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How do role conflict intensity and coping strategies affect the success of women entrepreneurs in Africa? Evidence from Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

While the relation between role conflict and coping strategies, and between coping strategies and entrepreneurship, have received attention in the literature, the literature has neglected whether and how the level of intensity of conflict affects the choice of coping strategies. The literature has also neglected how such coping strategies affects entrepreneurs' subjectively experienced success. This article addresses these neglected aspects. It does so by studying 204 women business owners based on a survey conducted in 2015–2016 in Addis Ababa. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), the structural relationships between role conflict, coping strategies, and entrepreneurial success is analyzed. It was found that women entrepreneurs' coping strategies change when the level of role conflict intensity changes, and moreover that changes in coping strategies have different impacts on entrepreneurial success. Specifically, when the intensity of role conflict is relatively low, they cope by prioritizing their entrepreneurial roles, which affects financial success positively but nonfinancial success negatively. When the intensity of role conflict is relatively moderate, they cope by involving others or reacting to all roles, which positively affects both financial and nonfinancial success. However, when the intensity is relatively higher, they cope by prioritizing family and social roles, which affects nonfinancial success positively but financial success negatively. Practical implications and avenues for further research are noted.

KEYWORDS

Women; entrepreneurship;
role conflict; coping; success

Introduction

Women entrepreneurs more often than men face role conflict (Jennings & Brush, 2013). This role conflict is experienced when they are unable to fulfill their responsibilities, or are unable to balance work, family, friends, and relations and other social responsibilities (Teh et al., 2009). As a result,

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they may engage in coping strategies to manage this role conflict (Hsieh & Eggers, 2010; Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011). The type of coping strategies used may, however, affect the success of a business as measured either in financial or nonfinancial gains (Fisher et al., 2014).

While the relation between role conflict and coping strategies and the relation between coping strategies and entrepreneurship have received attention in the literature, the literature has neglected whether and how the level of intensity of conflict affects the choice of coping strategies (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). The literature has also neglected how such coping strategies affect entrepreneurs' subjectively experienced success.

For instance, Rotondo et al. (2003) and Shelton (2006) investigated the effectiveness of coping to alter the potential sources of role conflict. Coping strategies have also been examined as ways of dealing with entrepreneurial failure (Singh et al., 2007), and to moderate between entrepreneurial stress and emotional outcomes (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011).

As far as the success of (women) entrepreneurs is concerned, the literature recognizes success factors such as knowledge, resources, experience, role models, education, information, technology, and entrepreneurial attributes (Azam Roomi et al., 2009; Hopp & Martin, 2017; Lee & Stearns, 2012; Marlow & Swail, 2014; Ramadani et al., 2013). None of these studies, however, address coping strategies as a success factor. While Örtqvist et al. (2007) examined the effect of coping strategies on entrepreneurial success, they considered only financial performance as measure of success. In the case of women entrepreneurs, where the importance of subjective measures of success has been stressed, and where role conflict is often more acutely experienced, this may be a serious omission (Boudrias et al., 2014; Dijkhuizen et al., 2014; Gorgievski et al., 2011; McGowan et al., 2012; Reijonen & Komppula, 2007; Wach et al., 2016).

This article aims to contribute toward filling these neglected aspects of the literature by studying the case of women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is an interesting country in which to examine the effect of role conflict and coping strategies on women entrepreneurs, as it is a developing country that has experienced high economic growth in recent years, creating many opportunities for entrepreneurs – including women entrepreneurs, who have increasingly been making use of these. As such, the article also contributes toward a better understanding of women entrepreneurship in developing countries, a topic that is relatively neglected in the scholarly literature (Mekonnen & Cestino, 2017; Mersha et al., 2010; Minniti & Naudé, 2010; De Vita et al., 2014).

Women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia were studied by conducting and analyzing a survey of 204 women business owners in 2015–2016 in Addis Ababa. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), the structural relationships between role conflict, coping strategies, and entrepreneurial success were analyzed. It is found that women entrepreneurs' coping strategies change when the level of role

conflict intensity changes, and moreover that changes in coping strategies have different effects on entrepreneurial success. Specifically, when the intensity of role conflict is relatively low, they cope by prioritizing their entrepreneurial roles, which affects financial success positively but nonfinancial success negatively. When the intensity of role conflict is relatively moderate, they cope by involving others or reacting to all roles, which positively affects both financial and nonfinancial success. However, when the intensity is relatively higher, they cope by prioritizing family and social roles, which affects nonfinancial success positively but financial success negatively.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. First, we present the relevant literature. Next, we set out the research design and methodology. After that, we present and discuss the results, before concluding the article.

Relevant literature

In this section, relevant literature on role conflict, coping strategies, and entrepreneurial success are presented.

Role conflict

Role conflict is experienced when demands from multiple roles¹ arise simultaneously and when responding to one of the roles requires forgoing the benefits of other roles (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The literature has tended to restrict itself to two poles in terms of the sources of role conflict: work and family. Herein, the conflict between work and family is seen as bidirectional, whereby family roles (for example, caregiving) can affect nonfamily roles and vice versa (Frone, 2000; König & Cesinger, 2015). Accordingly, it has become common in the literature to specify the direction of the work-family conflict as either being work-to-family conflict or family-to-work conflict (König & Cesinger, 2015). When family roles interfere with workplace roles, it creates *family-to-work conflict*; when workplace roles interfere with family roles, it creates *work-to-family conflict* (Carlson et al., 2000).

Because entrepreneurship is embedded in a social context, it may be facilitated or constrained by someone's position in a social network because social role expectations will influence their behavior (Jack & Anderson, 2002, p. 78; Eagly & Wood, 2013). These can also be a potential source of role conflict. *Social role expectations* refer to the privileges, duties, obligations, and behaviors of individuals in their social position (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). The gender stereotyping aspect of social roles shapes how men and women behave in their domains; for example, as women versus men in business

¹This refers to all kinds of roles including family roles, roles in the community and public role managerial roles, and entrepreneurial roles.

(Rosenbusch et al., 2009). In social role theory, men and women behaving as per the stereotype are linked with the social roles they possess. For example, common stereotypes linked to women are that they are communal; that is, friendly, unselfish, concerned with others, and emotionally expressive (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Thus, the notion that women's social roles are not customarily those of leader and entrepreneur may negatively impact women entrepreneurs (Balachandra et al., 2013). In addition, gender stereotypical belief has been theorized in entrepreneurship, to the extent that entrepreneurship is seen as a male domain in terms of practice and character (Gupta et al., 2009). Moreover, entrepreneurial behaviors associated with success are often rightly or wrongly described in so-called "masculine" terms (Ahl, 2006); for example, "competitiveness", "aggressiveness", and "innovativeness" (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). Gender role stereotyping puts pressure on women to behave as per socially recognized ways: if not, they may face social sanction (Eagly & Wood, 1991). As a result, women entrepreneurs face the challenge of fulfilling gender stereotypic expectations, while performing jobs that are believed to demand masculine characteristics such as entrepreneurship.

