Passion, Goals and Word-Of-Mouth Behaviour in a Classical Music Context

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The concept of passion is incorporated into the Model of Goal-directed Behavior to provide an intrinsic expression of desires. The results indicated that passion is a distinct construct. The model with passion explained substantially more variance in classical music attendees’ word-of-mouth behaviour than one without (27.6% to 62.9% respectively).

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ABSTRACT

In the words of D’Andrade (1992), in order to understand people, one needs to understand what leads them to act the way they do. In this regard, although the state-of-the-art Model of Goal-directed Behaviour (MGB) (Perugini and Conner 2000; Perugini and Bagozzi 2001) improved the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and amalgamates the automatic (past behaviour), affective (anticipated emotions), motivational (desires) aspects of decision-making and the role of goals to account for behaviour alongside other components of the TPB, it lacks in a consideration of intrinsic desires to explain why one goal is deemed more important than others and subsequently chosen (Perugini and Bagozzi 2001; Bagozzi and Dholakia 1999). Whilst the MGB perceives desires extrinsically To overcome the MGB’s lack in evaluating the influence of intrinsic desires on behaviour, this study incorporates passion in the MGB as a manifestation of one’s intrinsic desires. That is, desires would significantly predict passion since one’s desire for a goal increases when the goal holds self-relevance and is valued for its meaningfulness and importance (Kopetz, Kruglanski, Arens, Etkin, and Johnson 2012). Hence, one’s behaviour is perceived not only as based on its usefulness, pleasantness, or relative ease of accomplishment towards a goal (Perugini and Conner 2000), but also out of passion – i.e., its worth and importance to oneself (Vallerand 2008; Cardon, Vincent, Singh, and Drnovsek 2009; Murnieks, Mosakowski, and Cardon 2012). With passion-induced activities being personally relevant and important (Vallerand et al. 2003), the inclusion of passion is perceived to enhance the MGB by accounting for goal relevance, wherein the goal one is passionate about has a higher priority over other competing goals to result in that particular goal choice (Fishbach, Shah, and Kruglanski 2004; Kopetz et al. 2012). Therefore, the overarching question of this research is to explore the role of passion and goals in predicting marketing-related behavioural outcomes. Toward goal achievement, intrinsic desires instead entail in an activity becoming worth doing for its own sake (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002) and desired as an end in itself (Davis 1984). This suggests that two forms of desires exist.

In support, Davis (1984) alluded to the existence of an intrinsic form of desires by distinguishing between appetitive desires (pleasure; occurring when one “simply” wants to do something without a reason to) and volitive desires (action; based on reasons). Additionally, Linstead and Brewis (2007) presented a two-sided understanding of desires as either based on a lack of something or as a non-instrumental flow of energy so that behaviour is not only the replenishment, accumulation or filling of gaps, but also, the squandering of excessive amounts of desire (passion/energy) available (Bataille, 1985). Therefore, intrinsic desires are unlike extrinsic desires as extrinsic desires desire something for its perceived conduciveness to something else one desires whilst intrinsic desires exist as an enjoyment/energy; without the necessity for a reason. In this regard, as consumers’ goals are also based on subjective variables (Kangun, Otto, and Randall 1992; Johnson and Garbarino 1999), perceiving an intrinsic outcome to desire and goal relevance during decision-making is necessary.

This paper first reviews the literature on passion. Next, passion’s relationships with desires and behaviour are demonstrated. After the justification for passion to be incorporated in the MGB has been made clear, the paper presents a more comprehensive, revised version of the MGB by additionally integrating a measure of word-of-mouth behaviour. In the proposed model, participants’ attitudes, subjective norms, anticipated emotions, perceived behavioural control, desires, intention, passion and word-of-mouth behaviour are operationalised in the context of live classical music concerts. Finally, the implications of passion for marketing strategy are discussed.

Passion as an intrinsic construct

The intrinsic nature of passion can be justified in three ways. First, passion is defined as a strong inclination towards an activity that people like, invest time and energy in, to which they consider important (Vallerand et al. 2003; Baum and Locke 2004). Second, passion is associated with flow and intrinsic motivation, given highly passionate people’s absorption at meaningful and important activities (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002) and their autonomous internalisation and engagement in activities out of pleasure and enjoyment (Mageau et al. 2009; Vallerand 2008). However, passion’s strong inclination and enduring identification towards an activity differentiates itself from flow and intrinsic motivation which are viewed respectively as a consequence of passion and stemming from the person-task interaction at a short-term level (Vallerand et al. 2007; Deci and Ryan 1985). Thus, passion is shown to be innate.

