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SYSTEM DYNAMIC VIEW ON ENTREPRENEURIAL WELL-BEING (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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INTERACTIVE PAPER

SYSTEM DYNAMIC VIEW ON ENTREPRENEURIAL WELL-BEING

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Principal Topic

Happiness has intrigued humans probably since the beginning of time although the forms of pursuing it as well as ways of enjoying it may have varied greatly (Plutchik 2003; Kim-Prieto, Diener, Tamir, Scollon & Diener 2005). In modern western societies the chase of *individual* happiness has become a driving force affecting even stability of families (Sund & Smyrniotis 2005) these days. At the same time stress and anxiety seem to have reached epidemic proportions (Dozois & Dobson 2004) with enormous costs attached to them (Hudson, Flannery-Schroeder & Kendall 2004). Both general interest in and academic writing on happiness has grown markedly during the latest years yet studies concentrating on entrepreneurs are remarkably few. This study seeks to address three issues. Firstly, to compare the level of experienced well being to find possible similarities and differences between entrepreneurs and employees. Secondly, to look at the individual construct of experienced well being on average in each group and thirdly to establish patterns – system dynamic models - specific to entrepreneurial well being.

Method

To address the above mentioned questions an internet based survey (N=942) was conducted using a descriptive visual analogue scale (DVAS). The measure had good psychological properties and allowed tapping into the phenomenological level of experience while looking at well being as an individually constructed phenomenon holistically at the same time. Simple correlational analyses at different levels were used to detect distinct patterns and to finally create system dynamic models of well being.

Results and Implications

It was noted earlier that pursuit of happiness seems to be of growing interest to people living in western individualistic societies. The tentative result show that while both studied groups (employees, entrepreneurs) experienced high levels of well being they differed in the way the experience was constructed on the phenomenological level. Entrepreneurs seemed capable of experiencing (at least momentarily) stress and anxiety without it affecting their experienced happiness or satisfaction with life. Further, the system dynamic models of well being showed a distinct pattern in favor of entrepreneurs, pointing to the earlier mentioned viewpoints on the role of learning. The two-way analysis of correlations emphasized the role of subjective experience for functionality. The results may have practical implications in creating effective interventions for enhancing subjective well being among entrepreneurs.

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