This suggests yet another source of role conflict – beyond the traditional poles of work and family – namely, social role expectations (SREs) (Hundera, Duijsters, et al., 2019). *Social role expectations* are the behaviors and roles a society believes are "appropriate" for women, but which may clash with the characteristics and roles associated with successful entrepreneurs, referred to as *entrepreneurial role demands* (ERDs). As a result, a role conflict will exist between SREs and ERDs. Like work and family conflict, SRE and ERD conflict is bidirectional in nature (Hundera, 2019). A summary of the different sources of role conflict together with the stream of literature is presented in Table 1.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identified three forms of work and family conflict: time based, strain based, and behavior based. *Time-based conflict* occurs when there are competing time demands between roles, *strain-based conflict* occurs when pressure from one role weakens the performance in another role, and *behavior-based conflict* occurs when the behaviors expected in different roles are incompatible. Hundera (2019) show in their study that the three forms of role conflict are valid for the role conflict between social role expectations and entrepreneurial role demands.

The empirical evidence on the consequences of role conflict has primarily covered the impact on health conditions (for example, Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Yavas et al., 2008), job performance (for example, Bruck et al., 2002), and family well-being (for example, Lu et al., 2009).

Role conflict and women entrepreneurship

Women-owned businesses tend to be less successful on average than male-owned businesses (Jennings & Brush, 2013). Specifically, they tend to be less

Table 1. Summary of the different sources of role conflict.

Source	How role conflict is created	Stream in the literature
Family	Family role demands (for example, household chores) affecting effective involvement in roles outside the family such as entrepreneurship or a paid job.	Work-family conflict literature
Work	Role demands from entrepreneurial activities or a paid job affecting effective involvement in the family roles.	Work-family conflict literature
Social role expectation	Social role expectation involves prescriptive gender role stereotypes as they portray the attributes ascribed to women in a given society. These include selfless, putting family roles first, and generally being conservative. These attributes are incompatible with entrepreneurial role demands such as time demands, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, and commitment toward a venture.	Role conflict, gender studies, and entrepreneurship

profitable, be less resilient, and grow less strongly on average (Alsos et al., 2006). Why is this the case? A large body of literature has dealt with this question. Among the reasons identified are that women face greater difficulty in obtaining finance to start and grow a business; that they lack education, skills, and experience, and are less motivated to grow their businesses (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003); and that businesses owned by women tend to be concentrated in areas of low-profit potential: customer-oriented, retail, and service sectors (Baughn et al., 2006; Robb & Watson, 2012). It has also been found that female entrepreneurship in developing countries is hampered by formal and informal institutions (Sullivan & Meek, 2012; Welsh et al., 2013; Welter & Smallbone, 2008). A few scholars (for example, Jennings & McDougald, 2007; Shelton, 2006) have argued that another, somewhat neglected reason for the relative less success in business by female-business owners results from women experiencing more role conflict than men. For example, family responsibilities can limit a business owner's ability to succeed in business (Van Auken & Werbel, 2006).

Studies also show that women who work in a family business experience conflict over roles like that of any businesswomen (Martinez Jimenez, 2009). According to Lyman (1988), women's roles in the family business are influenced by social expectations of women's role in the family and family business responsibilities. For example, women face challenges of maintaining stability in the personal and business relationships and meeting the expectations of the caretaker role in the family (Martinez Jimenez, 2009). Societally constructed gender role indicators such as "women need to be always available to listen and respond," but "no legitimate authority to question or to challenge" and "to be nurturing, noncritical, and accepting of others," can adversely affect women's ability to effectively negotiate and participate in

making progress. For example, Dardha (2016) found that women are given limited decisionmaking roles as compared to men in family business. Hollander and Bukowitz (1990) argued that women focus on a caring role in their roles in family business rather than considering the relationship in terms of business. Such a caretaking tendency can be incompatible with how business owners expected to behave such as being assertive. Moreover, Salganicoff (1990) pointed to the possibility that women may face conflicts due to double standards being applied within the family business. That is, they are expected to commit themselves to their family business but, at the same time, give birth to the family. In addition, they are expected to be autonomous and independent and act like a businessman, but they need to be dependent, take care of the family, and behave like a mother. These expectations create confusion over how women want to behave and how they are expected to behave in a family business.

In many African countries, role conflict may be accentuated by the fact that women often face more significant obstacles in starting and running a business than men. The complexity of the business challenges they face demands much of their attention and ingenuity, but societal expectations and their own preferences may reduce the effective attention that they can pay to their business (De Vita et al., 2014, Hallward-Driemeier, 2013). The consequences for their business's success and survival can be detrimental: surveys have found that female entrepreneurs in Kenya cited the challenge of balancing multiple roles as the main reason for their higher rate of exit (Munyua, 2009). Similarly, Welsh et al. (2013) mentioned that one of the key challenges for women entrepreneurs in Sudan is balancing business and family responsibilities. In addition, women's entrepreneurial activities in Ethiopia are constrained by gender role expectations (Bekele & Worku, 2008; Mekonnen & Cestino, 2017). The gender role expectations result in a disproportionate distribution of domestic responsibilities, which makes it burdensome for women entrepreneurs to be fully involved in business activities.

Regardless of the potential effects of role conflict, coping strategies, and their implications for the success of female entrepreneurs in Africa, these are relatively neglected topics in the scholarly literature.

Coping strategies

Scholars recognize the importance of coping for easing role conflict, which has prompted interest in the strategies used by individuals and families to balance multiple roles (Adisa et al., 2016). Two major theories have prevailed in the literature to date: that of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and that of Hall (1972). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) made a distinction between problem-based and emotional-based coping. *Problem-based coping* deals with doing

something to relieve stress-related problems and *emotional-based coping* refers to ways of regulating the emotions caused by the stress (Tidd & Friedman, 2002). Problem-based coping is action oriented and is generally considered to be an effective strategy, while emotion-based coping fails to address the underlying causes of the stress and is therefore considered less effective (Tidd & Friedman, 2002).

Hall (1972) identified three types of strategies for coping with role conflict: (a) structural role redefinition, which involves actively engaging with role senders to reduce role conflict by reaching mutual agreements on a new set of expectations; (b) personal role redefinition, which involves altering personal concepts of role expectations received from others; and (c) reactive role behavior, which involves an effort to improve role performance without attempting to alter either structural or personal concepts of role expectations. Örtqvist et al. (2007) derived their two dimensions of coping – role redefinition and role behavior – from Hall (1972). *Role redefinition* refers to responding to role conflict by changing other people's (structural role redefinition) or one's own (personal role redefinition) expectations for the role. *Role behavior* refers to responding to role conflict by adjusting one's behavior through either working harder (reactive role behavior) or diverting attention in a belief that meeting the role demands is impossible (passive role behavior).