Third, Vallerand’s three criterion deemed necessary for passion’s development: selecting an activity choice that reflects one’s identity and interest, perceiving the activity as important (value) and by having a greater internalisation of the activity represented in one’s identity (Vallerand 2008, 2012; Mageau et al. 2009; Vallerand et al. 2003) justifies passion as an intrinsic construct. Accordingly, activity valuation is perceived as the intensity feature that underlies activity internalisation and the development of passion. Thus, interesting but unimportant activities (Vallerand 2012) are not the same as passionate activities that people are intrinsically motivated towards. In this regard, passion, as an intrinsic construct, is incorporated to account for the intrinsic expression of desire missing in the MGB.

The relationship between passion and desires

Research has perceived passion as inseparable from the concept of desires. Just as desires are aspirant e.g., “to long or hope for”, passion is also perceived to function in relation to a lack - i.e., a passion for something or someone (Linstead and Brewis 2007; Bataille 1985). However, although synonymous to desire, passion is deemed a more intensified form of desires. Through terms such as zeal and intense longing, the fire of desire has been alluded to in studies of passion (Linstead and Brewis 2007). Further, whilst having or feeling desire appears more general, passion indicates a focused, powerful emotion (Cardon, et al. 2009), with Hume (1739, Section III, p. 413) stating: “…reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.” As such, this study perceives two manifestations of desires, first, intentions represent an extrinsic extension of desires and second, passion represents an intrinsic extension of desires. Therefore, this study proposes that:

Hypothesis 1: Desires will be a significant predictor of passion.
The relationship between passion and behaviour

The influence of passion on behaviour has been examined across varied domains (e.g., music, sports, business, entrepreneurship), but these either focused on the outcomes of passion or measured brand passion in terms of brand love (Albert, Merunka, and Valette-Florence 2013; Caroll and Ahuvia 2006). Although Swinberge, Astakhova and Wooldridge (2014) applied Vallerand’s passion scale to brands, demonstrating that brand identification, not susceptibility to influences, predicts harmonious brand passion which in turn positively influences positive word-of-mouth behaviour and willingness to pay a premium price, formal R² values were not displayed; neither did they distinguish susceptible influences from attitudes or consider the roles of effort and anticipated emotions in influencing behaviour. As such, Swinberge et al. (2014) did not comprehensively incorporate the processes that account for how the initial attraction develops into passion, i.e., the socio-psychological antecedents of desire. Thus, the mediating effects of desires on passion have to be more deeply reviewed. In other words, the present study differs from Swinberge et al’s (2014) in that it evaluates passion towards an experiential behaviour rather than a non-effortful liking of a brand.

In general, higher levels of harmonious passion have been found to stimulate a significant motivational force to increase persistence in meaningful activities and behaviour as it entails in a flexible, pleasurable and adaptive engagement of the activity (Murnieks et al. 2012; Wang and Chu 2007; Amiot, Vallerand, and Blanchard 2006). By contrast, obsessive passion controls people so that they risk experiencing conflicts and other negative affective and cognitive consequences during and after activity engagement (Volpone, Perry and Rubino 2012; Philippe, Vallerand, Richer, Vallières, and Bergeron 2009; Ratelle, Vallerand, Mageau, Raveau, and Provencher 2004). As consumers attend classical music concerts to gain hedonic experiences (Walsmey 2011, 2013; Pulh, Marteaux, and Mencarelli 2008) so that passionate activities tend to be leisure activities (Mageau et al. 2009) unlike goal-driven activities e.g., studying or mastering a statistical course (Leone, Perugini, and Ercolani 2004), negative anticipated emotions are perceived as irrelevant to the classical music context since people could choose to not go if attending a concert evokes negative anticipated feelings. Moreover, Perugini and Bagozzi (2001) noted negative anticipated emotions to be insignificant across different samples and research topics. Therefore, as understanding the development of harmonious passion is more appropriate for this study’s context, obsessive passion will not be considered further.

