



The Effect of Work-Family Conflict on Business Sustainability in Micro and Small Enterprises in Bamenda: The Case of Copreneurs' Businesses

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Research Article

Abstract

This study investigates the effect of work-family conflict on business sustainability in husband-wife (Copreneurs) owned micro and small enterprises in Bamenda, Cameroon. The study utilized a mixed methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study used a causal research design to test for causality. The quantitative research component involves collecting numerical data through surveys or questionnaires administered to a sample of Copreneurs. The target population of this study was selected businesses that are co-managed by both spouses in Bamenda city, and a sample of 330 Copreneurs was obtained through stratified random sampling. Data was analyzed using ordinary least squares analysis.

The analysis reveals a positive relationship between the overall work-family conflict index and business sustainability. However, this relationship is statistically insignificant. Specifically, a unit increase in the work-family conflict index correlates with a 0.11-point increase in business sustainability. In contrast, the work time commitment has a significant negative effect on sustainability, with a coefficient of -0.412, indicating that an increase in work time commitment by Copreneurs leads to a 0.41-point decrease in sustainability. Conversely, role overload demonstrates a significant positive relationship with business sustainability, where a one-point increase in role overload results in a 0.745-point enhancement in sustainability. The study implies that business leaders should acknowledge the dual nature of work-family conflict and its components. Organizations should implement policies that promote work-life balance, such as flexible work schedules and family-friendly practices, to mitigate the negative effects of Work Time Commitment on sustainability initiatives. Training programs focused on time management and prioritization could also equip employees with the skills to balance work demands and sustainability goals effectively.

Keywords: Business Sustainability, Copreneurs, Work-Family Conflict, Cameroon

1. Introduction

The incompatibility between the demands of work and family is known as work-family conflict. It has emerged as a critical challenge for entrepreneurs, particularly those in copreneurial ventures (Zahedy et al., 2021). Copreneurship, where a married couple jointly owns and operates a business, is a prevalent form of entrepreneurship in developed and developing economies (Nhlapo, 2023). Entrepreneur is a term used to

refer to people who develop their own careers (Fenoniaina, 2022). Work-family conflict is a stressor that can have a detrimental effect on workers' mental health. However, Copreneurs experience work-family conflict (WFC), which may have a negative effect on business sustainability (Peregrino-Dartey, 2018). Research has shown that work-life balance is crucial for employee performance, which, in turn, can impact business sustainability (Putri *et al.*, 2023). WFC is common in cooperative enterprises and impacts business sustainability by promoting employee engagement and fostering a positive work environment; this can lead to productivity gains, higher retention rates, and general organizational success (Helmle *et al.*, 2014).

According to Macheck *et al.* (2016), Copreneurship is a subset of family businesses in which two people jointly own and run the company. Business sustainability may arise from entrepreneurs' successful WFC management (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016; Werbel & Danes, 2010). Family businesses, including Copreneurship, are significant contributors to the GDP and the socioeconomic development and sustainability of countries (Al-Dajani *et al.*, 2014; Oudah *et al.*, 2018). As a result, the establishment, expansion, and sustainability of family companies are essential to the global economy's development (Sarbah & Xiao, 2015). However, difficulties with succession planning, resolving disputes, and adjusting to shifting market conditions contribute to the low survival rate of family firms (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003). For family companies to succeed in the long run, strategic planning and the implementation of efficient governance structures are essential (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Effective leadership and management practices are crucial for improving employee performance and business sustainability (Manafe, 2022). Sustainability is the state in which a society or organization demonstrates a relationship to social, environmental, and economic factors. Long-term financial viability and profitability maintenance are the focus of the economic part of corporate sustainability (Porter & Van der Linde, 1995). The pursuit of sustainability is a crucial aspect of entrepreneurial ventures.