The three coping categories of Hall (1972) were modified by Hundera, Duysters, et al. (2019). These are Structural role redefinition (Type I coping), prioritize entrepreneurial roles, prioritize family social role expectations, and reactive role behavior (Type III). The current study analyzes these four dimensions of coping strategies in terms of their relationship to both role conflict and entrepreneurial success.

Structural role redefinition (Type I coping) involves communication, negotiation, and delegation to change to a new set of expectations which agreed on. The key feature of this coping strategy is involving others in the process of coping. This can be done through negotiation, seeking social support, and hiring outside support (Hundera, Duysters, et al., 2019). Individuals negotiate with role senders to reduce, relocate, and reschedule activities as needed to meet expectations. The aim is to make the role senders understand the scope of expectations that the entrepreneur must deal with and how a slight adjustment in expectations can resolve inconsistencies (Hall, 1972). *Social support* involves seeking emotional and instrumental support from one's spouse, extended family, friends, and neighbors to manage multiple role demands and reduce role conflict, while *hiring outside support* is a strategy that involves procuring home help or hiring employees to delegate responsibilities in one or more domains.

Prioritizing entrepreneurial roles involves devoting time and cognitive, emotional, and behavioral resources to key entrepreneurial activities, which can lead to business growth (Jennings & McDougald, 2007; Örtqvist et al., 2007).

Prioritizing family and social roles focuses on meeting the role demands that women are expected to assume in society (for example, being “super mom and wife” while also caring for others in the community).

Reactive role behavior (Type III) involves responding to all role demands by combining roles and working harder for longer hours. In reacting to all roles, individuals attempt to work on multiple roles equally to reduce their perceived guilt in not responding to role expectations.

Entrepreneurial success

“Entrepreneurial success is a phenomenon that seems to be understood by implication or context” (Fisher et al., 2014, p. 479). One interpretation of this relates to a culture or individuals’ perceptions of what determines entrepreneurial success (Rauch & Frese, 2000). For example, Wach et al. (2016) defined *entrepreneurial success* as the criteria used by entrepreneurs to judge business success.

Wealth has long been considered a key indicator of success (Hechavarría et al., 2017). Yet entrepreneurs do not necessarily consider achieving wealth to be an indicator of personal success (Dej, 2011; Gerschewski et al., 2016). In some cases, an entrepreneur may continue with a company that is underperforming financially because the business is fulfilling some nonfinancial expectation (DeTienne et al., 2008). Conversely, entrepreneurs have been known to forgo profitable businesses because the firm is not enabling them to achieve their personal goals (Wach et al., 2016).

Women entrepreneurs, in particular, consider success to be the achievement of inner goals (Azam Roomi et al., 2009; Dalborg et al., 2012; Fisher et al., 2014; Weber & Geneste, 2014). This includes survival, job creation, work-life balance, independence, recognition, and personal development. For example, Azam Roomi et al. (2009) indicated in their findings that most women entrepreneurs do not want to grow their venture, but instead keep it small, engaging in nonscalable businesses. Hechavarría et al. (2017) also found that female entrepreneurs focus on social value goals “over economic profit creation” as compared to male entrepreneurs. Therefore, entrepreneurial success is a multidimensional construct that is best captured by more than financial and economic indicators (Fisher et al., 2014), and has various indicators of success: firm performance, workplace relationships, personal fulfillment, community impact, and personal financial rewards (Wach et al., 2016).

Staniewski and Awruk (2018) argued that it is risky to make serious decisions exclusively based on one dimension of entrepreneurial success. The multidimensional success factors can further categorize as subjective financial success and subjective personal success (Dijkhuizen et al., 2016). The subjective financial success is related to income and finance, whereas the subjective personal success is centered around personal development and other nonfinancial goals of the

entrepreneur (Dej, 2010). According to Dej (2010), success indicators can be categorized as two categories: indicators that relate to money (e.g., income) as financial success and those that relate to personal satisfaction (e.g., personal autonomy) as non-financial success. Accordingly, the multidimensional, as well as financial versus non-financial, categories will be taken into account in this article. Therefore, subjective financial success includes firm performance (for example, turnover) and personal financial rewards (family income). The subjective nonfinancial success indicators are workplace relationships (for example, strong customer relationship), community impact (for example, social recognition) and personal fulfillment (for example, personal development).

Methodology

In this section, the conceptual framework is presented, hypotheses are developed, and the survey is explained.

Conceptual framework

The aim of this article is to examine the relationship between role conflict, coping strategies, and subjective financial and nonfinancial success using a sample of women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, as depicted in Figure 1:

The point of departure is based on Edwards and Rothbard (2000) and Jennings and McDougald (2007), and anticipates that role conflict can give rise to negative emotions, which prompts resorting to coping efforts by the entrepreneur in question. Thus, it is argued that the role conflict does not in

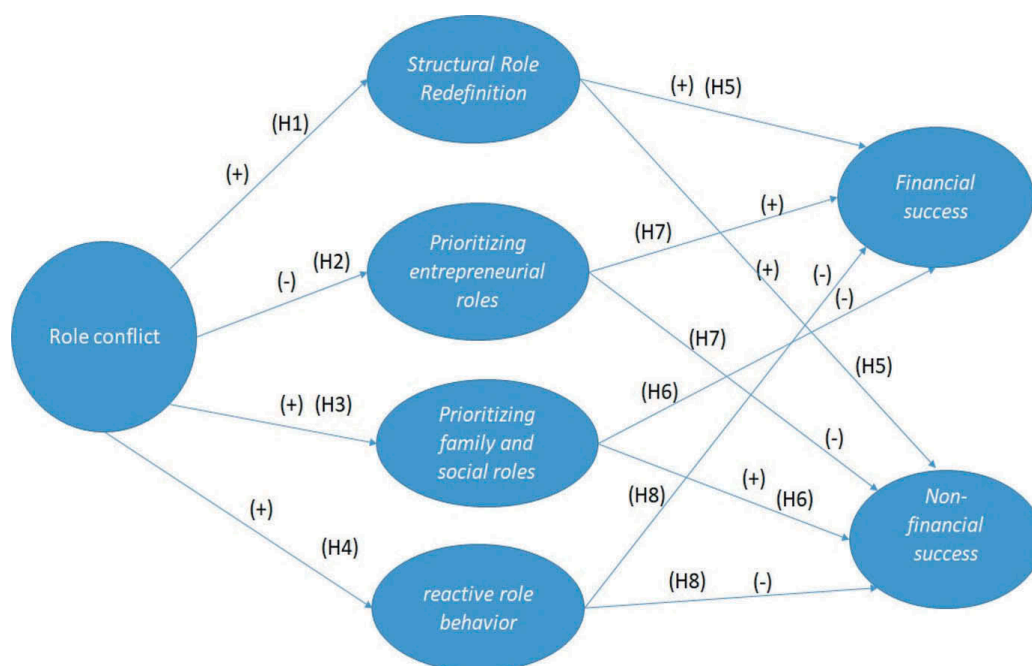


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

and of itself determine the outcome in terms of entrepreneurial success, but rather the individual's response does.

