

**Can employees perform well if they fear for their lives? Yes—if they have a passion for
work**

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Paper accepted for *Personnel Review*

Can employees perform well if they fear for their lives? Yes—if they have a passion for work

Abstract

Purpose—With a basis in conservation of resources theory, this study investigates the mediating role of championing behaviour in the relationship between employees' fear of terror and their job performance, as well as the buffering role of their passion for work, as a personal resource, in this process.

Design/methodology/approach—The tests of the hypotheses rely on three-wave, time-lagged data collected from employees and their supervisors in Pakistan.

Findings—An important reason that concerns about terrorist attacks diminish performance is that employees refrain from championing their own entrepreneurial ideas. This mediating role of idea championing is less salient, however, to the extent that employees feel a strong passion for their work.

Practical implications—For human resource managers, this study pinpoints a key mechanism—a reluctance to mobilize active support for entrepreneurial ideas—by which fears about terrorism attacks can spill over into the workplace and undermine employees' ability to meet their performance requirements. It also reveals how this mechanism can be better contained by the presence of adequate personal resources.

Originality/value—This study adds to burgeoning research on the interplay between terrorism and organizational life by specifying how and when employees' ruminations about terrorism threats might escalate into diminished performance outcomes at work.

Keywords—fear of terror; championing behaviour; passion for work; job performance; conservation of resources theory

Paper type—Research paper

Introduction

The fear of terror is prominent in many countries, particularly those marked by political instability and extremism (Bader and Berg, 2013; Hussain and Azam, 2016; Mushtaq and Rehman, 2016; Toker *et al.*, 2015). Such fear can manifest itself in different ways, such as frequent ruminations about future terrorist attacks, the sense that nothing can be done to avoid such attacks, the belief that terrorism will only get worse as time passes, or a feeling of a general lack of control in protecting oneself and loved ones from violence (Sinclair and LoCicero, 2006). An inability to avoid thinking about the threat of terrorism negatively interferes with people's quality of life and peace of mind in their daily functioning (Herzenstein *et al.*, 2015; Somer *et al.*, 2005; Toker *et al.*, 2015), but fears of terror also might exert an effect in the workplace, by undermining employees' organizational functioning (Bader and Berg, 2014; Comfort, 2002; Howie, 2007; Liou and Lin, 2008; Toker *et al.*, 2015). For example, fears of terror might reduce employees' work satisfaction (Kastenmuller *et al.*, 2014) and work concentration (Mainiero and Gibson, 2003), spur their absenteeism (Mushtaq and Rehman, 2016) and job burnout (Toker *et al.*, 2015), and ultimately undermine their ability to fulfil performance requirements (Bader and Berg, 2013; De Clercq *et al.*, 2017).

To extend this research line, the current study addresses another reason that employees' fear of terror might lead to poor performance, namely, because it takes up energy that employees otherwise could devote to undertaking productive entrepreneurial behaviours. In particular, if employees suffer this resource constraint, it may diminish their propensity to champion their entrepreneurial ideas—those that deviate from the status quo and have the potential to add to organizational success (De Clercq *et al.*, 2011; Kelley, 2011)—that otherwise might contribute to the organization's success (Scott and Bruce, 1994; Walter *et al.*, 2011). Such discretionary,

championing activities are critical to effective organizational functioning (Maimone and Sinclair, 2014; Oltra and Vivas-López, 2013; Scott and Bruce, 1994). As prior literature acknowledges, it is less the generation and more the active lobbying for and promotion of entrepreneurial ideas that enhance organizations' competitive advantages (De Clercq *et al.*, 2011; Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017; Van de Ven, 1986).

Despite the usefulness of championing entrepreneurial ideas, such activities may be costly for the promoters, especially if other organizational members regard their actions as intrusive or threatening (Day, 1994; Walter *et al.*, 2011). Further, mobilizing support for disruptive ideas might be perceived as self-serving, if the ideas appear to improve the work situations of the proponents but not the rest of the organization (Howell, 2005; Yuan and Woodman, 2010). In accordance with conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), we propose that if employees already must devote resources to dealing with their fear of terror, they might exhibit poorer performance, because they seek to conserve their remaining resources and thus are reluctant to engage in energy-consuming championing behaviours (Howell and Boies, 2004; Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017). Notably, a person's propensity to avoid creative or innovative behaviours is a causal mechanism that links negative workplace conditions (e.g., work role stressors, Mishra and Shukla, 2012; surface acting, Liu *et al.*, 2013) to diminished work outcomes. No prior empirical research has investigated this potential mediating effect in relation to the performance effects of a fear of terror though.

In turn, this study elucidates how organizations might *contain* negative behavioural responses to fears of terror. In particular, and consistent with COR theory, employees' passion for work (Klaukien *et al.*, 2013), as an important personal resource, might reduce the likelihood that employees react to their fears with reduced championing behaviour. Passion for work

reflects employees' desire to work hard and the associated satisfaction they derive from expending significant energy in work-related activities (Baum and Locke, 2004; De Clercq and Belausteguigoitia, 2017). In line with this logic, the personal resource of passion for work may reduce the likelihood that the resource drainage employees experience due to constant worries about terrorism enters the workplace, in the form of reduced idea championing efforts (Hobfoll, 2001). That is, when they exhibit a strong passion for work, the negative influence of employees' fear of terror on their championing behaviour should be buffered (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000), which in turn should have positive consequences for their performance (Walter *et al.*, 2011).

Contributions

Investigating these relationships produces several contributions to extant literature. First, this research reveals that a fear of terror can spill over and escalate into lower job performance, due to employees' reluctance to champion their entrepreneurial ideas (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). This spillover effect is consistent with previous applications of COR theory to the study of terrorism threats, a theory that "places a strong emphasis on downward spirals through which resource loss in one domain (e.g., negative effects of terror on general well-being) may exacerbate resource depletion in other domains (e.g., work-related well-being)" (Toker *et al.*, 2015: p. 274). The difficulty of avoiding thoughts about terrorism can thwart employees' ability to meet their performance targets, because they lack the stamina to undertake productive, energy-consuming activities (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017; Howell, 2005; Markham, 1998). Prior research indicates that when employees fear for their personal safety or the safety of their loved ones, because they anticipate future terrorist attacks, they exhibit lower job performance due to elevated levels of job-related anxiety (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017). The current study contributes to such research into the process by which perceived terrorism threats undermine positive work outcomes by

pinpointing an unexplored *behavioural* mechanism, namely, by limiting the idea championing that otherwise might enhance organizational success (Howell and Shea, 2001; Walter *et al.*, 2011). Formally, the diminished likelihood that employees actively work to mobilize support for their entrepreneurial ideas is a critical but largely ignored mechanism that might explain why terrorism threats lead to underperformance in workplaces.

