Towards a theory of non-family employees' organizational identification.

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Abstract:

Purpose – Since non-family employees form a large portion of employees in many family firms and they play an important role in the transgenerational survival of those firms, the purpose of this paper is to explore how family influence factors affect non-family employees' organizational identification and then organizational attachment, which can consequently influence their turnover intentions.

Design/methodology/approach – In this conceptual paper, the paper attempts to answer two important research questions: What are the family firm-specific determinants of nonfamily employees' organizational identification in family firms? How does nonfamily employees' organizational identification affect their tenure in family firms? Thereby, the paper develops a conceptual model linking family influence dimensions (i.e. power, experience, and culture), nonfamily employees' organizational identification, organizational attachment, and turnover intentions within the domain of the stewardship theory.

Findings – The model presented in this paper can help scholars and family business managers better understand the idiosyncratic family influence dimensions that can affect nonfamily employees' perceptions and intentions associated with their tenure in family firms. If family firms can limit the negative effects of family influence factors, make the best use of the positive effects, and integrate key nonfamily employees into the family firm through helping them satisfy their higher-order needs, they can uninterruptedly move forward toward achieving long-term competitive advantages and superior performance.

Research limitations/implications – Aside from the antecedents of nonfamily employees' organizational identification that are pointed out in this paper, there may be other determinants that are beyond the scope of this paper. The governance structure and strategic orientations are some of the possibilities constituting avenues for future research.

Social implications – Family firms with great employee care cannot only increase employees' loyalty to their firms, but also help them develop work-life balance.

Originality/value – This paper is one of the only attempts to use social identity theory to explain non-family employees' organizational identification and attachment in family firms that can affect their turnover intentions. Not only does this add to our knowledge of family firm human resources management and provide new directions for future research, but it also suggests the usefulness of social identity theory in family business research.

Keywords: Employee attitudes | Employee turnover | Family firms | Organizational identification | Stewardship | technology management | business management

Article:

Introduction

Family firms form a major portion of economies throughout the world (Gersick et al., 1997; Tagiuri and Davis, 1996). Despite this, most organizational research has not distinguished between family and nonfamily firms, limiting the diverse representation of the business population and the generalization of findings. Family firms exhibit high degrees of family members' ownership, involvement in management, and intentions for transgenerational succession. Indeed, the “essence” of the family firm derives from the involvement of family members in the firm and the family influence on the culture and functioning of the family firms (Chrisman et al., 2003a). Hence, the degree of family involvement and influence can distinguish a family firm not only from nonfamily firms, but also from other family firms. However, the effects of family involvement and influence remain underutilized in organizational studies, causing ambiguity in important family business issues both theoretically and practically (Dyer, 2003).

One crucial issue faced by many family firms is the management and retention of nonfamily employees (Dyer and Handler, 1994; Hoy and Verser, 1994; Chua et al., 2003). Many, if not most, family firms employ a larger portion of nonfamily employees than family members (Deloitte & Touche Study, 1999). Indeed, nonfamily employees may play a key role in family firms' long-term survival and growth through cognitive diversity in strategic decision making (Chua et al., 2003; Ensley, 2006). Hence, nurturing positive perceptions, identities, attitudes, and behaviors among nonfamily employees may be integral in effective management of nonfamily employees.

To fill this gap, we explore nonfamily employees' organizational identification and its consequences associated with nonfamily employees' retention. Thereby, we extend Barnett and

Kellermanns' (2006) theoretical model illustrating how family influence may affect nonfamily employees' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Accordingly, we apply the stewardship and social identity theories to explain the effects of family influence dimensions (Klein et al., 2005) on nonfamily employees' organizational identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) that can lead to their organizational attachment (Mael and Ashforth, 1995) and affect turnover intentions.

This paper contributes to the family firm literature in several ways. First, the use of social identity theory helps to demonstrate how family influence dimensions can affect nonfamily employees' organizational identification and the subsequent impact on organizational attachment and turnover intentions. As can be seen in Figure 1, the conceptual model presented in this paper suggests that the family influence dimensions of power, experience, and culture, impact nonfamily employees' organizational identification, which subsequently influence their organizational attachment, and ultimately their turnover intentions. This is the first attempt in the family firm literature to associate family influence dimensions with nonfamily employees' organizational identification, attachment, and intentions to leave in family firms. Due to the prevalence of nonfamily employees in family firms both within and outside of China and a call for studies investigating relationships with nonfamily employees (Chua et al., 2003; Barnett and Kellermanns, 2006), it is crucial to clarify how family influence dimensions can affect the retention of nonfamily employees in family firms. Accordingly, this paper contributes to a better understanding of the issues nonfamily employees face in family firms. In the remainder of the paper, the theoretical background and the propositions are presented. A discussion, future research directions, and conclusion are also provided.

