



The Influence of Emotions in the Collegiate Sport Workplace: An Analysis of Sport Employee Pride, Passion, and Engagement

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Within the sport industry, organizations can build a competitive advantage by developing and retaining employees that are engaged, work with passion, and feel a profound connection to their job. As such, sport management scholars have called for more explorations of positive constructs as they support employee growth and development. Specific to the college athletics context, this study examined how employee emotions (i.e., pride and passion) influenced employee job engagement. Further, we explored how perceived organizational success explained the relationship between these emotions and job engagement. A sample of full-time managerial, non-coaching intercollegiate athletics employees ($N = 312$) completed a survey about the influence of their pride and passion on job engagement via perceived organizational success by way of structural equation modeling. Per the results, pride's relationship with job engagement was not mediated by perceived organizational success, but passion's relationship with job engagement was mediated by perceived organizational success. These results speak to the impact of college sport employees' emotions in the workplace. We conclude with a description of how emotions can be utilized to build a competitive organizational advantage in the college sport workplace.

Keywords: organizational behavior, workplace emotions, human resource development

Sport management scholars have argued that job engagement is a valuable construct that assists sport employees in the competitive sport industry (Otto et al., 2021; Paek et al., 2022; Svensson et al., 2021). However, a lack of engagement has also been regarded by sport management scholars as an indicator for employee burnout and turnover in sport (Taylor et al., 2019). Employee turnover and burnout in the sport industry, specifically collegiate athletics, is prolific as college sport employees are likely to become overwhelmed in their job and workplace, which leads to workaholism (i.e., stress, burnout, reduced physical health; Taylor et al., 2019). For example, the overall high risk for Division I collegiate athletics administrators to become disengaged with their work was 61.2% and the high-risk burnout rate for the same group was at 35.2% (Weaver, 2022). Therefore, as college sport organizations and their workforce face these critical complications such organizations can build a competitive advantage by training and retaining employees that are engaged, work with a passion, and feel prideful about their job (Kim et al., 2019; Swanson & Kent, 2017a). Job engagement involves employees focusing their energies on the performance of their organization. As employees become engaged, they become accountable for their work outcomes (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Rich et al., 2010). Engaged employees have shown that their work positively defines them and thus generates positive implications for their workplace production and performance (Bureau et al., 2013).

The Human Resource Development (HRD) paradigm is utilized to guide the study as employee engagement is a key feature of HRD (Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Svensson et al., 2021). HRD is designed to emphasize mechanisms by which organizations can support the development of all members of an organization. Specifically, engendering positive workplace attitudes (i.e., emotions) are a fundamental feature of HRD (Khan et al., 2012; Nadler, 1992) and it has been used as a theoretical basis for previous studies among collegiate sport employees (e.g., Schuetz et al., 2021). As such, HRD's inclusion of emotions and engagement constitutes an appropriate theoretical grounding for the study. Emotions are a form of affect that are viewed as spontaneous and even irrational (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). Sport and emotions (i.e., pride and passion) are often intertwined, whether it is emotional fans, a prideful coach, or an employee's passion they display for their organization (Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022). With the close association between sport and emotion, it is reasonable that emotions could also be an important element within the context of the sport workplace (Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022). The value of discovering emotional mechanisms to increase employee job engagement is supported by its potential to enhance sport organizational performance (e.g., Svensson et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022). Further, expanding the literature on sport employee job engagement is advantageous as the emotional features of sport organizations are uniquely linked with the job tasks performed within (Swanson & Kent, 2017a). However, one element of sport employees' engagement that has yet to be reviewed is how emotions impact their willingness to engage in the college sport workplace. Therefore, this study builds upon Swanson and Kent's (2017a) work by examining how emotional facets of managerial collegiate sport employees (i.e., pride and harmonious passion) impact their job engagement. Sport and emotions have been coupled in a variety of ways such as sport spectators' emotional responses, but an emerging area of emotions—particularly pride and passion—in sport are those in the sport workplace (Kim et al., 2019; Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022). Thus, we propose that college sport employees' job engagement may be influenced by pride and passion, as these emotions have been studied both separately and together in the sport workplace (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Oja et al., 2019; Papadimitriou et al., 2017; Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Todd & Harris, 2009; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022).

Highly passionate employees are more engaged, energetic, and committed to their job tasks, which in turn can encourage workplace efforts to accomplish job tasks (Christian et al., 2011). Furthermore, previous sport management scholars (e.g., Oja et al., 2015; Schuetz et al., 2021; Todd & Harris, 2009) have highlighted how sport employees are likely to be prideful of the prestigious sport organizations for which they work, which is likely to positively influence work behaviors (e.g., engagement). As such, this study examines potential pathways to strengthen the engagement of sport employees. To do so, a model is built to test and evaluate the antecedents of college sport employee job engagement. The significance of this study includes providing a better understanding of how to improve the experiences and functionality of college sport employees. Even though previous scholars have examined pride (e.g., Oja et al., 2019; Schuetz et al., 2021; Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Todd & Harris, 2009), passion (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Papadimitriou et al., 2017), and job engagement (Otto et al., 2021; Paek et al., 2022; Schuetz et al., 2021; Svensson et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022) in the domain of the sport workplace, this study expands the respective literature by highlighting the prospective positive relationships that exists between the variables. By linking college sport employees' pride and passion to their job engagement, this study advances how college sport organizations could generate a competitive advantage by focusing on developing their human capital (see Delshab et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2019; Kim, Oja, et al., in press; Kim, Zvosec, et al., in press). With a focus on improving the functionality of college sport organizations via employee experiences and performance, this study examines how employee emotions (i.e., pride and passion) influences their job engagement. Further, we include perceived organizational success as a mechanism to better understand the complexity of emotions in the sport workplace (Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022) by examining how internal perspectives of sport organizations impacts how emotions influence engagement among college sport employees.

