CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to LoBiondo & Haber, [64], a theoretical framework is a “frame of reference that is a basis for observations, definitions of concepts, research designs, interpretations, and generalizations, much as the frame that rests on a foundation defines the overall design of a house.” It helps researchers in clearly understanding the variables of the study and provides guidance for data analysis. Developing from recent researches on the concept of passion where passion is seen as a state, we developed a theoretical framework for this study. Figure 3.1 depicts the theoretical framework of this study. This framework links employee work passion (EWP) with its antecedents and outcome. The variables that are hypothesized to affect the level of work passion in an employee for this study are self-efficacy and perceived organizational support (POS). This interaction of behaviour and environment is expected to lead to an outcome which is career satisfaction in this study. Furthermore, it is also hypothesized that that employee work passion mediates the relationship between its antecedents and outcome variable. The next sections of this chapter discuss in detail the variables of this research along with past researches supporting the proposed relationship between research variables.

3.2 ANTECEDENTS OF EMPLOYEE WORK PASSION

To understand the role of personal and organisational factor in experiencing passion for work by an employee, hypotheses defining the relationship between antecedents and employee work passion are described below. For each antecedent, a theoretical logic along with supporting theories for its relationship to employee work passion is provided and relevant literature is discussed.
3.2.1 SELF-EFFICACY

"If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning" - Mahatma Gandhi

According to Bandura, self-efficacy refers to one’s beliefs in one’s abilities to organize and implement the courses of action necessary to manage prospective conditions [18]. In simpler words, self-efficacy refers to what an individual trusts he or she can accomplish using their skills under specific circumstances [65]. Initial conceptualization of self-efficacy by Bandura considered it as task-specific or state-like (SSE) construct as he constrained it with the term “given situational demands”. This state-like nature of self-efficacy got support from other researchers as well [66] [67]. But later, the concept gained popularity as trait-like construct, commonly known as general self-efficacy (GSE) [68] [21] [69] [70] [71]. According to Eden [68], GSE refers to one’s belief in one’s overall ability to effect essential performances across a wide variety of achievement circumstances. In other words GSE refers to individuals’ opinion of their ability to perform across a range of different situations [71] [71]. Furthermore, various researchers [68] [70] [72] viewed SSE is a motivational state and GSE is a motivational trait. Consistent with this, we are viewing self-efficacy as general construct rather than with regard to a specific entity (task-specific).

Based upon social cognitive theory, efficacy beliefs stands at the core of human agency and are considered significant as they effect individuals’ motivation, thinking, feelings and behavior [73]. According to Bandura, individuals who consider themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious. They make their own future, rather than just forecast it. Moreover, self-efficacy has been found associated with various positive outcomes at workplace such as lower level of burnout, performance, job satisfaction, academic success, organizational commitment, well-being, work engagement and flow at work [74] [75] [76] [77] [78] [79] [80] [81].
Although, no one has empirically tested the direct relationship between self-efficacy and passion in the context of work till date; but few studies provide theoretical support to this relationship. For example, result of longitudinal study conducted by Le Blanc et al [80], recommends an upward gain-spiral in which efficacy beliefs reciprocally influence work engagement indirectly through their effect on positive affect in terms of enthusiasm, satisfaction, and comfort over time. Similarly, another set of study found high efficacy beliefs positively related to intrinsic motivation at work, work enjoyment, and feeling engrossed in one’s work [82] [76]. Salanova & Llorens [83] suggested that efficacy beliefs work as a self-motivating mechanism for employees. Where based on evaluation of own skills, employees set new goals for them that motivates them to put extra efforts on achieving these goals and be determined in the face of adversities. Here, the notion of work enjoyment, enthusiasm and intrinsic/self-motivation is similar to the dimensions of passion for work [10], namely, joy, subjective vitality and inner drive. Moreover, in the context of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial self-efficacy has been found positively related to entrepreneurial passion [84].