Second, in response to calls for more studies that consider contingency approaches to the outcomes of perceived terrorism threats (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017; Junaid and Haar, 2015; Toker *et al.*, 2015), this study offers new insights into how the likelihood of poorer performance due to the presence of terrorism fears might be mitigated by employees' passion for work (Baum and Locke, 2004). Employees likely respond differently to their fear, depending on whether they possess pertinent personal resources that help them cope with it (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000). In line with research that cites buffering roles of self-efficacy (Junaid and Haar, 2015), religiousness (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017), and coworker support (Toker *et al.*, 2015) for containing the negative outcomes of terrorism threats, this study reveals how employees' positive energy toward work mitigates the mediating effect by which reduced championing behaviour links a fear of terror to reduced job performance (Quinn *et al.*, 2012). This approach accordingly provides human resource managers with detailed insights into how their organizations can protect themselves from the negative interference of terrorism threats with employees' work activities, namely, by recruiting and retaining employees who exhibit a strong passion for work. Moreover, our focus on the mitigating effect of passion for work on the negative outcomes of a fear of terror complements previous studies that investigate an invigorating or activating role of this fear on the relationship of job involvement with helping behaviour (De Clercq *et al.*, 2019) or between government authoritarianism and the curtailment of civil liberties (Norris, 2017).

Third, this study's empirical context of Pakistan represents an extension and response to calls for more studies of disruptive work behaviours in non-Western settings (e.g., Jam *et al.*, 2017; Liu *et al.*, 2018). Pakistan has been the victim of many terrorist attacks and associated safety concerns (Hussain and Azam, 2016; Ismail and Amjad, 2014; Mushtaq and Rehman, 2016), so it offers a relevant, pertinent setting in which to investigate the likelihood that fears of terrorism might spill over into the workplace and escalate into negative behavioural outcomes. Its unstable political climate means that terrorism attacks are realistic threats for many employees (Shahzad *et al.*, 2016). The proposed conceptual framework thus should be informative for this country, as well as other nations that share similar political and security-related issues. The consideration of passion for work as a means to cope with harmful work-related consequences of fears of terrorism has practical value as well (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017). That is, by unpacking the relationship between a fear of terror and job performance, this study provides organizations that operate in politically unstable environments with important insights into why some employees may be better able than others to meet performance targets.

In summary, the conceptual framework in Figure 1, anchored in COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), proposes that the fear of terror thwarts job performance because the associated energy depletion steers employees away from actively promoting their entrepreneurial ideas. This championing behaviour thus mediates between a fear of terror and job performance. Passion for work serves as a buffer, such that the translation of persistent concerns about future terrorist attacks into reduced job performance, through reduced idea championing, becomes less likely when employees derive personal joy from their work.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Theoretical background

Employees can add to their organization's success through active championing of entrepreneurial ideas (Howell and Boies, 2004; Van de Ven, 1986; Walter *et al.*, 2011). Ideas that are novel to the organization have the potential to improve the status quo (Amabile, 1988; Shalley and Gilson, 2004; Yuan and Woodman, 2010). Mobilizing support for their new ideas has positive consequences for both organizations and the employees themselves, in that their championing efforts can add to their understanding of the organization's decision-making processes (Van Laere and Aggestam, 2016), contribute to their development of inter-firm networks (Coakes and Smith, 2007), and enhance their job performance (Kissi *et al.*, 2013). Yet the active promotion of entrepreneurial ideas also tends to be challenging for employees, especially if colleagues find their efforts intrusive (Day, 1994; De Clercq *et al.*, 2011; Zhou and George, 2001). That is, when employees push their novel ideas, the targets of their efforts may exhibit *resistance* to the extent that they feel threatened by potential workplace changes (Walter *et al.*, 2011; Yuan and Woodman, 2010).

This resistance might become especially problematic when employees also face other personal or work-related challenges. For example, employees are less likely to devote energy to generating or promoting entrepreneurial ideas if they suffer a lower ability to understand and assimilate external knowledge (Lin *et al.*, 2014), feel unhappy about their organization's strategic direction (De Clercq *et al.*, 2011), or are not committed to their employer (Wichmann *et al.*, 2015). Further, while championing behaviours already can be diminished due to internal work-related causes, it also is useful to clarify why employees might avoid pushing their entrepreneurial ideas in response to other, *external* resource drains that leave them with limited residual energy to engage in such activities (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000; Quinn *et al.*, 2012), with negative consequences for their performance (Howell and Shea, 2001; Kissi *et al.*, 2013).

The central premise of this study is that concerns about terrorism attacks might function as just such an external inhibitor of championing behaviours (Sinclair and LoCicero, 2007). This condition generates significant stress in employees' daily lives and work lives (Bader and Berg, 2014; Howie, 2007). The behavioural consequences of terrorism have been described in sociology and disaster research, focusing on outcomes such as group cohesion and helping behaviours (Drabek and McEntire, 2003; Fisher, 2002; cf. Reade, 2009). In addition, terror management theory (TMT), with roots in psychology, suggests that when employees feel helpless to protect themselves against terrorism, their mortality salience gets activated, and they become strongly aware that their lives are finite and death is an unavoidable reality (Burke et al., 2010), which in turn might enhance their anxiety and lead them to redirect their focus to personal instead of professional well-being (Yum and Schneck-Hamlin, 2005). However, as De Clercq and colleagues (2017: p. 24) point out, "whereas TMT theory focuses on the effects of perceived threats of terrorism and mortality salience on the experience of anxiety in general (Burke *et al.*, 2010; Greenberg *et al.*, 1986), it devotes less attention to how such perceptions might influence people in an organizational setting." These authors instead suggest COR theory as a relevant managerial theory, which they apply to show that perceived threats of terrorism can compromise employees' job performance due to feelings of job-related anxiety, a process mitigated by their religiousness (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017).

Similarly, we propose that employees' fear of terror may drain their personal energy resources to such an extent (Greenberg *et al.*, 1986; Toker *et al.*, 2015) that they cannot undertake energy-consuming championing activities or perform as well. The connection between perceived terrorism threats and employees' dedication to championing activities at work might appear somewhat remote, yet it aligns with previous research at the nexus of terrorism and

management that postulates that such threats compromise employees' sense of "initiative [or] ability to actively initiate and control organization-relevant behaviour" (Kastenmüller *et al.*, 2014: p. 424). Consistent with COR theory, employees' stressful, resource-draining expectations of terrorism may diminish their ability to meet the performance expectations set by their organization, due to their associated desire to protect and conserve their remaining resource bases and resultant decision *not* to dedicate significant efforts to idea championing (Abbas *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 2001). Similarly, and as previous applications of COR theory reveal, employees' inability to meet performance targets is shaped not only by resource-draining factors directly tied to their work settings but also by those that originate from outside, such as family incivility (Lim and Tai, 2014), efforts to balance family and work obligations (Witt and Carlson, 2006), or a negative interplay between personal and professional lives (Ballesteros-Leiva *et al.*, 2017).

