



Do Core Self- Evaluations Moderate the Relationship between Workplace Curiosity and Thriving at Work?

An Empirical Study on Academicians in Zagazig University faculties

هل تمثل التقييمات الأساسية الذاتية متغيرًا معدلاً
في العلاقة بين الفضول في مكان العمل والازدهار في العمل؟
دراسة ميدانية على الأكاديميين في كليات جامعة الزقازيق

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Abstract

Purpose – Thriving at work is one of the most important challenges facing organizations in their ways to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. As a result, examining its determinants is crucial. Using the Self-Determination Theory as a framework, the current study sought to develop a model of how core self-evaluations affected the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work among academicians in Zagazig University faculties.

Design/methodology/approach – The research design is descriptive, with quantitative primary data gathered via online questionnaires and self-administered hard copies. Data were gathered from a stratified sample of 320 academicians from 16 faculties in Zagazig University. Simple linear regression method and multiple hierarchical regression were employed to analyze data and test study hypotheses

Findings – The study's results showed that there is a significant positive correlation between workplace curiosity and thriving at work among academicians at Zagazig University faculties. Additionally, core self-evaluations significantly moderated the previous relationship.

Originality/value – Results suggest that workplace curiosity enhances thriving at work. A scientific rationale detailing the psychological mechanisms included elements like core self-evaluations. This research adds to the body of knowledge about job-related results, such as thriving at work, by introducing recent empirical and theoretical perspectives.

Keywords: Workplace curiosity, thriving at work, core self-evaluations, academicians, Zagazig University faculties.

ملخص:

الهدف : يعد الازدهار في العمل أحد أهم التحديات التي تواجه المنظمات في سبيل تحقيقها لميزة تنافسية مستدامة؛ و من ثم تظهر أهمية تعيين محدداته، واستنادا إلى نظرية تحديد الذات، إستهدفت الدراسة الحالية تطوير نموذج لقياس أثر التقييمات الذاتية الأساسية كمتغير معدل في العلاقة بين الفضول في مكان العمل والازدهار في العمل بين الأكاديميين في كليات جامعة الزقازيق.

التصميم / المنهجية / المدخل : تم استخدام تصميم البحث الوصفي ، مع جمع البيانات الأولية الكمية باستخدام الاستبيانات، و من خلال الإنترنت والنسخ الورقية التي تم إستيفؤها ذاتيًا تم جمع البيانات من خلال عينة طبقية عشوائية قوامها 320 مفردة من الأكاديميين في 16 كلية في جامعة الزقازيق ، وقد تم استخدام طريقة الانحدار الخطي البسيط وكذلك الانحدار الهرمي المتعدد لتحليل البيانات واختبار فروض الدراسة.

النتائج : أوضحت النتائج الرئيسية للدراسة وجود علاقة إيجابية ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الفضول في مكان العمل والازدهار في العمل بين الأكاديميين في كليات جامعة الزقازيق ،بالإضافة إلى أن التقييمات الذاتية الأساسية تلعب دورًا حاسمًا كمتغير معدل في إطار العلاقة السابقة.

الأصالة / القيمة : تشير النتائج إلى أن فضول الفرد في مكان العمل يمكن أن يلعب دورا حاسما في تعزيز الازدهار في العمل، ويدعم ذلك الدور المعدل للتقييمات الذاتية الأساسية. وتساهم هذه الدراسة في تطوير الأدبيات فيما يتعلق بالنتائج المتعلقة بالوظيفة ، مثل: الازدهار في العمل ، من خلال توفير وجهات نظر تطبيقية ونظرية حديثة.

المصطلحات الأساسية: الفضول في مكان العمل، الازدهار في العمل، التقييمات الأساسية الذاتية، الأكاديميين ، كليات جامعة الزقازيق .

1. Introduction:

Scholars and practitioners have recently focused attention on thriving (e.g., Paterson et al., 2014; Niessen et al., 2017) since companies now need employees that are eager to learn and exhibit energy at work. In short, in the very uncertain, complicated, and competitive business world, modern businesses require a healthy workforce—people who are willing to learn and grow, to stay competitive both personally and professionally, and to support organizations in their development (Abid and Contreras, 2022; Prem et al., 2017; Spreitzer and Porath, 2014).

An adaptive psychological state known as "thriving at work" supports workers in organizing their tasks and highlights the significance of prosperity, growth, and self-improvement (Goh et al., 2022). Members of the workforce that are thriving **inspect both cognitive (learning)** at work as well as **affection (a sense of vitality)** (Shahid et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). Thriving at work has been empirically connected to numerous significant benefits related to one's job (Shahid et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). For example, job performance (e.g., Elahi et al., 2020; Farid et al., 2023), job satisfaction (e.g., Dahleez et al., 2023; Huo and Jiang, 2021; Jiang et al., 2020; Okros and Vîrgă, 2022), subjective health (e.g., Walumbwa et al., 2018), organizational commitment (e.g., Khurshid et al., 2021; Nguyen and McGuirk, 2022), well-being (e.g., Girme et al., 2023; Huang and Zhou., 2024), work engagement (Gomez and Chavez, 2023; Rahaman, 2022), happiness at work (Basinska and Rozkwitalska, 2022; Qaiser et al., 2020), organizational citizenship behavior (Suryani et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2022) and low burnout (Okros and Vîrgă., 2022; Yun et al., 2022).

