



## From Passion to Fulfilment: How Calling Shapes Career Satisfaction in Preschool Teachers

**Tehreem Asad<sup>1</sup>, Shagufta Shaheen<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Bilal Maqsood<sup>3</sup>**

1. University of Central Punjab (UCP), Lahore, Pakistan, Email: [tehreem.asad@hotmail.com](mailto:tehreem.asad@hotmail.com)
2. University of Central Punjab (UCP), Lahore, Pakistan, Email: [shagufta.shaheen@ucp.edu.pk](mailto:shagufta.shaheen@ucp.edu.pk)  
(Corresponding Author)
3. Department of Clinical Excellence, Eastern Health Cluster, Ministry of Health, Dammam, Saudi Arabia, Email: [maqsoodmub@gmail.com](mailto:maqsoodmub@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Preschool teachers play a vital role in shaping children's intellectual and personal development, yet research has rarely examined how intrinsic motivators such as calling and work passion contribute to their career satisfaction, particularly in Pakistan. This study explored the relationships between calling, work passion, and career satisfaction, along with the mediating role of work passion and the influence of demographic factors. Using a cross-sectional design, data were collected from 253 preschool teachers in private schools in Lahore, Pakistan. Results showed significant positive links among calling, work passion, and career satisfaction. Mediation analysis indicated that work passion fully mediated the relationship between calling and career satisfaction. Additionally, regression analysis demonstrated that both harmonious passion and obsessive passion significantly predicted career satisfaction; however, calling was not a direct predictor of career satisfaction. Among demographic factors, age and income had no significant impact, while teachers with more professional experience reported higher levels of obsessive passion. These findings highlight the crucial role of work passion in translating a sense of calling into increased career satisfaction, especially for preschool teachers. Fostering such passion may not only enhance teachers' professional fulfillment but also improve the quality of early childhood education, as motivated and satisfied educators are better equipped to support children's learning and development. Limitations include the cross-sectional design, reliance on self-report measures, and data collected from a single city, which may limit generalizability.

**Keywords:** Calling, Work Passion, Career Satisfaction, Mediation Analysis, Teacher Motivation, Early Childhood Education in Pakistan

### Introduction

Teachers serve as an essential source of an individual's development, fostering cognitive growth and imparting vital skills to students, thereby enabling their positive contribution to societal advancement. With the ability to influence future generations, a teacher's impact extends beyond the confines of the classroom, leaving a lasting impression on the world. Besides educating, pre-school teachers have an extra responsibility. When engaging with young children of an impressionable age, it is essential to foster ethical and moral values within them at school, where a significant portion of their time is

spent, and they are reliant on their teachers' guidance. The burden of this responsibility, combined with various job stressors, results in burnout among pre-school teachers (Kokkinos, 2011). A calling is defined as feeling a meaningful passion for a particular field (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011). According to research, individuals who report a stronger intrinsic drive exhibit a lower tendency towards burnout (Yoon et al., 2017), a self-reported commitment to exceeding their professional responsibilities (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), and improved work performance (Kim et al., 2018). Given the demanding nature of the teaching profession (Travers & Cooper, 1996), possessing a sense of calling toward this field may help reduce burnout and foster higher career satisfaction. This highlights the importance of examining how a sense of calling impacts the career satisfaction of preschool teachers. Gaining insight into the role of work passion and calling in shaping career satisfaction can contribute to enhancing preschool teachers' professional well-being, improving retention rates, and ultimately elevating the quality of early childhood education. The concept of calling often involves a transcendent summons a feeling of being called by or toward something beyond personal desires or social expectations (Dik & Duffy, 2012). This sense of transcendence may stem from spiritual or religious beliefs, where work is viewed as a vocation or service to a higher purpose, as highlighted in Weber's (2013) discussion of vocation in Christianity. However, transcendence can also emerge outside religious contexts, such as through self-transcendence or the discovery of one's unique purpose, emphasized in Jungian psychology and Frankl's (1985) existential perspective on finding meaning. Calling Theory provides a framework for understanding how perceiving work as meaningful enhances engagement, persistence, and fulfillment in one's career (Dik & Duffy, 2007). Individuals who view their work as a calling tend to experience a strong alignment between their values and their professional roles, fostering harmonious work passion—a balanced, autonomous engagement that supports satisfaction and well-being (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vatou & Gkorezis, 2018; Hirschi, 2012). In contrast, when the experience of calling arises from external expectations or obligations, it may lead to obsessive passion, characterized by rigid, pressured engagement that can heighten stress or burnout (Vallerand et al., 2003). In teaching, particularly early childhood education, where work demands both emotional and moral investment, understanding the source and nature of teachers' calling is crucial, as it shapes the type of passion they develop and ultimately influences their long-term career satisfaction. Work passion refers to the strong inclination toward one's work that individuals find meaningful and in which they invest significant time and energy. It encompasses three key dimensions: positive emotions toward the job, a strong occupational identity, and intrinsic motivation to engage. Passion for work leads to greater personal satisfaction and productive contributions, often reflected in enhanced motivation, dedication, and commitment (Chen et al., 2019). Although research has investigated work passion in relation to job and work satisfaction, its specific connection to teachers' career satisfaction remains underexplored. Work passion is typically conceptualized in two forms: harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP). HP represents a balanced, autonomous form of engagement where individuals freely choose to pursue their work, while OP reflects a controlled, compulsive drive that can create conflict with other life areas. Studies show that calling is positively related to HP ( $r = 0.19$ ) but not to OP ( $r = 0.06$ ), highlighting that while both constructs involve deep engagement with work, they differ in meaningfulness and motivational orientation (Lajom et al., 2018). People who perceive a transcendent summons or a higher purpose in their work often experience greater enthusiasm and passion toward work-related activities (Berg et al., 2010). Calling embodies this transcendent dimension where individuals feel guided by something beyond self-interest, derive meaning, and contribute to the greater good whereas work passion focuses on the intensity of one's involvement rather than its purpose. Research suggests that individuals who view their profession as a calling tend to report higher passion for their job tasks (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas,