To elaborate on how employees' fear of terror might escalate into diminished productive work efforts, and thus poorer performance, as well as how this effect might be contained (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017; Junaid and Haar, 2015), this study also relies on COR theory to predict that behavioural reactions to adverse, resource-draining situations vary with the personal resources available to employees (Abbas *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll and Shirom, 2001). In particular, if employees' passion for work (Baum and Locke, 2004) buffers against the drainage of energy resource reservoirs due to their continued ruminations about future terrorism, it may diminish the likelihood that this resource drainage leads to reduced championing efforts and poorer job performance. That is, employees' passion for work may provide positive, work-related energy that they can leverage in challenging situations (De Clercq and Belausteguigotia, 2017; Klaukien *et al.*, 2013), such as when they believe that they cannot defend against future terrorist attacks (Toker *et al.*, 2015). Formally, when equipped with a strong passion for work, the negative effect

of employees' exposure to terrorism threats on their job performance, through reduced idea championing, should be attenuated.

Hypotheses

Mediating role of championing behaviour

Previous research indicates that the stress employees experience in one sphere (e.g., personal) can spill over and negatively influence attitudes and behaviours in another sphere (e.g., work; Lim and Tai, 2014; Nohe *et al.*, 2014). Energy resource losses due to adverse conditions outside the workplace may undermine employees' ability to allocate significant time to discretionary, energy-consuming work activities (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000; Quinn *et al.*, 2012). Studies show, for example, that the belief that family obligations negatively interact with work duties represents a significant source of workplace stress that depletes employees' energy reservoirs, leaving them reluctant to engage in productive activities that otherwise could contribute to organizational effectiveness (Witt and Carlson, 2006; Zhang *et al.*, 2012). Previous applications of COR theory to the specific case of terrorism similarly suggest that perceived threats of terrorism may generate enhanced workplace anxiety and burnout (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017; Toker *et al.*, 2005).

When employees frequently think about the threat of future terrorism, it may drain the energy resources from which they can draw to seek support actively for their entrepreneurial ideas (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000; Walter *et al.*, 2011). Such ideas are often disruptive, so employees likely anticipate significant scepticism in response to their efforts to sell their entrepreneurial ideas to other organizational members, who might feel threatened by potential changes to their current privileges (Howell, 2005; Markham, 1998; Yuan and Woodman, 2010). According to COR theory, the hardships that employees experience when they ruminate about

terrorism attacks may deplete the positive energy resources that they otherwise could dedicate to engaging in such challenging championing activities (Hobfoll, 2001; Toker *et al.*, 2015).

Conversely, if employees rarely dwell on the threat of future terrorism, they have more discretionary energy at their disposal that they can allocate to mobilizing support for their entrepreneurial ideas (Quinn *et al.*, 2012). That is, employees should be more likely to promote their ideas actively to the extent that they believe they are safe from terrorism.

Moreover, the possibility of terrorism attacks might create a sense that championing efforts are not worthwhile, because an act of terrorism could undermine the past and future success of their organization at any time (Comfort, 2002; Howie, 2007). This belief may spur a general sense of discouragement, such that they feel little motivation to go out of their way to champion entrepreneurial ideas (Hobfoll, 2001). That is, the broader political environment and its potentially negative impact on their organization's future could thwart employees' motivation to mobilize support for their entrepreneurial ideas, because such efforts appear to be in vain (Junaid and Haar, 2015; Toker *et al.*, 2015). In contrast, if employees believe the organization's well-being is not threatened by external attacks, they should regard discretionary work activities as meaningful and valuable and feel encouraged to engage in sustained championing efforts that might enhance the organization's success (Howell and Boies, 2004; Walter *et al.*, 2011).

In short, ruminations about terrorism attacks may compromise employees' ability and motivation to mobilize other members to endorse their entrepreneurial ideas. In light of the positive contributions that active promotions of entrepreneurial ideas tend to have for organizational effectiveness and growth (Howell, 2005; Schon, 1994), such that organizational decision makers appreciate such efforts (Kissi *et al.*, 2013; Van Laere and Aggestam, 2016), employees' reluctance to mobilize support for their entrepreneurial ideas may constitute an

important mechanism *through* which a fear of terror undermines their performance. That is, exposure to terrorism threats diminishes job performance because employees exhibit a lower propensity to go out of their way to promote entrepreneurial ideas that could increase organizational effectiveness.

Hypothesis 1: Employees' championing behaviour mediates the relationship between their fear of terror and job performance.

Moderating role of passion for work

According to COR theory, employees' negative behavioural reactions to adverse resource-draining circumstances vary with their possession of personal resources that influence their ability to cope with such circumstances (Abbas *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 2001). People marked by high levels of passion tend to be more resilient (Fisher *et al.*, 2018; Singh *et al.*, 2016) and experience positive energy during the execution of their work tasks (Baum and Locke, 2004), which in turn could enhance their ability to undertake energy-consuming championing efforts, even when they feel stressed by the threat of terrorism (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017; Klaukien *et al.*, 2013). That is, the positive feelings derived from passion for work expand the repertoire of cognitive tools available to employees who fear terrorism attacks (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003), leaving more room for discretionary behaviours such as idea championing. In contrast, employees who lack a strong passion for work may not be able to protect themselves against the hardships that come with exposure to terrorism threats, because they have less ability to adapt to stressful situations (De Clercq and Belausteguigoitia, 2017), so they likely react to salient terrorism threats with a reluctance to engage in energy-consuming work activities (Hobfoll, 2001), such as disruptive championing behaviours.

Furthermore, employees equipped with a strong passion for work likely can build better work relationships with others (Ho and Pollack, 2014), so they might be in a better position to

obtain advice about how to mitigate their concerns and retain sufficient energy for work activities (Toker *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, employees with a strong passion for work tend to be more strongly involved with their job in the face of adverse conditions, which might increase their ability to cope with these situations (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002) and diminish the chances that they avoid productive work activities (Klaukien *et al.*, 2013). When exposed to terrorism threats, passionate employees thus should be better able to avoid negative interferences between their resource-draining fears about terrorism attacks and their propensity to push their entrepreneurial ideas (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000).