Organizations have quickly incorporated thriving into their work procedures, keeping in mind these good results. For instance, Fortune 100 Best companies to work for ranked Hilton number 1 since launching Thrive@Hilton program in 2017 after being number 17 (Lambrano, 2020). However, in a recent extensive study, 36% only of participants indicated experiencing favorable energy levels in their workplace (Porath, 2022). Moreover, growing number of employees express feelings of languishing instead of thriving (Porath, 2022). Hence, thriving at work is a critical challenge that organizations are currently facing. This emphasizes how important it is to pinpoint and investigate the

preconditions for thriving in the workplace (Shahid et al., 2021). A significant portion of the organizational research on thriving at work has focused on this subject. As a result, a wide range of academics have looked at the factors that affect workers' thriving at work, such as the environment at work (Jo et al., 2020), social support (Ren et al., 2022), individual characteristics (Walumbwa et al., 2018), and public support (Ren et al., 2022).

Despite the accumulation of research on thriving at work in the past decade, this body of literature is still fragmented and requires a systematic and theory-based synthesis (Kleine et al., 2019). In addition, more study is desperately needed to determine the factors that lead to thriving (Shahid et al., 2021). While the body of study on thriving is limited, it is promising, and empirical data points to a developing area that is at a turning point. This is partly due to the lack of comprehensive reviews that enhance our understanding of the thriving construct and the potential pathways through which it can be expanded to include related concepts that seem intuitively connected.

Since contextual antecedents are thought to be important in the workplace and their influence depends on those personality traits that directly affect flourishing thriving at work, the focus of this study will be on personality traits that are precursors to succeeding in the workplace. There is a growing body of research that has to be done in order to pinpoint even more elements that lead to thriving at work. While past research has explored various individual characteristics that impact thriving at work such as positive personality traits (e.g., Abid et al., 2022); conscientiousness (e.g., Huo and Jiang, 2021); proactive personality (e.g., Alikaj et al., 2021), resilience (e.g., Kuntz, 2021); psychological capital (e.g., Basinska and Rozkwitalska, 2022; Liet al., 2022); psychological capacities (e.g., Nag et al., 2022) and neuroticism, extraversion, and consciousness (e.g., Hennekam, 2017).

Among the personality traits is workplace curiosity which became a powerful psychological asset in any organization that involves seeking out information and experiences for their own sake (Khan, 2022) where people are overrun with knowledge and may access unique experiences with just a few keyboard clicks (Kashdan et al., 2020). Celik et al. (2016, p. 1185) have described curiosity as a self-directed behavior that is "a drive for acquiring new knowledge and sensory experiences that can motivate exploratory behavior".

Nevertheless, the significance of curiosity in the workplace for fostering thriving at work has not been extensively explored and limited attention has been given to that relationship (e.g., Abid, G., et al., 2022; Usman et al., 2023). The latter included task focus as a mediating variable. **Many research have been done in the literature to investigate how individual's personality differences like cor self-evaluations, impact job- related outcomes** (Wang et al., 2021; Anand and Mishra, 2021). However, little is known about how important core self-evaluations is for fostering a curious and productive work environment. To explain how thriving at work is developed and managed, a thorough understanding of the interdependent linkages between workplace curiosity, thriving in the workplace, and core self-evaluations is necessary.

However, the role of core self-evaluations in curiosity- thriving relationship is still to be clarified. Further, providing a mechanism of explaining the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work moderated by core self-evaluations would enhance literature and knowledge. Hence, considering the theoretical and practical gap^(*), the goal of this study is to respond to the following questions:

RQ1: What is the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving among academicians in Zagazig University faculties?

RQ2: Do core self-evaluations moderate the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving among academicians in Zagazig University faculties?

(*)A pilot study was carried out utilizing open-ended inquiries to preliminarily explore the level of workplace curiosity and thriving at work among academicians. Provisional parameters were acquired regarding the employees' perception of the research variables, workplace curiosity, and core self-evaluations, as well as their potential connection to thriving at work. The study was conducted on 50 academicians in Zagazig University drawn from five faculties (the faculty of commerce, arts, engineering, pharmacy, and physical excises). Ultimately, we verified that the participants had a solid understanding of the measurements' terminologies, which were subsequently applied on a broader scope in the foundational investigation. The inclusion of a pilot study in conjunction with the literature review facilitated the development of a research model and its associated connections.

Therefore, the current study aims at developing a model predicting thriving at work by taking into account the direct impact of workplace curiosity and the moderating effect of core self-evaluations among academicians in Zagazig University faculties.

This research has three main contributions. **First**, it enhances the field by providing valuable insights based on the work of Ryan et al (1997) who developed Self-Determination Theory by examining the significance of curiosity in the workplace and its role as a crucial personal attribute that enhances an individual's sense of thriving in professional environment. **Second**, an empirical study is conducted to complement the current research by offering a more thorough explanation of the particular function of core self-evaluations as a moderator in the association between thriving in the workplace and workplace curiosity. **Lastly**, this research will also improve academicians' career development and organizational methods in Zagazig University faculties.

This research is organized in the following manner. The subsequent section provides an overview of the theoretical background and the development of hypotheses. Subsequently, methodology, population & sample, measurement, and empirical design are presented. Lastly, results are presented and discussed, followed by theoretical and managerial implications, and the suggestion of limitations and future research.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Thriving is a distinct element that reflects the optimistic notion of human thriving, which includes peak performance. The work of Cameron et al. (2003) on Positive Organizational Scholarship served as the foundation for the definition of thriving in organizational studies. The objective of this initiative was to investigate ways in which employees can enhance their work experiences, surpassing mere engagement and satisfaction. Thriving is a distinct from human flourishing, which encompasses optimal human functioning (Keyes and Haidt, 2002). **Drawing from the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2002), Gerbasi et al. (2015) argued that thriving serves as an individual asset that safeguards performance from the detrimental effects of workplace stress, potentially offsetting the depletion of resources.**