Following Jennings and McDougald (2007), it is argued that higher levels of role conflict do not necessarily result in strategies that lead to positive financial and nonfinancial success.

Accordingly, the two research questions are: (a) How does the level of intensity of role conflict influence strategies that female entrepreneurs use to cope? and (b) How do strategies that female entrepreneurs use to cope with the role conflict of differing intensities influence entrepreneurial success?

Hypotheses

Role conflict and coping strategies

When an entrepreneur experiences a conflict between roles that are important to both her and the role sender (that is, an individual or community who expects women to perform a role given to them as per the social prescription), role conflict can be high (Carr & Hmieleski, 2015; Clark, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). As a result, both the role sender and entrepreneur might be motivated to modify the role expectations and negotiate under such conditions. In addition, when individuals perceive they cannot manage conflict by themselves, they may be more likely to delegate their role to others by seeking social support or hiring outside support. Research has also shown that individuals are more likely to seek social support in scenarios perceived to be stressful (Day & Livingstone, 2003). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be posited:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Role conflict positively affects structural role redefinition (Type I coping).

It may be expected that most women in Ethiopia adhere to the segregation of roles by gender. So, coping strategies that are congruent with women's roles as defined by society tend to be dominant. This is because when women respond to business owner roles rather than to gender-based roles as per the norms of society, they can face various forms of social punishment (Amine & Staub, 2009). Therefore, when the conflict between roles is high and it is difficult to integrate roles or respond to all of them, women will be less likely to respond to their entrepreneurial roles.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Role conflict negatively affects prioritizing entrepreneurial roles.

Prioritizing family and social roles can allow women to meet their socially expected obligations, despite their roles as businesswomen. Women are socialized

to be dependent on their society (Day & Livingstone, 2003; Taylor et al., 2000). In addition, due to the poor levels of education, most women in Ethiopia are not sufficiently equipped to challenge the norms requiring that they conform to traditional social role expectations in terms of the division of labor (Amine & Staub, 2009). Therefore, when the conflict between roles is high and it is difficult for them to integrate the roles, women might choose to prioritize their social roles.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Role conflict positively affects prioritizing family and social roles.

Regarding the reactive role behavior (Type III), women in Ethiopia are socialized to be nonassertive (Della-Giusta & Phillips, 2006). Therefore, it is assumed that when the conflict between roles is high, women entrepreneurs may try to satisfy all roles.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Role conflict positively affect to reactive role behavior. (That is, when the intensity of role conflict is high, female entrepreneurs respond/react to all the role expectations.)

Entrepreneurial success and coping strategies

In this article, four types of coping strategies are recognized, as discussed in the previous section. These can be effective or not, depending on their effect on subjective financial and nonfinancial success.

Negotiating with role senders and readjusting expectations can improve venture performance (Örtqvist et al., 2007). For example, entrepreneurs who negotiate with their customers to readjust order delivery might retain existing customers and attract new ones. Negotiating with members of one's personal and social networks can also build good social relations and create community influences (Nziku & Struthers, 2018). When entrepreneurs successfully negotiate role expectations, they can reduce irregularity, uncertainty, and overexpectations (Örtqvist et al., 2007). Hence, successful negotiations can result in a sound work-life balance, personal work flexibility, and good mental and physical health, thereby leading to positive financial and nonfinancial success. Social support also can decrease an entrepreneur's involvement in the duties or responsibilities of one or more domains. For example, studies have shown that using personal networks and family support are an effective coping strategy during the new venture process (Greve & Salaff, 2003).

By relieving women of some of their responsibilities, social support can provide them with more time to engage in all of their roles, thereby enhancing their ability to meet all role expectations. Besides, Rotondo et al. (2003) found that helpseeking is effective in lowering role conflict. Individuals who seek support tend to receive constructive help or comfort they require (Dawa & Namatovu, 2015). Therefore,

this strategy is likely to enhance success. For example, Van Auken and Werbel (2006) argued that family support promotes business success. Moreover, hiring outside people to whom to delegate some of their responsibilities can allow owner-managers to benefit from the enhancement of both their work and family roles (Shelton, 2006). Hence, this strategy can allow entrepreneurs to engage in and facilitate activities in all domains (for example, family, business, and community), thus enhancing those roles. Hiring people can also create job opportunities for others, which has a beneficial social impact. Therefore, through the negotiation and delegation, structural role redefinition coping can effectively reduce role conflict imposed on women entrepreneurs and can lead to positive outcomes.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Structural role redefinition coping strategy positively affects financial success and nonfinancial success.

Prioritizing the entrepreneurial role facilitates venture growth and is negatively related to role conflict (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). But human beings are social by nature, which requires them to have a life outside of business. In the Sub-Saharan Africa context, where family and social connections are highly valued, focusing on entrepreneurial roles at the cost of social roles may not bring the sort of nonfinancial success that motivates self-employment.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Prioritizing family and social roles negatively affects financial success, but positively affects nonfinancial success.

Prioritizing family and social roles as coping can allow women entrepreneurs to live up to the standards of their community (Amine & Staub, 2009). This strategy comes at the cost of meeting one's entrepreneurial role demands and, thus, is not a growth-facilitating strategy (Jennings & McDougald, 2007).

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Prioritizing entrepreneurial roles positively affects financial success, but negatively affects nonfinancial success.

When women entrepreneurs use reactive role behavior as coping strategies, such as combining multiple role demands, there is a high tendency for them to also respond to non-business owner responsibilities, leaving them less time to complete important activities for growing a business (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). On the other hand, entrepreneurship scholars have argued that entrepreneurs put responsibilities related to their business first, to expand their business (Shelton, 2006). In addition, excessive role demands can lead to higher levels of work-related strain (Dijkhuizen et al., 2014), which can manifest in attitudes and behaviors that interfere with business growth. This strategy also requires sacrificing personal needs (for example,

less sleep). Therefore, this strategy may not be effective in reducing role conflict and can adversely affect success.

Hypothesis 8 (H8): Reactive role behavior negatively affects financial success and nonfinancial success.

In the next section, the research methods for testing the above eight hypotheses are described.

Methods

Empirical context

Data for testing the hypotheses posited in the previous subsection were obtained from a survey conducted in Ethiopia. Before presenting more detail on the scope and nature of the survey (see below), it is necessary to describe the country context.

On average, 47 percent of people who start a business in any given year in Ethiopia are women (GEM, 2012). Ninety percent of women entrepreneurs are active in the consumer retail and service sectors, which are linked to women's domestic roles, and they can integrate household chores with the business.

Hailemariam and Kroon (2014) argued that women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia are motivated by both opportunity and necessity, which depend on age, educational backgrounds, socialization and learning experiences, family backgrounds, and religious beliefs. Women, who are involved in business out of necessity are characterized by having low employment opportunities, inadequate experience in the labor market, and low family income. This group of women is mainly involved in informal microenterprises related to petty trading such as street vending, food processing, and other general low-growth businesses.