Employees marked by high levels of passion for work also tend to feel *attracted* to difficult situations, because finding ways to thrive despite challenges can provide personal fulfilment (Baum and Locke, 2004; Vallerand *et al.*, 2003). Thus, passion for work might not only enhance employees' ability to address the negative consequences of terrorism threats but also generate a sense of intrinsic motivation if they can contribute actively to their organization's success (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In this sense, it may attenuate the potency with which employees' fear of terror diminishes their championing behaviours, by enhancing the desirability of taking on the challenging task of mobilizing support for disruptive new ideas (Klaukien *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, employees who are passionate tend to commit to pursuing challenging work goals, particularly if their attainment can help the employees deal with unfavourable situations (De Clercq *et al.*, 2013). The extent to which employees exhibit a strong passion for work thus should encourage them to mobilize support for entrepreneurial ideas, including those that might help protect organizations from external threats such as terrorism (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017; Howell and Shea, 2011).

These arguments, in combination with the aforementioned mediating role of championing behaviour, suggest the presence of a moderated mediation effect (Preacher *et al.*, 2007). That is, employees' passion for work offers a critical contingency of the indirect effect of a fear of terror on job performance, through championing behaviour. This moderated mediation implies that for passionate employees, the role of reduced championing behaviour as a causal mechanism that explains the negative relationship between fear of terror and job performance is weaker (Kissi *et al.*, 2013; Walter *et al.*, 2011). Conversely, the reluctance to engage in championing behaviour likely grows stronger when employees lack a strong passion for work, in which case their resource depletion due to terrorism threats is more likely to lead to poorer performance (Hobfoll, 2001). When employees cannot draw on a strong passion for work, their limited championing behaviour becomes a more important factor for explaining how their fear of terror contributes to thwarted job performance.

Hypothesis 2: The indirect relationship between employees' fear of terror and job performance through reduced championing behaviour is moderated by their passion for work, such that this indirect relationship is weaker among employees with greater passion for work.

Research method

Sample and data collection

The hypotheses tests rely on survey data collected from employees and supervisors in five Pakistani-based organizations located in the city of Lahore that operate in three industry sectors: banking, telecommunication, and education. Lahore has been the target of many terrorism attacks (including four large attacks since early 2017), and Pakistan ranks fifth in the list of countries most impacted by the terrorism since 2013, according to the Global Terrorism

Index 2018.¹ This empirical setting accordingly provides a suitable context to examine the impact of a fear of terror (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017; Shahzad *et al.*, 2016). Including the three distinct industries also ensures comprehensive coverage of different activities within the Pakistani economy, offering greater data heterogeneity and confidence in the external validity of the study findings.² One of the authors leveraged existing business contacts to identify pertinent organizations in the different industry sectors and ensure the organizations' willingness to participate. The individual participants within organizations were identified through a random selection of employees from lists provided by the human resource offices of the respective organizations. Thus, whereas convenience sampling was used to identify organizations in a varied set of industries, the data collection within organizations was entirely random, and the participating employees were representative of their organizations. To account for possible industry-specific effects, the statistical analyses control for industry.

The data collection occurred in three waves, separated by three weeks each. These time gaps help avoid concerns about reverse causality—such that the promotion of entrepreneurial ideas and generation of solutions might minimize fears about the negative influences of terrorism, or improved performance might instil positive energy in employees that also spurs their championing efforts—but also are sufficiently short to reduce the risk that significant organizational events would occur during the research period. Moreover, the separation of the different survey rounds minimizes expectancy bias, that is, the chance that participants complete the surveys in a manner consistent with their prediction of the research hypotheses (e.g., that

¹ See <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/12/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018-1.pdf>

² The surveys did not explicitly assess whether the organizations or their members had been victims of terrorism attacks in the past, but informal exchanges with organizational contact persons, before the data collection took place, generally indicated that concerns about terrorism are an inherent aspect of employees' daily lives, and organizational decision makers are aware of these concerns.

their fear of terror would give them the “right” to avoid energy-consuming championing behaviours). One of the authors made personal visits to the organizations’ sites to administer the surveys. After participants had filled out the surveys, they deposited them into sealed envelopes and returned them to this author. The participants were informed that the research findings would be useful for their organization’s internal operations, but they did not receive any financial or other reward to take part. The surveys were administered in English, which is the language of formal business communication in Pakistan.

These data also may be subject to social desirability bias, so the research design applied well-established procedures to diminish such concerns, which also have been applied by previous studies in Pakistan (e.g., Abbas *et al.*, 2014; Butt *et al.*, 2005; Khan *et al.*, 2015; Naseer *et al.*, 2016). In particular, the invitation letters that accompanied the surveys promised the participants full confidentiality and emphasized that their participation was completely voluntary. The letters also noted that the individual responses would only be accessible to the research team and that only anonymous, aggregated data would be available to anyone else. Further, the study description explained that the surveys contained a personal code to facilitate data matching across the three rounds, but that this code would not undermine confidentiality. The participants also received explicit assurances that there were no right or wrong answers and were asked to respond to the survey items as honestly as possible, two tactics that further diminish social desirability bias (Spector, 2006). Finally, the invitation letters provided contact information for one author, in case the participants had any questions or wanted to provide feedback, and explained that the participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Although social desirability bias cannot be completely ruled out, these standard procedures significantly reduce this concern.

The first survey asked employees about their fear of terrorism and passion for work, and it also included a pertinent set of control variables (see the Measures subsection); the second survey assessed their engagement in championing behaviours. In the third survey, the employees' supervisors evaluated the employees' job performance. Of the 400 originally administered surveys, 293 were returned in the first round. In the second wave, 237 respondents completed the survey, and then 216 surveys were received from supervisors in the third wave. After removing surveys with incomplete data, 203 completed sets of surveys remained for the hypothesis tests.

Measures

The assessment of the study's constructs relied on previously validated measures, using five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Fear of terror. Employees' fear of terror was assessed with a 13-item terrorism catastrophizing scale from Sinclair and LoCicero (2007). Sample items were "I often dwell on the threat of future terrorism," "I frequently think about the threat of future terrorism," and "I have difficulty keeping the threat of terrorism out of my mind" (Cronbach's alpha = .86).

Championing behaviour. To measure the extent to which employees actively promote their entrepreneurial ideas, this study relied on a three-item idea championing scale (Scott and Bruce, 1994): "I often mobilize support for entrepreneurial ideas," "I often acquire approval for entrepreneurial ideas," and "I often make important organizational members enthusiastic for entrepreneurial ideas" (Cronbach's alpha = .73).