Spreitzer et al. (2005) constructed a theoretical model elucidating the origins of thriving in the workplace through the proactive collaboration in shaping one's work environment. They defined thriving as a mental state where employees feel both energized and engaged in learning while on the job. It is believed that thriving is not a fixed trait but rather a temporary quality that a person possesses as they advance (see Chaplin et al. 1988). On the other hand, Niessen et al. (2017) contended that thriving on one day did not correlate with agentic behaviors exhibited on the following days. This finding might be the consequence of methodological artifact (for instance, a time delay throughout the night could have introduced unidentified biases), but it might also point to the direct effects of successful experiences. The vitality aspect signifies the feeling of being energized and having enthusiasm for work (Nix et al., 1999). Within the wider scope of successful research, this element is characterized by different expressions like flourishing (O'Leary, 1998), blossoming (O'Leary and Ickovics, 1995), or feeling inherently lively and invigorated (Benson and Scales, 2009), "embracing life to the fullest" (Haight et al., 2002, p. 16), and living with positive feelings (Abraido- Lanza et al., 1998). The literature encompasses various terms to describe the learning dimension, which refers to the process of enhancing capability and confidence through acquiring and applying knowledge and skills (Carver, 1998). These terms include successful adaptation (Ickovics and Park, 1998; O'Leary, 1998), self-generativity (Taylor, 2004), and the development of the self (Benson and Scales, 2009). In this study, we will utilize the definition provided by Spreitzer, as it is widely accepted and commonly used.

Thriving at work differs from other notions such as positive and negative emotions, proactive personality, and aspirations for learning and achieving goals. According to Seo et al. (2004 as referenced in Porath et al., 2012), **positive and negative emotions** specifically refer to the feelings and dispositions that are perceived as positive or negative. However, the tendency to act in order to influence one's environment is what defines a proactive personality (Bateman and Crant, 1993, as mentioned in Porath et al., 2012). Lastly, individuals who possess a strong learning-goal orientation view skills as flexible and place importance on enhancing their abilities to successfully tackle upcoming challenges (Button et al., 1996; as cited in Porath et al., 2012, p. 252).

2.1. The relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work:

Curiosity has been identified as an emotional (Frijda, 1994) or cognitive state (Clare et al., 1987). It consists in investigating and evaluating situations that offer the potential for new knowledge and information (Litman and Spielberg, 2003). Moreover, it represents a quest for knowledge or information that is rather simple, such as an incomplete perception of an object or event. **According to Spielberg and Reheiser's (1994) information gap theory of curiosity, our interest is piqued when our desired knowledge diverges from our existing understanding. More research is needed to lessen the condition of deprivation caused by this information gap. The optimal arousal model (Spielberger and Reheiser, 1994) offers an alternative viewpoint on curiosity and characterizes it as the innate desire, which differs among individuals, to gain knowledge within a specific timeframe or situation.**

Work curiosity refers to a persons' desire to actively seek out new experiences and information, leading them to engage in inquisitive and exploratory actions while at work (Litman, 2010; Harrison et al., 2011). Within an organization, employees may demonstrate work curiosity as a result of their inherent fascination with their duties, as well as perceiving uncertainties in the workplace as an opportunity to grow (Kashdan et al., 2009). On the other hand, employees may feel inadequate and experience negative feelings like rage, irritation, or worry if they believe they are lacking the knowledge necessary to handle work-related problems. In the professional setting, employees facing insecurity may encounter emotions like deprivation and ignorance, as highlighted by Wu et al. (2021). These negative feelings can actually fuel their curiosity to gain understanding and reach their objectives, as noted by Litman (2010).

Kashdan et al (2020) provided work-related curiosity as a construct consisting of four dimensions. There are two separate dimensions when it comes to emotional content: the first one is associated with joyous of exploration, similar to curiosity driven by interest, while the second one is linked to an unpleasant feeling of uncertainty that lingers until an information gap is filled or resolved, resembling curiosity driven by deprivation (Litman and Jimerson, 2004). It was discovered that the **joyful exploration** component significantly predicted behavioural indicators connected to performance and creative problem-solving. The prediction power of **deprivation sensitivity** was not as high as that

of the previous one (Hardy et al., 2017). It is important to note that combining these two dimensions of curiosity would obscure their distinct effects on subsequent outcomes.

In addition to the delightful pursuit of discovery and the sensitivity to deprivation, further dimensions of curiosity have been revealed. These encompass the perceived capacity to endure the pressures associated with venturing into uncharted territories (**stress tolerance**) and a fascination with the thoughts and actions of others (**social curiosity**).

There are two sides of workplace curiosity; dark side and bright side. **The dark side of curiosity:** Thompson et al. (2023) concluded that curiosity is well-intentioned, however, it can lead to unintended negative perceptions from leaders, although there are numerous studies indicating that curiosity in the workplace is accompanied by positive outcomes among workforce. Moreover, Kashdan (2022) revealed that leaders often interpret an employee's curiosity as a form of insubordination but this perception is influenced by the level of political skill among employees. These findings shed light on a challenging dilemma that organizations face concerning curious workforce.

Given the connection between curiosity and task performance, curious employees can be a great asset to a company. Leaders, however, could punish subordinates for being inquisitive at work. It is important for leaders to be mindful of their biases, both conscious and unconscious, to accurately assess whether employees are insubordinate when seeking information, knowledge, or learning to address work-related issues. Recent research delves into individual tendencies towards "blinding" oneself by intentionally restricting access to information for a more unbiased perspective.