Literature Review

Pride

The concept of pride has been regarded as a positive and beneficial paradigm encompassing self-satisfaction, encouraging behaviors, and the desire to do good (Wärna et al., 2007). Pride is a feeling resulting from the achievements and positive actions that are credited to one's own purpose (Carver et al., 2010; Tracy & Robins, 2004). Pride is sustained in one's self-accomplishments, therefore encouraging one to display authentic emotions when goals are reached. Thus, pride is connected to one's quest in long-term goal realization, self-worth, and prosocial behavior (Carver et al., 2010; Tracy et al., 2009; Tracy & Robins, 2007). Pride originates from being intrinsically motivated and prompts individuals to put forth maximum effort towards their goals without regard to the social features of others' support (Tracy & Robins, 2007).

Within an organizational setting, pride has been regarded as a collective feeling of status and importance centered on the workplace experience of one's job (Swanson & Kent, 2017a). Therefore, when employees are aware of their display of pride, the capabilities of employees are positively affected (Williams & DeSteno, 2008). Feelings of pride are often supplementary to an employee's workplace accomplishments and hard work behavior. Generally, pride is regarded as a feeling that employees pursue and strive to reach within the sport workplace setting (Swanson & Kent, 2017a).

The notion of pride has been closely associated with the sport workplace (Kim et al., 2017; Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Todd & Kent, 2009). Sport employee pride embodies feelings of

usefulness, importance, and admiration based on their current job condition and standing (Todd & Kent, 2009). When sport employees experience positive mindsets regarding their job and organization (i.e., pride), it leads to a more positive general assessment of working within the sport industry (Swanson & Kent, 2017a). Furthermore, employees who value their job and sport organization in a positive way place an importance on their workplace interests. Thus, when employees display pride in their organization and job, beneficial results are provided to the organization as a whole (Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Todd & Kent, 2009). Within the sport workplace, pride has been examined from both an evaluative and emotional viewpoint in which pride is symbolic of a worker's "feelings of importance, value, and admiration based on status evaluations of one's current job" (Swanson & Kent, 2017a, p. 355).

Passion

In recent sport management literature, passion has received an increase in attention from scholars (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Papadimitriou et al., 2017; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022). Passion is the strong affinity towards self-defining activities that people value highly and dedicate large amounts of time and energy (Vallerand et al., 2003). Further, passion at work has been defined as "an individual's emotional and persistent state of desire based on cognitive and affective work appraisals" (Perrewé et al., 2014, p. 146). Specific to the sport industry, passion for one's work has also been regarded as a source to achieve advantageous organizational outcomes, such as affective commitment, job involvement, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Swanson & Kent, 2017a).

Scholars have shown that passion for work can explain the variance in workplace performance that transcends job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and job identification (Liu et al., 2010; Trépanier et al. 2014). Vallerand et al. (2003) stated that "passion can fuel motivation, enhance well-being, and provide meaning in everyday life" (p. 756). However, Vallerand and colleagues (2003) also noted that passion can "arouse negative emotions, lead to inflexible persistence, and interfere with achieving a balanced, successful life." (p. 756). Thus, further studies examining emotions within the workplace setting have explored how passion can take on both harmonious and obsessive forms (Vallerand, 2015).

There is a dichotomy of passion that can either be obsessive (i.e., uncontrolled desire; Belanger et al., 2012) or harmonious (i.e., autonomous engagement; Marsh et al., 2013). Obsessive passion is the intense emotion of passion, which relates to a loss of reason and control and consequently produces negative effects (Vallerand, 2010). Obsessive passion leads to individuals developing fervid feelings that generate an inner overpowering urge to be associated with and involved in an activity (Mageau et al., 2011). However, this study is centered on harmonious passion due to its positive relationship with job engagement (Birkeland & Buch, 2015) as it is seen as a wide-ranging emotion where reason can serve as the basis for a behavior and therefore can lead to positive outcomes (Vallerand et al., 2003). Harmonious passion derives from the motives one has for engaging in an activity that is integrated and representative of one's own self-view. Passion is naturally self-enhancing (Vallerand et al., 2003), thus becomes a feature of one's identity. Consequently, when an employee experiences feelings of passion, especially feelings in one's job and organization, there is a reinforcement regarding the beliefs one has about themselves. Individuals who experience harmonious passion openly and without reservation decide to partake in an activity with no feeling of obligation to engage (Mageau et al., 2011).

In the sport management literature, passion has been examined because of the positive relationship between harmonious passion and sport employee performance (Swanson & Kent,

2017a). As previously mentioned, when “purpose” or harmonious passion begins to emerge for employees, benefits are gained if they are effectively able to adapt which leads to a higher self-efficacy, and positive work outcomes (Vallerand et al., 2003). Further, harmonious passion is grounded in manageable feelings, where one regards work as both important and pleasurable as well as a measure of one’s identity, but not completely consuming (Vallerand et al., 2003). Previous researchers have noted that passion has been shown to impact a wide range of employee performance and behaviors (e.g., engagement, commitment, and employee sense of control; Pollack et al., 2020; Swanson & Kent, 2017a; Trépanier et al., 2014).