As word-of-mouth communication is the most successful means of promotion of the arts (Reichheld 2003; Bennett and Rundle-Thiele 2005, Radbourne 1999) and that the MGB do not explicitly define or measure behaviour in marketing terms, this study posits relevance in focusing on WOM behaviour. Word-of-mouth behaviour is perceived when consumers say positive things (Eisingerich, Auh, and Merlo 2013; Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels 2009; Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, and Zeithaml 1993) and recommend the organization or service to others (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996). Therefore, this leads to the hypotheses that:

Hypothesis 2: Passion will be a significant predictor of word-of-mouth behaviour.

Hypothesis 3: The passion model will explain more variance in word-of-mouth behaviour than the MGB.

Figure 1 is the theoretical model proposed in this study and displays the relationship between passion and other constructs in the MGB.
Next, the structural relations between the constructs were examined for common method bias (CMB) using exploratory and confirmatory Harman’s one-factor test. These results showed that CMB is not an issue in this study. In arriving at the most parsimonious and robust conceptualisation, we are now confident to address the hypotheses.

RESULTS
The MPGDB produced a Chi-square of 602.851 with 237 degrees of freedom. The CFI was .951, NFI .922, RMSEA .059, indicating a good data to model fit (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham 2006). As such no further model re-specification or modification was deemed necessary. Table 1 shows the estimates for the paths and the significant levels between the constructs. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desires &lt;--- Attitude</td>
<td>.495</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desires &lt;--- Subjective Norms</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desires &lt;--- Positive Anticipated Emotions</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desires &lt;--- Perceived Behavioural Control</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desires &lt;--- Past Behaviour</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention &lt;--- Desires</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion &lt;--- Desires</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>H1 supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-Mouth &lt;--- Passion</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>H2 supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-Mouth &lt;--- Past Behaviour</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-Mouth &lt;--- Intention</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.557*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Intention significantly predicted word-of-mouth when passion was removed (0.452, p<.006).

To ascertain whether the passion model has better predictive ability than the MGB, it was compared with the MGB. The test of the MGB showed that the variance predicted by WOM was 27.6%. In turn, the variance predicted by WOM in the passion model was 62.9%. As WOM’s R² value is lower in the MGB compared to the passion model, H3 is supported; the MPGDB explains more variance in WOM than the MGB.

DISCUSSION
A key question in attempting to understand consumers’ behavioural responses towards classical music performances pertains to the role of passion. This study therefore set out to assess the impact of passion on consumers’ word-of-mouth behaviour towards classical music concerts when placed within the MGB.

Beginning with an overview, the MPGDB in this context of classical music performances affirms the well-known MGB theory, wherein attitudes, subjective norms, positive anticipated emotions, perceived behavioural control and past behaviour are key antecedents of desires. The strongest predictors of desires are listed in this order: attitudes, subjective norms, past behaviour and perceived behavioural control, with desires predicting both passion and intention. Past behaviour is clearly a valuable factor in goal-directed behaviour seeing as it directly predicts not only desires but also word-of-mouth behaviour. This study has also shown that passion significantly predicts word-of-mouth behaviour. This influence of passion on behaviour concurs with other studies on passion (Vallerand et al. 2003; Mageau et al. 2009) in that harmonious passion leads to motivational, enthusiastic and persistent behaviour and positive word-of-mouth on brands (Swimberghe et al. 2014).

More importantly however, this is the first study, to our knowledge, to combine the roles of passion and desires in a model of goal-directed behaviour and to examine the role of passion in the context of classical music performances. In consequence, the contribution of the present study is directed to two main areas. First, it adds knowledge to the domains of passion and psychology. In enriching existing passion research, there is now a direct relationship between desires and passion. Prior findings in the literature used the term ‘desire’ to subsume passion, perceiving passion as a synonym for desires. However, this study has shown that desires and passion are distinct constructs and that desires significantly predict passion. Hence, the association of passion with desires is made less ambiguous and credibly demonstrated in the passion model with good fit statistics. In light of the definite link established between desires and passion, future models on passion will now be able to incorporate desires as an antecedent to passion (Vallerand et al. 2003).