Bright side of curiosity: According to Thompson and Klotz (2022), employees are more likely to feel comfortable taking risks if their leaders exhibit curiosity, as suggested by social learning theory. Additionally, they posited that the impact of curiosity would be more pronounced among followers of male leaders compared to female leaders, in line with social role theory, due to the communal nature of curiosity, which tends to benefit men more through public demonstrations of communal behavior. The examination of both hypotheses revealed that when leaders demonstrated curiosity, it boosted psychological

safety among followers and encouraged them to speak up with their ideas at work (especially in cases where the leaders were male). This study deepens our understanding of how curiosity affects interactions in the workplace, highlighting how it can improve leader performance and how gender affects curiosity's consequences. **In addition, this study highlights the positive aspects of curiosity.**

Self-Determination Theory integrates conventional empirical approaches with an organismic Meta theory to comprehend human motivation and personality. This theory highlights the importance of the evolved internal resources of humans in influencing the development of self-regulation and personality (Ryan et al., 1997). The primary focus of this theory is to explore individuals' inherent growth tendencies and intrinsic psychological needs, such as competence, relatedness, and autonomy, which drive self-motivation and personality integration. Additionally, it examines the environmental conditions that support these positive processes. These essential requirements play a vital role in facilitating the ideal operation of individuals' innate tendencies towards growth and assimilation, while also nurturing favorable social progress and personal welfare.

Curiosity is seen as an innate desire that motivates employees to explore, to know, and be informed (Litman, 2005). In this fluid world, people need to understand things they seem to consider important, and need some stimuli to define these things and curiosity triggers this novel stimuli (Weick, 1993). Researchers from various fields and backgrounds have acknowledged the significance of curiosity in driving individual exploratory behaviors (Harrison, 2012). The intrinsic motivation of workers is associated with their desire for connection and belonging within the company, independence in their tasks, and proficiency (Deci, 1992). These workers are driven by their internal needs, rather than external incentives like financial rewards.

Research, both conceptual and empirical, suggests that curiosity activates particular behaviors that are employed to accomplish particular goals. Inquisitive workers work on projects until their goals are achieved (Abid et al., 2022). Curiosity has been found to enhance learner attention, motivate knowledge seeking (Berlyne, 1966) and promote adaptive advantage, and it may be a strong predictor of learning in the workplace. Curious employees learn via questioning

frequently, read passionately, examine fascinating images, manipulate stuffs and accept tasks that are comparatively very challenging (Kashdan and Silvia, 2009) and hence feel energized. Curiosity motivates workers to think innovatively and find more about whatever in their view is an immediate interesting target. When employees are curious, they tend to think for their own sake, and if they are not being controlled by others, they start feeling a sense of vitality and learning.

Prior research has shown that the unique personality traits of individuals can have an impact on their success in the workplace. Although the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work has not received much research, the consequences for firms and individuals alike are significant (Usman et al., 2023). We posit that individuals who exhibit curiosity in the workplace will actively engage in job-related tasks out of personal interest, seeking excitement, challenges, and opportunities to make a meaningful impact. As a result, we contend that workplace curiosity is strongly associated with thriving at work. **Thus, it is hypothesized that:**

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work academicians in Zagazig University faculties.

2.2. Workplace Curiosity and thriving at work moderated by core self-evaluations:

Core self-evaluations have its starting points in Appraisal Theory (Packer, 1985; 1985; 1986) where core self-evaluations was characterized as the person's most fundamental assessment of his/her own most profound psyche content. The concept was further extended and defined as “the fundamental assessment that individuals make about their worthiness, competence, and capabilities as a person” (Judge et al., 2003, p. 304). Core self-evaluations was believed to be a character quality that satisfies the three rules of self-assessment, the core self-evaluations is a character quality, and certain variables that satisfy the standards of self-evaluation, fundamentality, and expansiveness comprise the implication of the core self-evaluations (Judge et al., 2001). This is why core self-evaluations is defined as an all-encompassing self-idea (Tomas and Adriane, 2008; Judge, 2009) and as the most important judgment of an individual's own capacities and values (Kang, 2023).

A complete, underlying, higher-level notion known as "core self-evaluations" is defined by four recognized personality research qualities that include four components of the workplace (Akkermans and Tims, 2017). These traits include self-esteem, which represents an overall assessment of one's self-worth; generalized self-efficacy, which reflects an individual's belief in their ability to successfully navigate and handle various life events across different situations; emotional stability, which contrasts with neuroticism and pertains to a consistent inclination towards calmness and relaxation rather than exhibiting intense emotional reactions in stressful circumstances; and lastly, locus of control, which has to do with how one feels about the reasons behind the things that happen in life and how much control they believe they have over them.

Assessing one's own value and aptitude is essential to understanding how workers relate to and act in the workplace (Akkermans and Tims, 2017). **Self-efficacy is a crucial personal resource that protects workers from the negative consequences of work-related stress, according to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This self-evaluation may be favorable or unfavorable (Judge et al., 1997).**

Employees possessing elevated levels of CSE are inclined to view their duties and demanding tasks in a positive, motivating, and productive manner, leading to a higher likelihood of successful management and competence (Bono and Judge, 2003; Friede and Ryan, 2005). Individuals with strong CSE also encounter fewer stress-inducing factors due to their ability to effectively control situations and focus on favorable information (Chang et al., 2012). CSE may impact results directly by influencing emotions and indirectly through cognitive evaluations and behavioral reactions to various situations (Chen et al., 2022; Geng et al., 2021; Gullifor et al., 2023; Peláez-Fernández et al., 2022) such as affective commitment and job-related well-being (Kittinger, et al., 2020, Mihalache and Mihalache, 2022), job satisfaction (Nguyen and Stinglhamber, 2021), work engagement (Tisu et al., 2020), job crafting (Mariam et al., 2022), creativity (Zhang et al., 2020), career adaptability (Xu and Yu, 2021), work-family enrichment (Jain and Nair, 2020), psychological well-being (Legh-Page., 2022), performance attributions (Gim et al., 2022), and work place thriving as

an important higher order personality construct (Liu et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2012).

