Call for Papers
Interdisciplinary European Conference on Entrepreneurship Research
17th Annual Conference 2019

Family Firms:
Steering in the tension of sustainable growth and strategic renewal

Utrecht, the Netherlands, 16-18 October 2019

Track Chairs:
Christian Hauser, HTW Chur, Switzerland
Jan-Philipp Ahrens, University of Mannheim, Germany

Description of the track

This is a general track dedicated to family firm research. Family firms, that frequently emerge when owner-leaders of entrepreneurial ventures wish to perpetuate their economic activities, are globally the most frequent firm type (La Porta, Lopez-De-Silanes, & Shleifer, 1999; Faccio & Lang, 2002). Their contributions to growth, innovation, robustness and longevity are substantial to the success of the global economy, making them a pillar for sustainable prosperity and development.

Family firms operate in a polar tension between continuity, stability, reliability, sustainability and management for the long-run as one pole; while successful family firms are often steered in a fashion that cherishes dynamic adaption to changing environments, innovation, strategic renewal and succession as the other pole (Miller & LeBreton-Miller; 2005).

In the last twenty years, family firm research made significant progress in terms of theoretical underpinnings, but the field still lacks a systematic adoption of thorough and theoretically-based frameworks (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2003; Zahra & Sharma, 2004). The key topics mirror issues of family business managers, with the main ones being succession, economic performance, and firm governance (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 1996; Debicki, Matherne, Kellermanns, & Chrisman, 2009), while significant areas of the field clearly deserve more scholarly scrutiny, especially the domain of effective family firm management, strategy, and governance.

Moreover, sociological and psychological aspects remain under-researched, although it is well known that family firm garner and capitalize in particular on social capital. Their focus on sustainability, both financially and non-financially, often leads to the emergence of a fragile social structure around them – consisting of a web of strong and weak relational ties – that often goes along with the development of shared values and vibrant firm cultures (Long, 2011), which needs to be understood better in several dimensions. Emergent social structures (Ekeh, 1974) may influence and alter managerial behavior at
helm of the family firm and thereby affect family firm performance: the social individual, the individual in his group setting (Asch, 1952), remains largely unexplored (Ahrens, Calabrò, Huybrechts, & Woywode, 2019). Similarly, the field has found that part of the economic and non-economic relations often create a strong regional and spatial anchoring, the consequence of the activities of family firms for the regions, cities, provinces as well as the trajectories they create need to be better understood (Stough, Welter, Block, Wennberg, & Basco, 2015).

We invite all empirical (quantitative and qualitative), conceptual, and methodological work that advances our understanding in the field of family firm research. We hope that this track attracts scholars that have advanced this field over the last three decades as well as young scholars that wish to study and teach in this exciting field. We believe that methodological exchange from fields, such as business studies, economics, history, geography, politics, sociology, and psychology will help to foster scientific progress, the robustness, and credibility of results in the relatively young field of family business research. By sharing novel approaches, we see this track as opportunity to jointly develop further knowledge about the potential, benefits, and constraints of different methods to enable researchers to improve the design and execution of their research and to spread and share their practices within the community and beyond.

From a theoretical point of view, we welcome papers with interesting and new hypotheses that may include, but are not limited to:

- agency theory,
- leadership theory,
- social exchange theory,
- resource-based theory,
- theory of the firm,
- identity theory,
- upper echelon theory,
- organizational theories,
- theories of familiness, et cetera.

We encourage authors to test hypotheses that may advance or help to reinterpret existing theory and knowledge in the field of family business research.

Ultimately, we aim for contributions which provide RELEVANCE through addressing the key elements for family firms, family firm owners, and entrepreneurial families, which might be CEOs and family CEOs, leadership, top management teams, governance, ethics, social capital, succession, digitalization, strategy, and ownership.

Moreover, we especially invite YOUNG SCHOLARS to submit their work to this track. In case of questions if your topic might fit the track, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

**Literature:**


The deadline for submissions is 15th June 2019. All submissions must use the submission template and use the submission procedure on the webpage otherwise they will not be considered for review.
Download the submission template here
Submit your paper here

The registration for the conference is open until 31st August 2019.
Register here