Copreneurs face unique challenges in managing work-family dynamics as the boundaries between their personal and professional lives become blurred. The constant interaction and collaboration required in copreneurial ventures can lead to increased work-family conflict, where the demands of the business and family responsibilities compete for time and attention. Work-family conflict can have significant implications for both the individuals involved and the sustainability of copreneurial ventures. Research has shown that Copreneurs experiencing high levels of work-family conflict tend to have lower job satisfaction, reduced engagement, and overall poorer performance. These factors can hinder the growth and success of their businesses in the long run. Moreover, work-family conflict can spill over into the couple's personal relationship. The stress and strain from managing work and family responsibilities can affect the quality of communication, increase marital stress, and lower relationship satisfaction for Copreneurs. These negative effects on personal relationships can further impact their ability to collaborate effectively in the business and sustain its success over time. The well-being and satisfaction of Copreneurs are closely tied to the sustainability of their ventures. Copreneurs who experience high levels of work-family conflict are more prone to burnout, reduced life satisfaction, and decreased motivation, which can undermine their commitment to the business. The present study seeks to close this gap by looking at the effect of work-family conflict on the business sustainability of copreneurial MSEs in the context of Bamenda, Cameroon. The following are the paper's specific goals.

- To assess the effect of work time commitment on business sustainability in Bamenda.
- To examine the effect of role overload on business sustainability in Bamenda.
- To offer recommendations for enhancing business sustainability in Bamenda.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Research on green entrepreneurship in Jakarta, Indonesia, highlights the importance of promoting sustainability education and the triple bottom line in entrepreneurial endeavors (Nuringsih, 2020; Mtuka,

2020). According to Carroll and Shabana (2010), the social component of company sustainability entails considering how operations affect many stakeholders, including workers, clients, local communities, and society. Reducing the detrimental effects that company operations have on the environment is the primary goal of the environmental component of business sustainability (Hart, 1995). The rise of digital marketing and online platforms has created opportunities for small businesses to reach customers and promote their products or services (Alzaanin, 2020). The small businesses here also include commercial ventures. This study has adopted the economic dimension of business sustainability.

A key aspect of work-family conflict is role overload, which occurs when individuals struggle to fulfill the multiple roles they hold, such as employee, business owner, spouse, and parent (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Voydanoff, 2004). Additionally, there is also work time commitment, which is how much time and effort committed to work-related activities can exacerbate work-family conflict (Day & Chamberlain, 2006; Ooi & Teoh, 2021). These factors have been found to negatively impact the well-being of copreneurial couples and threaten the performance and long-term viability of their businesses (Rodrigues & Franco, 2022; Venter et al., 2009). Auken and Werbel (2006) propose that spouses form expectations regarding their spouse's level of involvement in job and family-related activities and their family goals. Uncommitted spouses may argue that their partner is more understanding in domestic matters, more likely to criticize business dealings, and less willing to contribute some of the family's funds to the enterprise. As a result, the entrepreneurial spouse could have to decide between the needs of the business and those of their spouse. This kind of situation is an example of work-family conflict since the entrepreneurs' ability to make decisions and commit personal resources to the business's survival would most likely be negatively impacted by the stress created (Auken & Werbel, 2006).

Karatepe and Tekinkus (2006) investigate the effects of work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion, and intrinsic motivation on front-line employees' job performance, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment in Turkish retail banks as their setting. Results reveal that work-family conflict increases emotional exhaustion and decreases job satisfaction.

In a study conducted in the USA, Prottas and Thompson (2006) found that work-family conflict had a negative impact on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of small business owners. The authors argued that the competing demands of work and family life placed a considerable strain on these individuals, compromising their ability to sustain and grow their businesses effectively. Similarly, a study by Eddleston and Powell (2012) in Canada revealed that work-family conflict was an important predictor of entrepreneurial burnout. The researchers suggested that the high levels of work-family conflict experienced by Canadian entrepreneurs contributed to emotional exhaustion and a decline in their overall well-being, ultimately undermining the long-term sustainability of their ventures. Also, a study by Annink et al. (2015) in the Netherlands revealed that work-family conflict was an important contributor to entrepreneurial burnout. The researchers suggested that the high levels of work-family conflict experienced by Dutch entrepreneurs contributed to emotional exhaustion and a decline in their overall well-being, ultimately undermining the long-term sustainability of their ventures.

