



SPECIAL ISSUE

INNOVATION IN FAMILY FIRMS: BRIDGING THE THEORY-PRACTICE GAP

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Innovation in family firms is still a controversial issue within the academic community and poses some unique challenges for family business owners and managers. The distinctive nature of family firms results in a complex influence on the innovation process (De Massis, Frattini and Lichtenthaler, 2013), which is reflected in mixed research findings. On one hand, the distinctive nature of family firms can facilitate flexibility, a customer-oriented approach and a focus on quality and community involvement (Craig and Moores, 2006; Aronoff, 1998). On the other hand, this family nature may render them more complex, either because they are engaged into succession processes or because they suffer a lack of resources, training, skills or knowledge (Ibrahim, Angelidis and Faramarz, 2008). So, the influence of the family on innovation is not univocal (Veider and Matzler, 2015). As a consequence, it is possible to distinguish two main streams regarding the inclination of family firms towards innovation. Whereas some studies describe family firms as conservative, adverse to risks and reluctant to changes (Cabrera, Saa and Almeida, 2001; Hall, Melin and Nordqvist, 2001) other researchers point that family firms can be as innovative as non-family firms and even more (Craig and Moores, 2006). So, there is not a wide consensus about the (non-) innovative characteristics of family firms.

Previous research has addressed some issues regarding innovation in family firms, as drivers to innovation from both institutional and industry levels, as well as firm level (Ahuja et al., 2008), obstacles to innovation (Lorenzo and Núñez-Cacho, 2012), the influence of founders and family CEOs on the innovative orientation of family firms (Miller et al., 2011), the influence of the generation in charge on the innovation issues (Hall et al. 2001; Ward, 1997), the role of tradition and past knowledge (De Massis et al., 2016), the temporal evolution of innovation in family firms (Gersick et al., 1997; Kotlar and De Massis, 2013), or the “resource bundling” –referred to the missing link between familiness and innovation- (Carnes and Ireland, 2013), among others. Some studies reflect the Janus-faced effects of the family nature of the firm on innovation in terms of dual propositions, like the notion of ambidexterity (De Massis, Frattini and Lichtenthaler, 2013), the idea of duality (Duran et al., 2015), and the paradox pointed by Chrisman et al.

(2015), as a new framework to gain understanding about the link between family involvement and innovation, based on ability and willingness.

A novelty of this Special Issue is the **collaboration with managers and practitioners**, who will be involved in the review process together with the academics. Our aim is to make a step forward to **bridge the gap between research and practice on family business innovation**, acknowledging the different perspectives and approaches adopted by academics and practitioners. Both academic rigour and practical relevance will be considered as important factors for the papers published in this Special Issue.

We encourage submission of empirical, conceptual, and literature review papers that can provide a unique perspective using diverse theoretical and methodological approaches. Authors are also encouraged to propose different and novel approaches for examining the family business concept that are particularly suited to capture the peculiarities of family firms in innovation. We also welcome submission of practice-oriented papers co-authored with family business practitioners (e.g., family business leaders, consultants).

Contributions may address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- The role of tradition in innovation
- Dynamic capabilities as a source of innovation
- Other sources of innovation in family firms
- Differences in the management practices adopted to manage innovation in family vs nonfamily firms
- The influence of cultural context on innovation
- The long tenure of family CEOs as a facilitator to innovation
- The role of the founder regarding innovation
- Family firm innovation across time: the need to renewal every 25 years, a new firm to build upon the old firm
- The effects of succession processes on innovation (ownership / leadership)
- Is it possible to innovate when succession processes are ongoing?
- Succession processes take time (several years), can a family firm get apart from innovation during these processes?
- Barriers to family firm innovation, are there differences from non-family firms'?
- The paradox of innovation in family firms
- The influence of noneconomic goals preferences on innovation
- The influence of family boards on innovation
- The influence of family council on innovation
- Are family CEOs more innovative than external CEOs in family firms?
- The need for resources to innovate
- Internationalization and Family Business
- Collaborative innovation in family firms
- Innovation and Socioemotional wealth
- Family Business Sustainability and Innovation
- How do practitioners view family business innovation?
- What are the practical implications of current family business innovation research?

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The Journal

European Journal of Family Business is an open access, peer-reviewed journal published half yearly. The journal publishes research papers in the field of family-controlled enterprise. The scopes of the journal include, but are not limited to, the following topic areas: Succession, Governance, Organization Theory, Culture, SMEs, Marketing, Internationalization and Globalization, Gender and ethnicity, Corporate social responsibility and ethics, Productions Management, Human resources.

Submissions

Please submit papers through the journal's online submission system, <http://www.revistas.uma.es/index.php/ejfb>, create your user account (if you have not done so already), and for "Manuscript Type" please choose the Special Issue "Innovation in Family Firms". All papers that enter the reviewing process will be double-blind reviewed following the journal's normal review process and criteria. You will be able to submit your paper for this Special Issue between January, 15th, 2018 and December 15th, 2018.

Dates and deadlines

Special Issue is scheduled to be published **December of 2019**.

The following timetable/deadline dates are given for your information:

- (1) Submission of the full papers – 15/12/2018
- (2) First feedback from reviewers – 31/01/2019
- (3) Editorial decisions sent to the authors - 8/02/2019
- (4) Submission of the revised papers – 31/03/2019
- (5) Second feedback from reviewers – 15/05/2019
- (6) Editorial decisions sent to the authors – 25/05/2019
- (7) Submission of the revised papers – 30/08/2019
- (8) Notification of acceptance – 15/09/2019
- (9) Publication of the special issue – **December 2019**.

For additional information please contact ejfb@uma.es