Another explanation to this relationship lies in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory [85] [86]. The theory assumes that individuals flourish when they protect, gain, maintain, and conserve resources [87]. According to Hobfoll [85] resources are ‘those objects, personal characteristics, conditions or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions or energies’. Self-efficacy can be classified under the category of personal resource. In the opinion of Hobfoll [85], resources have a strong motivational potential, which is in line with Bandura’s [18] view that efficacy beliefs may act as an important determinant of the effort and persistence that people will invest in pursuing goals, or in other words their level of motivation [88] [89]. As this theory suggests that resources allow the acquisition or preservation of more resources, people are motivated to create and invest resources in order to enrich their resource pool.

Based upon COR theory and findings of aforementioned studies, it can be argued that employees who are highly efficacious are expected to enjoy their work more, feel enthusiastic at work and are internally motivated to do their work. In other words, gain in this personal resource will result
in increased level of passion for one’s work. As highly self-efficacious employees are more likely to experience enthusiasm, high level of engagement even in the adverse situations and can easily overcome stress [90]. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

\[ H1 - \text{Self-efficacy is positively related to EWP} \]

![Figure 3.1 Theoretical framework](image)

### 3.2.2 PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

According to organizational support theory, perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employee’s general beliefs about the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being [19]. Studies on POS originated with the thought that if managers are concerned with their employee’s commitment to the organization, employees are focused on the organizations commitment to them [19]. According to authors, POS helps employees to satisfy their needs for approval, esteem and affiliation and expectations that their
improved work effort will be recognized and compensated. Research on POS reveals that employees believe that their organization has a general positive and negative orientation towards them that includes both recognition of their contributions and concern for their welfare.

The basic premise of POS research lies in social exchange theory [91] and the norm of reciprocity [92] which creates an obligation on the part of employees to care about the organization’s welfare and to help the organization reach its objectives [93]. From social exchange theory perspective, employment is noticed as the trade of effort and loyalty by the employee for physical benefits and social resources from the organization [94]. This social exchange relationship rests on norm of reciprocity [92]. Researchers suggest that an exchange starts with one party giving benefits to another. If the same behaviour is reciprocated by the receiver consequently will result in a series of beneficial exchange and the spirits of mutual obligation between the parties will occur [95]. A comprehensive belief of reciprocity includes a feeling of a duty to recompense favourable behaviour. On similar lines, Eisenberger et al defined employees’ obligation sense as prescriptive faith concerning whether one should care about the organization’s well-being and should support the organization achieve its goals [96].

Research on the concept of POS suggests that greater POS results in various positive outcomes such as greater affective attachment and feelings of obligation to the organization [97] [98], organizational spontaneity and in-role behavior [96], extra role behavior [99], safety at work [100], work attendance [19], job performance [97], citizenship behaviors [98], job satisfaction [101], employee and organizational engagement [102]. Although, POS has been considered as one of the major factors responsible for better human functioning but there exist only few studies which provide support to POS and positive emotions at work. First theoretical support linking POS and work passion lies in the work of Witt [103] and George & brief [104]. Where, they proposed that events at work demonstrating an employee’s capability, value and achievement would enrich positive mood. By carrying the organizations positive valuation of an employee’s effort and care for their well-being POS may lead to the enhancement of positive mood at work (cf [96]). Where, positive mood refers to feelings of enthusiasm, excitement and alertness [105] which is similar to the joy and subjective vitality [13] dimensions
of work passion. Moreover, according to George & Brief [104], POS make employees work beyond their formal responsibilities by providing creative ideas for the benefit of their organization and making continuous efforts to acquire new knowledge and skills. A conclusion can be derived from this study that POS has a positive effect on employees’ passion towards their work as passionate individuals work harder and are always willing to learn more and more [55].

Another explanation to this relationship lies in the work of Houlfort et al [14] where authors hypothesized that organization that values their employee’s contribution and that endeavour to provide them with a healthy, adaptable and safe environment, where there opinion is valued, create conditions that ought to encourage harmonious passion. Here, Vallerand’s [9] conceptualization of harmonious passion is similar to Pertulla’s [10] conceptualization of passion for one’s work in terms of autonomous internalization of passionate activity in one’s life. Result of this study revealed that organizational support and work valuation both positively anticipated harmonious passion. In accordance with the findings of this study a conclusion can be drawn that POS will have positive affect on employee’s passion for his or her work.