A study by Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) in Spain indicated that the availability of policies that were family-friendly and supportive work environments could help mitigate the negative effects of work-family conflict on business performance. The authors found that organizations that actively promoted work-life balance and provided resources to help employees manage multiple roles were more likely to achieve greater business sustainability. Prottas and Thompson (2006), in a study carried out in the US, realized that work-family conflict had a negative impact on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of small business owners. The authors argued that the pressing demands of work and family life placed a considerable strain on these individuals, compromising their ability to sustain and grow their businesses effectively. Olson et al. (2003) revealed that the age of the business was positively associated with increased achievements for both the business and the family, and their result was statistically insignificant at a 10% significance level. While the challenges of workplace family strife within the framework of copreneurial

businesses have been extensively explored in the developed world, there is a paucity of research examining these issues in the context of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in underdeveloped nations (Rodrigues & Franco, 2022; Mtuka, 2020).

2.1. Work Time Commitment and Business Sustainability

Work time commitment refers to the dedication and hours employees and business owners invest in daily operations. A high level of commitment is often associated with increased productivity, improved customer satisfaction, and long-term business growth. Businesses that ensure consistent time investment in planning, execution, and monitoring are more likely to sustain competitive advantage. When individuals allocate sufficient time to strategic and operational activities, they enhance efficiency, optimize resources, and foster innovation. This sustained effort will lead to better financial performance and overall business sustainability.

H₁: Work time commitment significantly affects business sustainability in Bamenda.

2.2. Overload and Business Sustainability

Overload occurs when business owners and employees experience excessive work demands beyond their capacity. This can lead to fatigue, decreased productivity, and increased operational inefficiencies. When businesses are overloaded with tasks and responsibilities without adequate resource allocation, decision-making may suffer, leading to financial losses and burnout. Prolonged overload negatively impacts workforce motivation and limits the ability of businesses to innovate and adapt to market changes. Consequently, sustained overload can weaken business performance and threaten long-term sustainability.

H₂: Overload significantly affects business sustainability in Bamenda.

3. Research Framework

In a conceptual framework, the relationships and interactions of variables are usually demonstrated by lines and arrows, which are critical in guiding the investigation. In this context, a variable refers to the image, perception, or concept that can be measured or symbols to which numerals or values are attached (Kumar, 2011).