Job performance. Employees' performance evaluations came from a seven-item supervisor-rated measure of job performance (Abbas *et al.*, 2014; Williams and Anderson, 1991). For example, three measurement items were, "This employee performs the tasks that are

expected of him/her,” “This employee meets formal performance requirements of the job,” and “This employee adequately completes assigned duties (Cronbach’s alpha = .71).

Passion for work. A five-item scale, derived from Baum and Locke (2004), measured employees’ passion for work. Example items were “I love to work,” “I look forward to returning to work when I am away from work,” and “I derive most of my life satisfaction from my work” (Cronbach’s alpha = .83).

Control variables. To assess whether the hypothesized spillover effect of employees’ fear of terror to diminished championing behaviour and job performance is robust, the analyses contained various control variables. First, the analyses controlled for employees’ *gender* (1 = female), because men might be more willing to speak up about novel ideas to other members than are women (Detert and Burris, 2007). Second, the models controlled for employees’ *education* (1 = high school, 2 = college, non-university, 3 = college, university, 4 = masters, 5 = PhD) and monthly *income* (1 = below 25,000, 2 = 25,000-40,000, 3 = 40,001-50,000, 4 = above 50,000, measured in the local currency), because employees’ social level may have an impact on the extent to which they are sensitive to terrorism threats and respond to them with reduced championing behaviour and job performance (Greenberg *et al.*, 1986; Howie, 2007). Third, the analyses controlled for whether employees’ job consisted mainly of *fieldwork* (e.g., selling mobile phones), which might leave them more exposed to terrorism threats. As further controls, the survey assessed employees’ *job levels* (1 = managerial responsibilities) and *organizational tenure* (in years), because employees with greater job responsibilities or who have worked for the organization for longer might feel more confident that they can convince colleagues of the value of their entrepreneurial ideas, even when they feel distressed by threats of terrorism (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008). Fourth, employees’ championing behaviours and job

performance might be influenced by their perceptions of how their organization treats them, so the analyses included a three-item measure of *turnover intentions*, such as “I will probably look for a new job in the near future” (Bozeman and Perrewé, 2001). Accordingly, this study investigates the salience of employees’ fear of terror in predicting their championing behaviour and job performance, beyond the influence of their overall happiness with their work situation. Fifth, the controls for industry used two dummy variables, with education as the base category.

Results

Table 1 contains the correlations and descriptive statistics; Table 2 shows the hierarchical regression results. Models 1–3 predict championing behaviour, and Models 4–6 predict job performance. The variance inflation factors for the regression coefficients are each lower than 5.0, so multicollinearity is not a concern (Studenmund, 1992).

[Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here]

The results from the control models indicated that employees were more likely to undertake championing behaviour when they had worked for the organization for longer ($\beta = .032, p < .05$, Model 1) and had lower turnover intentions ($\beta = -.136, p < .05$, Model 1), but they performed worse in their jobs when they engaged in fieldwork ($\beta = -.376, p < .05$, Model 4) or wanted to leave the organization ($\beta = -.125, p < .01$, Model 4).

To test whether the reluctance to engage in championing behaviour explicates how a fear of terror diminishes job performance (H1), it is necessary first to consider both relationships that constitute this mediation effect. The results showed that fear of terror diminished championing behaviour ($\beta = -.157, p < .05$, Model 2), which diminished job performance ($\beta = .290, p < .001$, Model 6), as expected. As a formal check, the bootstrapping method suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004), based on the Process macro developed by Hayes (2013), generates confidence

intervals (CIs) for indirect effects and thus avoids statistical power problems that may arise with asymmetric or other non-normal sampling distributions of the effects (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2004). The CI for the indirect effect of fear of terror on job performance through championing behaviour did *not* include 0 [-.128, -.009], in support of the presence of mediation.

The test of the moderated mediation effect by passion for work (H2) started with an assessment of whether this personal resource moderated the negative relationship between fear of terror and championing behaviour. The interaction term, fear of terror \times passion for work, predicts championing behaviour in Model 3, and the positive and significant interaction term ($\beta = .242, p < .001$) confirmed a buffering role of passion for work. Figure 2 depicts the nature of this effect by plotting the effect of fear of terror on championing behaviour at high and low levels of passion for work. A corresponding simple slope analysis (Aiken and West 1991) also indicated that the relationship between fear of terror and championing behaviour was negative and strongly significant at low levels of passion for work ($\beta = -.409, p < .001$) but insignificant at high levels ($\beta = .075, ns$).

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

To test formally for the presence of moderated mediation, as stipulated in H2, this study used Preacher *et al.*'s (2007) approach and Hayes's (2013) Process macro. Similar to the bootstrapping method to test for mediation, this approach generates CIs rather than point estimates, but for conditional indirect effects in this case (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2004). The CIs also are estimated at different levels of the moderator (i.e., 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles). In line with the conceptual framework, the estimated model included a moderating effect of passion for work on the relationship between fear of terror and championing behaviour but not the relationship between championing behaviour and job performance. A post hoc

analysis indicated, as expected, that passion for work did not significantly moderate the relationship between championing behaviour and job performance. Using 10,000 random samples and replacement from the full sample, the results revealed that the bootstrap 95% CI for the conditional indirect effect of fear of terror on job performance at the 10th, 25th, and 50th percentiles did not contain 0 ([-.294, -.058], [-.165, -.036], and [-.104, -.001], respectively), but the intervals contained 0 at the 75th and 90th percentiles of passion for work ([-.075, .043] and [-.064, .069], respectively). As a direct assessment of the presence of moderated mediation, the index of moderated mediation equalled .079, and its corresponding CI did not include 0 ([.016; .149]) (Hayes, 2015). Therefore, passion for work buffered the negative indirect effect of fear of terror on job performance, through championing behaviour, in support of H2 and the overall conceptual framework.

Although the conceptual focus of this study is on the *concurrent* interplay of employees' fear of terror and passion for work in explaining championing behaviour and subsequent job performance, a post hoc analysis also accounted for potential interdependencies between the first two constructs, as well as between the first construct and the different control variables. For example, the extent to which employees ruminate about terrorism threats might be influenced by their passion for work, gender, or position in society and the organization. Accordingly, a path model included the covariances among each of these variables, an approach that is consistent with prior research (De Clercq *et al.*, 2009). The hypothesized effects matched the regression results in Table 2. That is, the direct relationships between fear of terror and championing behaviour and between championing behaviour and job performance, as well as the moderating effect of passion for work, were robust even after accounting for possible causal interdependencies.

