). Using the framework of self-discrepancy theory, we investigated how the cognitive self-evaluation of ObPEs can shape entrepreneurs' well-being outcomes. We used qualitative research design and interviewed 30 entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka by employing semi-structured interview guides to investigate the research question.

The findings resulted in our development of a nuanced dynamic process model that explains the underlying psychological process between ObEP and well-being outcomes through four

key stages: the emergence of ObEP, cognitive self-evaluation, discrepancies and conflicts, and well-being outcomes. We contend that entrepreneurs become passionate about their ventures due to various personal and contextual stimuli. When their business activities start to define who they are as individuals in a rigid and controlled manner, they begin experiencing ObEP. Their awareness of experiencing ObEP prompts entrepreneurs to evaluate themselves according to their own and others' expectations or norms of them. The degree to which they meet, exceed, or fall short of these expectations and norms leads to their experiencing positive or negative discrepancies. The experience of negative discrepancies may lead the entrepreneur to feel a sense of conflict with themselves and with others in their lives, leading to adverse well-being outcomes. At the same time, such experiences may motivate ObPEs to change tack to minimize the adverse impacts of ObEP.

Our second study offers significant theoretical contributions to three areas. The first one is the underlying psychological process between ObEP and well-being outcomes. Our model enhances understanding of how ObEP may generate favourable and unfavourable well-being outcomes. Second, our introduction of the concept of the "vicious cycle of ObEP" serves to explain how the experienced negative discrepancies may result in conflicts and poor well-being outcomes. Third, we also advance the understanding of self-discrepancy theory by suggesting that discrepancies do not always result in the expected emotions, nor are they limited to individual-level discomforts. We propose a new and third category of emotional discomfort as a result of experiencing self-discrepancies: aggression-related affects that emerge from interpersonal conflicts and disagreements. Finally, we also suggest effective strategies that ObPEs can take individually or collectively to manage their passion and navigate its adverse outcomes toward favourable well-being outcomes.

5.2.3 Developing a Conceptual Model on Coping Strategies to Regulate ObEP and Shape Entrepreneurial Well-being

While our second study highlighted the functional and dysfunctional well-being outcomes resulting from cognitive self-evaluation and its associated discrepancies and conflicts, the question of how ObPEs might effectively regulate their passion to enhance their well-being remained. As such, in our third study, we developed a conceptual model for regulating ObEP to shape the well-being of entrepreneurs. Since ObPEs tend to perceive adverse situations as more stressful than others (Zeiler, 2019) and to experience more negative emotions and conflicts due to their rigid business pursuits (Curran et al., 2015; Vallerand, 2010), it follows that they require heightened levels of self-regulation to navigate the outcomes of ObEP towards enhanced well-being. Although prior studies have suggested that obsessive passion is detrimental to self-regulation, recent studies in entrepreneurship emphasize that ObPEs can actively regulate their passion rather than being passive victims of it (Streeb et al., 2023). However, there is currently a limited understanding of the cognitive process that enables passionate individuals to effectively balance their passions with other aspects of their lives (Bélanger et al., 2019). Drawing on cognitive appraisal theory, we therefore developed a conceptual model to examine how entrepreneurs may regulate their obsessive passion to shape their well-being.

We reveal that ObPEs will appraise stress as a challenge or threat depending on their goals, beliefs, and ability to access required resources. We also highlight that entrepreneurs who employ approach strategies to cope with stress and negative emotions can regulate their passion by deepening their involvement in their business activities without detriment to their well-being. The use of avoidance strategies, however, may cause ObPEs to reduce their attachment to their business, leading to lower well-being.

Our third study contributes to the literature on entrepreneurial passion and its regulation in several ways. First, we address how ObPEs can appraise stressful situations as either challenges or threats. We emphasize the role of goals, beliefs, and the ability to access key resources to cope with negative emotions in this appraisal process. Second, we show how ObPEs can choose strategies to cope with negative emotions triggered by stress. Unlike prior studies, which suggest that ObPEs only use avoidance strategies, we argue that they can also use approach strategies to deal with stress when they appraise it as a challenge. Third, we explain how the coping strategies chosen by ObPEs to deal with negative emotions triggered by stress may influence the regulation of their obsessive passion and shape their well-being.