Thus far, it has been proposed that workplace curiosity and thriving at work are positively related. Extending that proposition led to postulate that core self-evaluations regulates the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work. According to the theory of self-validation (Brinol and Petty, 2009), people have a tendency to deliberately choose information that supports their beliefs about themselves and feel emotions that are consistent with who they are, which in turn shapes the way they behave. Those with positive self-concepts are inclined to focus on positive information and interpret it in a positive manner, whereas individuals with negative self-concepts are more likely to pay attention to negative information and interpret it negatively (Swann et al., 2007). Scholars have argued that proactive personality (Zhao, 2016) and psychological capital (Paterson et al., 2014) have a positive impact on thriving in the workplace. Consequently, having a positive self-concept or possessing desirable personality traits are crucial elements that contribute to success in the workplace.

Studies have demonstrated a clear relationship between core self-evaluations and thriving in the job (Porath et al., 2012). Strong core self-evaluators see themselves as capable and deserving, and they continuously retain a positive self-perception under a variety of conditions (Judge et al., 2004). As a result, they are more likely to see obstacles at work as chances for development and advancement. Additionally, those with good core self-evaluations are more likely to hold themselves in higher regard, have a strong sense of their own value, have a positive perspective on their place in the world, demonstrate confidence in their skills, and be upbeat about life. Conversely, Individuals with low core self-evaluations typically harbor negative perceptions of themselves, exhibit a lack of self-assurance in their abilities, and maintain a pessimistic outlook on their future prospects (Zacher, 2014).

According to the current research, individuals who have high core self-evaluations—that is, who have positive views about their abilities and mental health—are more likely to experience a greater positive impact from workplace curiosity on their general well-being in the workplace. Specifically, those who hold favorable opinions about themselves while engaging in learning and seeking information will exhibit greater levels of

learning and vitality, which are essential components of thriving in the workplace. Consequently, the association between workplace curiosity and thriving at work will be more pronounced when of core self-evaluations are higher among individuals compared to those with lower levels. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: Core self-evaluations significantly moderate the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work among academicians in Zagazig University faculties.

Figure (1) displays the research model and suggested relationships.

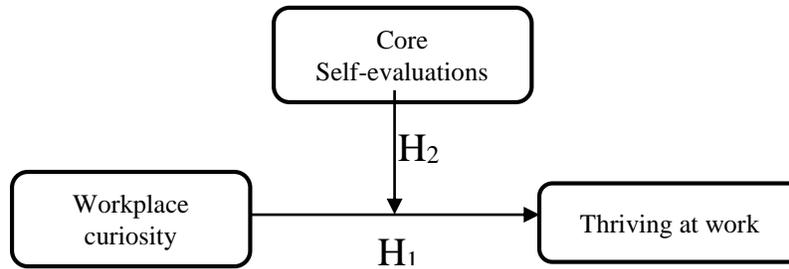


Figure (1): Research model and suggested relationships.

3. Methodology:

The current investigation used a quantitative strategy to look into the research hypotheses. The proposed relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was investigated using a cross-sectional survey as the quantitative data collecting method, in accordance with the theoretical framework.

3.1. Population and Sample

Academicians in faculties, especially of Zagazig University, have been selected based on the notion that curiosity and the need to thrive in work prevail. Since the researcher was appointed to the position as teaching assistant, curiosity starts to grow to help in completing a master and doctorate dissertations, and later for promotion as assistant professor and professor. Moreover, curious researchers typically have better academic achievement (Kashdan and Steger, 2007). In addition, Zagazig University is ranked eighth among Egyptian universities and ranked 1938 globally, and ranked thirty-third in Africa. Zagazig University was established seventh among Egyptian universities. The university includes 23 colleges and institutes in various scientific specializations, and it has 9 university

hospitals and two under construction. Primary data collection took place from June–August 2023. As shown in table (1), there are 6374 active academicians in Zagazig University faculties. Population includes all active academicians in 16 faculties in Zagazig University^(*). The survey participants consisted of academic professionals who possessed a minimum three years of professional experience, enabling them to effectively articulate the various research variables. **A stratified sample was drawn to collect primary data.**

Table (1)
Research sample distribution.

	Faculty	No. of academicians	%	Required instruments	Received instruments
1	Medicine	2707	42.5	154	132
2	Veterinary	248	3.8	20	17
3	Sciences	394	6.2	22	20
4	Pharmacy	199	3.1	11	10
5	Engineering	654	10.3	37	34
6	Agriculture	358	5.6	2	18
7	Dentistry	43	0.6	3	3
8	Arts	217	3.4	12	9
9	Commerce	260	4.1	15	12
10	Education	182	2.9	11	9
11	Physical exercises (Female)	170	2.7	10	10
12	Physical exercises (Male)	145	2.3	8	8
13	Specific Education	197	3.1	11	9
14	Technology and development	134	2.1	8	8
15	Nursing	174	2.7	10	10
16	Computer and information science	105	1.6	6	6
17	Law	87	1.4	5	5
	Total	6374		363	320

3.2. Sample Descriptive Statistics:

Follows in table (2) shows the descriptive statistics of sample demographics.

^(*)Faculties of Institute of Civilizations, Science of disabilities, Medicine in Fakous, Archaeology, Asian studies Institute, Dentistry, Clinical medicine are excluded because they have been established in less than five years and the academic staff has not been completed.

Table (2)
Research sample descriptive statistics.