Discussion

This study contributes to existing research by examining the role of fear of terror in predicting employees' job performance, with a special focus on factors that inform this process. Despite growing attention to how beliefs about terrorism threats might negatively interfere with work efforts (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017; Junaid and Haar, 2015; Toker *et al.*, 2015), insufficient research provides *behavioural* explanations of why employees' performance might suffer due to their ruminations about terrorism, let alone how their personal resources might limit their negative behavioural responses. In accordance with the logic of COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), this study explicates that (1) poorer work performance in the presence of terrorism threats can be explained by employees' reluctance to undertake productive championing behaviours, due to their lack of energy resources, and (2) their passion for work buffers this effect. The results provide empirical support for these theoretical arguments.

Ruminations about terrorism sensitize employees to their mortality, and employees bring the resulting stress to work (Burke *et al.*, 2010), which depletes their energy for productive work behaviours, such as idea championing (Bader and Berg, 2014). Mobilizing entrepreneurial ideas is challenging, because it can generate scepticism among other organizational members, who fear that novel ideas might highlight their own failures and shortcomings (Walter *et al.*, 2011). This challenge should be particularly prominent when employees also must cope with the hardships associated with persistent thoughts about terrorism. Consistent with COR theory, employees whose energy resource reservoirs are depleted, due to their fear of terror, are less likely to dedicate significant energy to mobilizing support for their entrepreneurial ideas (Boon and Kalshoven, 2014). Both ability- and motivation-based mechanisms underpin this connection. Employees who believe that terrorism poses a realistic threat may lack the energy to promote

their entrepreneurial ideas, especially in the face of resistance (Quinn *et al.*, 2012), and they also may believe that it is not worthwhile to allocate significant time to these organization-enhancing activities, because their efforts might be nullified if their organization is going to be subject to terrorism attacks anyway (Howie, 2007).

Notably, this study offers the critical insight that employees' reluctance to promote entrepreneurial ideas is a critical channel by which their fear of terror can lead to poorer performance. When they refrain from championing activities, which otherwise could add to organizational effectiveness, organizational decision makers perceive that employees fall short of performing their essential duties, including finding innovative solutions to organizational shortcomings (Howell and Shea, 2001). For example, the psychological hardships that stem from fears about future terrorist attacks may cause employees to focus mostly on their personal relationships (Kastenmüller *et al.*, 2011; Toker *et al.*, 2015), leaving less room to undertake performance-enhancing championing activities. Conversely, if employees believe that terrorist attacks are unlikely, they should have sufficient energy to promote new ideas to enhance organizational performance.

In addition, the mediating role of championing behaviour is moderated by employees' passion for work. Critical in this regard is the COR logic that the reluctance to undertake energy-consuming championing behaviour, in response to external terrorism threats, is muted when employees can rely on a critical personal resource that helps constrain further resource losses (Baum and Locke, 2004; Hobfoll, 2001). Employees who feel positively energized by their work can more easily avoid a scenario in which continuous thoughts about terrorist attacks undermine their productive work behaviours, because they can cope with these thoughts more easily (Klaukien *et al.*, 2013). This adjustment then leaves them with more residual energy to dedicate

to discretionary championing activities, even in the presence of terrorism threats (Quinn *et al.*, 2012). Passionate employees also may derive personal joy from mobilizing support for their entrepreneurial ideas in the presence of terrorism, because their ability to do so represents an attractive challenge (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003). Employees who lack such passion for work are both less able and less motivated to engage in energy-consuming idea championing when they fear terrorist attacks, so their negative behavioural responses, in the form of reduced championing behaviours, are more likely (Hobfoll, 2001).

The moderating effect of passion for work on the relationship between a fear of terror and championing behaviour is particularly insightful when considered in combination with the mediating role of championing behaviour. This moderated mediation dynamic reveals that the strength of the indirect effect of fear of terror on job performance through (reduced) championing behaviour depends on how passionate employees feel about work. That is, championing behaviour connects the resource-depleting condition to poorer job performance less powerfully when employees can draw on the personal resource of passion for work. Conversely, the resource drainage that results from terrorism threats translates into lower job performance with more strength, due to a reluctance to engage in energy-consuming championing behaviour, to the extent that employees feel less passionate about working hard (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2000).

Overall, this study offers a more complete understanding of the negative outcomes of people's concerns about terrorism. Previous research in the realm of management and organizations underscores that such concerns not only change people's attitudes and philosophy about life in general but also have important spillover effects on the ways that they function and perform at work (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017; Howie, 2007; Kastenmuller *et al.*, 2014; Toker *et al.*, 2015). As an extension of such research, this study shows that a propensity to halt championing

behaviours serves as a critical mechanism that connects employees' fear of terror to diminished job performance, and employees' passion for work mitigates this process. Although the scope of the tested conceptual model is somewhat narrow, the goal was to provide depth, rather than breadth, in pinpointing a hitherto unexplored mechanism by which fear of terror interferes with employees' ability to perform. Notably, the findings add to previous research on the *direct* positive influence of employees' passion for work on positive work outcomes, such as proactive work behaviours (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017), the exploitation of new product opportunities (Klaukien *et al.*, 2013), or new venture growth (Baum and Locke, 2004). In particular, the detrimental performance effect of reduced championing behaviour, in response to the fear of terrorism, can be contained by work-related passion that counters the resource depletion arising from such fear (Hobfoll, 2001), which represents a novel finding. To the extent that employees derive satisfaction from working hard, they can better manage the stress that comes with continuous ruminations about terrorism, so they retain sufficient energy and drive to promote their entrepreneurial ideas at work and achieve better performance.

Limitations and future research

This study has some shortcomings that offer opportunities for continued research. First, championing behaviour is a critical mechanism that underpins the negative performance consequences of employees' fears about future terrorist attacks (Bader and Berg, 2014; Toker *et al.*, 2015), but other behavioural responses also could explain this link, such as employees' ability or willingness to engage in citizenship (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2009) or voice (Morrison, 2011) behaviours. In a related vein, the ability and motivational arguments for the negative relationship between fear of terror and championing behaviour could be tested more explicitly in further research, to specify whether it is a lack of ability or motivation that is most prevalent in

determining employees' behavioural responses to perceived terrorism threats. Yet another extension would be to explicitly assess the negative emotions or attitudes that might connect employees' fear of terror with their diminished championing behaviour, including anxiety (De Clercq *et al.*, 2017), anger (Harmon-Jones and Sigelman, 2001), or a lack of harmonious work passion (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003).³ Decomposing the fear of terror construct also might explicate the causes of anticipated terrorism events (e.g., politically oriented), who commits them (e.g., individuals or organized groups), and their severity (e.g., expected number of victims).