Job Engagement

Job engagement is centered on an employee internalizing an organization’s mission (Daley, 2017). The construct has been defined as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). The main emphasis of job engagement is job activity, permitting individuals to recognize the level to which they engage with their jobs. Similarly, Maslach and colleagues (2001) viewed job engagement as a “persistent, positive, affective-motivational state of fulfillment” (p. 417). When engaged, employees are able to achieve their full and complete selves in the workplace through actively fulfilling job tasks by utilizing their personal energy into the unique labor aspects of their role. Engaged employees are observant, connected, psychologically present, integrated, cognizant, and focused on their job tasks (Saks, 2006). These individuals are accessible to coworkers, connected to their job, and bring their complete and best selves to perform the responsibilities of the position (Kahn, 1992; Rich et al., 2010).

Previous scholars have viewed engagement from an organizational perspective (Maslach et al., 2001); however, more recent scholars have articulated the significance of investigating engagement at the individual job level (e.g., Daley, 2017; Glavas, 2016). As mentioned previously, job engagement is an individually focused facet of one’s own level of engagement; understanding this concept could allow for the creation of improved organizational work climates related to attitude, purpose, and behavior (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990). Organizations have benefited from an enhanced understanding of their employees’ level of job engagement and in turn are developing high performing work climates that offer opportunities to be successful in attaining organizational goals and objectives (Parent & Lovelace, 2018).

Additionally, job engagement is rooted in meaningfulness, the value of one’s work, and achieving a sense of purpose in the workplace (Daley, 2017; Kahn, 1990). Job engagement goes beyond the saturated scholarship of job satisfaction. Even though there are some similarities, job satisfaction and job engagement are different constructs. An employee can be engaged in a job, but not be satisfied with it, as well as be satisfied with a job, but not engaged in it (Daley, 2017; Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). Mere satisfaction is normally regarded as sufficient enough to retain employees in their roles within an organization, although it is not adequate enough to guarantee productivity at a high level or even at all (Abraham, 2012; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006). Greater levels of job engagement fuel increased productivity and lead to a more meaningful workplace environment (Glavas, 2016).

The inclusion of job engagement within sport management literature has recently expanded (e.g., Otto et al., 2021; Paek et al., 2022; Schuetz et al., 2021; Svensson et al., 2021). Job engagement decreases the turnover intentions of sport employees, while increasing their overall well-being, creative workplace behaviors, and perceptions of performance (Paek et al., 2022; Svensson et al., 2021). Specifically, job engagement has shown to be a meaningful

variable in the college sport workplace as a college sport employee's ability to flourish is supported by job engagement (Schuetz et al., 2021).

The Role of Perceived Organizational Success

College sport organizations that participate in the highest level of competition (i.e., Division I) operate in an environment that emphasizes competition and success. The meaningfulness of success in college sport organizations is observed through prominent athletic performances such as the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament, whereby college sport employees gather to watch the teams representing their sport organization compete on national television (Oja et al., 2018). In this way, college sport employees' subjective perceptions of the teams' performance influences their experience in the workplace. The intersection of sport team success and college sport employees' perceptions of that success reflects a unique condition of employment in sport (i.e., positive association with a sport organization via visible sport events; Todd & Kent, 2009). In line with these circumstances, we have employed a subjective evaluation of organizational success in the form of college sport employees' perceptions of their organizations' athletic team success as opposed to an objective assessment (e.g., team records or championships). This decision was made to stay in alignment with the personal and internal nature of emotions in sport (Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022). Moreover, scholars have noted the potential influence of sport organizations' athletic success on the psychological experiences of sport employees (e.g., Oja et al., 2015; Oja, Gordon, et al., in press; Swanson & Kent, 2015; Todd & Kent, 2009). The psychological experiences of team athletic success are germane to the emotions of sport employees (Oja, Gordon, et al., in press) as well as their behaviors (Todd & Kent, 2009). As such, perceived organizational success is included in the study to better understand the effects of college sport employees' perceptions of their organization, and more specifically how such acuties impact the relationship between their emotions and engagement.