Item	Details	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	181	56.6
	Female	139	43.4
	Total	320	100.0
Age	Less than 30 years	94	29.4
	From 30 to < 45 years	161	50.3
	45 years and more	65	20.3
	Total	320	100.0
Affiliation	Demonstrator	91	28.4
	Assistant Lecturer	59	18.4
	Lecturer	62	19.4
	Assistant Professor	46	14.4
	Professor	41	12.8
	Emeritus Professor	21	6.6
	Total	320	100.0
Tenure	Less than 3 years	18	5.6
	3 less than 10 years	131	40.9
	10 to less than 15	77	24.1
	More than 15	94	29.4
	Total	320	100.0

As shown in the table, 56.6% were male and 43.4% were females. Most respondents (50.3%) were from 30 to < 45 years old, most respondents (28.4%) were demonstrators. Finally, the majority of respondents (40.9%) tenured from three to less than 10 years.

3.3. Measures:

A 5-point Likert scale was utilized to measure all variables. The questionnaire, initially written in English, underwent review by six researchers and four senior academicians from Egyptian universities. Their valuable feedback was incorporated to refine the Arabic version of the questionnaire. To ensure content equivalency, a back-translation process was employed (Prieto, 1992). In this study, data collected from academicians using questionnaire. A cross-sectional field study was selected in order to investigate the research questions and test the hypotheses. The instrument included workplace curiosity, thriving at work, and core self-evaluations. Furthermore, the findings from our pilot study demonstrate that the participants were able to readily understand the survey's scale content. This provided us with confidence that the survey could effectively gather empirical data.

3.3.1. Workplace curiosity:

It was assessed utilizing a 16-item scale (Kashdan et al., 2020) which has proved good psychometric properties in the United States and German context. The measurement considered the four dimensions of curiosity- joyous exploration, deprivation sensitivity, stress tolerance, and openness to people's ideas. Each was measured using four items. Sample items include “I get excited thinking about experimenting with different ideas” ,”I can spend hours on a single problem because I feel a need to find an answer”, When work is anxiety provoking, I tend to explore rather than avoid” and “It is important to listen to ideas from people who think differently “for each dimensions respectively.

3.3.2. Thriving at work:

Thriving at work measure was adopted from 10 items scale of Porath et al. (2012), which is the most commonly used measure in previous studies (e.g., Maan et al., 2022; Alikaj et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020) and showed an accepted degree of reliability Usman et al., 2023 ($\alpha = 0.93$); Arshad et al., 2023 ($\alpha = 0.94$); Lee, 2022 ($\alpha = 0.92$), Huang and Zhou, 2024 ($\alpha = 0.96$). The measurement considered the two dimensions of thriving—learning and vitality—and each was measured using five items. Sample items include “I see myself continually improving” and “I feel alert and awake”. for each dimensions respectively.

3.3.3. Core self-evaluations

To measure individuals' core self-evaluations, Judge et al. (2003) 12 items scale was used. This scale is well established among recent researches (e.g., Paloş, 2023; Wu et al., 2022; Luo et al., 2024). CSE is a multidimensional concept encompassing self-esteem, locus of control, emotional stability and generalized self-efficacy. According to Chang et al. (2012), CSE is largely different from other individual personality characteristics since it is wider in scope and hence more likely to generate higher validity coefficients. Therefore, in the present research, we employ the direct approach for measuring CSE, which assesses employees' CSE, s itself rather than its traits. Sample items include "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life" and I determine what will happen in my life".

Control variables: Age, gender, tenure, and scientific degree might have an association with perceptions of employee workplace curiosity, thriving at work, and core self-evaluations, and thus, we controlled for them. We examined the viability of these control variables that could offer alternative interpretations for the proposed relationships among the variables in the current research model. By referring to a comprehensive analysis of the pertinent literature, we accounted for these variables.

4. Data Analysis and results:

4.1 .Measures' Validity and reliability:

a. Measures Validity:

The measures' validity was confirmed by a panel of researchers and experts following their input, recommendations on certain questions, and review of their proposed changes. Revised questionnaires were then disseminated among the population to assess the clarity of the statements and adjustments were made to a few survey items according to their responses. Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to investigate the dimensionality of the research variables.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

An evaluation of the measurements' construct validity was carried out using IBM SPSS Amos 24 through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Initial findings

indicated a poor fit of the data, leading to the recommendation of excluding certain items from both the core self-evaluations and thriving at work measures to improve the fit. Table (3) shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis.

Table (3)
Variables' confirmatory factor analysis results.

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	PClose
Threshold	--	--	1-3	>0.95	<0.08	<0.08	>0.05
Workplace curiosity	201.84	98.000	2.060	0.943	0.048	0.058	0.129
Core Self- Evaluations	26.667	17.000	1.569	0.996	0.018	0.042	0.631
Thriving at work	44.593	15.000	2.973	0.992	0.014	0.079	0.136

Note: N: 304; CFI, comparative fit index, SRMR, standard root Mean residual, RMSEA, root mean square error of Approx.

As illustrated in the table, the data parameters exhibited a strong alignment with the related standards in the results following the second round (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Furthermore, workplace curiosity exhibited factor loadings between 0.59 and 0.90, core self-evaluations between 0.68 and 0.88, and thriving at work between 0.85 and 0.93. These findings confirm the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurements.

b. Measures Reliability:

Table (4) presents Cronbach alphas of the research variables.

Table (4)
Cronbach alphas of the research variables

Variable	Alpha Cronbach
Workplace Curiosity	0.83
Thriving at work	0.94
Core Self -Evaluations	0.97

The results of the reliability test for the study variables' measures recorded high levels and showed high internal consistency. Therefore, these measures will give the same result if they are used again, in addition to their quality and error-free. In other words, these measures are characterized by stability.

4.2. Data collection:

The data collection methods employed include online surveys and self-administered paper questionnaires. Out of the 363 physicians who were targeted, 320 valid responses were collected. Participants in our study were carefully briefed on the importance of their involvement. We guaranteed the protection of their privacy and personal information. It was emphasized that there are no correct or incorrect answers, and anonymity was maintained throughout the study. Participants were urged to provide real workplace examples and evidence to enhance the clarity of their responses. The participants have been guaranteed that the information gathered will solely serve scientific research objectives. Out of the 363 academics targeted at Zagazig University, 320 responses were received. Following the elimination of invalid responses, 320 were deemed suitable for additional examination.

