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THE DUEL BETWEEN TWO DOMAINS: DOES WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICT INFLUENCE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS? (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

THE DUEL BETWEEN TWO DOMAINS:
DOES WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICT INFLUENCE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS?

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Principal Topic

Theoretically, entrepreneurs are their own bosses, enjoy greater (personal) freedom, and have the flexibility to accommodate family responsibilities. In reality, however, entrepreneurs’ freedom is restricted by the responsibility for the venture; its survival and performance (Hornaday & Aboud, 1987; Parasuraman et al., 1996). In contrast, family responsibilities limit entrepreneurs’ ability to devote time and energy to the venture. Even though researchers have acknowledged that conflict between work and family may pose constraints for entrepreneurs (Losocco et al., 1991; Stoner et al., 1990), the effect of work-and-family conflict as it relates to entrepreneurs’ job stress and job satisfaction has not yet been explored. The present study provides empirical tests of the individual-level relationships between entrepreneurs’ work-and-family conflict, job stress, and job satisfaction.

Method

A survey was mailed to top executives of 2,392 small, private companies identified from the High Technology Directory for Rocky Mountains and Texas. Useful surveys were returned from 393 founders and 110 non-founders - a response rate of 26 percent. The survey, based on established measures, e.g., the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, two work-and-family measures, a 16-item job stress measure, and individual- and firm-level control variables, was tested using a pilot study of 79 responses from small business executives.

Results and Implications

The results showed founders experienced significantly more job satisfaction and significantly less job stress than non-founders. Despite these results, no significant mean differences were found for work-influence-family conflict or family-influence-work conflict. The results also showed both directions of work-and-family conflict were significant contributors to job satisfaction and job stress for the founders. For the non-founders, however, work-influence-family conflict and family-influence-work conflict contributed to job stress but not to job satisfaction. Unexpectedly, the results showed job stress did not moderate any of the relationships between the two types of work-and-family conflict and job satisfaction for either sample. However, job stress partially mediated the relationships between both types of work-and-family conflict and job satisfaction for the founders only. These results provide insight into how entrepreneurs “in the midst of the surprises and vicissitudes of venture creation, manage to enjoy the journey” (Sexton & Smilor, 1997: XVIII).

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