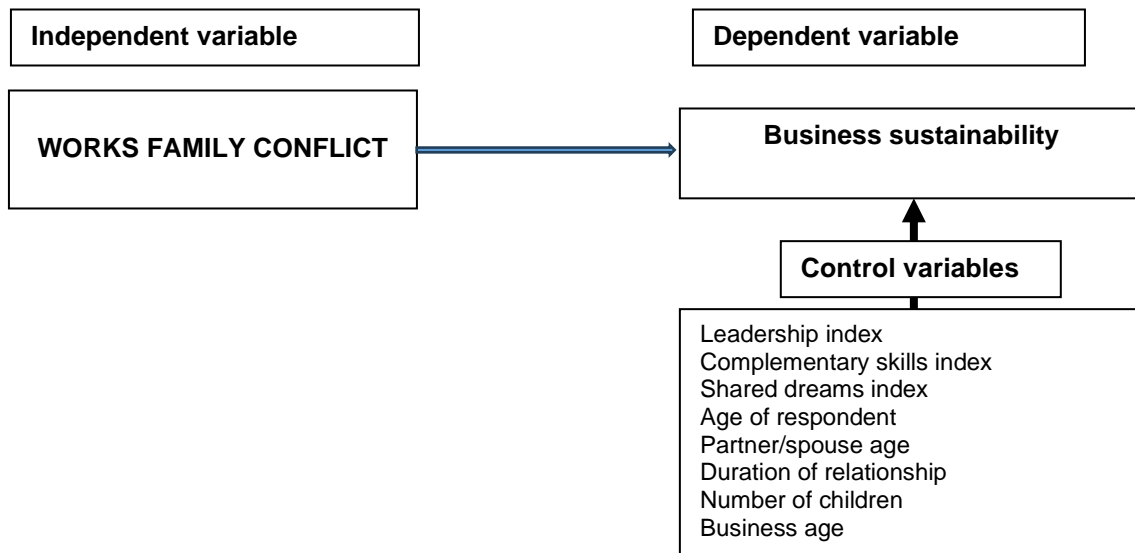


Fig. 1: Research Framework

Corbetta (2003) describes a variable as a property to be operationalized in a study. In this study, the variables are divided into independent and dependent variables. Cooper and Schindler (2008) describe the ‘dependent variable’ as the variable that is measured, predicted, or otherwise monitored by the researcher and is expected to be affected by manipulating independent variables.

4. Methods

The study used a mixed methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study used a causal research design to test for causality. The study adopts a stratified random sampling technique to select participants who possess specific characteristics and experiences that align with the study's objectives (Cash et al., 2022). Participants for this study were selected from copreneurial business ventures in Bamenda City's business community. This methodology guarantees that the representative sample encompasses various viewpoints and experiences of family and business sustainability.

Various stages were included in this sampling approach to guarantee a representative sample of copreneurial ventures in the study area. The participants were randomly selected from the three municipalities of Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III to reduce bias among the city's widely spread Copreneurs. A stratified random sampling approach was employed to ensure a representative sample of copreneurial ventures in the study area. The study targeted copreneurial ventures within Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III municipalities. To minimize bias and ensure geographic representation, the population was first stratified based on the three municipalities (Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III). A simple random sampling technique was applied to select copreneurial ventures within each municipality. A random number generator was used to select participants, ensuring that each venture had an equal chance of being included in the study. A structured survey was administered to the selected participants to gather quantitative data. Regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of work-family conflict on business sustainability in the study area.

The data for the study were collected through the administration of questionnaires. The key informants included owners of copreneurial business ventures in Bamenda. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on cooperation and business sustainability. A five-point Likert scale was employed to simplify data processing and analysis, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree. The questionnaire was self-established, and Cronbach alpha was used to test for scaling and internal consistency. The questionnaire was used because it was simple, and most respondents were educated. They answered the questions either naturally or with little assistance. The completed questionnaires were collected from the key informants. The data collected included numerical responses from the closed-ended questions, which were analyzed quantitatively.

The connection between conflict at work and family and business sustainability was investigated using a regression analysis. Business sustainability was defined as the ability of copreneurial ventures to maintain long-term profitability, growth, and social and environmental responsibility. We operationalized the impact of work-family conflict on the overall sustainability of copreneurial businesses. The regression model used to run the analysis is specified in Equation (1).

$$\text{Business sustainability (BSTY)} = f(\text{Work-family conflict}) \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

The impact of work-family conflict on business sustainability in Bamenda city has been extended by using the following regression model specified in Equation (2):

$$\text{BSTY} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{WTC}_1 + \alpha_2 \text{ROL}_2 + \alpha_3 \text{BS}_3 + \alpha_4 \text{LGTY}_4 + \alpha_5 \text{AM}_5 + \alpha_6 \text{AW}_6 + \alpha_7 \text{LM}_7 + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Where BSTY represents business sustainability, WTC represents a work-time commitment. ROL represents role overload. BS stands for business size. LGTY captures longevity. AM stands for the age of man. AW is the age of the wife. LM represents the Length of Marriage. α_0 represents the intercept, α_1 to α_7 represents the coefficient for Copreneurship parameters, and ϵ represents the error term. Where β_0 represents the intercept, α_1 to α_7 represents the value for work-family conflict, and ϵ represents the error term. The

regression analysis aims to estimate the impact of work-family conflict on business sustainability and determines the significance and direction of the relationship.