The MPGDB also makes a small but meaningful contribution to the Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour as it evaluates behavioural consequences from both direct and indirect influences of behaviour. The MPGDB’s measures more adequately reflect the behavioural selection process inherent to word-of-mouth behaviour to enhance the prediction of WOM as desires are now perceived as not the only missing motivational element to energise intentions (Perugini and Bagozzi, 2004). Instead, passion has been validated as an explanatory variable determining motivation to energise WOM behaviour.

The second main contribution of this study pertains to the MPGDB’s capacity to more comprehensively account for the consumer decision-making process. In this regard, passion is evidenced to influence consumer decision-making, such that as consumers desire classical music performances more, their desires manifest into both intention and passion. Unexpectedly, passion removes the positive effects of intention on word-of-mouth when it is included in the MGB so that intention effects are no longer significant. As passion and intention were not highly correlated (0.6), high implied correlations were not responsible for the insignificant effects of intention. The apparent power of passion over intention therefore provides new insight into the prominent role of passion in guiding marketing-related behavioural responses. However, whether this phenomenon only pertains to word-of-mouth behavioural responses is still unclear. Thus, an avenue for future research could be to explore passion’s relationships with other constructs e.g., switching behaviour. Overall, the result findings showed that the MPGDB explained more variances in word-of-mouth behaviour compared to the MGB, thus strongly justifying the incorporation of passion in the MGB.

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS
To this end, marketers should realise that passion is a concrete and measurable construct that accounts for variations in consumers’
behavioural responses. In other words, should consumers not develop a harmonious passion for classical music performances, perceiving such activities as part of their identity and important to them in the first instance, the effectiveness of marketing strategies would be limited since these consumers may not value the pursuit of such services long-term (Vallerand et al. 2003). Moreover, as this study has shown, passion is positively related with word-of-mouth behaviour hence incorporating passion in marketing strategies is beneficial.

As such, important practical implications relevant to marketing strategies can be derived from the results of the study: how to encourage the development of harmonious passion and how to increase positive word-of-mouth behavioural responses. As attitudes and subjective norms were the two stronger predictors of desires, strengthening their relationships would lead to higher levels of desires, and in turn, promote passion. That is, to enhance consumers’ attitudes towards classical music performances, marketers could endeavor to change consumers’ current beliefs, add new beliefs, change the importance of their beliefs and change their beliefs of ideal classical music performances. In this manner, strategically repositioning classical music performances in consumers’ minds will strengthen attitudes’ relationship with desires. To enhance subjective norm’s relationship with desires, the roles of aspirational groups and group influence strategies can be applied. Particularly drawing on normative and identification influences, targeting consumers’ need for belongingness and gaining support from their significant others towards classical music performances would be beneficial.

However, in order for desires to manifest into passion and subsequent WOM behaviour, consumers must first value and identify with classical musical performances. In other words, the identity of a concert audience must align with consumers’ own self-identity such that the pursuit of classical music performances is done out of self-interest and not just because of external influences e.g., subjective norms, perceived behavioural control etc. Therefore, as “getting someone to do something will only be effective if an intermediate “getting someone to be” also takes place (Bianchi 2011), marketers must consider how classical music performances can be perceived as important and contributes to deep fulfillment to consumers (Floch 2001), in order to foster passion.

LIMITATIONS

Although providing encouraging results, this study has its limitations. Foremost, with it being a result of convenience sampling, the results may not be representative of the population. Therefore, now that that applicability of the passion model has been demonstrated, future researchers could obtain more representative samples to study the similar and/or different effects of passion on positive behavioural responses towards classical music performances to verify our findings. Second, other loyalty behavioural responses exist that could be helpful to test: repurchase behaviour, customer voluntary participation, switching behaviour etc. (de Rooij 2013; Collier and Bienstock 2006, Zeithaml et al. 1996). However, as word-of-mouth communication is the most successful means of promotion of the arts (Radbourne 1999), we view this omission as a trade-off to probe more intensively into word-of-mouth behaviour. Additionally, other antecedents to passion e.g., identity may also be considered. Finally, future research could build a more comprehensive theoretical model which incorporates the moderating effects of demographic (age, gender, education level, occupation and socio-economic category), that could potentially influence positive behavioural responses towards classical music concerts.

REFERENCES