5.3 Implications for Practice

In addition to the aforementioned theoretical contributions, we outline several practical implications for entrepreneurs, educators, and other stakeholders. Through our first study on the emergence of passion, we highlight the importance of recognizing the potential drivers of ObEP for entrepreneurs. In doing so, entrepreneurs can better understand what leads to the development of ObEP and can proactively manage the internal and external pressures that may push them towards excessive engagement in entrepreneurial activities. This awareness can help them minimize potential adverse effects on their well-being stemming from ObEP.

Second, we also emphasize to entrepreneurs and stakeholders the importance of understanding the nature of ObEP and the underlying psychological process between ObEP and its associated well-being outcomes. Having this knowledge will help them make informed decisions about managing their passion in a way that promotes their overall well-being. In addition, entrepreneurs and their close others are encouraged to become more aware of the diverse effects and multifaceted nature of ObEP. We show that ObEP is not inherently detrimental to their

well-being; its effects vary depending on how ObPEs cognitively evaluate themselves and the associated discrepancies and conflicts.

Thirdly, we encourage ObPEs to proactively and strategically manage their ObEP by employing strategies to cope with the negative emotions triggered by stress. Rather than falling victim to their passion, ObPEs can take control by implementing approach and avoidance strategies to leverage the benefits of ObEP while shaping their well-being.

5.4 Future Research Directions

We provide a comprehensive summary of potential research avenues from our three studies, laying the groundwork for further investigation. Our analysis has led us to identify three key areas for future research: (1) assessing the generalizability of our findings in broader contexts, (2) evaluating the influence of additional variables, and (3) enhancing methodologies and data collection strategies.

First, to assess the generalizability of our findings, we recommend investigating the research phenomena among various types of entrepreneurs, such as entrepreneurs from different venture stages, including early growth and matured stages, as the nature of passion and its process can be varied among different types of entrepreneurs (Stroe et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003). Exploring specific entrepreneurial activities such as inventing new products or services, founding new organizations, and developing organizations rather than the overall business to reach entrepreneurial well-being would also be valuable, as recent research suggests that the relationship between passion for these specific activities and outcomes can vary (Cardon et al., 2017; Cardon & Kirk, 2015). Investigating and understanding the unique dynamics of passion for specific entrepreneurial activities can lead to more effective and targeted strategies for achieving entrepreneurial well-being. In addition, we also suggest the fruitfulness of investigating the phenomena among entrepreneurs of different genders and age groups. Since

passion and its outcomes may vary according to demographic factors (Murnieks et al., 2020), future research needs to investigate how gender and age influence the development of ObEP, its consequences, and its underlying psychological mechanisms. A comparison of ObPEs with their harmonious counterparts may also shed light on how these individuals differ in cultivating and managing their passion to achieve positive well-being outcomes.

Second, we suggest future researchers incorporate additional variables that may explain the emergence and outcomes of ObEP differently. In this thesis, we focused on AEC and PCP as potential drivers of ObEP. Future studies may employ several personal, contextual, and environmental drivers that are proposed to fuel ObEP. We also encourage future researchers to investigate how ObEP impacts organizational and social well-being outcomes, as exploring its broader impacts can provide a further understanding of its effects. Moreover, examining the cognitive processes involved, such as self-serving bias or cognitive dissonance, that entrepreneurs use to justify high levels of well-being (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2022) would be a fruitful area of future inquiry since it will reveal how entrepreneurs evaluate and justify their well-being status without any bias.

Third, we suggest future research strategies that could improve the effectiveness of our studies' methods and data collection techniques. It would be interesting to include others close to the entrepreneur as the study participants, such as family members, friends, subordinates, and any other key stakeholders who have the potential to be impacted by the entrepreneur's passion. Although we include them for data triangulation and to minimize self-reported bias (Jack & Raturi, 2006), further use of data from close others to explore how they influence and are influenced by the obsessive passion of entrepreneurs, when and how they intervene, and what the mechanisms of such interventions entail could extend understandings of the dynamics of obsessive passion within an entrepreneurial setting.