According to Bekele and Worku (2008), women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia are 2.52 times more likely to exit from the business in comparison with men. No empirical evidence exists on the reason for this among women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. It can be argued that it is more likely that most of them close their businesses because of an increased demand in their domestic roles. For instance, when single women marry or when the number of dependents in the family increases because of birth, the presence of sick persons, or the elderly, domestic responsibilities for women increase. At the same time, with marriage, women have to live up to more expectations.

In addition to the domestic responsibilities, there are community-based voluntary associations, which are ubiquitous throughout the country, such as "Iqqub," "iddirs," and "mahabers." All the associations' work is based on "reciprocity and trust": the person who is supported in the event of difficulty or a cheerful event is expected to do the same for other members.

For example, iddir is an indigenous voluntary mutual help association; an informal financial and social institution (Teshome et al., 2012). It provides social welfare services to its members either in cash or in kind in the event of difficulties (for example, funerals) as well as entertainment (for example, wedding ceremonies). One of the activities of idir, which is mainly for women, is serving the hundreds or even thousands of guests who come to pay their respect and comfort the bereaved family during the first seven days of mourning after death. Such community-based roles may require entrepreneurs in Ethiopia to close their business during work hours, which reduces the hours of business operations, which ultimately affects the success (Mersha et al., 2010). Although it puts significant demand on persons, participation in an indigenous association such as idir also strengthens social ties and resources of business for entrepreneurs in the country. These social associations and networks, each having their own peculiar roles and demands, may pose unique challenges for women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia. This adds different issues for women in Ethiopia who are trying to cope with role conflict; it is in addition to what is covered in the literature about role conflict and coping strategies.

Sources

To obtain data with which to evaluate the hypotheses set out above, a sample of full-time women entrepreneurs were asked to fill out a questionnaire pertaining to the conflict they experience with regard to the expectations in their role as business owner, role as caretaker in the family, and other roles, and their typical methods of coping with this conflict. In addition, they were asked to rate their financial and nonfinancial success in the years 2016 and 2017.

The data were collected at two points in time. Venture profiles and role conflict and coping strategy data were collected from a sample of 500 women entrepreneurs between February and July 2017. Data on entrepreneurial success and venture performance (turnover, profit, and number of employees) were collected between August 2017 and October 2017 from 350 participants who had filled out the initial survey.

Procedure

The principal investigator created a network of leaders of women's business associations. This gave the main researcher the opportunity to participate in workshops, meetings, and trade shows, and that is where most of our respondents were encountered and where the questionnaires were distributed.

Most of the respondents completed and returned the survey questionnaire at the end of the meeting, workshop, or trade show. A few women requested that it be sent to them by email, then filled it out and returned it within two days to two weeks. Some requested that the completed questionnaire be retrieved from their workplace. For the first survey (February 2017 to

July 2017), a total of 650 questionnaires were distributed and 500 completed questionnaires were collected. A response rate of 77 percent was obtained, thanks to a combination of the network created through the women's business associations, the face-to-face approach for most questionnaires, and the researchers' close follow-up on the non-face-to-face surveys.

On the first survey, participants had been asked whether they would be willing to participate in future studies. Of the 500 participants who filled out the initial survey questionnaire, 390 women entrepreneurs agreed to do so. As with the initial survey, the main researcher took advantage of becoming involved in the different platforms available to meet the 390 women entrepreneurs. Additional enumerators were hired and trained who could have better access to the selected women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, participants were called and were sent follow-up emails for the questionnaires that had been sent previously by email. Using all possible strategies at our disposal to increase the response rate, we managed to collect 350 completed questionnaires in the second survey and reached a response rate of 89 percent.

Of the 350 questionnaires completed in the first and second surveys, 43 were missing a substantial amount of data and thus dropped from the analysis. Another 103 respondents did not respond to the entrepreneurial success and performance questions and, hence, were dropped from the final analysis.

In the end, 204 questionnaires were left for the final analysis. Participants were asked to indicate: (1) their level of education; (2) age; (3) marital status; (4) sector in which they operated; (5) number of employees; (6) annual sales for 2016 and 2017 (note that this was collected in two different years); and (7) profit for 2016 and 2017 (note that this was collected in two different years). The results are shown in [Table 2](#).

Measures

a. Coping strategies

To measure the strategies used for coping with role conflict, this article relied on the four subcategories from Hundera, Duysters, et al. (2019). The first scale, structural Role Redefinition (Type I), was obtained after the respective factor analysis for the indicators of negotiation, seeking social support, and hiring outside support. "Negotiation" was measured by three items, such as "I discuss my roles with family members." "Seeking social support" was measured by four items, such as "I seek physical and emotional support from friends and neighbors." "Hiring outside support" was measured by three items along the lines of "I hire home help."

Prioritizing entrepreneurial roles was measured by four items, an example being "I choose to respond to my business role." "Prioritizing family and social roles" was measured by four items such as "I choose to behave as per social expectations." Reactive role behavior (Type III) was measured by five items such as "I work harder and longer to meet all my role demands."

Table 2. Sample characteristics.

Demographic variable		N (%)
Education	No school	2(1)
	Primary	51(25)
	Secondary	75(37)
	Diploma	59(29)
	University degree	17(8.3)
Age	18–25	16(9)
	26–30	35(17)
	31–35	107(52.5)
	36–45	37(18)
Marital status	46 and over	9(4)
	Single	18(9)
	Married	160(78)
	Divorced	20(10)
	Widowed	6(3)
Sector	Service	108(53)
	Retail	60(29)
	Manufacturing	30(15)
	Other	6(3)
No. of employees	1–3	126(62)
	4–5	70(34)
	6 or more	8(4)
Self-reported annual sales for 2016	\$2,499 and under	8(4)
	\$2,500–4,499	41(20)
	\$4,500–6,999	78(38)
	\$7,000–9,999	60(29)
	\$10,000 and over	14(7)
Self-reported annual sales for 2017	\$2,499 and under	11(5.3)
	\$2,500–4,499	39(19)
	\$4,500–6,999	61(30)
	\$7,000–9,999	55(27)
	\$10,000 and over	26(13)
Self-reported profit for 2016	\$10,000 and over	23(11)
	\$1,799 and under	139(68)
	\$1,800–3,499	59(29)
	\$3,500–5,499	3(1.5)
	\$5,500 and over	3(1.5)
Self-reported profit for 2017	\$1,799 and under	136(67)
	\$1,800–3,499	59(29)
	\$3,500–5,499	4(1.9)
	\$5,500 and over	5(2.4)

Cronbach's alpha scores for coping scales in this study were .80 for "negotiation," .79 for "seeking social support," .70 for "hiring outside support," .95 for "prioritizing entrepreneurial roles," .85 for "prioritizing family and social roles," .86 for "reactive role behavior." Respondents were asked to indicate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Details of items for measuring each coping strategy are provided in Table 3.

b. Subjective entrepreneurial success

The present study adopted items from existing subjective entrepreneurial success scales from Dej (2011), Fisher et al. (2014), and Wach et al. (2016).