Model and Hypothesis Development

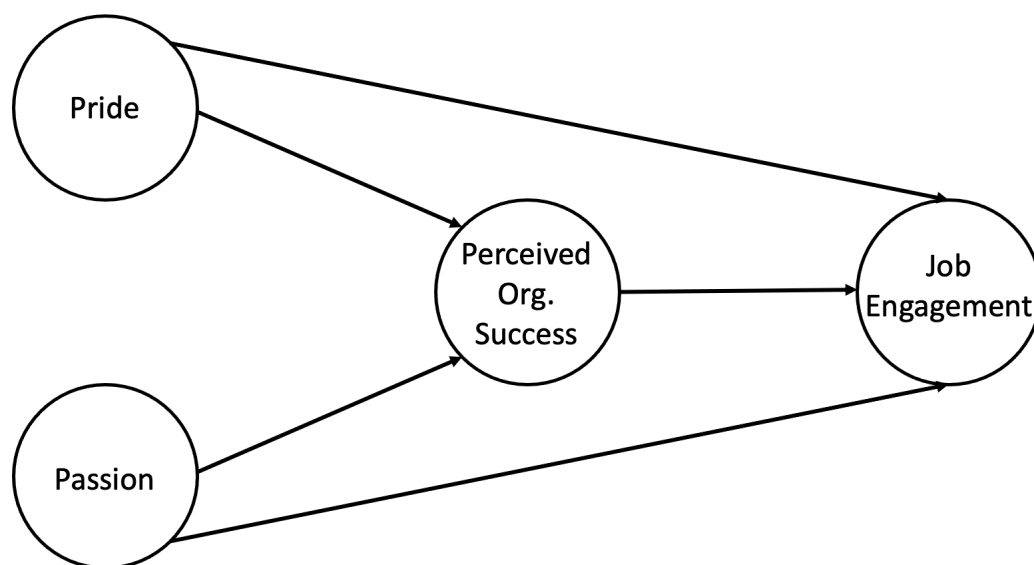


Figure 1.
Hypothesized Model.

In the proposed model (Figure 1), job engagement is positioned as the dependent variable with pride and harmonious passion as the independent variables. Pride and passion are analyzed within the same model to better differentiate between the impacts of each independent variable. The model also includes the mediator of perceived organizational success to offer an explanation of the relationship between pride, passion, and job engagement. Pride in the organizational setting largely involves cognitive and emotional elements as pride encompasses feelings of value, importance, and appreciation based on how employees value their workplace status (Todd & Harris, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2001). We posit that the more pride employees have in their jobs (and the subsequent psychological benefits), the more likely employees will desire to be active participants in the workplace (Todd & Harris, 2009). As employees experience positive feelings of pride from insights of their job status and significance, it is probable that this will lead to positive emotional states that allow employees to express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances (Kahn, 1990). Sport organizations are unique in that the performance of the teams are highly visible. Thus, it is not surprising that employees working in the sport industry generally believe that sport is prestigious in nature (Swanson & Kent, 2017b). Because college sport operates in a visible space, it is likely that perceived organizational success can offer an explanation as to why employee pride would positively impact their engagement. To advance our first hypothesis and the inclusion of perceived organizational success, we rely on the work of Todd and Kent (2009) who noted the influence of visible athletic performances of sport organizations on sport employees. That is, a college sport employee who is prideful of one's organization is likely to further engage in their jobs when that college sport organization is perceived to be successful because of the prestige and visibility of college sport organizations (Todd & Kent, 2009). The existence of visible performances, specifically demonstrations of organizational success (e.g., winning a championship), constitutes one of the unique elements of sport that impacts sport employees' workplace experiences (Todd & Kent, 2009). Thus, it stands to reason that sport employees' perceptions of the success of their organization could offer insights into their workplace experiences. For instance, sport employee perceived organizational success could explain why pride impacts their job engagement based on direct relationships. Being prideful of a sport organization is likely to induce a perception that the organization is successful as emotions effect perceptions (Zeimers & Shilbury, 2022) and believing a sport organization is successful should engender a desire to further one's involvement with the organization (Todd & Kent, 2009). In sum, a sport employee's perception that their organization is successful could be one reason why their pride leads to engagement in the workplace as the visibility of successful performances could facilitate sport employees' existing pride positively impacting their job engagement (Todd & Kent, 2009). Consequently, our first hypothesis details the role of perceived organizational success (i.e., mediation) on the relationship between pride and engagement:

H₁: The relationship between college sport employee pride and job engagement will be mediated by perceived organizational success.

Job engagement has been theoretically linked to harmonious passion (Forest et al., 2012). This positive relationship exists on the foundation that harmonious passion allows employees to experience task satisfaction through immersion in their job responsibilities (Vallerand, 2010). As such, individuals who have developed a harmonious passion for an activity will likely feel positive affect before, during, as well as after performing the activity. Job engagement is the extent to which employees reach a positive, fulfilling, work-related state-of-mind that is characterized by energy, dedication, and an overall absorption with their job (Bakker &

Schaufeli, 2008). As employees experience positive feelings and evaluations relating to the importance and value of their job (Todd & Harris, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2001), this should then contribute to a positive assessment of their current job experiences. Passionate workers are more fully committed to the responsibilities of their daily workplace activities, which in turn impacts their engagement (Ho & Astakhova, 2018, 2020). We once again rely on Todd and Kent (2009) to form the basis of our second hypothesis and argue that the perceived success of a college sport organization is likely to explain why a college sport employees' passion increases their job engagement. This reasoning is based, in part, on direct relationships. Passionate sport employees are likely to perceive that the organization is functioning highly, which then results in greater engagement (Ho & Astakhova, 2018, 2020). More specifically, college sport employees who are passionate about their work are predisposed to view their organizations as successful because emotions influence perceptions (Zeimers & Shilbury, 2022), and perceiving a sport organization as successful ought to produce a desire to further involve oneself with the organization (Todd & Kent, 2009). Passion's positive influence on job engagement has been documented, yet sport employees' perceptions of organizational success could offer one explanation for this relationship given that the prominent displays of sporting events are likely to impact sport employees (Todd & Kent, 2009). Specifically, this relationship could be explained by successful performances providing a tangible impetus for passionate employees to continue to remain engaged with their jobs. Accordingly, the second hypothesis includes perceived organizational success as a mediator to describe the relationship between passion and job engagement:

H₂: The relationship between college sport employee harmonious passion and job engagement will be mediated by perceived organizational success.