Theoretical background

Family influence

Family firms are distinctive due to family involvement through ownership, governance, management, and transgenerational intentionality (Chrisman et al., 2005b). Chrisman et al. (2005a) explain the distinctiveness of a family firm by its essence involving intention, vision, familiness, and/or behavior. In line with Chrisman et al.'s (2005a, b) explanation, Chrisman et al. (2003b) argue that “family aspirations and values affect opportunities pursued” and “further affect the family firm's resources, competitiveness, and performance”. However, as Chrisman et al. (2005a, b) point out, little is known about the influence of family involvement on how and why family firms behave and perform differently than nonfamily firms, how strategic decisions are made, functions are performed, and strategies and structures are set (Chrisman et al., 2005a, b).

In order to explain the extent of a family's influence on family firms, Klein et al. (2005) present family influence dimensions: power, experience, and culture. As Chrisman et al. (2005b) point out, power dimension indicates sources and amount of authority a family has in a family firm. Experience dimension indicates the level and type of family involvement in a family business and the degree to which this involvement lasts through generations. Culture is composed of family members' values and the degree to which these values shape the organizational values in family firms. Chrisman et al. (2005b, p. 244) also address that these three dimensions are appropriate in “showing a family's ability and willingness to influence the direction of a business, as well as the depth to which a family's influence is likely to have affected business decision making”.

In family firms, extensive reliance on family members as employees and/or managers can lead to having suboptimal employees with limited quality and quantity of human capital (Dunn, 1995). At the same time, high-capability nonfamily managers might also prefer nonfamily firms due to presumptions of exclusive treatment of family business members and limitations in career growth and professionalism (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003). As Barnett and Kellermanns (2006) argue, the level of family influence can affect the fairness of human resources practices in family firms and high levels of family influence tend to be associated with unfair human resources practices in family firms. In addition, past studies show that firms with managerial ability and capacity limitations are constrained in growth (Penrose, 1959). Therefore, attracting and maintaining qualified nonfamily employees is a challenging task in family firms (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003) highlighting the importance of human resources management (Astrachan and Kolenko, 1994; Barnett and Kellermanns, 2006).

In this paper, we draw on stewardship theory in explaining the impact of family influence dimensions on nonfamily employees' organizational identification and their subsequent organizational attachment that can affect their tenure in family firms.

Stewardship theory

Both agency and stewardship theories have been utilized to address the role of agents in achieving family firms' strategic goals (Chrisman et al., 2007). Nevertheless, these theories differ in assumptions about the agents' motivations that affect their behaviors in organizations (Chrisman et al., 2007). Agency theory is mainly concerned with conflicting interests of the principal and the agent and difficult and costly monitoring of the agent (Eisenhardt, 1989). On the other hand, stewardship theory derives from social-psychology to examine relations in organizations where members tend to be collectivists (Davis et al., 1997). Hence, employees who are stewards, hold common goals of the firm above their self-interests (Davis et al., 1997). Accordingly, the individuals' interests are aligned with the interests of the organization in a sense that “pro-organizational collectivistic behaviors have higher utility than individualistic self-serving behaviors” (Davis et al., 1997, p. 24).

Thereby, family business studies have been exploring whether family business members are agents or stewards (Chrisman et al., 2007). Stewardship approaches to the study of family firms might be particularly relevant, as family firm members may hold family firm objectives higher than their individual objectives (Zahra, 2003) and demonstrate high levels of trust and unity (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996; Habbershon and Williams, 1999) that can lead to competitive advantages through superior performance. Consequently, family firms can “inspire greater employee care and loyalty” (Habbershon and Williams, 1999, p. 4).

Social identity theory

Social identity theory defines social identification and explains its antecedents and consequences (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Social identification is “a perception of oneness with a group of persons” (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p. 20). Ashforth and Mael (1989, p. 22) argue that organizational identification is “a specific form of social identification”.