2011; Peterson et al., 2009). Moreover, passion itself can instill motivation, foster well-being, and add meaning to daily life (Vallerand et al., 2003). Building on these findings, the present study examines the relationship between calling and career satisfaction among preschool teachers, proposing that work passion serves as a mediating mechanism linking a sense of calling to greater career fulfillment.

To distinguish career satisfaction from job or work satisfaction, it is important to clarify their conceptual differences. Career satisfaction is defined as an individual's contentment with both internal factors (e.g., personal fulfillment, meaningfulness) and external factors (e.g., professional achievements, future prospects) within their career (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Hofmans et al., 2008). It reflects one's perception of current career accomplishments as well as anticipated opportunities for future growth (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). Career satisfaction has significant implications for work-related outcomes, such as influencing the intention to stay (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009) or leave an organization (Nauta et al., 2009). It assesses the degree to which individuals perceive their career progression as aligned with their personal values, goals, and priorities (Erdogan et al., 2004). It is often used interchangeably with career success, defined as favorable psychological or work-related accomplishments obtained through career experiences (Joo & Park, 2010). In contrast, job satisfaction refers to the positive emotions and evaluations individuals hold toward their work or specific job experiences (Locke, 1976), encompassing both affective and cognitive dimensions (Judge et al., 2009; Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Given its broader scope, career satisfaction captures not only satisfaction with one's current job but also long-term fulfillment and progress within the profession. Therefore, this construct is selected as the outcome variable in the present study for its comprehensive representation of teachers' overall career experiences. Teaching, especially in early childhood education, is an emotionally demanding profession that requires significant personal commitment. Preschool teachers face challenges such as behavioral management, limited resources, time pressure, and low professional status (Curbow et al., 2000; Kelly & Berthelsen, 1995; McCrath & Huntington, 2007). These stressors have been linked to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and increased turnover intentions (Schaack et al., 2020), highlighting the need to identify factors that enhance teachers' career satisfaction and retention. Despite evidence that intrinsic motivation and a sense of calling can buffer burnout and promote satisfaction (Hagmaier et al., 2013; Gradisek & Habe, 2020), few studies have examined how calling translates into career satisfaction through work passion—particularly among preschool teachers. Most previous research has focused on primary or secondary school teachers (Budhwani & Gondane, 2024) or has substituted career satisfaction with job satisfaction (Peterson et al., 2009; Duffy et al., 2012). Furthermore, empirical work on these constructs within Pakistan's early childhood education sector remains scarce (Malik & Mansoor, 2015), even though the context is marked by low pay, limited training, and high attrition (Tahira et al., 2021; Rafiq et al., 2023). Building on Calling Theory and the dualistic model of passion, this study addresses these gaps by investigating how work passion mediates the relationship between calling and career satisfaction among preschool teachers in Lahore, Pakistan. By identifying this mechanism, the research aims to contribute to the literature on teacher motivation and to inform initiatives that foster educator well-being, effectiveness, and retention in early childhood education.