Table 3. Coping strategies items.

Structural role redefinition (Type I)
Negotiation:
I discuss my roles with my family members to redefine role expectations.
I negotiate with people in my business networks (clients, suppliers, and colleagues) to redefine role expectations.
I negotiate with people in my social networks (friends, neighbors, and extended family) to redefine role expectations.
Seek social support:
I receive physical and emotional support from my spouse.
Chores are divided among family members.
I receive physical and emotional support from extended family (mother, aunt, other relatives).
I receive physical and emotional support from friends and neighbors.
Hire outside support:
I hire home help.
I hire and delegate business roles (for example, train an employee to manage venture).
I delegate community roles (for example, hire a day worker for community work).
Prioritize Entrepreneurial Role:
I am physically and psychologically disconnected from my home when I am at work.
I choose to respond to my business role.
I do not bother myself about social issues.
I choose to behave like a business person in all situations.
Prioritize Family and Social Role:
I am physically and psychologically disconnected from my work when I am at home.
I put my family first.
I choose to socialize when the need arises.
I choose to behave as per the social expectations.
Reactive Role Behavior (Type III):
Worked harder and longer than usual to meet all roles demands.
Planned, scheduled, and devoted more time.
I respond to business-related issues when I am at home.
I respond to family-related issues when I am at work.
I socialize when I am in my business owner role.

Item selection occurred after a pilot study had been conducted with 50 women entrepreneurs in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The initial success scales contained 5 to 11 items per success factor, with participants asked to indicate the extent to which they had reached the stated criteria for success. Each answer was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*totally not achieved*) to 5 (*totally achieved*).

The final items for the analysis were selected based on the results of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (see [Tables 4](#) and [5](#)). CFA was also conducted to assess model fit. First, a five-factor model was examined, with firm performance, personal financial rewards, workplace relationships, community impact, and personal fulfillment as factors.

The first scale measured firm performance through seven items, an example being “increased market share, such as firm expansion.” The second measured personal financial rewards through four items such as “capacity to buy.” The third measured workplace relationships through three items such as “strong customer relationships.” The fourth measured personal

Table 4. Items for measuring entrepreneurial success.

Financial success
Firm performance:
Firm profitability
Turnover
Innovation (for example, new products, services, or methods)
Growth in the number of employees
Personal financial rewards:
Personal financial security
Ability to afford
High income for your family
Nonfinancial success
Workplace relationship:
Employee satisfaction
Supportive firm culture (for example, strong firm values and positive attitudes)
Personal fulfillment:
Work-life balance
Own decisionmaking
Own vision propagate
Personal relationships and maintain networks
Social impact:
Social recognition (for example, reputation)
Social responsibility toward employees
Participation in public activities (for example, sponsor of social events)

Table 5. Items, means, standard deviations, factor loadings, and Cronbach’s alpha scores for entrepreneurial success.

Items	Mean	SD	Factor loading	alpha
Financial success				0.89
Venture performance	3.43	0.59	0.825	
Personal financial rewards	3.5	0.64	0.981	
Nonfinancial success				0.8
Personal fulfilment	3.44	0.509	0.63	
Community impact	3.48	0.516	0.758	
Workplace relationships	3.47	0.613	0.758	

fulfillment through four items such as “work-life balance.” The fifth measured community impact through seven items such as “creating jobs.” Cronbach’s alpha scores for success scales in this study were .87 for firm performance, .85 for personal financial rewards, .75 for workplace relationships, .89 for community impact, and .85 for personal fulfillment.

The two subjective financial scale measures were found to be strongly related to objective financial measures, growth in sales, and profit (between 2016 and 2017). Since entrepreneurial success is often divided into two factors (that is, subjective financial success and subjective personal success) (for example, Dej, 2011; Dijkhuizen et al., 2016) a two-factor model was then tested. The results indicate that the two-factor model fit data with fit indices of CFI = .994, AGFI = .987, CMIN = 1.63, RMSEA = .056, and PCLOSE = .372. As indicated in the table (see Appendix), there are no

validity concerns. According to Hair et al. (2010), measurement reliability is achieved when composite reliability (CR) > 0.7 and convergent validity are average variance extracted (AVE) and > 0.5; discriminant validity is achieved when maximum shared variance (MSV) < AVE, average shared variance (ASV) < AVE, and the square root of AVE > interconstruct correlations. Accordingly, the two factor model of entrepreneurial success used in our study is reliable. Cronbach's alpha scores for the subjective financial success scales and nonfinancial success scales in this study were .89 and .80, respectively. Details of items for measuring for financial and non-financial success are provided in Table 3.

c. Role conflict

In designing the research questionnaire in this article, the bidirectional nature of role conflict as well as its multiple sources (family, work, social, and entrepreneurial roles) were considered. However, since our focus here is level of role conflict, overall experience of role conflict was considered. Hence, role conflict was conceptualized as the interrole conflict that arises from participating in multiple roles that are, to some extent, incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) – that is, the existence of strong pressure from two or more noncompliant roles Kahn et al. (1964).

Accordingly, role conflict was measured using the Work-Family Conflict Scale developed by Carlson et al. (2000) and the SRE and ERD Conflict Scale from Hundera (2019). The Work-Family Conflict Scale measures six dimensions of work-family conflict using three items for each. Some items were reworded to fit the entrepreneurs' experience in our context. For example, "My business keeps me from my family activities more than I would like." The items were measured on a 5-point Likert-direction scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha scores, in this case, were .83 for the nine items representing work-family conflict and .86 for the nine items representing family-work conflict.

The SRE and ERD scale measures two dimensions of SRE and ERD conflict: SRE-to-ERD conflict (nine items) and ERD-to-SRE conflict (six items). Items for SRE-to-ERD conflict include "You cancel your business schedules to socialize"; items for ERD-to-SRE include "You can't enjoy social events because you think too much about the business." Each answer was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The Cronbach's alpha scores were .89 for the nine items representing SRE-to-ERD conflict and .85 for the nine items representing ERD-to-SRE conflict. Since our focus was on the overall level of role conflict, the one-factor model was tested. The results showed that the data fit the model with fit indices of CFI = .993, AGFI = .933, CMIN = 2.8, RMSEA = .094, and PCLOSE = .156. Details of items for measuring role conflict are presented in Table 4.

Statistical analysis

Structural equation modeling was used for the analysis (Lomax & Schumacker, 2012) because it is appropriate for cases with multiple observed variables. It also explicitly takes measurement error into account, which enhances validity and reliability. Moreover, SEM has the ability to analyze complex theoretical models. Role conflict, coping strategy, and subjective success are formed by constructs measured by multiple indicators and SEM was deemed appropriate for simultaneously testing the measurements and structural relationships between the constructs and indicators (Lomax & Schumacker, 2012). A correlation analysis was conducted before proceeding to the correlation of the study variables using SEM. As indicated in Table 7, all the role conflict, coping strategy, and subjective financial and nonfinancial success variables were significantly correlated. The SEM showed that the indicators were reliable, with model fit indices of $\chi^2(393) = 754$, $p = .000$, CFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.94, and RMSEA = .045.