Moreover, social identity researchers distinguish between organizational identification and internalization, arguing that people may define themselves in terms of their organizations, however they can disagree with their organizations' values, strategy, and authority (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Interestingly, organizational identification can occur “even in the absence of interpersonal cohesion, similarity, or interaction and yet have a powerful effect on affect and behavior” (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p. 26). Hence, social identification can be an antecedent of internalization rather than being a synonym for it (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Consequently, this differentiation has generated considerable research interest for identifying the dynamics of organizational identification. Early research associated need satisfaction with organizational identification (Hall et al., 1970). Building on this foundation, Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue that people can satisfy their higher-order needs such as self-esteem through organizational identification. Organizational studies identify higher-order needs such as esteem, autonomy, and self-fulfillment, whereas lower-order needs are security and social (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1977). Consistent with Ashforth and Mael's (1989) argument, Dutton et al. (1994) suggest that organizational identification can help individuals preserve their continuity of self-concept, and provide distinctiveness and self-enhancement. Accordingly, Dutton et al. (1994, p. 239) redefine organizational identification as “the degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization”. Mael and Ashforth (1995) contribute to the knowledge about needs underlying organizational identification by adding individuals' need for achievement and self-enhancement and organizations' instrumentality in satisfying these achievement-oriented desires. Hence, people identify themselves with their organizations if they perceive that the organization is a useful place to pursue their desired activities. Accordingly, a recent study by Smidts et al. (2001) emphasizes the importance of self-esteem and self-enhancement and investigates the impact of work environments characterized by open communication. The researchers show that open communication climates enhance organizational identification of employees through elevating their “perceptions of self-worth” and “experiences of being taken seriously” (Smidts et al., 2001, p. 1058). In addition, the need for coherence is also identified as the rationale behind organizational identification (Pelham and Hetts, 1999). Individuals prefer having coherence, predictability, and control in their lives and organizations can help fulfill these needs (Pelham and Hetts, 1999) through reducing uncertainties (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). The more these higher-order needs are satisfied by the organizations, the more will be the individuals' organizational identification. On the other hand, when these needs are not satisfied within the context of organizations, people are more likely to search for other organizations and leave their organizations eventually. The last alternative is not what family firms wish for when they aim growth and long-term survival with the involvement of nonfamily employees who are often in large numbers and/or in key positions within family firms.

Understanding nonfamily employees' higher-order needs underlying their organizational identification is critical in human relations management in family firms. Since organizational identification leading to organizational attachment can be a major predictor of turnover intentions (Dutton et al., 1994), family firms can utilize nonfamily employees' organizational identification as a tool to understand turnover intentions among nonfamily employees, take preventive measures, and foster a work environment to increase organizational identification.

Organizational identification is influenced by a variety of organizational and contextual variables (Mael and Ashforth, 1995). Accordingly there has been a call for studies to identify various antecedents of organizational identification (Mael and Ashforth, 1995). In this paper, the family influence dimensions, that include power, experience, and culture (Klein et al., 2005), are explored as the determinants of nonfamily employees' organizational identification that can lead to their organizational attachment and affect their turnover intentions in family firms within the framework of stewardship theory.

Power of family members and nonfamily employees' organizational identification

First, we build on the power dimension of the family influence. In family firms, ownership, kinship, and tenure might be associated with power of business members. Family business founders and/or owners have the main influence on family business operations (Chrisman et al., 1996; Kelly et al., 2000). Kelly et al. (2000) examine founder centrality in family firms through highlighting the central roles the founder plays. The founder brings in personal characteristics, values, rules, and procedures based on personal experiences when he/she establishes the family business. Therefore, the founder's vision and intention constitute the foundation for the essence of the family firm, including the intention, vision, familiness, and/or behavior that distinguish a family business (Chrisman et al., 2005a). In addition, the dual role of being head of the household and head of the family business (Gersick et al., 1997) intensifies the founder's power. Due to his/her ownership and tenure since the beginning, the founder might perceive himself/herself as the sole or ultimate decision-maker. Kellermanns and Eddleston (2004) argue that in high control concentration cases where the controlling individuals have a strong desire for authority, trust level may decrease that can harm the stewardship tendencies in family firms. Furthermore, closeness to the founder endows a family business member with power (Dyer and Handler, 1994). Therefore, kinship ties to the founder or the owner may empower family members while leaving nonfamily business members with relatively less or no power in business decisions.