Multiple regression analysis was employed to estimate the coefficients (β) and assess the significance of the relationship between work-family conflict and business sustainability. The study used multiple correspondence analyses (MCA) to create indices and further analyzed them with the help of the ordinary least square technique (OLS). The analysis controlled for other relevant factors that may influence business sustainability, such as coping strategies implemented by Copreneurs to manage work-family conflict. The regression analysis findings provided insights into the effects of work-family conflict on the overall sustainability of copreneurial ventures in Bamenda city.

5. Result

5.1. Test of Reliability and Pairwise Correlation Matrix

The last and foremost test is the ability of a case study to demonstrate that the operations of a study (data collection, procedures) can be repeated, yielding the same results. Reliability assesses the consistency of the study's results over time (Hayashi *et al.*, 2019). When concepts, relationships, and patterns can be confirmed in multiple contexts, at varied times, and with different types of people and yield systematic, confirmatory evidence, the confidence level in the validity and applicability of the findings can be strengthened (Polit & Beck, 2010). In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, a statistical package appropriate for this study was organized. After discussing with the statistician, a pre-test was conducted on a much smaller sample to ensure that the items on the instruments were within the reach of the respondents.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics of the Variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Business sustainability	0.791	7
Leadership	0.815	7
Complementary Skills	0.741	6
Shared Dream	0.710	5
Work time commitment	0.720	5
Role Overload	0.730	5

The reliability statistics revealed a generally strong internal consistency among the measured variables. Business sustainability has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.791, indicating good reliability with seven items, while leadership demonstrates even higher consistency at 0.815, also with seven items. Complementary skills show acceptable reliability at 0.741 with six items. Shared Dream, with a value of 0.710, meets the acceptable threshold, suggesting a reliable measurement despite having five items. Work Time Commitment and Role Overload exhibit reliability values of 0.720 and 0.730, respectively, indicating satisfactory internal consistency with five items each. Overall, these statistics suggest that the constructs are well-measured, providing confidence in the validity of the findings.

The sustainability index, which measures the level of business sustainability among micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Bamenda, has a mean value of 0.46 with a standard deviation of 0.39. This indicates that, on average, business sustainability is moderate, though there is considerable variation across enterprises. The work-family conflict index has a mean of 0.43 with a standard deviation of 0.26, suggesting that, on average, business owners experience a moderate level of work-family conflict. However, the variation in this index indicates that some respondents experience significantly higher conflict levels than others. Within the dimensions of work-family conflict, the work-time commitment index has a lower mean (0.34) and a relatively higher standard deviation (0.31), implying that time-related work pressures vary widely among respondents. Role overload, on the other hand, has a higher mean value of 0.57 with a lower standard deviation of 0.21, indicating that a significant proportion of business owners experience role overload, though with relatively less variation across the sample.

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Sustainability index	330	0.46	0.39	0	1
Work-family conflict index	330	0.43	0.26	0	1
Work time commitment index	330	0.343	0.31	0	1
Role overload	330	0.57	0.21	0	1
Age of respondent	330	40.62	8.94	27	65
Partner/spouse age	330	38.05	8.97	20	57
Duration of relationship	330	6.30	3.93	1	15
Number of children	330	3.15	1.70	0	7

The average age of respondents is 40.62 years, with a standard deviation of 8.94 years, suggesting that most business owners are middle-aged, aged 27 to 65. The mean age of partners or spouses is slightly lower at 38.05 years, with similar variability (standard deviation of 8.97 years), and ranges from 20 to 57 years. The duration of relationships among respondents varies widely, with an average of 6.30 years and a standard deviation of 3.93 years, ranging from as short as 1 year to as long as 15 years.