Research findings

The objective of this article was to examine the relationship between role conflict, coping strategies, and subjective financial and nonfinancial success. With the regard to the relationship between role and coping strategies, the following hypotheses can be posited:

H1: Role conflict positively affects structural role redefinition.

H2: Role conflict negatively affects prioritizing entrepreneurial roles.

H3: Role conflict positively affects prioritizing family and social roles.

H4: Role conflict positively affect to reactive role behavior.

The maximum likelihood parameter estimates from the SEM analysis, as presented in Table 8, show that the four relationships posited in the model between the role conflict and coping strategy variables were statistically significant.

The results reveal that role conflict positively affects structural role redefinition, prioritizing family and social roles and reactive role behavior, whereas negatively affect prioritizing entrepreneurial roles. Therefore, all of the above hypotheses are confirmed.

Concerning the relationship between coping strategies and subjective financial and nonfinancial success, the following hypotheses can be posited:

Table 6. Items for measuring role conflict.

SRE-to-ERD Conflict:

- (1) You cancel your business schedules to socialize.
- (2) You're afraid to talk about your business and yourself (promote yourself).
- (3) You can't expand the business because of your social obligations.
- (4) As a woman in business, you're afraid of being labeled a "bad woman."
- (5) You feel guilty doing business because you can't visit people (extended family).
- (6) You can't behave like a businessperson because of religious obligations.
- (7) You're afraid to compete in matters important to your business.
- (8) You can't expand your business because you have to share the income with relatives.
- (9) You're not proud of doing business because people do not value women in business.

ERD-to- SRE Conflict:

- (1) You can't fulfill religious obligations because of your business obligations.
- (2) You can't live up to the expected behavior because you are on the lookout for opportunities.
- (3) You can't share your income with relatives because you want to expand the business.
- (4) You don't have time to socialize because your business keeps you busy.
- (5) You can't abide by the norms because you are assertive.
- (6) You can't abide by the norms because you promote yourself to attract business networks.

Work-to-Family Conflict:

- (1) My business keeps me from my family activities more than I would like.
- (2) The time I must devote to my business keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities.
- (3) I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities.
- (4) When I get home from work, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities.
- (5) I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family.
- (6) Due to all the business pressures, sometimes when I come home, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy.
- (7) The problem-solving behaviors I use in business are not effective in resolving problems at home.
- (8) Behavior that is effective and necessary for me to do business would be counterproductive at home.
- (9) The behaviors I perform that make me effective to do business do not help me to be a better parent and spouse.

Family-to-Work Conflict:

- (1) Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work.
- (2) Because I am often stressed from family responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work.
- (3) Tension and anxiety from my family life often weaken my ability to do my job.
- (4) The time I spend on family responsibilities often interfere with my work responsibilities.
- (5) The time I spend with my family often causes me not to spend time on activities at work that could be helpful to my career.
- (6) The behaviors that work for me at home do not seem to be effective at work.
- (7) Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at home would be counterproductive at work.
- (8) The problem-solving behavior that works for me at home does not seem to be as useful at work.
- (9) I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on family responsibilities.

H5: Structural role redefinition coping strategy positively affects financial success and nonfinancial success.

H6: Prioritizing family and social roles negatively affects financial success, but positively affects nonfinancial success.

H7: Prioritizing entrepreneurial roles positively affects financial success, but negatively affects nonfinancial success.

Table 7. Means, standard deviations, alpha reliability coefficient, and correlation coefficients (N = 204).

	M	SD	FP	PFR	WPR	SI	PF	Type I	PER	Type III	PFSR	ERDs-to-SRES conflict	SRES-to-ERDs conflict	WIF	FIW
Financial success															
FP	3.32	0.819													
PFR	3.76	0.736	.665**												
Nonfinancial success															
WPR	3.8	0.69	.495**	.440**											
SI	3.67	0.626	.467**	.348**	.345**										
PF	3.34	0.751	.320**	.476**	.422**	.561**									
Coping strategies															
Type I	3.21	0.388	.431**	.419**	.617**	.410**	.422**								
PERs	2.22	0.739	.454**	.411*	-.021	-.082	-.052	.194**							
Type III	3.63	0.496	.141*	.151**	.151**	.086	-.103*	-.454**	-.321**						
PFSR	3.16	0.805	-.0182**	-.332**	.034	.125*	.031	-.492**	.430**	-.168**					
Role conflict	2.55	0.654	.135*	-.081	-.181**	-.226**	-.166*	.332**	.165**	-.152*	-.684**				
ERDs-to-SRES															
SRES-to-ERDs	2.83	0.345	-.317**	-.260**	-.537**	-.398**	-.318**	-.181**	.220**	.174**	.561**	-.442**			
WFI	2.75	0.668	.121*	.178*	-.456**	-.401**	-.410**	.446**	.185**	-.118*	-.193*	.291**	-.235**		
FWI	2.7	0.741	-.403**	-.399**	-.771**	-.424**	-.429**	.213**	-.081	.1090*	.338**	.594**	.476**	-.475**	

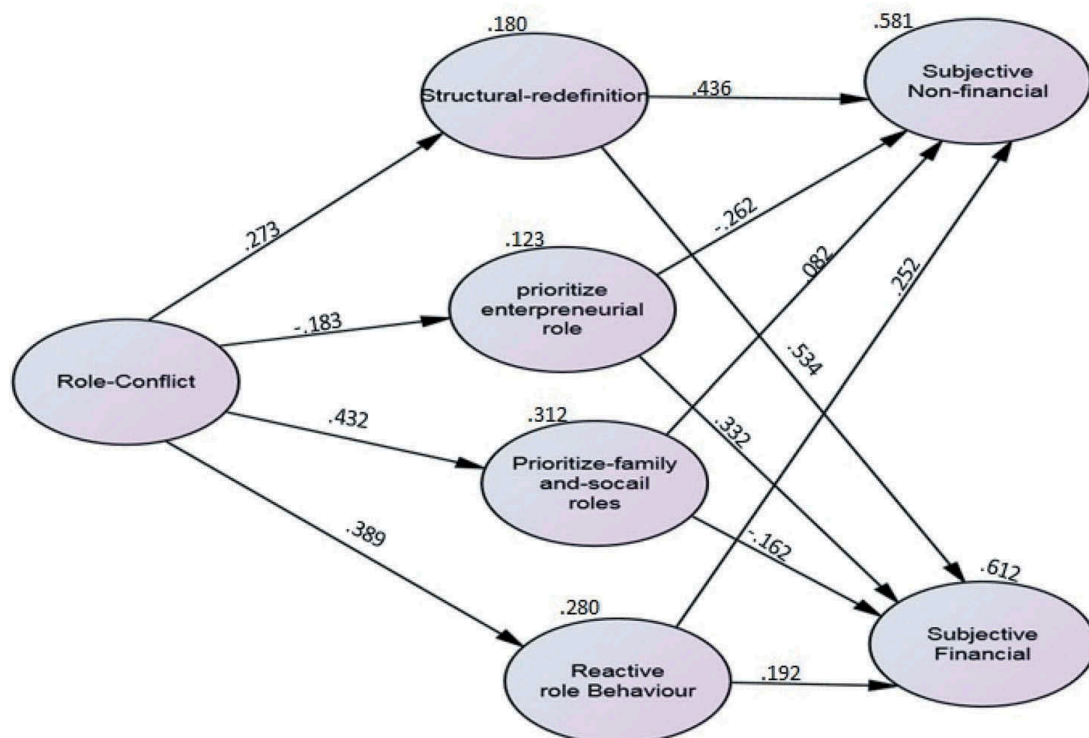
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).
 * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
 FP: financial performance
 PFR: personal financial rewards
 WPR: workplace relations
 SI: social impact
 PF: personal fulfillment
 PER: prioritize entrepreneurial roles
 Type I: structural role redefinition
 PFSR: prioritize family and social roles
 Type III: reactive role behavior