Power differences can lead to tension, disruption, and relational conflict in family firms (Kellermanns and Eddleston, 2004). Indeed, “identities are, at least partly, developed in the context of power relations” (Alvesson, 2000, p. 1105). In family firms with power imbalances, nonfamily employees cannot satisfy their need for positive regard (Pelham and Hetts, 1999). Moreover, their conceptions of self-esteem, self-importance, valence, and self-worth will be affected negatively in case of power imbalances (Hogg and Abrams, 1990; Deaux et al., 1999; Crocker and Blanton, 1999; Simon, 1999; Tyler and Smith, 1999). Being taken seriously is an important element of organizational identification (Smidts et al., 2001). Hence, having little or no power will interfere with nonfamily employees' stewardship tendencies and their organizational identification:

P1. Power of family employees will be negatively associated with nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

Experience of family members and nonfamily employees' organizational identification

The second dimension of the family influence is experience. Firm level experience is aggregate of individual level experiences and the focus in this paper is on family members' personal experiences. Indeed, experience is a crucial dimension of family influence and also expected to be an important credential in promotion or succession evaluations in family firms. Concerning younger family members' gaining experience and training, apprenticeship is a valuable learning tool in family firms (Morck and Yeung, 2004). Apprenticeship is a hands-on personalized learning experience between the senior family business master(s) and the junior apprentices, starting at home, continuing through summer jobs and extending into the life-long career of family members (Le Breton-Miller et al., 2004) along with or without related higher education.

On the other hand, nonfamily employees do not have the same long term learning-by-doing experiences and family firm-specific tacit knowledge. In addition, nonfamily employees may not have the same career development opportunities (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003) that family members have when job creation for family members and transgenerational succession are primary goals of the family business (Chrisman et al., 2003b). Indeed, particularism based on irrelevant criteria (e.g. kinship) rather than universalistic criteria based on competence is common in family firms in selecting and promoting employees (Perrow, 1972; Carney, 2005).

Implications of nepotism (Tagiuri and Davis, 1996) and nonfamily employees' exclusion from senior positions (Chua et al., 2003) can restrict nonfamily employees' ability to satisfy their need for enhancement, need for coherence (i.e. predictability, control, order, and structure), desire to achieve personal aspirations, and desire to be part of the family business group (Dutton et al., 1994; Mael and Ashforth, 1995; Pelham and Hetts, 1999; Smidts et al., 2001). In this type of work environment, the family business membership will not be instrumental and rewarding in nonfamily employees' achievement oriented pursuits. Perceived incongruence of personal interests and family business interests (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1995;

Smidts et al., 2001) will thwart stewardship behaviors and organizational identification of nonfamily employees. This can be especially true in environments with strong family networks such as China and the Middle East (Carraher, 2013):

P2. Experience of family employees will be negatively associated with nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

Family firm culture and nonfamily employees' organizational identification

Dyer (1988) identified four types of family firm cultures as paternalistic, laissez-faire, participative, and professional. The author also empirically showed that 80 percent of first generation family firms have mainly paternalistic characteristics. In paternalistic family businesses, decision-making is centralized that can leave many family and nonfamily members with minimum or no role in the process (Kelly et al., 2000). On the other hand, in laissez-faire family firm culture, which is the other extreme end of the cultural continuum, members have the complete freedom to participate (Sorenson, 2000), however too much independence might also deviate members from common goals and collectivity. In decentralized family firms, family business members are expected to be more participative (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007) and professional. In sum, the degree of nonfamily employees' organizational identification may vary in different types of family business cultures.

In paternalistic family firm culture (Sharma et al., 1997), in which decision-making is centralized, nonfamily employees may not have the opportunity to satisfy their need for self-expression (Dutton et al., 1994) that is necessary for organizational identification. Indeed, “people are drawn to organizations that allow them to exhibit more of themselves and to enact a fuller range of characteristics and values in their self-concept” and “members will find organizations attractive when their social identities there provide them a sense of distinctiveness” (Dutton et al., 1994, pp. 244, 246).