Methods

Procedure

A sample of full-time managerial (i.e., does not include interns or graduate assistants), non-coaching college athletics employees (e.g., Assistant Director of Marketing, Director of Ticketing, Associate Director of Sports Information) were gathered to test the hypotheses. After Institutional Review Board approval, participants were selected by collecting publicly available emails on online university staff directories. A cluster random sampling technique was utilized to gather participants by randomly selecting every fourth NCAA Division I, "Power Five" collegiate sport departments that had publicly displayed emails to draw emails from their online staff directories (Johnson & Christensen, 2017), which resulted in 13 clusters (i.e., athletics departments). Every email that matched the sample criteria (i.e., non-coaching, full-time, managerial sport employee) was collected. Thus, all prospective participants of chosen universities had an equal opportunity to participate. Responses were then collected using the Qualtrics program. After the survey link was distributed, 312 ($N = 312$) responses were deemed useable based on their level of completeness. A total of 2,251 participants were asked to complete the survey, which resulted in a response rate of 13.86%.

Participants

The sample of 312 participants was deemed adequate for the analysis based on an item-to-response ratio of 1:5 (Hair et al., 2010). The collected sample involved 167 males (53%), 126

females (41%), with 19 choosing not to answer (6%). With regard to ethnicity, the sample was comprised of Caucasians ($n = 273$, 87.5%), African-Americans ($n = 12$, 3.8%), Asians ($n = 5$, 1.6%), those who self-identified as Other ($n = 5$, 1.6%), Multiple ($n = 3$, 1%), and 14 (4.5%) participants selected not to identify their ethnicity. The years of industry experience in sport organizations ranged from 1 year to 50 years, with an average of 13.49 years. While the sample is primarily Caucasian, the ethnicity and other demographic variables are consistent with preceding studies involving the American collegiate sport industry (e.g., Oja et al., 2020; Oja & Bass, 2020; Taylor et al., 2019), which supports the appropriateness of the sample.

Instruments

There were four instruments used to measure the constructs (see Table 1), all of which had Likert-type scales with 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) anchors. A three-item scale was used to measure pride (Todd & Harris, 2009). Harmonious passion was measured with three items from Vallerand et al.'s (2003) passion for work scale. The instruments for both pride (e.g., Kim, Oja, et al., in press; Swanson & Kent, 2017a) and harmonious passion (Kim, Oja, et al., in press) have previously demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity in sport-based studies. Job engagement was measured with Saks's (2006) scale that has shown sufficient reliability and validity standards in sport (e.g., Paek et al., 2022). Perceived organizational success was assessed with Wann and Dolan's (1994) measure, which included support for adequate reliability and validity.

Data Analysis

Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data, which allows for the simultaneous examination of relationships among latent variables, with Mplus version 7.4. The data contained missing and non-normal data which spurred the use of the MLR estimator as it accounts and adjusts for missing and non-normal data (Yuan & Bentler, 2000). The analysis involved forming a global measurement model to evaluate the performance of the individual indicators and reliability (i.e., composite reliability; CR; Bagozzi & Yi, 1998) and validity (e.g., AVE; Fornell & Larcker, 1981) statistics. The measurement model was evaluated with goodness-of-fit indices, which included Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and factor loadings. Further, the variables in their latent form were considered reflexive, which suggests that the individual indicators do not independently represent the overall construct. This enables the removal of poorly performing indicators (i.e., $< .5$) when they are not theoretically congruent with the other items (Hair et al., 2010). Once the measurement model was deemed acceptable, a structural model was created to assess the relationships between latent variables. Mediation analysis was conducted with the bootstrapping technique as bootstrapping is viewed as a preeminent analysis of indirect effects (Hayes, 2009; Zhao et al., 2020). Bootstrapping involves confidence intervals (CI), not traditional p values. Additionally, the analysis avoided the terminology of "full mediation" and "partial mediation" due to the advice of Hayes (2018).

Results

Measurement Model

The initial measurement model demonstrated acceptable fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 181.47$, $df = 84$, $p < .001$, CFI = .93, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .06 [.049-.073], SRMR = .07). One indicator from the job engagement construct was removed due to poor statistical performance (Hair et al., 2010). Further, this item was reverse coded, and due to problematic issues associated with reverse coded items (Weems & Onwuegbuzie, 2001) and the reflective nature of the construct, removal was deemed appropriate. A second measurement model, without the aforementioned job engagement indicator, was assessed and also had acceptable fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 151.68$, $df = 71$, $p < .001$, CFI = .94, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .06 [.047-.074], SRMR = .06). All constructs demonstrated acceptable reliability (i.e., $> .6$ CR), and convergent (i.e., $> .5$ AVE) and discriminant validity (i.e., squared correlations among latent constructs $<$ AVE) statistics. Table 1 contains item performance, AVE, and CR statistics. Table 2 provides the correlations among constructs.