Table 3: Pairwise Correlation Matrix

	bsust	cop	Leader	cskill	Shared	wofc	worktc	rolov	age	page	dura	kids
bsust	1.0000											
cop	0.0754	1.0000										
	0.1716											
leader	0.1040	0.9096	1.0000									
	0.0592	0.0000										
cskill	-0.0548	-0.9229	-0.7905	1.0000								
	0.3206	0.0000	0.0000									
shared	0.0440	0.8669	0.6597	-0.6938	1.0000							
	0.4256	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000								
wofc	0.0314	0.8344	0.7282	-0.6808	0.8507	1.0000						
	0.5701	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000							
worktc	-0.0501	0.8072	0.7199	-0.6407	0.8258	0.9475	1.0000					
	0.3647	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000						
rolov	0.1095	0.7739	0.6600	-0.6494	0.7861	0.9475	0.7954	1.0000				
	0.0468	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000					
age	0.0563	0.2523	0.3029	-0.1972	0.1798	0.1325	0.1054	0.1457	1.0000			
	0.3083	0.0000	0.0000	0.0003	0.0010	0.0160	0.0558	0.0080				
page	0.0994	0.1169	0.1336	-0.1751	0.0011	0.1179	0.0825	0.1409	0.3241	1.0000		
	0.0713	0.0338	0.0152	0.0014	0.9834	0.0323	0.1349	0.0104	0.0000			
dura	-0.0902	0.1822	0.1583	-0.2014	0.1302	0.1827	0.1401	0.2061	0.4694	0.4341	1.0000	
	0.1020	0.0009	0.0039	0.0002	0.0179	0.0009	0.0108	0.0002	0.0000	0.0000		
kids	-0.0795	0.2591	0.3011	-0.1886	0.2099	0.2718	0.2721	0.2430	0.5478	0.5812	0.5453	1.0000
	0.1497	0.0000	0.0000	0.0006	0.0001	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	

Source: Author computation (2023)

Family size also plays a critical role in work-family conflict and business sustainability. The number of children per respondent averages 3.15, with a standard deviation of 1.70, indicating considerable variation across the sample. While some business owners have no children, others have as many as seven. This suggests that family responsibilities vary significantly, potentially affecting entrepreneurs' ability to balance work and family commitments.

Results from Table 3 indicate that positive and negative correlations exist among the variables. Most importantly, it should be noted that there is some strong correlation (correlation coefficient greater than 0.6)

among some independent variables, which may indicate the existence of possible multicollinearity problems in various models. Therefore, the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) test will be used to ascertain that multicollinearity was not a call for concern in different models.

5.2. The Effect of Work-Family Conflict on Business Sustainability

Table 4 presents the results of the effect of work-family conflict on the sustainability of micro and small enterprises in Bamenda. Column 1 presents the results of the work-family overall index on business sustainability. In contrast, column 2 shows the results of the effect of work-time commitment and role overload as components of work-family conflict on the sustainability of micro and small enterprises in Bamenda.

Table 4: OLS result of the effect of work-family conflict on business sustainability

	(1)	(2)
VARIABLES	Sustainability	Sustainability
Work-family conflict index	0.112	
	(0.0838)	
Work time commitment index		-0.412***
		(0.109)
Role overload index		0.745***
		(0.156)
Age of respondent	0.00787***	0.00698***
	(0.00287)	(0.00261)
Partner/spouse age	0.0110***	0.00956***
	(0.00292)	(0.00293)
Duration of relationship	-0.0150**	-0.0175**
	(0.00676)	(0.00738)
Number of children	-0.0569***	-0.0396**
	(0.0198)	(0.0201)
Business age	-0.00327	-0.00742
	(0.0103)	(0.00942)
Constant	-0.0341	-0.192
	(0.133)	(0.121)
Observations	330	330
Adjusted R-squared	0.055	0.105
P > F (overall significance)	0.0004	0.0000
Breusch Pagan Chi 2	0.03	3.02
Breusch Pagan P-value	0.8542	0.0823
Mean VIF	1.72	2.17