## **Research Questions**

1. Investigate the relationship between calling and career satisfaction among preschool teachers.
2. Examine the impact of work passion on career satisfaction.

3. Explore the mediating role of work passion in the relationship between calling and career satisfaction.
4. Assess the effect of demographic variables on calling, work passion, and career satisfaction.

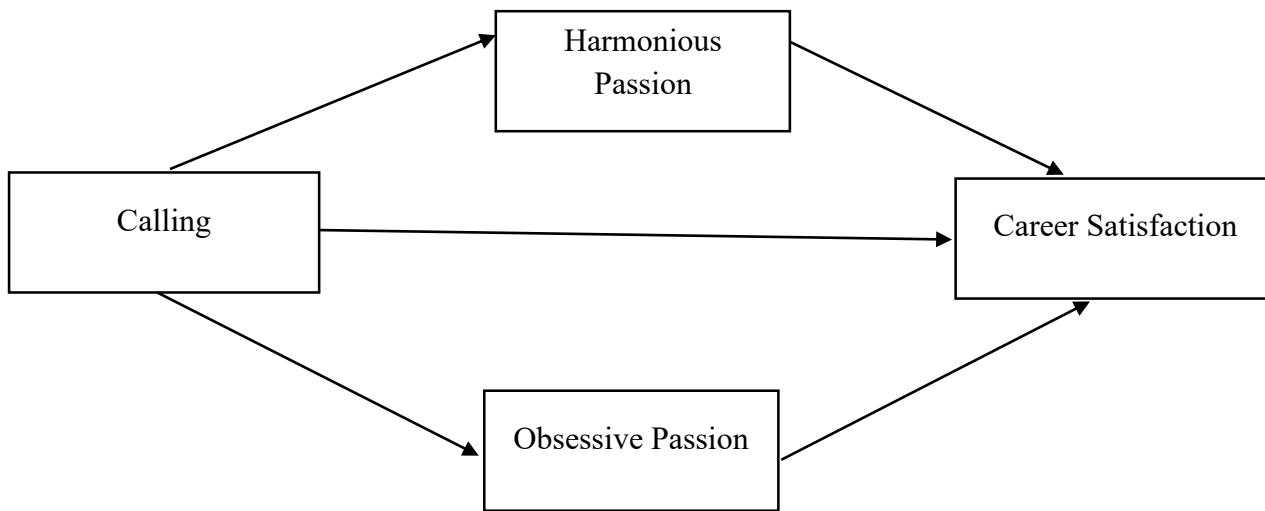
### Hypotheses

H1: Calling, work passion, and career satisfaction are positively related among preschool teachers.

H2: Work passion mediates the relationship between calling and career satisfaction.

H3: Demographic variables (age, experience, and income) significantly influence calling, work passion, and career satisfaction.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study**



**Note.** This model illustrates the hypothesized relationship between the variables with calling serving as the independent variable, work passion (HP, OP) being the mediator and career satisfaction as the dependent variable.

### Literature Review

Work as a Calling Theory (WCT; Duffy et al., 2018) provides a foundational framework for understanding how perceiving work as a calling contributes to individuals' satisfaction and well-being. This theory conceptualizes calling as a meaningful and prosocial work orientation, characterized by the belief that one's career contributes to the greater good and aligns with one's core purpose. Individuals who view their work as a calling often experience enhanced work engagement, psychological fulfillment, and job satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2018). Research further suggests that calling is associated with greater motivation, persistence, and performance outcomes, making it a key intrinsic factor influencing career satisfaction (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Kim et al., 2018). Building on this theoretical foundation, studies have consistently demonstrated positive associations between calling and various work-related outcomes. Shang et al. (2022) found that teachers with a strong sense of calling reported higher job satisfaction through greater occupational self-efficacy, aligning with Social Cognitive Career Theory. Similarly, Wu et al. (2024) demonstrated that among Pakistani teachers, affective and efficacy components of professional identity significantly predicted calling, which in turn enhanced career satisfaction. These findings highlight calling as a motivational construct that fosters career fulfillment through self-belief and a sense of purpose. Supporting this