In participative and/or professional cultures of family firms (Sorenson, 2000), encouraging all participants' opinions elevates the members' perceptions of worth and importance (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007). Participative and/or professional work environments foster a positive communication climate (Smidts et al., 2001) that can increase trust and involvement that are consistent with stewardship behaviors. As Sorenson (2000) argues, participative family firm culture allows joint decision making and delegation and enriches work. Social identity studies also suggest that “increasing inclusion” and “greater contact with the organization increases a member's perceptual readiness to categorize and define him- or herself as a member of the social group” (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 248). Hence, a nonfamily employee having equal opportunities in decision-making and operations through open communication channels, can “categorize oneself more easily as a significant member” (Smidts et al., 2001) and identify himself/herself with the family firm.

In laissez-faire culture, participation opportunities for all family business members can affect nonfamily employees' organizational identification positively up to an optimum level. However, complete independence of employees can deviate individuals from common goals and direct them toward attainment of self-interests contrary to stewardship behaviors. Additionally, individuals “want to maintain the continuity of their self-concepts over time and across situations” (Dutton et al., 1994). Having no clear structure or goals can increase uncertainties and harm nonfamily employees' sense of self-continuity (Dutton et al., 1994) and prevent them from satisfying their need for coherence concerning predictability, control, and order (Pelham and Hetts, 1999), consequently weakening their organizational identification:

P3a. Paternalistic family business culture will be negatively associated with nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

P3b. Participative and/or professional family business culture will be positively associated with nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

P3c. Laissez-faire family business culture will have an inverted U-shaped relationship with nonfamily employees' organizational identification in family firms such that laissez-faire family business culture will be positively associated with nonfamily employees' organizational identification up to an optimum level and then will be negatively associated with nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

Organizational attachment among nonfamily employees

Mael and Ashforth (1995) draw attention to the relationship between organizational attachment and attrition as a neglected issue. Individuals become attached to their organizations psychologically “when they incorporate the characteristics they attribute to their organization into their self-concepts” as a result of organizational identification (Dutton et al., 1994, pp. 241-242). Hence, psychological attachment to an organization involves attitudinal and affective commitment and internalization of organization's values and goals (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Lee and Mitchell, 1994). Thereby, people see their “organization as part of themselves” (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 242).

The indicators of organizational attachment are intragroup cohesion, positive attitudes toward in-group members, cooperative behaviors, a heightened sense of trust, reciprocity, and social attraction (Dutton et al., 1994) that are in line with stewardship behaviors in family firms. Indeed, as highlighted in stewardship theory, social identity theory addresses that individuals psychologically attached to their organizations can “focus on tasks that benefit the whole organization rather than on purely self-interested ones” (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 255). Accordingly, if nonfamily employees identify themselves with the family firm, they are expected to psychologically attach to the family firm:

P4. Nonfamily employees' organizational identification is positively associated with their organizational attachment in family firms.

Turnover intentions

Turnover is defined as “the termination of an individual's employment with a given company” (Tett and Meyer, 1993, p. 262). Lee and Mitchell (1994) explain the volitional nature of departure from the organization based on job satisfaction and perceived alternatives. Accordingly, when the congruence of nonfamily employees' individual interests with family firm interests cannot be achieved (Smidts et al., 2001), nonfamily employees would psychologically disconnect themselves from the family firm and look for other alternatives (Carraher, 2011). If one did not identify with the organization and develop organizational attachment, he or she would not experience a psychic loss by leaving the organization (Mael and Ashforth, 1995). Therefore, nonfamily employees with organizational disconnection would be more prone to develop turnover intentions:

P5. Nonfamily employees' organizational attachment is negatively associated with their turnover intentions in family firms.

Discussion

Nonfamily employees face complex work environment in family firms with their complex perceptions and roles (Sharma, 2004). However, family business studies addressing the nonfamily employees' organizational identification in family firms have been rare. To fill this gap, this paper suggests that the theory of the family firm will be enriched by the investigation of antecedents of nonfamily employees' organizational identification and consequences associated with the retention of nonfamily employees in family firms. Accordingly, in this paper, we attempt to answer two important research questions:

RQ1. What are the family firm-specific determinants of nonfamily employees' organizational identification in family firms?

RQ2. How does nonfamily employees' organizational identification affect their tenure in family firms?

Thereby, we develop a conceptual model linking family influence dimensions (i.e. power, experience, and culture), nonfamily employees' organizational identification, organizational attachment, and turnover intentions within the domain of the stewardship theory.