Second, this study centred on passion for work as one specific resource that buffers the translation of fear of terror into reduced championing behaviour and subsequent job performance. Additional studies could consider other contingency factors and personal resources, such as the number of terrorism events that employees have personally experienced in the past, their tolerance for fear (Izard, 1977), creative self-efficacy (Tierney and Farmer, 2002), emotional stability (Beehr *et al.*, 2015), tenacity (Baum and Locke, 2004), or psychological capital (Sweetman *et al.*, 2011). Supportive organizational context factors also might halt the process by which stress due to preoccupations about terrorism threats escalates into a reluctance to undertake productive work behaviours, such as an organizational climate that supports personal initiative (Scott and Bruce, 1994), transformational leadership (Dvir *et al.*, 2002), or the availability of psychological counselling in crisis situations (Howie, 2007).

Third, the study sample consists of organizations that compete in three different sectors, so the analyses control for industry. The results offer empirical support for the hypotheses even with the inclusion of these industry control variables, which indicates that the results are robust

³ This study measures passion for work with a scale that conceptualizes passion as a stable personality trait (Baum and Locke, 2004); other studies could use scales that conceptualize passion as a state that is changeable over time (Ho *et al.*, 2011; Vallerand *et al.*, 2003).

to the presence of industry-specific factors that are not explicitly included in the models. Nevertheless, a possibility of omitted variable bias remains, so continued studies might test other industry-level variables, such as the extent to which certain industries implement sector-specific training and support programs to help employees deal with their fear of terror (Liou and Lin, 2008) or develop measures to address concerns about social safety in general, as informed by sociology research (Tach and Edin, 2017). The degree to which employees' fear of terror diminishes their championing behaviour and subsequent job performance also might depend on an industry's competitive intensity or market turbulence (Covin and Slevin, 1989; Porter, 1996). Employees who work for organizations that are subject to excessive external rivalry might be more aware of the *need* for organizational innovation and creativity (Lahiri *et al.*, 2008), such that the chances they respond to their fear of terror by reducing their championing behaviour could be subdued. Continued research could explicitly account for such industry factors.

Fourth, though the theoretical predictions are country neutral, it is possible that cultural factors influence the tested conceptual framework. Pakistan is marked by high levels of uncertainty avoidance, and employees might be particularly sensitive to stress-invoking circumstances such as terrorism threats that infuse uncertainty into their daily functioning (Hofstede, 2001; Mushtaq and Rehman, 2016). The buffering role of a personal resource such as passion for work in weakening the connection between fear of terror and job performance through championing behaviour thus may be particularly pertinent in countries with risk-averse cultural profiles. Cross-national studies could provide additional insights into the benefits of various personal characteristics for containing the hardships that result from ruminations about terrorism across *different* cultural environments. Another research path would be to compare the role of corresponding factors at the individual level, such as employees' personal risk orientation

(Chow *et al.*, 2012), to investigate how they moderate the relationship between fear of terror and employees' behavioural reactions to this fear.

Practical implications

The findings have important implications for human resource management practice. When employees worry extensively about the possibility of future terrorist attacks, they might turn away from productive entrepreneurial behaviours that would contribute to organizational effectiveness and their own performance evaluations, so organizations must seek to reduce such worries. However, employees might be hesitant to admit that they cannot keep the threat of terrorism out their minds, for fear of being ridiculed by colleagues as weak or scared (Howie, 2007; Toker *et al.*, 2015). Human resource managers therefore should be proactive in identifying employees who likely suffer fears of terror and install organizational mechanisms to limit negative spillover effects. For example, support systems, including individual and group sessions, could encourage employees to express their preoccupations about their personal safety and the risk imposed by external threats of terrorism (Comfort, 2002; Liou and Lin, 2008). They also could communicate about specific measures that protect against damages if the company is a victim of terrorism attacks (Nissen *et al.*, 2015).

Beyond this general recommendation, this study is particularly pertinent for defining ways in which pertinent personal resources can help employees cope with terrorism threats (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017). To the extent that managers can recruit and retain employees who derive great satisfaction from their work, they can protect themselves better against the danger that their employee bases halt performance-enhancing entrepreneurial behaviours in response to external threats of terrorism. For example, managers could benefit from predicting and assessing the personal joy that employees take from making a difference to their

organization's well-being through championing behaviours, even if they come to work with some stress due to negative external circumstances (Howell, 2005). They also might increase the likelihood that employees with a strong passion for work keep promoting new ideas for organizational improvement even in the presence of a fear of terror, by demonstrating that constructive ideas that add to the organization's success ultimately can help the organization reduce its own vulnerability to external threats of terrorism (Toker *et al.*, 2015).

Conclusion

This study adds to previous research at the intersection of terrorism and human resource management by detailing the effect of employees' fear of terror on their performance evaluations at work, as well as the roles of their championing of entrepreneurial ideas and passion for work in this process. The tendency to avoid actively promoting entrepreneurial ideas is a critical reason that employees' repeated thoughts about terrorism negatively interfere with their ability to meet their performance targets at work. The strength of this explanatory mechanism is contingent, however, on how passionate employees feel about working hard. These findings in turn might inform future research endeavours pertaining to how human resource managers can prevent external security threats, including those that originate from terrorism, from entering the workplace and undermining the quality of employees' work.

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Figure 1: Conceptual model

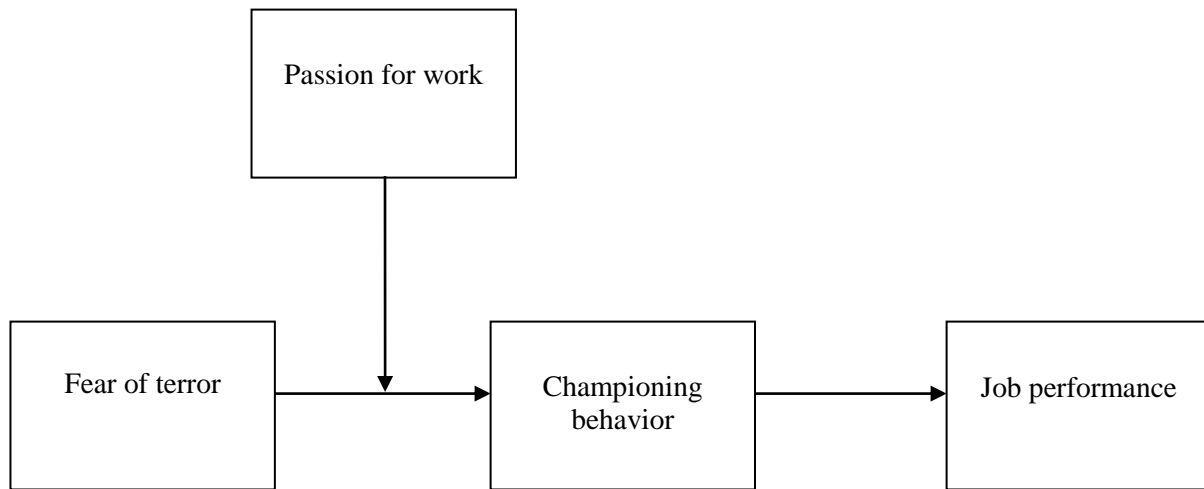


Figure 2: Moderating effect of passion for work on the relationship between fear of terror and championing behaviour

