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Equestrian Sport and the Work-life Interface: An exploratory study on the combination of horses, family and work in competitive, working horse riders.

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Abstract

This study investigated the work-life interface and individual outcomes in a novel population of working, equestrian athletes. Work-life balance, enrichment and conflict were investigated under the premise that non-work roles other than family may significantly influence individual and organisational outcomes. Competitive equestrian athletes working outside of equestrian sport (N=100) completed a questionnaire on work-life balance, enrichment, conflict, coping, satisfaction, perceived stress, commitment and performance. Confirmatory factor analysis provided support for the use of modified scales in this population, and alluded to important relationships between variables. Consistent with previous research in the work-life field, this study found significant relationships between work-life balance and enrichment and positive individual outcomes such as life satisfaction, job satisfaction, performance and stress. This study also found significant relationships between work-life conflict and negative individual outcomes. Additionally, this study found work commitment and equestrian sport commitment significantly influenced work-life balance enrichment and conflict. This study concludes that the combination of equestrian sport, work and family is important to consider under the umbrella of work-life balance, enrichment and conflict. In summary, whether equestrian athletes experience positive or negative psychological and performance outcomes is greatly influenced by work-life balance, enrichment, conflict and commitment to roles. Further research should move beyond this exploratory study to further investigate how these variables interact in larger, more complex models.

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