In addition, our study was designed based on cross-sectional data, which does not allow us to analyse how emotions such as passion and subsequent behaviours of entrepreneurs evolve (Jachimowicz, 2019). Common method variance is another typical issue when relying on self-reported data, particularly in quantitative studies. However, our first study addressed this issue using statistical and procedural remedies (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Thus, we recommend that future studies incorporate longitudinal studies and various research methods, including observation and participatory action research. This approach will provide insight into how the phenomena evolve over time and allow for a further nuanced interpretation of the data. Future studies may also involve multiple researchers to increase the range of perspectives involved in interpreting the collected data. These approaches may strengthen findings through different forms of triangulation such as data, method, and investigator (Denzin, 1978) and minimize the bias raised by self-reported data.

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Appendix

Ethical Approval

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Fasana Sanoon
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30 August 2024

Dear Fasana

Ethical Application WMS 20/106
The Dark Side of Entrepreneurial Passion: How Obsessive Passion shapes the Mental Well-being of Entrepreneurs.

The above research project, as outlined in your submitted application, has been granted Ethics Approval for Research by the Waikato Management School Human Research Ethics Committee.

Please note: should you make any major changes to the project outlined in the approved ethics application, you may need to reapply for ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research.

Kind regards,

Amanda Sircombe

Amanda Sircombe
WMS Research and Postgraduate Manager

Self-Administered Questionnaire – Study 1

Questionnaire

The emergence of obsessive entrepreneurial passion and its influence on entrepreneurial well-being



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa

Dear Entrepreneur

I hereby kindly request you to participate in a 20-minute research survey that inquires “*The emergence of obsessive entrepreneurial passion and its influence on entrepreneurial well-being*”, conducted for the Ph.D. under the supervision of the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Entrepreneurial passion is suggested to play a major role in shaping the mental well-being (MWB) of entrepreneurs. However, when that passion becomes uncontrollable, it may produce some mental well-being issues. This study will investigate how obsessive passion shapes the mental well-being of entrepreneurs.

By conducting this survey, it is expected to offer the following benefits to the entrepreneurs.

1. Provide knowledge on how to deal with extreme passion and its undesired consequences
2. Help entrepreneurs to adopt mechanisms for managing their passion when it is obsessive and maintain the state of mental well-being
3. Assist entrepreneurs in taking necessary actions to deal with antecedents of obsessive passion
4. Provide a coherent explanation about the entrepreneurial passion and mental well-being of the Sri Lankan entrepreneurs
5. Facilitate policymakers and educators to take the necessary steps to enhance the mental well-being of entrepreneurs

The survey itself, which comprises eight sections, and we request you to complete all the questions in each section. I know you are a very busy person. I recommend you to complete the survey in one sitting and return.

I look forward to your generous participation in this research, and thank you very much for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Sanoon Fathima Fasana

Principal Researcher

Section I: Demographic Details

The following questions collect demographic data that will be used to build a picture of entrepreneurial characteristics. Please answer in relation to your primary business. Please complete each question by selecting the appropriate response. Place a tick in the correct box.

1. My gender is	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female		
2. My age group is	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-40		
	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-60		
	<input type="checkbox"/> 61-70	<input type="checkbox"/> Above 70		
3. My highest level of education is	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not got school	<input type="checkbox"/> G.C.E. Ordinary level		
	<input type="checkbox"/> G.C.E. Advanced level	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Masters degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate level		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate diploma		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Courses	<input type="checkbox"/> PhD/ Doctorate		
4. My marital status is	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced			
5. My years of experience in this business is	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10		
	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Above 15		
6. Number of employees work under me is	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10		
	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Above 15		
7. I owned _____% of share when I started the operations of this business.				
8. On average, I spend _____ hours per week at my place of work.				
9. In addition to my average working hours at my place of work, I average (circle response below) hours per week working on my business while I am supposed to be out of duty				
5hrs 10hrs 15hrs 20hrs 25hrs 25+ hrs				
10. I am working on my business when I am on holiday	Strongly disagree		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4 5
11. I am working on my business even if I am sick	Strongly disagree		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4 5
12. I have worked as an employee previously	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
13. I have this business because	<input type="checkbox"/> Purchased a franchise			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Purchased an existing business			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bought into an existing partnership/business			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Created a business that previously didn't exist			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) _____			