perspective, Peng et al. (2020) reported that career calling among Chinese army officers predicted higher job satisfaction through work meaningfulness and meaning in life, emphasizing the mediating role of psychological meaningfulness. Together, these studies illustrate that perceiving one's work as a calling contributes to satisfaction by providing a sense of direction, self-worth, and purpose in professional life. To further understand how calling translates into work outcomes, Vallerand et al. (2003) introduced the Dualistic Model of Passion, which distinguishes between harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP). HP reflects an autonomous, balanced form of engagement that promotes flexibility, well-being, and satisfaction, whereas OP arises from internal or external pressures, leading to rigid persistence and potential conflict with other life areas. The model has been widely applied to explore how individuals internalize their sense of calling and how this internalization influences occupational outcomes. Empirical findings support the notion that calling influences the type of passion individuals develop toward their work. Choi et al. (2020) demonstrated that perceiving work as a calling predicted higher harmonious passion and lower obsessive passion, with HP fully mediating the relationship between calling and work engagement, while OP partially mediated the link between calling and workaholism. Similarly, Rosa and Vianello (2020) found that HP partially mediated the relationship between calling and workaholism, whereas OP acted as a full mediator, suggesting that the experience of calling can lead to both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes depending on how passion is internalized. These results highlight the importance of distinguishing between harmonious and obsessive forms of passion when exploring how calling shapes work-related attitudes and behaviors. Research in organizational and educational contexts has further demonstrated that work passion serves as a mechanism linking calling to positive career outcomes. Vatou and Gkorezis (2018), studying primary school teachers, found that calling was positively related to both work passion and work meaningfulness, with meaningfulness mediating the relationship between calling and passion. Their results suggest that teachers who perceive their work as meaningful are more likely to develop harmonious passion, which in turn enhances satisfaction. Extending this framework, Liu et al. (2021) reported that alignment between serving one's and helping others' career callings increased both HP and OP, which positively influenced innovation performance, supporting the mediating role of passion between calling and positive work outcomes. The significance of work passion in shaping employee well-being has been further validated across various professions. Cabrita and Duarte (2023) revealed that HP buffered against the negative effects of work demands on affective well-being, whereas OP amplified these effects, reinforcing the view that harmonious forms of passion promote resilience and satisfaction. Similarly, Pathak and Srivastav (2020) demonstrated that work passion positively predicted career satisfaction among social workers, with belongingness and psychological empowerment mediating this link. Together, these studies underscore that passion not only strengthens intrinsic motivation but also transforms the sense of calling into tangible professional fulfillment.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

A correlational research design was employed to examine the relationships among calling, work passion, and career satisfaction in preschool teachers.

### **Sample and Sampling Strategy**

The sample comprised 253 preschool teachers from private-sector schools in Lahore, Pakistan. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria.

**Inclusion criteria:** Teachers currently employed full-time in private preschools of Lahore, holding at least a graduate degree, and representing different career stages (i.e., less than 2 years, 2–5 years, and more than 5 years of experience).

**Exclusion criteria:** Non-teaching staff, substitute teachers, educators from other levels (primary, secondary, or higher education), and teachers from cities outside Lahore were excluded.

## Measures

### 1. Calling.

The *Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ; Dik et al., 2012) was used to measure the sense of calling. It includes three subscales—transcendent summons, purposeful work, and prosocial orientation—each containing four items. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Not at all true of me”) to 5 (“Absolutely true of me”).

### 2. Work Passion.

Work passion was assessed using the *Passion Scale* developed by Carbonneau et al. (2008), which consists of two subscales: harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP), each comprising seven items. Responses are recorded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 7 (“Strongly agree”).

### 3. Career Satisfaction.

Career satisfaction was measured using the *Career Satisfaction Scale* by Greenhaus et al. (1990). It contains five items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”).

### 4. Demographic Information Form.

Participants provided information on age, gender, qualification, monthly income, and years of teaching experience.

## Procedure

Data were collected from full-time preschool teachers working in private schools in Lahore. After obtaining official permission from school authorities, participants were briefed on the study’s purpose and assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained before administering the questionnaires, which took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was secured from the relevant institutional review board. Participants were informed about the study’s objectives, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses. No identifiable data were collected, ensuring anonymity.

## Reliability Analysis

Table 1 presents the reliability coefficients for all scales used in the study. All measures demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of .70.

