



We are pleased to invite **two Master's students** from TUM School of Management to participate in a joint research project between **TUM School of Management** and **Harvard Business School** to conduct cutting-edge research at the intersection of **Corporate Purpose & Passion for Work**

**Research area:** Strategy/Organizational behavior (Master's Students only)

**Application:** Send your CV and most recent transcripts to [juergen.hamann@tum.de](mailto:juergen.hamann@tum.de)  
**Deadline: 27<sup>th</sup> of February**, start planned in March/April 2026, please also indicate which of the two research questions you are interested in (see below).

### Abstract

The concepts of *corporate purpose* and *passion for work* have gained substantial attention in organizational research and managerial practice. Corporate purpose is increasingly viewed as a higher-order, meaning-giving business philosophy that provides direction and legitimacy beyond economic value creation, while passion for work captures intense positive affect, identity relevance, and sustained engagement at the individual level. Although both literatures have evolved largely independently, their theoretical interdependence remains underexplored. From a multilevel perspective, purpose can be seen as a collective sense-making frame, whereas passion reflects the internalization of meaning at the level of the self. Beyond simple alignment, recent theorizing suggests that purpose and passion may interact in more complex ways, giving rise to states of fit, misfit, and tension. For instance, a strongly articulated organizational purpose may amplify individual passion, but may also crowd out, instrumentalize, or even conflict with employees' personal passions. Conversely, highly passionate individuals may reinforce collective purpose, but may also experience dissonance when personal callings diverge from commercially framed or strategically instrumentalized purposes.

This joint research project between TUM and HBS thus aims to explore the relationship and the underlying mechanisms between *purpose* and *passion* as dynamically interrelated meaning systems. By focusing on their alignment, misalignment, and potential feedback loops, we seek to advance our understanding of the conditions, under which their interaction becomes mutually reinforcing, neutral, or tension-laden. The goal is to advance our understanding of how their interaction shapes motivation, identification, and individual behavior in organizations. Therefore, we are seeking two highly motivated students who enjoy exploratory work and are excited to contribute to cutting-edge research in this area.

### Research questions to be explored

- (1) How does the alignment or misalignment between an individual's personal passion and the perceived purpose of their organization affect individual-level outcomes such as motivation, well-being, and performance?
- (2) How can *perceived individual purpose* be conceptually defined and empirically measured, and how can a reliable and valid scale be developed based on and adapted from existing *perceived organizational purpose* measures?

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