Section II: Entrepreneurial Passion							
The following statements describe the level of passion that you have towards your business. Please read them and decide the extent to which each statement describes you. Use the response scale given below to tick ✓ the best answer.							
	Not Agree at All	Very Slightly Agree	Slightly Agree	Modestly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1. This business is important for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I spend a lot of time doing this business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I like this business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Engaging in this business is a passion for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my business activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If I could, I would only do my business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I have almost an obsessive feeling for my business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. My business is the only thing that really turns me on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My business is so exciting that I sometimes lose control over it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I have the impression that my business controls me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section III: Affective Entrepreneurial Commitment					
The following statements describe the level of affective entrepreneurial commitment that you have towards your business. Please read them and decide the extent to which each statement describes you in relation to your business. Use the response scale given below to tick ✓ the best answer.					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. Running a business is much more desirable than other career opportunities I have	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Running a business will help me achieve other important goals in my life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Overall, my skills and abilities will help me run a business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I am confident I can put in the effort needed to run a business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section IV: Competitive Pressure					
The following statements describe the level of competitive pressure that you experience from your industry. Please read them and decide the extent to which each statement describes you. Use the response scale given below to tick ✓ the best answer.					
	Strongly disagree	disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Competition in my industry is cutthroat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. There are many “promotion wars” in my industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Anything that one competitor can offer, others can match readily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Price competition is a hallmark of our industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. One hears of a new competitive move almost every day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. My competitors are relatively weak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section V: Entrepreneurial Well-being (Positive and Negative Affect)

The following scale consists of a number of questions that describe different feelings and emotions that you feel while engaging in business-related activities. The scale indicates to what extent you generally feel this way over the past weeks, that is, how you feel on the average. Use the response scale given below to tick the best answer.

	None or almost none of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All or almost all of the time
“How much of the time during the past few weeks...				
21. ... you were happy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. ... you enjoyed life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. ... felt calm and peaceful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. ... you felt depressed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. ... you felt everything you did was an effort?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. ... your sleep was restless?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. ... you felt sad?”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. ... you could not get going?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. ... you felt anxious?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section VII: Entrepreneurial Well-being (Life and Entrepreneurial Satisfaction)

The following statements describe the satisfaction you have in your business. Indicate to what extent you generally feel satisfied with each. Use the response scale given below to tick the best answer.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
30. In most ways, my business is close to my ideal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. The conditions of my business are excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. I am satisfied with my business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. So far, I have gotten the important things I want for my business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Even if I could, I wouldn't change any of my experiences in business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section VII: Entrepreneurial Well-being (Psychological Functioning)

The following statements describe the level of psychological functioning in your life. Please read them and decide the extent to which each statement describes you. Use the response scale given below to tick the best answer

	Strongly agree	Some what agree	A little agree	Neither agree nor disagree	A little disagree	Some what disagree	Strongly disagree
35. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. The demands of everyday life often get me down	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

44. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51. I am good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52. I like most parts of my personality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Waikato Management School

Te Raupapa



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Project Title

How do obsessively passionate entrepreneurs' cognitive self-evaluation shape their well-being?

General Introduction

1. How would you describe yourself? what would you say are your special attributes that led you to be an entrepreneur? how would you describe your personal characteristics?
2. Can you please tell me about your current business? When did you start this business? Why did you want to start this business on your own?
3. Have you begun other businesses in the past? Can you please tell me about them? How successful were they?

Passion

4. How would you describe passion?
5. To what extent would you describe yourself as a passionate person in general?
6. To what extent do you have a passion for your business? If so, how would you describe yourself as a passionate person towards business?
 - a. To what extent do you have a passion for founding? If so, how would you describe yourself as a passionate founder?
 - b. To what extent do you have a passion for inventing? If so, how would you describe yourself as a passionate inventor?
 - c. To what extent do you have a passion for developing? If so, how would you describe yourself as a passionate developer?
7. To what extent would you say that your passion for business defines who you are, or is it what you do?
8. When did you first feel passionate about your business? Tell me about how your passion developed?
9.
 - a. What were some factors that you recall have encouraged you to become passionate about your business?
 - b. What were some factors that you recall have hindered you in becoming passionate about your business?
10. To what extent would you say that being a passionate entrepreneur enhances your self-esteem? Could you please share with me any occasion on which you experienced this?