Similarly, another study conducted by Mitchell et al [106] on the role of POS, distributive justice and motivation in reactions to new information technology also provides support to this relationship. This study found that POS leads to increased intrinsic motivation for using a new Information technology. The concept of intrinsic motivation is one of the most important dimensions of passion [10] [14]. More specifically, the result of this study found that when employees felt that their organization valued and respected them, they enjoyed using the system more, and they were more inclined to accept the new technology. Moreover, the assumption behind testing this relationship was drawn from self-determination theory [107]. SDT proposes that circumstances that satisfy three basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are expected to lead to internalization of intrinsic motivation. In this manner, Mitchell et al [106] assumed that POS would increase the fulfilment of psychological needs. As it is operationalized as caring about employees, POS is likely to make employees feel more related to the organization and its members; as it is defined as trusting employees, it is likely to make employees feel more autonomous in their job; and as it is also described as providing employees with the resources necessary to perform one’s job efficiently, it is likely to make employees feel
more competent. On the similar lines, we also assumed that POS will lead to increase in level of passion among employees towards their work.

Lastly and most importantly Pertulla [10] in her study tested the direct relationship between POS and passion for one’s work. POS was found positively related to passion for one’s work. The findings of the study suggested that POS is positively related to all the four dimensions of passion for one’s work, namely, joy, subjective vitality, meaningful connection and inner drive. To the best of researcher’s knowledge this is the only study where a direct relationship between POS and passion for work has been tested empirically.

Based upon social exchange theory, norms of reciprocity and findings of aforementioned studies, it can be argued that employees who perceive that their organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being are more likely to reciprocate the same by exhibiting higher levels of passion for their work. In other words, when employees feel that they are supported by their organizations feel joy at work. Hence, we hypothesize that:

\( H2: \) POS is positively related to EWP

### 3.3 OUTCOME OF EMPLOYEE WORK PASSION

Although passion has been seen associated with various positive and negative outcomes but in the context of work the research on the concept of passion is scarce. Limited studies have empirically tested the relationship between passion and its outcomes in organizational settings. In this study, we have tried to study the link between employee work passion and career satisfaction. Past researches providing support to this relationship are discussed below along with its hypothesis.

#### 3.3.1 CAREER SATISFACTION

Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.

- Steve Jobs
The term career is defined as “an evolving sequence of a person’s work experience over time” [108]. Career success is defined as the gathered positive work and psychological outcomes arising from one’s work experiences [109]. According to Everett Hughes [110] [111] there are two distinct type of career success- objective and subjective. Specifically, Hughes defined the objective career as directly observable, measurable, and verifiable by an impartial third party, while the subjective career is only experienced directly by the person engaged in her or his career. Thus, objective career success is objective and noticeable, and usually consists of highly visible outcomes such as pay, ascendancy [112], promotions and position [113]. Indeed, review of reveals that majority of career-related articles published in major interdisciplinary journals focused on its objective aspect.

Subjective career success refers to an individual’s reactions to his or her unfolding career experiences [110] [111]. This subjective aspect of career success is commonly known as career satisfaction [20] [72]. Recently, Greenhaus et al [20] defined career satisfaction as the manager’s assessment of his or her overall career success and progress toward meeting career goals. While the career success literature is dominated by objective criteria, a subjective criterion has also gained popularity within career success research in the recent past [114] [115]. More specifically, subjective career success includes reactions to actual and anticipated career-related attainments across; a broader time frame than one’s immediate job satisfaction [116], and a broader variety of consequences, like sense of identity [117], purpose [118], and work-life balance [119] (cf [120])

