An Examination of How Founder Pessimism and Introversion Can Jointly Enhance Organizational Performance

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ABSTRACT
Using qualitative and quantitative methods, we challenge the conventional wisdom suggesting optimistic, extraverted leaders produce the highest levels of organizational performance. Drawing from our 16 interviews with high profile investors, we learned that pessimistic, introverted founders may be more capable managers than their more optimistic, extraverted counterparts during the adolescent stage of the organizational life cycle. We tested these counter-intuitive qualitative findings in a large sample of adolescent-stage organizations and confirmed that the positive influence of founder pessimism on organizational performance was strongest when the founder was also highly introverted. Implications are discussed.