Table 1
Statistical results from the Measurement Model

Constructs	Est.	SE	AVE	CR
<i>Pride</i>			.58	.81
I feel especially respected in social settings when I discuss my job in sports	.78	.05		
My job gives me a feeling of importance when talking to others outside work	.73	.05		
In social settings, I feel valued and admired because of my job	.78	.05		
<i>Harmonious Passion</i>			.63	.83
My work is in harmony with other activities in my life	.92	.04		
My work is in harmony with other things that are part of me	.80	.04		
My work is well integrated in my life	.64	.05		
<i>Job Engagement</i>			.52	.81
I really “throw” myself into my job	.69	.05		
Sometimes I am so into my job that I lose track of time	.61	.06		
This job is all consuming; I am totally into it	.82	.03		
I am highly engaged in this job	.75	.05		
<i>Perceived Organizational Success</i>			.64	.89
My organization’s teams are outstanding	.82	.03		
My organization’s teams are performing below expectations	.80	.04		
I generally consider our teams to be “good”	.74	.06		
I consider our teams to be below average	.84	.03		

Table 2
Correlations Among Constructs

Constructs	1	2	3	4
Pride	1			
Passion	.40**	1		
Job engagement	.52**	.16*	1	
Perceived Org. Success	.22**	.36**	.27**	1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Hypotheses Testing

A structural model was then built to assess the relationships between latent variables (i.e., the hypotheses). The structural model had acceptable model fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 175.95$, $df = 71$, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .07 [.056-.082], SRMR = .06). For H1, pride's relationship with engagement was not mediated by perceived organizational success ($\beta = .02$, 90% CI [-.01, .07]), which resulted in the rejection of H1. However, H2 was supported as harmonious passion's relationship with engagement was mediated by perceived organizational success ($\beta = .07$, 99% CI [.001, .20]). Pride's relationship with perceived organizational success ($\beta = .09$, $p = .29$) was not significant, but pride's relationship with engagement was significant ($\beta = .52$, $p < .01$). Perceived organizational success had a significant relationship with engagement ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$). Lastly, harmonious passion's relationship with perceived organizational success ($\beta = .32$, $p < .01$) was significant, but harmonious passion's relationship with engagement was not significant ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .15$).

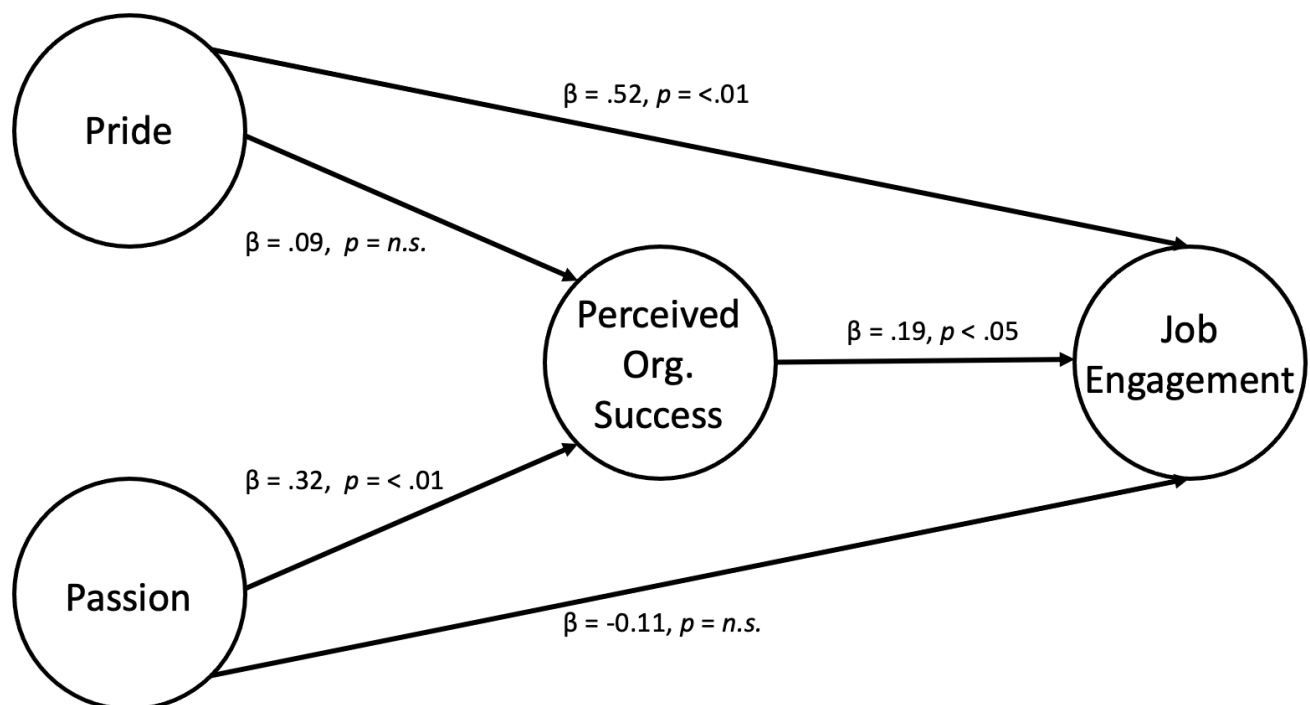


Figure 2.
Results Model.