In past, various attempts have been made by researchers to identify factors that are responsible for career success of individuals [121] [122]. These include demographic (e.g. age, sex, cast), personality (e.g. the five factors model), human factors (e.g. education, experience, skills), motivational (e.g. hours worked, work centrality) and environmental (e.g. organization size, sector, region) variables. A great stress is also placed on social capital [109] as an antecedent of career success (cf [123]). Joe Tye (author of Personal Best: 1001 Great Ideas for Achieving Success in Your Career) opined that career success begins with career satisfaction. Taking forward his view, subjective aspect of career success i.e career satisfaction was chosen for this study. While passion for work has not been studied as an antecedent of career satisfaction till date; but there exist some studies which provide support to this relationship.
In social psychology, the concept of passion is studied as a ‘motivational concept’. Basic premise of motivation lies in the existence of motive power in terms of energy. This energy gets directed towards the allocation of resources in order to achieve objectives that are likely to lead to rewarding outcomes; and thus attainment of goals will make individual feel good [124] [125]. Motivation in ‘passion’ thus encompasses explicit or implicit expectation of satisfaction, as objectives are chosen and behaviour is energized and focused towards predicted positive outcomes. In this way passion can be seen as similar to the concept of career satisfaction. Therefore, few arguments are provided by researcher to show dissimilarity between these two concepts. Although both the term satisfaction and passion have positive affect in common but they differ in their degree. Satisfaction is derived from a Latin word “Satis” meaning “enough”, the term implies sufficiency or adequacy- something is satisfactory- rather than being wonderful or exciting. Furthermore, passion also has positive effect, but it differs in being more strongly activated. It is the sense of “energy, enthusiasm and zeal” that makes this concept different [5]. Passion implies activation whereas satisfaction indicates satiation [126].

Another distinction between satisfaction and passion lies in the fact that ‘passion’ takes a proactive approach in attainment of goals that will yield positive outcomes whereas ‘satisfaction’ is more reactive in terms of feelings about what has already been achieved and is likely to be achieved. As defined by Hughes [110], “individual’s reactions to his or her unfolding career experiences” [110] [111]. An individual who is contented with his or her career considers that it has provided a satisfactory level of what is wanted. Therefore, wants and feelings are fundamental to both passion and satisfaction, but their prime role varies among the two concepts. In motivated states like passion, individuals by definition have needs that are unfulfilled, while in more reactive states like satisfaction individual’s needs have been or are likely to be fulfilled. In particular, passion may be seen as energized satisfaction; passionate employees are certainly contented in some regards, but satisfied employees may or may not be passionate. On the basis of above discussion, we move on to present studies that provide support to possible relationship between passion and career satisfaction.

Passion has now been studied as a strong positive emotion by researchers. Past studies reveal that positive emotions have a power to induce significant changes in employee’s thoughts and
activities [127] [128], while negative emotions induces withdrawal. Positive emotions intensify the extent to which employees are energetically engaged in their work roles and goals making them more efficient and satisfied. Moreover, positive emotions help employees to notice, accumulate and remember positive (mood related) evidence of past resulting in formation of more positive opinions towards their colleagues, work, and careers [129] [130]. More specifically, work enjoyment, one of the most important dimensions of passion [10] [9] [55], was found positively related to career satisfaction of employees [131] [132].

Intrinsic motivation or inner drive, which means freely engaging in a task as it seems to be personally enjoyable [133], is another important dimension of employee work passion [10] [55]. According to self-determination theory (SDT), intrinsically motivated work activities are likely to be consistent with persons’ intense interests and beliefs, deriving from the true self [133]. Based on SDT it can be argued that doing a work which is consistent with person’s own interest and liking will make him or her more satisfied.

Based on these findings, we suggest that as passionate employees have an inner urge to do their work and they enjoy their work are more likely to be satisfied with their careers. Moreover, such intrinsically motivated employees who enjoy their work becomes genuinely engaged in it which results in the fulfilment of their basic psychological needs, enhancement of psychological well-being, and increases the extent to which work accomplishments are truly satisfying to them [134] [31] [135] [136] [137]. This feeling of genuine engagement may also lead managers to involve in extra efforts and to sustain these efforts over time, increasing the possibility of overall career success. Based on these deliberations, it is hypothesized that