4.3. Descriptive analysis and correlations:

Table (5) displays the descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables outlined in the research model.

Table (5)
Means, standard deviations, and Pearson Correlations.

	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Gender	N/A	N/A	1						
2	Age	1.909	.7001	-.220**	1					
3	Affiliation	2.65	1.478	.033	.036	1				
4	Tenure	2.94	.870	-.020	-.050	-.142*	1			
5	WPC	2.808	.8410	.010	-.078	-.036	.112*	1		
6	CSE	2.722	.8620	.013	.087	-.031	.047	.118**	1	
7	TAW	2.877	.8745	-.175**	.228**	.131*	-.009	.406**	.430**	1

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, Cronbach's alpha are between parentheses, WPC: Workplace Curiosity, CSE: Core Self-Evaluations, and TAW: Thriving at work.

The data presented in the preceding table demonstrates a significant alignment with the findings from the pilot study. The results indicate that the participants, who were academicians, reported varying degrees of workplace curiosity, core self-evaluations, and thriving at work, ranging from moderate to

high levels. As expected, thriving at work was positively correlated with workplace curiosity, and thriving at work was positively correlated with core self-evaluations. The preliminary results validate the proposed relationships.

5. Hypothesis testing:

The research hypotheses were examined using hierarchical regression analysis. While the effect of workplace curiosity and core self-evaluations was investigated in M2, the impact of demographic variables was analyzed in M1. Finally, M3 looked at the relationship between core-self assessments and workplace curiosity and the interaction term. The relevant results are presented in Table (6).

Table (6)
Results of hierarchical regression analysis: Influence of predictors on thriving at work

Independent variables	Dependent variable: Thriving at work (N = 320)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control Variables</i>			
Gender	-0.126**	-0.139**	-0.120**
Age	0.204***	0.195***	0.232***
Affiliation	-0.137**	-0.120**	-0.116**
Tenure	-0.021	-0.079	-0.082
<i>Direct effects</i>			
Workplace Curiosity		0.384***	0.421***
Core Self- Evaluations		0.370***	0.370***
<i>Moderating effect</i>			
WPC × CSE			0.156**
<i>Model fit statistics</i>			
F-value	7.468***	34.765***	32.493***
R ²	0.087	0.400	0.422
Δ R ²	-	0.313	0.022

The data presented in the table indicates that workplace curiosity positively impacted thriving at work ($\beta=0.421$, $p=0.01$), providing strong support for hypothesis 1. In order to examine hypothesis 2, a moderated regression analysis was conducted by creating an interaction term between workplace curiosity and thriving at work, which was initially centered.

The findings indicated a notable correlation between curiosity in the workplace and core self-evaluations (WPC x CSE), suggesting that the extent of thriving at work environment was notably influenced by this correlation ($\beta=0.156$, $p=0.05$). Moreover, the interaction term between workplace curiosity and core self-evaluations resulted in a 22% enhancement in the explained variance ($\Delta R^2=0.022$, $p<0.01$).

The relationship between workplace curiosity and core self-evaluations is graphically depicted in figure (2), along with the direction of the slopes for both groups—low and high core self-evaluations—against levels of thriving at work.

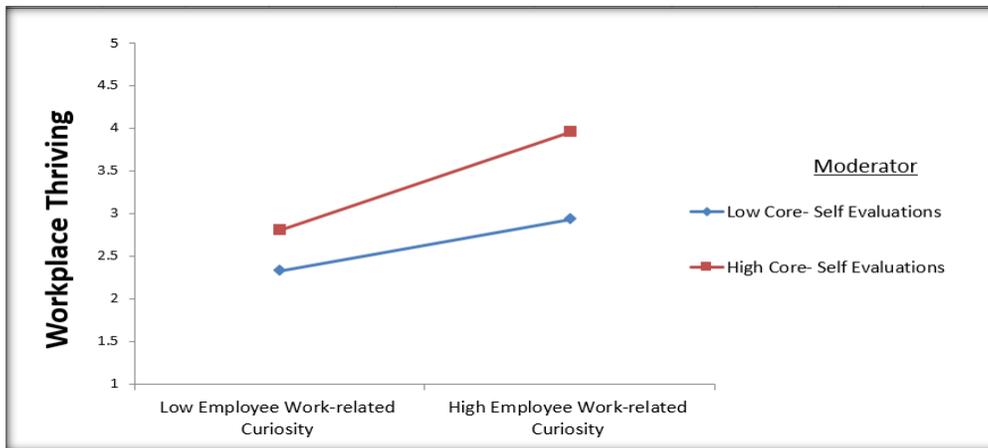


Figure (2): The interaction of workplace curiosity and core self -evaluations on thriving at work.

As shown, workplace curiosity affected levels of thriving at work, but this effect was different across core self-evaluations groups. Workplace curiosity among academicians with high core self-evaluations were motivated to thrive at work. However, workplace curiosity among academicians with low core self-evaluations did not yield in much higher thriving at work. Hence, hypothesis 2 was supported.

6. Discussion:

In light of increasing pressures to uphold organizational effectiveness, this research suggests that promoting thriving in the workplace is influenced by the interactions and relationships among various individual factors. Our study delved

into the impact of workplace curiosity on fostering employees' thriving at work. Moreover, referring to theories of appraisal (Packer, 1985; 1985; 1986) and self-validation (Brinol and Petty, 2009), we examined the impact of core self-evaluations on the association between workplace curiosity and prospering at work. Our investigation supported the validity of our model and the two linked hypotheses.