Discussion

College sport organizations face a critical issue in elevated turnover rates due to employee stress, burnout, and reduced physical health (Taylor et al., 2019). The current study addresses ways to combat this important issue by utilizing the theoretical framework of HRD to explore mechanisms to increase college sport employees' engagement through increased levels of pride and passion. In turn, enhanced college sport employee engagement, and broadly human capital development, has the potential to provide a competitive advantage to collegiate athletics departments (Oja, Zvosec, et al., in press).

In an effort to enhance organizational functionality among college sport organizations within the framework of HRD, this study was designed to analyze how employee emotions (e.g., pride and harmonious passion) impacted employee job engagement. By doing so, the study provided a pathway for college sport organizations to develop mechanisms to increase levels of employee job engagement, as well as how perceived organizational success influenced the relationship between both antecedent variables and job engagement. This study builds on the work of Swanson and Kent (2017a), who conducted a similar analysis with comparable results; however, there are three main differences with the current study: (a) Swanson and Kent did not examine job engagement as an outcome variable as they tested affective commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational citizenship behaviors, (b) while Swanson and Kent attempted to examine harmonious passion, their results precluded them from doing so and the authors had to rely upon obsessive passion, and (c) Swanson and Kent sampled employees within the professional sport setting and the current study consisted of a sample of college sport employees. Additionally, this work contributes to the growing literature on emotions in the sport workplace (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Papadimitriou et al., 2017; Swanson & Kent, 2017a, b; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022) by connecting sport employees' emotions with work outcomes (i.e., job engagement).

In this study, pride's relationship with job engagement was not mediated by perceived organizational success (H1), but harmonious passion's relationship with job engagement was mediated by perceived organizational success (H2). A closer look at the results provides important advances to both theory and practical applications in the college sport industry. The inclusion of perceived organizational success enables a clearer understanding of how the visible organizational performance of sport organizations impacts employees' work experiences. By measuring the organizational success perceptions of participants, we were able to examine how they influenced not only job engagement, but also workplace emotions' relationship with job engagement. Perceived organizational success is a significant variable as it represents a unique element of sport (i.e., visible organizational performance; Todd & Kent, 2009) and presents further evidence of the role of sport organizational success on the innerworkings of college sport organizations. In the study, perceived organizational success had a direct, positive relationship with job engagement, which suggests that when college sport employees perceive that their college sport organization is successful, they are more likely to engage in their work. This is a relevant finding within the development of HRD literature as it points to the possibility of sport employees being invested in the performance of college sport teams. This is in line with previous studies that have explored the duality of sport employees as fans and employees (e.g., Oja et al., 2015; Oja, Gordon, et al., in press; Swanson & Kent, 2015). The result extends the sport management HRD literature by demonstrating that sport employees' job engagement can be influenced by the success of sport teams.

With H1, there was a direct relationship from pride to job engagement, but there was not a mediation effect. This informs that perceived organizational success does not influence the relationship, or more plainly sport employees who display pride in their organization are more likely to be engaged with their job no matter the degree of success by the college sport organization. This result also indicates that prideful sport employees provide important benefits for sport organizations in the form of job engagement. This discovery advances HRD theory within sport by noting how prideful sport employees are more likely to be engaged in their jobs, which can lead to other positive benefits (e.g., psychological well-being, innovative work behaviors, and organizational performance; Svensson et al., 2021). This finding also contributes to HRD theory in sport by demonstrating how sport employee emotions positively impact workplace outcomes and supports the development of employees via engagement. This finding also answers previous work that called for more research on the impact of emotions in the sport workplace (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Papadimitriou et al., 2017; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022).

H2 was supported, as perceived organizational success mediated the relationship between harmonious passion and job engagement. The specific results for this hypothesis include a non-significant relationship between harmonious passion and job engagement. We have deliberately chosen to not label this relationship as “full” mediation based on the advice of Hayes (2018) who explained that “full” and “partial” mediation are hollow terms as factors such as sample size can dictate which term is used. Instead, the interpretation of the result is simply that perceived organizational success mediates (i.e., explains) the relationship between harmonious passion and job engagement (Hayes, 2018). That is, college sport employees who are passionate about their sport organization are likely to engage in their jobs because they view the sport organization as successful. In this setting, passion seemingly benefits from an element of success to inspire engagement. This could be a product of fandom among sport employees (Oja, Gordon, et al., in press; Swanson & Kent, 2017b) in that college sport employees who are passionate may be more willing to engage in their jobs when the teams are successful. This finding can be further explained by Oja, Gordon, et al. (in press), who found that sport employees did not identify as traditional fans, but rather supporters and retained a professional outlook. The professionalization of their jobs created a norm of providing quality services, but participants reported positive affect when their teams were successful (Oja, Gordon, et al., in press), which would likely strengthen the willingness to be engaged in their work. This finding represents a valuable advancement to HRD theory in sport as it demonstrates how emotions influence employee development via cognitive and affective work involvement, and how perceptions of success impact the relationship. Broadly, positive emotions, such as pride and harmonious passion, among college sport employees facilitates engagement, which represents an expansion of HRD in sport by signifying how emotions can support the development of human resources (i.e., engagement; Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

