CAN ENTREPRENEURS HAVE A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE?: A CROSS COUNTRY ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)

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Recommended Citation
Annink, Anne; Amorós, José Ernesto; and den Dulk, Laura (2015) "CAN ENTREPRENEURS HAVE A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE?: A CROSS COUNTRY ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)," Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research: Vol. 35 : Iss. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol35/iss3/4

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SUMMARY

CAN ENTREPRENEURS HAVE A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE?: A CROSS COUNTRY ANALYSIS

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Principal Topics

Work-life balance (WLB) is in the central debate of quality of life. Some scholars argue that self-employment might be a panacea for a WLB, but it also can be a double-edged sword (Prottas and Thompson, 2006): entrepreneurs still struggle with combining work and other responsibilities in life. Different work characteristics of entrepreneurs might influence their capabilities to achieve WLB because implies opportunities but also several constraints that shape and affect people’s capabilities to combine work and life domains (Hobson, 2013), but also national context can influence (Reynolds et al., 2005). The aims of this article are 1) to test the influence of individual work characteristics and 2) to test the (interaction) effect of a country’s culture on the entrepreneurs’ abilities to maintain WLB. We analyze these data from capabilities and agency theory adapted for WLB (Hobson, 2013).

Method

We use primary data from solo-entrepreneurs and micro-enterprises owners (up to10 employees), collected in 57 countries in 2013 (n=13,742). We conduct a multilevel analysis. Our DV is the self-evaluation of entrepreneurs WLB using three-item scale (Valcour, 2007). At the individual level we test different characteristics of entrepreneurs like their motivation, autonomy, and firm characteristics (solo entrepreneur vs. ones that create jobs, industry, innovativeness). For second level we test the economic development of each country and if some formal institutional arrangements (Gender Inequality Index) influence the WLB. Demographics are taken as control variables.

Results and Implications

Our main results confirm that higher level of job autonomy and the opportunity motivated entrepreneurs have more WLB but established self-employed are less satisfied with their WLB than the start-ups. At country level, the gross national income has positive effect on WLB. Finally, moderator analyses showed a positive effect of experience on WLB and autonomy on WLB turns out to be weaker in the context of a high gross national income. We provide some theoretical implications: work context variables which in theory could be experienced as resources, such as work experience, may in practice be experienced as a demand. Practical implications are also discussed.

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