Note: (Robust) Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Results from column 1 of Table 4 indicate that the coefficient of the work-family conflict index is positive (0.112), which indicates that the work-family conflict positively relates to business sustainability in micro and small enterprises in Bamenda. Globally, a unit-point increase in the work-family conflict index will lead to a 0.11-point increase Bamenda's micro and small business sustainability. However, this result is statistically insignificant. Thus, the work-family conflict overall index has a positive but insignificant effect on business sustainability.

However, looking at the results from column 2, we observe that work time commitment has a negative effect on business sustainability, as the coefficient of the work time commitment index is negative (-0.412). In fact, a unit point increase in work time commitment by Copreneurs reduces the business sustainability index by 0.41 points. It should be noted that this outcome is significant at a 1% level. Thus, work time commitment has a significant negative effect on the sustainability of micro and small businesses in Bamenda.

Contrary to work time commitment, the coefficient of the role overload index is positive (0.745), which reveals that role overload relates positively to business sustainability. An increase in the role overload index by one point will bring about a 0.745-point increase in the sustainability index of micro and small enterprises in Bamenda. Moreover, this result is significant at 1% level. Thus, role overload by Copreneurs significantly enhances business sustainability in Bamenda City.

Among the control variables, the age of the respondent and the age of their partner/spouse both exhibit positive and statistically significant effects on business sustainability in both models. This implies that older entrepreneurs and those with older partners tend to have more stable businesses. The duration of the relationship negatively affects business sustainability at the 5% significance level, suggesting that longer relationships may introduce constraints that reduce business focus. Similarly, the number of children negatively impacts sustainability, with a stronger effect in column 1 (-0.0569 at the 1% level) than in column 2 (-0.0396 at the 5% level), indicating that family responsibilities can hinder business performance. The age of the business is not significant in either model, suggesting that business longevity alone does not guarantee sustainability.

Looking at the adjusted R-squared values, we can see that the model in column 2 (0.105), which breaks down work-family conflict, is better at explaining variation in business sustainability than the model in column 1 (0.055). The overall significance of both models is strong, with p-values of 0.0004 and 0.0000, respectively. The Breusch-Pagan test results indicate no serious heteroscedasticity concerns in column 1 ($p = 0.8542$), while column 2 ($p = 0.0823$) is borderline, suggesting potential mild heteroscedasticity but not at a concerning level. The mean-variance inflation factors (VIFs) of 1.72 and 2.17 indicate no serious multicollinearity issues. Both models had a mean VIF far lower than 2.5, indicating that multicollinearity was not a serious issue in the models.

6. Discussion

Though the overall work-family conflict index was found to have a positive but insignificant effect on business sustainability, it should be noted that both components of work-family are statistically significant, though with antagonistic effects. This antagonism may justify the insignificant effect of the overall index. As such, we fail to accept the third hypothesis of the study, which states that work-family conflict has no significant effect on the sustainability of micro and small copreneurial enterprises in Bamenda. This result corroborates the Family Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation (FFIRO) Theory, which posits that families can be characterized based on two fundamental dimensions: cohesion and flexibility. Cohesion refers to the emotional bonding and connectedness among family members, while flexibility encompasses the ability of the family system to adapt to changing circumstances and demands. The interplay between these two dimensions gives rise to different family types, each with unique strengths and challenges.

The significant negative relationship between Work Time Commitment (WTC) and business sustainability suggests that sustainability efforts may decline as individuals increase their commitment to work. This finding aligns with Shrivastava and Souder (2018), who argue that prioritizing work can detract from sustainable practices, as employees may neglect long-term environmental goals in favor of immediate business demands. However, this contrasts with studies suggesting that high work commitment, when aligned with corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, can foster a culture of sustainability (Doh & Guay, 2006). This divergence points to the complexity of how work commitment interacts with

sustainability, suggesting potential conditions under which work commitment might enhance rather than hinder sustainability efforts.