11. To what extent would you say that being a passionate entrepreneur enhances your social acceptance? Could you please share with me any occasion on which you experienced this?
12. How would you say that passion comes into the day-to-day aspects of your business?
13. To what extent would you think that you have been overly passionate about your business?
14. To what extent would you say that there are times when your passion has been obsessive?
 - a. To what extent would you say that controlling your attachment towards business is difficult for you.
 - b. To what extent would you like to involve only in business
 - c. Do you think that your business is something that keeps you turn on
 - d. Do you think business controls you?
15. On average, how many hours per week do you work? Do you work on holidays?
16. Have you noticed any change in your passion for your business over the years? If so, how and why has this changed?

Self-evaluation

17. For the time being, how would you perceive the relationship between yourself and your business?
18. If you had no obligations to other people, and if you could exclusively adjust the relationship between you and your business, how would you think the relationship would have been?
19. When you think of people close to you who do not have a similar interest in your business like you have, how would you think they prefer the relationship between you and your business should be?
20. What are your business goals? To what extent would you prioritize your business goals from personal goals?
21. To what extent would you believe that the business goals you had last year are same for this year?
22. To what extent would you believe that you have achieved your business goals? To what extent would you compare your business goals with your current level of achievement?
23. Describe to me about how do you feel when you are unable to meet your business goals?
24. When was the last time that you believed that you worried too much about your unmet business goals? Explain.
25. To what extent would you value your entrepreneurial identity? To what extent you would think that accomplishing your business goals helps you to protect your entrepreneurial identity?
26.
 - a. How would you perceive yourself as the person who satisfies all the demands of your family?
 - b. How would you perceive yourself as the person who satisfies all the demands of your friends?
 - c. How would you perceive yourself as the person who satisfies all the demands of other stakeholders?

Conflicts

27.
 - a. How would you describe yourself as a father?
 - b. How would you describe yourself as a husband?
 - c. How would you describe yourself as a friend?

28. Could you please share some occasions in which you failed to satisfy the demands of any of them? How did you react to those incidents, or how was your feeling during those situations? Did you worry about that?
29.
 - a. Tell me some occasions in which you had a conflict or disagreements with your family members due to your passion for business?
 - b. Tell me some occasions in which you had a conflict or disagreements with your friends due to your passion for business?
30. Can you please describe a situation where you got terrible feelings about yourself because of being overly engaged in your business?
31. To what extent do you think your business becomes a barrier to simultaneously performing multiple roles and creating conflicts among those roles? Could you please share some experience related to that?
32. To what extent would you think about your business when you are away from business? Can you describe that how was your emotion during that time?
33. When was the last time you missed any important family events or gatherings with your friends due to your business? Do you worry about it? Why?
34.
 - a. To what extent do you think because of your business's engagement, you find less time to be with your family?
 - b. To what extent do you think you find less time to involve in other activities because of your business's engagement?
35. To what extent would you believe that conflicts are inherent and unavoidable in your business?
36. To what extent would you believe that conflicts are frequently occurring while engaging in business?

Mental well-being

37. To what extent do you think there is a downside to your feelings of passion? Can you please share any occasions which would describe a similar situation in your life?
38. To what extent do you believe that being obsessively passionate benefits you? Can you share any experience/s which reflects the above situation?
39.
 - a. How often do you feel positive emotions due to your involvement in the business? Can you tell me some examples?
 - b. How often do you feel negative emotions due to your involvement in the business? Can you tell me some examples?
40.
 - a. To what extent are you satisfied with your business? How would you describe your satisfaction with business when you have an obsessive passion for your business?
 - b. To what extent are you satisfied with your personal life? How would you describe your satisfaction with personal life when you have an obsessive passion for your business?
41. How would you describe your quality of relationships with others when you overly engage with your business-related activities? Do you feel that you have lost good relationships because of the work overload in your business? Can you share some examples?
42. To what extent you believe that your life is purposeful and meaningful? How do you perceive that the intense involvement in your business-related activities helps you achieve your business and life goals?