**H3: EWP is positively related to subjective career success**

### 3.4 Employee Work Passion as a Mediator

Self-efficacy influences employee self-development, health, performance, [73] [139] [140], work engagement, well-being [78] [79] [76] and also helps in reducing job burnout [139] [75] [74]. Moreover, high self-efficacy of employees is also found to be associated with higher job satisfaction [134] [141] which facilitates them to be more satisfied with their careers in long run.
Similarly, employee’s perception of greater organizational support positively affects their performance [97], rate of absenteeism [19], level of employee as well organization engagement, organizational commitment [97] [98] and job satisfaction [101]. Past researches also suggest that organizational support for career development in the form of social and material support for one’s personal goals is likely to be a significant predictor of subjective career success [113] [142] [143]. As mentioned in above studies, POS and self-efficacy has been predicted to have positive relationship with EWP and career satisfaction. In addition, a positive relationship between EWP and career satisfaction has been found in some studies. Based on these studies, a conclusion can be drawn that POS and self-efficacy will have both direct and indirect (via employee work passion) effect on career satisfaction.

However, these studies did not investigate the mediating effects of passion between antecedents and outcomes in the context of work. Rather, in the context of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial passion has been studied as a mediator between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and persistence [84]. This study provides support to the mediating role of entrepreneurial passion. Similarly, another study provides support to mediating role of passion, where professional vitality has been found partially mediating the relationship between protean career attitude and career satisfaction [144]. Here, professional vitality has been defined as “a characteristic possessed by individuals who are able to consistently perform the work of their chosen profession with passion, vigor, facility and satisfaction” [145]. Where, the central component of professional vitality is passion at work defined as "a compelling inner desire to enhance the lives of children/students through one's own contributions as an educational leader". This definition shares commonalties with Pertulla [10] and Vallerand’s [14] definition of passion for work with respect to inner drive/motivation dimension of passion.

Another theoretical support to the mediating role of work passion can be found in the work of [146]. In this study, flow at work has been studied as a mediator between effect of job resources and demands on exhaustion. Here, the flow experience is described as a short-term peak experience characterized by three main components: absorption, enjoyment and intrinsic motivation. Both work enjoyment and intrinsic motivation dimension of flow are similar to the joy and inner drive dimension of passion for work [10]. The findings of this study reveal that job
resources strongly decrease exhaustion through flow-work enjoyment and job demands increase exhaustion through flow-work enjoyment.

Further, to test the mediation effect statistically Barron and Kenny [138] laid down conditions for establishing it. According to authors, “a given variable is said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for relation between the predictor and the criterion. Mediators explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance. Whereas moderator variables specify when certain effects will hold, mediators speak to how or why such effects occur.” In order to identify possible mediation, employee work passion (mediator) should be related to its antecedents (self-efficacy, POS) and outcome (Career satisfaction). Additionally, direct paths between antecedents (self-efficacy, POS) and outcome (Career satisfaction) should also be related [138].

Various aforementioned studies provide support to all the conditions of mediation. Following hypotheses 1 and 2, self-efficacy and POS has been suggested to be positively related to employee work passion. Similarly, studies mentioned in hypothesis 3 provide support to a positive relationship between EWP and career satisfaction. Concerning direct relationship between antecedents (self-efficacy, POS) and outcome (Career satisfaction), some of the relevant studies are discussed above in this section. These studies provide support to direct positive relationship between both the antecedents and outcome of passion. Therefore, in line with above findings, this study aims to extend the current literature on EWP by examining the following hypotheses:

\( H4: \text{EWP mediates the relationship between its antecedents and outcome} \)

\( H4a: \text{Self-efficacy will be positively related to career satisfaction} \)

\( H4b: \text{EWP mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and career satisfaction} \)

\( H4c: \text{POS will be positively related to career satisfaction} \)

\( H4d: \text{EWP mediates the relationship between POS and career satisfaction} \)
3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the development of theoretical framework for the study. Based on past researches and psychological theories self-efficacy and POS were identified as the antecedents of this study. Furthermore, specific hypotheses were formulated regarding the relationship between employee work passion and its antecedents. In terms of outcome, hypothesis linking employee work passion with career satisfaction was formulated. Moreover, EWP was hypothesized as a mediator between its antecedents and outcome. The following chapter discusses in detail the research methodology used to examine the conceptualization of employee work passion construct in Indian context and to test the theoretical model developed in this chapter.