**Table 1 Psychometric Properties of Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ), The Passion Scale and Career Satisfaction Scale**

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's $\alpha$	<i>N</i> of items
Calling and Vocation Questionnaire	67.49	10.58	.85	24
Presence (Total)	34.65	5.68	.76	12
Search (Total)	32.84	6.21	.78	12
The Passion Scale				16
HP	33.21	7.14	.88	6
OP	28.99	7.50	.81	6
Career Satisfaction Scale	18.13	4.14	.88	5

*Note.*  $N = 253$ , HP = Harmonious Passion, OP = Obsessive Passion

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants, including age, gender, qualification, years of experience, and monthly income.

**Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants at Baseline**

Baseline Characteristic	$N = 253$	
	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Women	251	99.2
Men	2	.8
Age		
Less than 25 years	49	19.4
26-35 years	106	41.9
36-45 years	82	32.4
46 or more	16	6.3
Experience		
Less than 2 years	62	24.5
2-5 years	74	29.2
More than 5 years	117	46.2
Monthly Income		
Less than 30,00	107	42.3
30,000-50,000	121	47.8
50,000+	25	9.9

*Note.*  $N = 253$

Descriptive statistics for the main study variables are presented in Table 3. The results show the means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis values, all within acceptable limits, indicating normal distribution of data.

**Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation, Kurtosis and Skewness of Calling, Work Passion and Career Satisfaction on Baseline Measures**

Scale	<i>M(SD)</i>	Kurtosis	Skewness
Calling and Vocation Questionnaire	67.49 (10.58)	.80	-.30
Presence (Total)	34.66 (5.67)	.29	-.21
Search (Total)	32.81 (6.21)	.60	-.23
Work Passion	85.19 (18.08)	2.08	-1.3
HP	33.21 (7.14)	1.89	-1.28
OP	28.94 (7.52)	.09	-.59
Career Satisfaction	18.13 (4.14)	-.61	-.20

*Note.*  $N = 253$

### Correlation Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationships between calling, harmonious passion (HP), obsessive passion (OP), and career satisfaction.

**Table 4 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Calling, Work Passion (HP and OP), and Career Satisfaction**

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Calling	250	67.49	10.58	-			
2. HP	252	32.21	7.14	.45**	-		
3. OP	253	28.94	7.52	.34**	.69**	-	
4. Career Satisfaction	253	18.13	4.14	.27**	.53**	.45**	-

*Note.*  $N = 253$ , \*\* $p < .01$

As presented in Table 4, results revealed a moderate positive relationship between calling and HP ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ) and a weaker but significant positive correlation between calling and OP ( $r = .34, p < .01$ ). Calling also showed a weak positive relationship with career satisfaction ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ). HP and OP were strongly correlated ( $r = .69, p < .01$ ). Furthermore, both forms of work passion were significantly associated with career satisfaction — HP ( $r = .54, p < .01$ ) and OP ( $r = .46, p < .01$ ).

## Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of calling, harmonious passion (HP), and obsessive passion (OP) on career satisfaction among preschool teachers.

**Table 5 Multiple Linear Regression of Calling, Harmonious Passion, and Obsessive Passion as predictors of Career Satisfaction as dependent variable.**

Model	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI
Constant	6.72	1.48		4.52	.000	[3.80,9.65]
Calling	.01	.02	.03	.54	.587	[-.03,.05]
HP	.22	.04	.39	5.07	.000	[.13,.31]
OP	.10	.04	.18	2.57	.011	[.02,.18]
$R^2$	.30					

*Note.* N = 253, HP = Harmonious Passion; OP = Obsessive Passion; CI = Class Interval.

As shown in Table 5, the overall model was statistically significant,  $F(4, 250) = 36.57, p < .001$ , explaining 30% of the variance in career satisfaction ( $R^2 = .30$ ). Results indicated that harmonious passion ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ) and obsessive passion ( $\beta = .18, p < .05$ ) were significant positive predictors of career satisfaction. In contrast, calling was not a significant predictor ( $\beta = .03, p = .59$ ), suggesting that calling alone does not directly influence teachers' career satisfaction when work passion is considered in the model.

## Mediation Analysis

A parallel mediation analysis was conducted using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) to examine whether harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP) mediate the relationship between calling and career satisfaction. Bootstrapping with 5,000 samples was applied to estimate the indirect effects and their 95% confidence intervals.

