ENTREPRENEURIAL JOB DESIGN: THE INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF WORK CHARACTERISTICS AND NEW VENTURE EXPERIENCE (SUMMARY)

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ENTREPRENEURIAL JOB DESIGN: THE INTERACTIVE EFFECTS OF WORK CHARACTERISTICS AND NEW VENTURE EXPERIENCE

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Principal Topic

Entrepreneurs experience job stress due to their responsibility for employee welfare, survival and economic success of the venture, etc. (Hornaday & Aboud, 1987). Therefore, it is not surprising entrepreneurs experience more job stress than managers (Buttner, 1992). A substantial body of research has addressed job stress. However, only limited research has addressed entrepreneurs’ job stress; nearly all studies have been based on role theory (Wincent & Ortqvist, 2009). Despite this, results are not consistent across studies. One alternative is use job design theory, specifically job characteristics theory, in explaining entrepreneurs’ job stress. Fundamentally, job characteristic theory posits core job characteristics influence job-related outcomes (e.g., job stress; Kulik et al., 1987). Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the effect of four core job characteristics--autonomy, task variety, task identity, and feedback--on entrepreneurs’ job stress. Research shows important differences exist between novice and repeat entrepreneurs (e.g., Baron & Ensley, 2006). A second purpose of this study is to examine whether the job characteristics impact novice and repeat entrepreneurs’ job stress differently.

Methods

This study is based on survey responses from 192 novice and 229 repeat entrepreneurs and on measures of the job characteristics (Sims et al., 1976) and job stress (Judge et al., 1994). Regression analysis is used to determine the effect of job characteristics on job stress for the novice and repeat entrepreneurs. The Chow test is used to assess if regression lines were different for novice and repeat entrepreneurs.

Results and Implications

The results show autonomy reduced novice and repeat entrepreneurs’ job stress. Task identity and feedback did not have a significant relationship with job stress for either novice or repeat entrepreneurs. Task variety had an effect on job stress for novice entrepreneurs but not for repeat entrepreneurs. This means entrepreneurs starting and operating their first venture experience job stress as a result of task variety; however and despite experiencing a significantly higher level of task variety, experienced entrepreneurs’ task variety did not have a significant effect on their job stress. These results show job characteristics theory helps explain entrepreneurs’ job stress and illustrate important similarities and differences in how job characteristics affect novice and repeat entrepreneurs’ job stress.

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