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SUMMARY

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES FOR FAMILY AND NON-FAMILY BUSINESSES

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Principal Topic

The creation and management of new businesses can create both positive and negative outcomes for entrepreneurs. In particular, the demands of a new business may stress the link between the entrepreneur’s family and work domains, and thereby create conflict within the entrepreneur. This conflict, which is termed work and family conflict (Burke & Greenglass, 1987), can hinder the psychological health of the entrepreneur and subsequently affect the performance of the new firm. Whether the conflict is related to family demands that inhibit attention to business needs, or work demands that affect family processes, work and family is particularly relevant to family businesses (Neubauer & Lank, 1998). The current study considers the relationships between work and family conflict on important psychological outcomes, namely work tension and satisfaction. These relationships are examined for entrepreneurs of family and non-family firms, with the goal of clarifying the theoretical relationships between these constructs.

Method

A national (United States) random sample of 2000 new ventures was acquired from Dun and Bradstreet for use in this study. A usable sample of 214 family and non-family firm founders who are also members of their top management team was obtained. Approximately 40% of the firms in the sample were identified as being family businesses. Established measures were used to assess each of the hypothesized constructs.

Results and Implications

Results suggest that work and family conflict variables differentially predict psychological outcomes for entrepreneurs leading family versus non-family ventures, in support of our hypotheses. The findings suggest that entrepreneurs leading family businesses tend to experience increased work tension and decreased satisfaction when tension from the family domain interferes with their ability to effective perform their responsibilities in the workplace. More broadly, the implications of this research present an important opportunity for the entrepreneurship and family business disciplines to contribute theoretically to the work and family conflict literature.

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