**Table 6 Mediating Effect of Harmonious Passion and Obsessive Passion on Calling and Career Satisfaction**

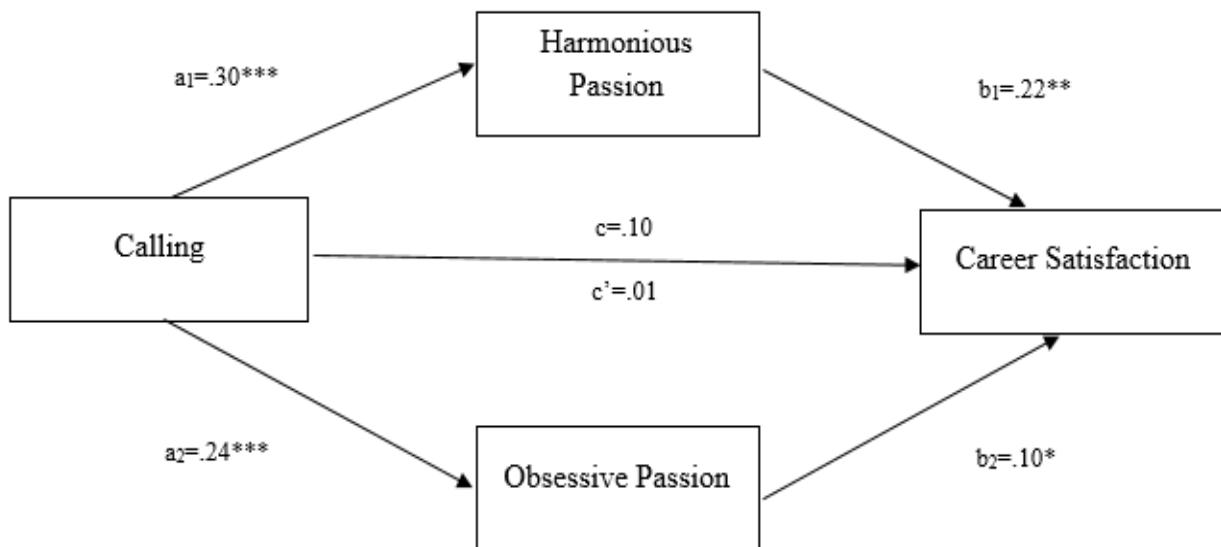
Predictor	HP			OP			CS		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Constant	12.59	2.61	4.80***	12.70	2.89	4.39***	6.72	1.48	4.52***
Calling	.30	.03	7.97***	.24	.04	5.70***	.01	.02	.54
HP							.22	.04	5.07***
OP							.10	.04	2.57*
$R^2$		.20			.11			.30	
	$F(1.00, 248) = 63.56, p < .001$			$F(1.00, 248) = 32.55, p < .001$			$F(3.00, 246) = 36.57, p < .001$		

	Bootstrapping effect	SE	95% CI (LL, UL)
Total effect	.10	.02	.06, .12
Indirect effect total	.09	.01	.06, .12
Indirect effect via HP	.06	.01	.04, .10
Indirect effect via OP	.02	.01	.00, .04

Note.  $N = 250$ ,  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ ,  $***p < .001$  B= Unstandardized coefficients; SE= Standard error; CI= Class Interval; LL= Lower limit; UL= Upper limit; HP = Harmonious Passion; OP = Obsessive Passion; CS = Career Satisfaction.

Results indicated that calling significantly predicted both HP ( $B = 0.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and OP ( $B = 0.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, the direct effect of calling on career satisfaction was non-significant ( $B = 0.01$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Harmonious passion significantly predicted career satisfaction ( $B = 0.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while obsessive passion showed a weaker but significant relationship ( $B = 0.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The total indirect effect of calling on career satisfaction was significant ( $B = 0.09$ , 95% CI [0.06, 0.12]). The indirect effect through HP was significant ( $B = 0.06$ , 95% CI [0.04, 0.10]), whereas the indirect effect through OP was not ( $B = 0.02$ , 95% CI [0.00, 0.04]). The total effect (c), direct (c'), and indirect ( $a_1 \cdot b_1, a_2 \cdot b_2$ ) are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2** Mediation Model of Calling, Harmonious Passion, Obsessive Passion and Career Satisfaction