The dichotomy of perceived influence of organizational success on the relationships between pride, passion, and job engagement offers a nuanced perspective of emotions in the sport workplace, which are relevant to HRD (Khan et al., 2012; Nadler, 1992). Emotions are complex and even those grounded in positive frameworks will not always have the same influence on outcomes in the sport workplace (Zeimers & Shilbury, 2022). This study found that sport employee emotions positively influence job engagement, but perceived organizational success plays a key role with passion but not with pride. As such, this study advances the broader body of literature concerning sport employees and positive workplace constructs (e.g., Kim et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2019; Kim, Oja, et al., 2021; Kim, Zvosec, et al., 2021; Oja et al., 2019; Oja et al., 2020; Paek et al., 2022; Swanson & Kent, 2017a, b; Todd & Harris, 2009; Todd & Kent,

2009) and more specifically HRD in sport (e.g., Schuetz et al., 2021; Svensson et al., 2021) by linking positive emotions with job engagement. HRD and job engagement are closely intertwined (Shuck & Wollard, 2010), and this study extends HRD literature by establishing that positive emotions can support job engagement and thus the development of college sport employees. This is an important line of research for college sport organizations as human resources contribute to sport organizational performance (Delshab et al., 2022). College sport organizations' optimal functionality is a product of excellent performances from athletes, coaches, and managerial employees. This study emphasized how developing managerial college sport employees' human resources play in building a competitive advantage for their organizations by exploring how positive emotions influence job engagement through the lens of perceived organizational success. There is now a clearer understanding of HRD processes in college sport organizations after examining how positive emotions independently impact sport employees' job engagement.

Practical Implications

Previous scholars in sport have shown that emotions offer a promising foundation of employee development (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Papadimitriou et al., 2017; Zeimers & Shilbury, 2020, 2022). The results of this study support this notion as they indicate that there are advantages for college sport organizations and leaders that enable employee pride and passion. Sport organizations and managers that develop a workplace environment that allows for positive emotions to develop among their employees are likely to see engaged employees. Additionally, with college sport organizations looking for more pathways to develop competitive workplace advantages, one strategy could include efforts to improve corporate social responsibility (CSR), especially efforts that are targeted towards employees (i.e., micro-CSR; Hazzaa et al., 2022). Efficient CSR initiatives could positively influence sport employees' pride and harmonious passion towards their college sport organization. Another strategy could encourage employees to create a culture of collaboration through team goals and increased social networks (Barnhill et al., 2021). Initiating social networking between departments can help facilitate like-minded desires to meet the organization's goals. Finally, creating a sense of purpose (i.e., measuring employee's personal growth and creating performance objectives) can increase passion levels (Pradhan et al., 2017) by encouraging career development.

This study highlights the significance of job engagement in the college sport workplace and the factors that stimulate it, and so the findings have meaningful practical implications for sport organizations. Notably, increasing job engagement among sport employees via their pride and passion could have significant positive repercussions for organizational performance as job engagement has been found to enhance organizational performance in the sport setting (Svensson et al., 2021). This finding supports the concept that human capital in sport organizations contributes organizational functionality (Oja, Zvosec, et al., in press), in that college sport employees with positive emotions were more willing to be engaged in their jobs. Importantly, such emotions can be cultivated through quality human resource development training programs. Implementing such programs could then lead to a competitive organizational advantage for college sport organizations by developing human capital among managerial college sport employees.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the present study expands the overall knowledge of job engagement within the sport industry, there are several limitations. One limitation is that the current study is cross sectional and true experimental research needs to be utilized to determine if these effects are present within the workplace for college sport employees. The participants' ethnicity is largely Caucasian, and so the results of the study are from a Caucasian perspective. While this degree of disparity is reflective of the college sport industry (e.g., Oja & Bass, 2020), it is nevertheless a limitation. An additional limitation of the study was that the sample was restricted to employees specifically at the NCAA Division I level in the United States. Therefore, the generalizability of the results is limited and may differ when examining college sport employees outside of NCAA Division I (e.g., NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III) or other sectors of the sport industry.

A potential direction for future research is to complete in-depth interviews with sport employees to obtain a description of how their pride and passion influence their job engagement and other relevant workplace variables (e.g., well-being, job satisfaction, performance). Qualitative inquiry will allow for the opportunity to further analyze the previously noted negative aspects of passion and pride. As obsessive passion has been typically associated with negative outcomes, it has been shown to be a positive construct among sport employees (Swanson & Kent, 2017a). Future research should also consider focusing on the individual life experiences of employees and whether their past history with sport is potentially one possible justification for obsessive passion having a positive influence in sport workplace, which is another point of interest highlighted by Swanson and Kent (2017a). Lastly, future efforts should continue to explore the potential of job engagement to create a competitive advantage for college sport organizations (e.g., Delshab et al., 2022; Kim, Oja, et al., in press; Kim, Zvosec, et al., in press; Svensson et al., 2021). Results from such future research could produce a better understanding and prospective approaches for developing a more engaged workforce in the college sport industry.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study provides a further understanding of HRD in college sport organizations via the job engagement of sport employees, and it also features the significant influence of sport employee pride, harmonious passion, and perceived organizational success. This study found that sport employees' job engagement is supported with higher levels of positive emotions, but there was a differentiating effect of perceived organizational success in that it mediated the relationship between harmonious passion and job engagement but did not mediate prides' relationship with job engagement. By growing the HRD literature of emotions and job engagement among college sport employees, this study can be applied as a foundation to produce improved workplace experiences for college sport employees which can assist in generating a competitive advantage for college sport organizations via their managerial employees.

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