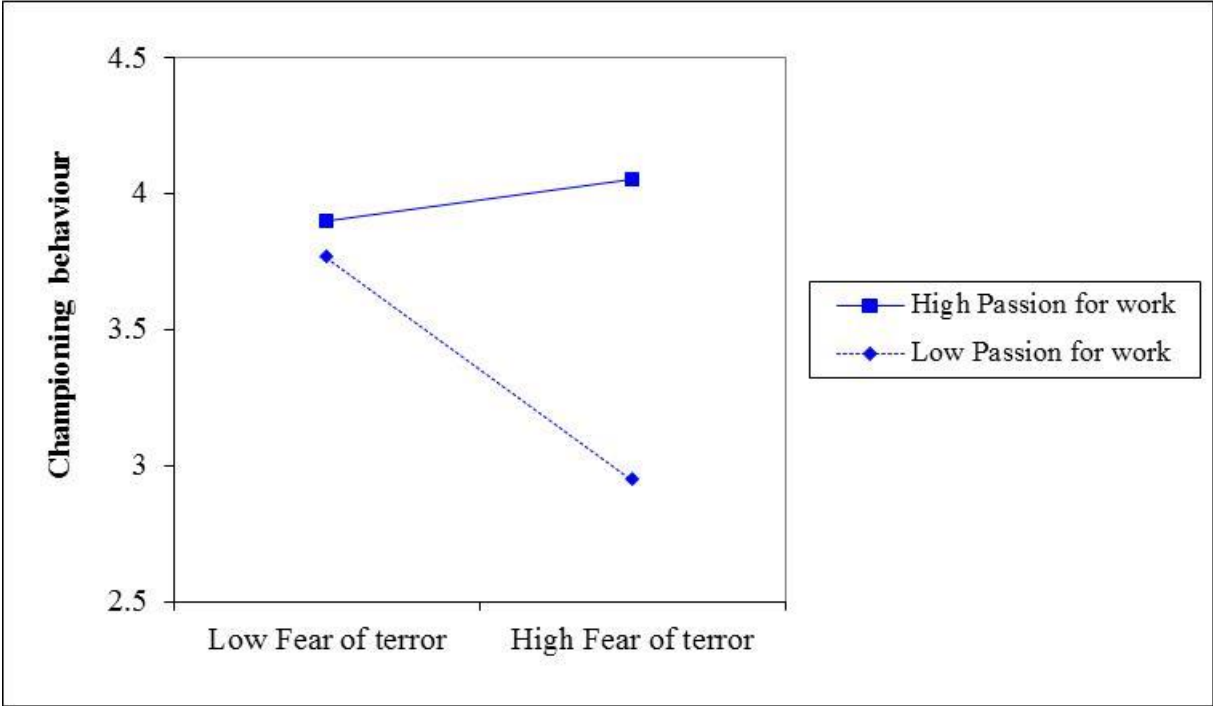


Table 1: Correlation table and descriptive statistics

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Fear of terror														
2. Championing	-.171*													
3. Job performance	-.400**	.471**												
4. Passion for work	.036	.381**	.282**											
5. Gender (1 = female)	.086	-.106	-.083	-.062										
6. Education	.107	.001	.005	.237**	.154*									
7. Income	-.130	.159*	.236**	.325**	-.191**	.310**								
8. Fieldwork	.051	-.021	-.146*	.053	-.070	.027	-.096							
9. Job level	-.063	.063	.099	.155*	-.045	.096	.195**	-.087						
10. Organization tenure	-.002	.269**	.202**	.366**	-.088	.309**	.576**	-.007	.155*					
11. Turnover intention	.372**	-.228**	-.230**	-.156*	.041	.161*	-.119	-.101	.059	-.198**				
12. Banking industry	.016	-.112	-.134	-.298**	-.171*	-.407**	-.309**	.105	-.077	-.398**	.017			
13. Telecom industry	.056	.062	-.027	.029	.189**	.058	.040	-.104	.149*	.097	.077	-.471**		
14. Education industry	-.069	.056	.161*	.275**	-.001	.359**	.276**	-.011	-.060	.313**	-.089	-.580**	-.446**	
Mean	2.775	3.672	3.808	3.551	.473	3.833	2.562	.059	.108	5.742	2.818	.379	.266	.355
SD	.731	.731	.611	.868	.500	.778	1.029	.236	.312	5.147	.996	.486	.443	.480
Minimum	1.231	1.000	1.714	1.000	.000	1.000	1.000	.000	.000	.500	1.000	.000	.000	.000
Maximum	4.692	5.000	5.000	5.000	1.000	5.000	4.000	1.000	1.000	28.000	5.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Notes: N = 203.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2. Regression results

	Championing behaviour			Job performance			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	
Gender (1 = female)	-.135	-.098	-.077	-.058	-.020	.009	
Education	-.030	-.050	-.057	-.047	-.045	-.031	
Income	-.013	-.059	-.056	.078	.026	.043	
Fieldwork	-.107	-.153	-.157	-.376*	-.357*	-.313	
Job level	.066	-.057	-.062	.143	.027	.044	
Organizational tenure	.032*	.028*	.028*	.006	.009	.001	
Turnover intention	-.136*	-.062	-.081	-.125**	-.020	-.002	
Banking industry ^a	-.032	.104	.066	-.161	-.051	-.081	
Telecom industry	.094	.161	.153	-.131	-.068	-.115	
Fear of terror		-.157*	-.167*		-.311***	-.266***	
Passion for work		.303***	.310***		.179***	.092 ⁺	
Fear of terror × passion for work			.242***				
Championing behaviour						.290***	
	R ²	.118	.228	.269	.139	.284	.377
	ΔR ²		.110***	.041***		.145***	.093***

Notes: n = 203 (unstandardized regression coefficients).

⁺ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

^a Education industry is the base category