Regarding role overload, the study reveals a positive relationship with business sustainability. This finding suggests that individuals experiencing higher demands may develop resilience and adaptive strategies that promote sustainable practices. This aligns with Kahn *et al.* (2013), who found that high-pressure situations can lead to innovative problem-solving and resourcefulness. However, this result contrasts with Maslach and Leiter (2016), who argue that role overload typically leads to burnout and diminished capacity for effective decision-making, potentially jeopardizing sustainability efforts. Thus, while this study posits that role overload can enhance sustainability through resilience, it is crucial to recognize that excessive demands might ultimately overwhelm individuals, leading to negative outcomes.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable perspectives on the intricate relationship between work-family conflict and business sustainability within Bamenda's micro and small copreneurial enterprises. While the overall work-family conflict index demonstrated a positive but statistically insignificant effect on business sustainability, the analysis revealed significant and opposing influences from its two components: Work Time Commitment (WTC) and Role Overload. The study concludes that work-family conflict has a complex and multidimensional impact on the sustainability of Bamenda micro and small enterprises (MSEs). While the overall work-family conflict index does not significantly affect business sustainability, its individual components reveal contrasting influences. Work time commitment negatively affects sustainability, indicating that excessive time demands from work can hinder business performance. In contrast, role overload has a positive effect, suggesting that entrepreneurs who take on multiple responsibilities may develop resilience and adaptive strategies contributing to business sustainability.

From a policy perspective, targeted interventions are needed to support micro and small enterprise (MSE) owners in managing work-family conflict to enhance business sustainability. Since work time commitment negatively impacts sustainability, policymakers should promote policies that encourage flexible working arrangements and time management training for entrepreneurs. Programs that provide access to childcare services or family support systems could also help reduce the burden of balancing work and family responsibilities.

The positive impact of role overload on sustainability suggests that business owners who take on multiple roles may develop resilience and adaptability, which contribute to their businesses' success. Policymakers and business support organizations can leverage this insight by designing entrepreneurship training programs that enhance multitasking, stress management, and strategic delegation skills. Providing mentorship opportunities and peer networking platforms may further help business owners navigate role overload effectively.

Demographic factors such as entrepreneurs' and partners' age positively influence business sustainability, indicating that experience and maturity play a role in business stability. Policymakers should consider targeted financial and technical support for younger entrepreneurs, including business incubation programs and access to microfinance, to enhance their capacity for sustainable business growth.

The negative impact of relationship duration and the number of children on business sustainability suggests that family responsibilities can create constraints for entrepreneurs. Policies that promote family-friendly business practices, such as tax incentives for businesses that support family-orientated work structures, could help mitigate this effect. Additionally, integrating work-life balance education into business development programs can effectively equip entrepreneurs with strategies to manage family and business responsibilities.

8. Limitations and Direction for Future Research

While the study aims to provide valuable insights into the effect of work-family conflict on business sustainability in micro and small enterprises in Bamenda, Cameroon, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The study's findings may have limited generalizability beyond Bamenda city due to the specific socio-cultural, economic, and contextual factors unique to the area. Therefore, caution should be exercised when extending the results to other geographic locations or cultural contexts. Future research could explore the reasons behind some unexpected findings, such as the positive relationship between role overload and sustainability and the negative impact of complementary skills. Moreover, investigating effective strategies for managing work-family conflict and enhancing sustainability in copreneurial businesses could provide practical value to this unique group of entrepreneurs. We also recommend ongoing research to explore the long-term effects of work-family dynamics on sustainability outcomes. This could involve longitudinal studies that track changes over time, providing deeper insights into how these relationships evolve and informing future strategies for supporting Copreneurs in achieving personal and organizational sustainability goals.

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