Table 8. Structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis results: parameter estimates and significance.

Relationships			Beta estimate	P
Structural redefinition	< -	Role conflict	0.237	***
Prioritize entrepreneurial role	< -	Role conflict	-.183	.014
Prioritize family and social roles	< -	Role conflict	0.432	***
Reactive role behavior	< -	Role conflict	0.3898	***
Subjective nonfinancial	< -	Structural redefinition	0.436	***
Subjective financial	< -	Structural redefinition	0.534	***
Subjective nonfinancial	< -	Prioritize entrepreneurial role	-0.262	***
Subjective financial	< -	Prioritize entrepreneurial role	0.332	***
Subjective nonfinancial	< -	Prioritize family and social roles	0.082	.087
Subjective financial	< -	Prioritize family and social roles	-0.162	.02
Subjective nonfinancial	< -	Reactive role behavior	0.252	***
Subjective financial	< -	Reactive role behavior	0.192	.002

H 8: Reactive role behavior negatively affects financial success and nonfinancial success.

As for H5, the statistical analysis as presented in Table 8 and Figure 2 confirmed that structural role redefinition positively affects financial and nonfinancial success. Therefore, H5 is maintained. One possible explanation for this, as mentioned by previous scholars, is that coping strategies based on structural role redefinition such as negotiation and delegation are positively related to business success (Jennings & McDougald, 2007; Örtqvist et al., 2007; Shelton, 2006). In

**Figure 2.** Structural equation model of role conflict, coping strategies, and entrepreneurial success.

addition, when owner-managers delegate their roles, they relieve some duties and are able to focus on higher matters in business, at home, and in their community that can lead to positive outcomes.

Although the effect of prioritizing family and social roles has no significant effect on nonfinancial success, it affects the financial success negatively. Thus, H6 cannot be rejected. As expected, it was found that prioritizing entrepreneurial roles as a response to role conflict results in positive financial success, but negative nonfinancial success. Therefore, H7 cannot be rejected. Contrary to expectations, the SEM analysis results show that reacting to all roles (Type III) coping in response to role conflict affects both financial and nonfinancial success positively. Therefore, H8 is not supported.

Conclusions

The first research question addressed in this article was “How does the level of intensity of role conflict influence the strategies that female entrepreneurs use to cope?” According to the evidence from Ethiopia presented in this article, this question can be answered as follows. When the intensity of role conflict is relatively low, women entrepreneurs cope by prioritizing their entrepreneurial roles; with relatively moderate intensity of role conflict, they cope by involving others or reacting to all their roles as well as they can. Finally, when the intensity of role conflict is relatively high, women entrepreneurs cope by prioritizing family and social roles.

As indicated, the women entrepreneurs prioritize entrepreneurial roles when the intensity of role conflict is low. This may be because when the degree of conflict is low, women business owners can choose among the coping strategies that can enhance business growth. It may also be because when level of the role conflict is low, it might be easy to balance between roles that allow them to respond to entrepreneurial roles. With lower levels of conflict, women may also balance multiple roles and focus on their role as a business owner. Moreover, low-level conflicts might be seen as relatively positive by business owners (see also Baron, 2008).

The second research question was “How do strategies that female entrepreneurs use to cope with the role conflict influence entrepreneurial success?” Here, it was found that female entrepreneurs who use structural role redefinition that involves negotiation and delegation as ways of coping with role conflict report positive financial and nonfinancial success. Contrary to expectations (see H8), reactive role behavior was found to be positively affecting both financial and nonfinancial success. Moreover, it was found that if women entrepreneurs prioritize family and social roles due to the role conflict, it affects nonfinancial success positively, but negatively affects financial success.

The results presented here contribute to the literature on women entrepreneurship and the literature on coping strategies, particularly so in the

African context. Whereas the literature has tended to see coping strategies merely as an antecedent or moderator for role conflict, the findings in this article suggest that typical ways of coping are influenced by role conflict and will vary depending on the intensity of the role conflict. And whereas the literature has focused on the effectiveness of coping strategies on role conflict, well-being, and business performance, this article established that the effectiveness of coping strategies can also be evaluated in terms of their effect on entrepreneurial success, in particular a broader notion of success that includes both financial and nonfinancial measures. Here, it was found that women entrepreneurs who involve others to modify expectations and who delegate roles reported both positive financial and nonfinancial success.

One practical implication of the findings of this article is that interventions aimed at enhancing social skills (for example, such as negotiation skills) may likely improve both the financial and nonfinancial success of women entrepreneurs. Social skills could help women entrepreneurs to better navigate the complex dynamics of their interconnected family and social relationships and improve the profitability of their businesses. A second practical implication of the findings of this article is that better time management skills may help female entrepreneurs to keep the focus on the most important and sensitive tasks, and limit the time invested in less important activities. This may be useful in the context of Ethiopia, as this article found, contrary to expectations that a reactive role behavior coping strategy, whereby women entrepreneurs try to meet all their role expectations, positively affects both financial and nonfinancial success. The danger is that when women entrepreneurs try to meet all their role expectations, it may have negative health implications.

Finally, the results reported in this article are not without limitations. The model was tested in the Addis Ababa region of Ethiopia. Future studies need to consider data collected from other African countries, to obtain a more general understanding of the role conflict, coping strategies, and success of women entrepreneurs in the region. Moreover, the study was limited to a cross-sectional analysis, and longitudinal research might be needed for outlining causal and bidirectional relationships.

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Appendix

Discriminant and Convergent Validity Test for Entrepreneurial Success Factors

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Financial Success	Non-financial Success
Financial Success	0.884	0.522	0.160	0.891	0.723	
Non-financial Success	0.882	0.518	0.160	0.942	0.400	0.720