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EXAMINING THE ROLE OF AUTONOMY SUPPORT, AUTONOMY, AND TEAM EFFICACY ON INNOVATIVE PROJECT OUTCOMES IN ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

**EXAMINING THE ROLE OF AUTONOMY SUPPORT,
AUTONOMY, AND TEAM EFFICACY ON INNOVATIVE
PROJECT OUTCOMES IN ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS**

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Principal Topic

The use of projects focused on creating innovative products, services, new ventures, and to identify potential new markets is increasingly observed within established organizations seeking to become more entrepreneurial (e.g., Shepherd & Cardon, 2009; Zahra, 1999). Despite the potential research holds in pursuing the pattern of factors to explain project outcomes, studies have tended to focus either on the role autonomy support plays in empowering innovative individual efforts (e.g., Hornsby, Kuratko, & Montagno, 1999) or on the role diversity and dynamics play in generating an increased sense of collective efficacy (e.g., Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006). This study seeks to contribute to the literature by examining how efforts to create a supportive environment translate into innovative project outcomes through individual and associative autonomous behavior in established organizations.

Methods

In order to examine the proposed relationships between autonomy support, autonomy, team efficacy, and project outcome, this paper uses a unique dataset reflecting a variety of environments in over 15 industry sectors. Data collection involved a qualified e-mail invitation sent to approximately 3,000 referrals who indicated that they either work in the IT field or rely on information technology in their daily work activities. A sample of 742 individuals identifying themselves as either a team member or a project manager who had participated in a recent IT related project was generated. The records were scrutinized for missing data items, limited variation pattern responses and significant outlier characteristics and then trimmed to 693 – 425 reporting involvement in innovative projects, and 268 in incremental projects. Descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling were employed for data analysis.

Results and Implications

Preliminary empirical results suggest organizationally-based autonomy support predicts perceived individual autonomy and team efficacy but that only team efficacy mediates the relationship perceived project outcome success in turn. This pattern of results is stronger for the innovative than for the incremental project context. Collectively, these findings suggest that collective efficacy may become more of a self-fulfilling prophecy through associative rather than individual perceptions, a finding that extends prior insight into the collective and temporary aspects of entrepreneurial behavior in established organizations.

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