## Discussion

The present study examined the relationships among calling, work passion (harmonious and obsessive), and career satisfaction among preschool teachers. The findings highlight the central role of passion in translating a sense of calling into meaningful and satisfying career experiences. Consistent with prior research (Vatou & Gkorezis, 2018; Moe, 2016), calling was positively associated with harmonious passion and career satisfaction, supporting the idea that perceiving one's

work as a calling enhances autonomous motivation and fulfillment. Teachers who experience their work as meaningful are more likely to engage in it harmoniously, which in turn fosters greater satisfaction and professional well-being (Carboneau et al., 2008; Çalışkan et al., 2023). Interestingly, obsessive passion was also positively related to calling and career satisfaction, diverging from earlier studies that linked it to burnout and emotional exhaustion (Carboneau et al., 2008; Amarnani et al., 2019). This discrepancy might reflect contextual or cultural factors in the preschool teaching profession, where strong emotional investment and commitment are often viewed positively. The nurturing and relational nature of preschool teaching may buffer against the typical negative outcomes associated with obsessive passion. Regression and mediation analyses further clarified these relationships. While calling did not directly predict career satisfaction, both harmonious and obsessive passion were significant predictors. Moreover, harmonious passion fully mediated the relationship between calling and career satisfaction, underscoring that passion acts as the motivational mechanism through which a sense of calling leads to fulfillment at work. This aligns with previous research emphasizing that calling enhances career outcomes primarily through intrinsic motivation and engagement (Duffy et al., 2018; Vallerand & Houlfort, 2003; Spehar et al., 2016).

Conversely, obsessive passion did not serve as a significant mediator, even though it predicted career satisfaction directly. This suggests that while obsessive passion can sometimes fuel commitment and productivity, it may not consistently translate the sense of calling into long-term satisfaction (Ho & Astakhova, 2018; Dalla Rosa & Vianello, 2020). This finding supports the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003), which distinguishes between harmonious passion's adaptive outcomes and obsessive passion's potentially ambivalent effects. Regarding demographic factors, age and income did not significantly influence calling, passion, or career satisfaction, suggesting that these constructs are more strongly driven by personal meaning and intrinsic motivation than by external or demographic characteristics (Vallerand, 2015; Duffy et al., 2018). However, teachers with more than five years of experience reported significantly higher obsessive passion compared to less experienced teachers. This may reflect increased identification with the profession and emotional investment developed over time, which can intensify attachment to work (Carboneau et al., 2008; Forest et al., 2011). Taken together, these findings reinforce the importance of fostering harmonious passion among preschool teachers to promote sustainable motivation and career satisfaction. Professional development programs that emphasize self-determination, emotional regulation, and work-life balance could help teachers channel their passion in a healthy way, preventing obsessive over-engagement and potential burnout.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of calling and work passion in enhancing preschool teachers' career satisfaction. The findings demonstrate that when teachers perceive their profession as a calling and experience harmonious passion for their work, they report greater satisfaction, which can ultimately lead to improved job performance and positive developmental outcomes for children (Shang et al., 2022). These results extend existing research by providing evidence from Pakistan, where empirical studies on psychological factors influencing preschool teachers' career satisfaction remain limited.

## Limitations and Suggestions

Despite its valuable insights, the study faced several limitations that may restrict the generalizability of its findings. The small sample size, due largely to limited access and low teacher numbers in individual schools, may have reduced statistical power. The sample was also predominantly female,

reflecting the gender composition of early childhood education, which limits gender-based comparisons. Furthermore, as the research was conducted solely in private schools in Lahore, the findings may not fully represent teachers in public or rural educational settings. Future studies should aim to include larger and more diverse samples across different regions and school types to enhance generalizability. Longitudinal research could also explore how calling and work passion evolve over time and how interventions designed to foster these constructs influence teachers' well-being and retention.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings offer several implications for educational policy and practice in Pakistan. Fostering a sense of calling and harmonious passion among preschool teachers could enhance engagement, reduce burnout, and improve job satisfaction in a profession often marked by low pay and high turnover. Supporting teachers' psychological well-being is likely to benefit early childhood education outcomes, as passionate and satisfied teachers can provide higher-quality learning experiences for young children. Policymakers and administrators should invest in professional development programs and supportive work environments that strengthen teachers' sense of purpose and intrinsic motivation. Recognizing and valuing the contributions of preschool teachers can play a key role in teacher retention and the overall development of the early education sector in Pakistan.

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