43. How would you perceive yourself as a person who capitalizes on opportunities effectively? To what extent do you believe that thinking about your business repeatedly will help to use those business opportunities effectively?
44. Tell me, how do you manage unexpected situations in your business? Can you highlight some difficulties that you underwent to manage those situations successfully?
45. How would you describe you as an independent individual? To what extent you believe that having extreme engagement in business will control yourself?
46. Describe how far you acknowledge and accept good and bad qualities of yourself? Can you provide any examples of that?
47. Have you been disappointed with any incident in your past life, either in business or personal life? Could you please share that incident with me, if possible?

Regulation of Passion

48. How would you say that you regulate your entrepreneurial activities with activities in other life domains?
49. What are difficulties you face while managing them?
50. How do you cope up with stressful situations? Can you give me some examples that you remember?
51. How do you manage your negative emotions when you are dealing with stress created by your business?
52. How do you manage your positive emotions when you are engaging in business activities?
53. To what extent would you believe that it is difficult to control your emotions when you highly worry about business issues?
54. How would you describe yourself as an entrepreneur who wanted to be away or withdraw from any business problems?
55. How do you perceive yourself as a socially connected person? Do you think that will help you to regulate your passion/emotion?
56.
 - a. To what extent would you believe that your subordinates will help you to overcome the business-related issues?
 - b. To what extent would you believe that your business stakeholders will help you to overcome the business-related issues?
 - c. To what extent would you believe that your family members will help you to overcome the business-related issues?

Co-Authorship Form



Co-Authorship Form

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Please indicate the chapter/section/pages of this thesis that are extracted from a co-authored work and give the title and publication details or details of submission of the co-authored work.

Chapter 2: The emergence of obsessive entrepreneurial passion and its influence on well-being of entrepreneurs is currently being revised based on the feedback received from the Entrepreneurial Theory and Practice journal. The revised paper will be submitted to the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal.

Nature of contribution by PhD candidate

Extent of contribution by PhD candidate (%)

CO-AUTHORS

Name	Nature of Contribution
Dr Jenny Gibb	Offered guidance and feedback on refining ideas and providing critical insights on written work, recommended suitable journals for publication, advised on addressing feedback given by the reviewers from journal, and helped in selecting and acquiring necessary software for data analysis.
Dr Antoine Gilbert Saad	Offered guidance and feedback on refining ideas and providing critical insights on written work, recommended suitable journals for publication, advised on addressing feedback given by the reviewers from journal, and helped in selecting and acquiring necessary software for data analysis.

Certification by Co-Authors

The undersigned hereby certify that:

- ❖ the above statement correctly reflects the nature and extent of the PhD candidate's contribution to this work, and the nature of the contribution of each of the co-authors; and
- ❖ that the candidate wrote all or the majority of the text.

Name	Signature	Date
Fathima Fasana Sanoon		03/09/2024
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July 2015



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Chapter 3: The Two Faces of Obsessive Passion: The dynamic psychological process between obsessive entrepreneurial passion and well-being will be submitted to the Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice Journal.

Nature of contribution by PhD candidate	Contributed to developing research ideas, data collection, data analysis, finding interpretation and manuscript writing, submitting paper to the journals
Extent of contribution by PhD candidate (%)	75%

CO-AUTHORS

Name	Nature of Contribution
Dr Jenny Gibb	Offered guidance and feedback on refining ideas and providing critical insights on written work, and recommended suitable journals for publication
Dr Antoine Gilbert Saad	Offered guidance and feedback on refining ideas and providing critical insights on written work, and recommended suitable journals for publication

Certification by Co-Authors

The undersigned hereby certify that:

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- ❖ that the candidate wrote all or the majority of the text.

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Please indicate the chapter/section/pages of this thesis that are extracted from a co-authored work and give the title and publication details or details of submission of the co-authored work.

Chapter 4: Taming the fire: A dynamic model of coping strategies to regulate obsessive entrepreneurial passion had been revised based on the feedback received from the Acedamy of Management conference. The revised paper will be submitted to the Journal Organizational Behaviour

Nature of contribution by PhD candidate	Contributed to developing research ideas, data collection, data analysis, finding interpretation and manuscript writing, revision and resubmitting to the journals
Extent of contribution by PhD candidate (%)	75%

CO-AUTHORS

Name	Nature of Contribution
Dr Jenny Gibb	Offered guidance and feedback on refining ideas and providing critical insights on written work, recommended suitable journals for publication, advised on addressing feedback given by the reviewers from conference.
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