First, workplace curiosity strongly predicted employees' prospering at work, according to the empirical investigation. This result is consistent with research by Abid and Contreras (2022) and Usman et al. (2023). The findings indicate that curious individuals who partake in exploratory thinking and actively involve themselves in the assigned task are more prone to experiencing vitality and learning, which are qualities associated with thriving. **Moreover**, the desire to explore and discover new possibilities has motivated curious individuals to pinpoint educational prospects and adapt to their surroundings in order to improve their skills, ultimately resulting in success in the workplace. Curiosity played a role in the cultivation of skills and internal drive for acquiring knowledge (aspects of flourishing, such as energy and education). **Finally**, curious individuals recognized obstacles as opportunities to overcome instead of insurmountable barriers, thereby enhancing their ability to find ways to flourish in the midst of adversity.

Second, the idea that core self-evaluations moderate the connection between workplace curiosity and thriving at work was approved. This hypothesis was validated. The findings demonstrated that scholars possessing strong core self-evaluations maintained positive viewpoints regarding their competencies and emotional well-being. Moreover, academicians, who hold themselves in high evaluations, exhibit a greater inclination towards acquiring new knowledge and seeking information. This, in turn, leads to an increased emphasis on continuous learning and vitality as fundamental elements for achieving thriving at work. Academicians who hold themselves in high regard while curiously working stimulate cognitive and emotional processes through their proactive approach, perseverance, sense of accountability, and liveliness. On the other hand, academicians holding low opinions about themselves felt curiosity as annoying and a state of imbalance that prevented them from taking

workplace initiatives and did not show persistence, sense of responsibility, or vitality.

7. Theoretical implications:

First of all, it deepens our understanding of what it means to thrive at work, which is a significant contribution to positive psychology, which studies the causes of and remedies for thriving at work. Up until this study, little was known about the impact of curiosity on thriving at work, and there hasn't been enough research done on the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work. The present work aimed to close this gap. The results of this study show that academicians' thriving at work is positively impacted by their curiosity in the workplace. **Second**, by examining the function of core self-evaluations as a moderating factor in the relationship between workplace curiosity and prospering in the professional setting, this study illuminates an important and novel finding. Consequently, this study adds value by conceptualizing a mechanism in which individuals with strong core self-evaluations, driven by a passion for exploration and learning, can lead to the development of a conducive environment for employees to thrive in their workplaces. **Finally**, our renewed perspectives emphasize the impact of personal variation, particularly core self-evaluations, on the strength of the link between an individual's motivational state and their personality trait (workplace curiosity), as well as the outcomes they experience in their work environment (thriving at work). Previous boundary research primarily centered on exploring how core self-evaluations support individuals in difficult situations, like overcoming obstacles in complex work environments or high-pressure circumstances. We contribute to the existing field of knowledge in our research by offering thorough theoretical and empirical support. Such evidence suggests that core self-evaluations can be helpful when an individual's motivating state—like curiosity—contributes to favorable results for workers. Specifically, it enhances their ability to thrive in the workplace.

8. Practical implications:

The implications of our research findings are significant for practical application. Given that scholars dedicate a majority of their time to their work

environments, it is crucial to consider ways to maintain their energy levels and boost their motivation for learning. The findings of our study expand our understanding of antecedents (i.e., curiosity and core self-evaluations) of thriving at work. This information could be deemed important for senior executives in dynamic companies where innovation, adaptation, survival, and success rely on the constant generation of new ideas and embracing change. The significance of fostering a professional atmosphere that encourages inquisitive individuals within the workplace is highlighted by this statement. For instance, it is recommended that organizations develop recruitment and selection policies to attract curious academicians to their workforce. When organizations are interested in increasing thriving, they could recruit, select, and promote academicians on the basis of traits and most specifically curiosity's traits.

In addition, if academicians stopped learning more and more as time goes by, lost energy, and not looking forward to each new day, organizations need to work on refreshing their curiosity and information seeking motives. Top management might consider substantially increasing rewards and support for academicians who seek out opportunities to expand knowledge and think in depth about work tasks, who can't rest until they find answers to complex problem at work, which will in turn enhance their thriving effort at work. The top management must be focused and practicing their efforts not only promoting workplace curiosity, but also the facilitation and accessibility of resources must be enabled in order to implement their ideas. The recommendations align closely with the feedback provided by the participants in the pilot study phase.

9. Limitations and Future Research:

Despite its contributions, the study contains certain shortcomings that should be taken into account in subsequent investigations:

- The cross-sectional approach was used to gather the study's primary data, which means that the opinions of the sample units were gathered at a certain moment in time. Therefore, the current study suggests conducting longitudinal study that extends over time to assess the effect time passage on the proposed relationships.
- The primary data in the study were collected based on survey method, which suffers from number of errors and concludes correlational relationships. Therefore, the study suggests conducting more laboratory and field

experimental research that investigates cause-and-effect relationships, or quasi-experimental studies, and expanding the external validity of the current results.

- Research population was academicians in Zagazig university faculties. It is further suggested that future research expand this study and replicate the existing results in other universities or in different populations in different sectors or industries such as research centers and electronics companies etc. to ensure the generalizability of the current research model.
- The current research model included workplace curiosity and core self-evaluations as predictors of thriving at work. It has been suggested that personal attributes, such as self-evaluations and other individual differences, play a crucial role in enabling curious employees to excel in their work. This assumption is based on the idea that individuals' capacity to safeguard their own resources acts as a driving force for their behavior (hobfoll, 2022), future research are suggested to include other predictors such as big personality traits e.g., consciousness and openness, optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem to deepen understanding concerning the relationship between workplace curiosity and thriving at work.

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