Therefore, this paper contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it illustrates the effects of family influence dimensions on the development of nonfamily employees' organizational identification. This paper is one of the only attempts to use social identity theory to explain nonfamily employees' organizational identification and attachment in family firms that can affect their turnover intentions. Not only does this add to our knowledge of family firm human resources management and provide new directions for future research, but it also suggests the usefulness of social identity theory in family business research. Second, this paper highlights the important consequences of nonfamily employees' organizational identification. These micro level individual perceptions and intentions can lead to macro level firm wide outcomes that may be beneficial to family firms. Indeed, owing to the extensive and critical presence of nonfamily employees in family firms (Chua et al., 2003; Barnett and Kellermanns, 2006), it is crucial to identify the effects of family influence dimensions on nonfamily employees' organizational identification that can lead to their organizational attachment and consequently affect their turnover intentions in family firms. Both of these contributions move us forward in the advancement of the theory of the family firm (Chrisman et al., 2005a, b; Conner, 1991).

Limitations and future research implications

Aside from the antecedents of nonfamily employees' organizational identification that are pointed out in this paper, there may be other determinants that are beyond the scope of this paper. The governance structure (Gersick et al., 1997) and strategic orientations (Chrisman et al., 2005b) are some of the possibilities constituting avenues for future research. The impact of family influence and the consequences associated with nonfamily employees' organizational identification and attachment may vary in these different contingencies. Hence, all these contingencies suggest additional applications of social identity theory to the family business research.

We would like to highlight other future research opportunities. The lack of organizational identification and attachment draws implications for future research within the context of the agency theory also since these missing elements can deviate nonfamily business members from common goals and collectivity. In line with Lubatkin et al.'s (2005, p. 315) drawing attention to “agency threats” in family firms, we expect that the nonfamily employees' lack of organizational identification and their subsequent psychological disconnection from the family firm will be associated with agency problems such as moral hazard via free riding, shirking, withholding effort and information, and information asymmetries. Therefore, many agency problems are likely to derive from nonfamily employees' psychological disconnection from the family firm among nonfamily members that are worth investigating in future studies.

Longitudinal studies will capture the effects of family influence dimensions on nonfamily employees' tenure in different stages of business life-cycles (Gersick et al., 1997). Stewardship relationships that are present during the earlier stages of the family business might alter into agency relationships and problems through the later phases in the life cycle of the firm (Karra et al., 2006). As the family business grows and flourishes, complacency might set in leading both family and nonfamily business members to free ride or shirk. Therefore, longitudinal studies are encouraged to examine different developments that would affect the formation of nonfamily employees' organizational identification and attachment at different stages of the family firm life cycle.

Furthermore, the existence of non-economic goals might complicate nonfamily employees' organizational identification and attachment. Wealth creation (Habbershon et al., 2003) may not be the primary goal in all family firms as Chrisman et al. (2003) argue. Some family firms may aim value creation (Chrisman et al., 2003; Carney, 2005) via pursuance of non-economic goals such as primarily employing and promoting kin that may restrict nonfamily employees' organizational identification and attachment. Therefore, future studies can provide further clarification regarding the non-economic goals and their impact on the nonfamily employees' organizational identification and attachment in family firms.

Future research should also examine differences in family business across cultures and countries (Carraher et al., 2010; Carraher and Carraher, 2006). For instance if we compared perceptions of family business in China, Lithuania, and the USA (Carraher et al., 2003, 2009) would the results be similar across the countries or what about if one looked at family business in Africa, Asia, and North America (Carraher et al., 2004, 2008) would the results be similar or different? Research should also examine the impact that participation in family businesses can have on other attitudes and behaviors such as vengeance seeking behaviors (Carraher and Michael, 1999), quality management (Carraher and Carraher, 1996a, b), creativity (Wu et al., 2012), managerial perceptions (Lester et al., 2010; Parnell and Carraher, 2001), or knowledge transfer (Li-Hua, 2007a, b).

In sum, it appears that like the field of family business (Carraher and Paridon, 2008/2009), understanding how family business owners think will be both productive intellectually and valuable practically. In conclusion, this paper provides an organizational identity perspective to nonfamily employees' identification and attachment to the family firms. The model presented in this paper can help scholars and family business managers better understand the idiosyncratic family influence dimensions that can affect nonfamily employees' perceptions and intentions associated with their tenure in family firms. If family firms can limit the negative effects of family influence factors, make the best use of the positive effects, and integrate key nonfamily employees into the family firm through helping them satisfy their higher-order needs, they can uninterruptedly move forward toward achieving long-term competitive advantages and superior performance.

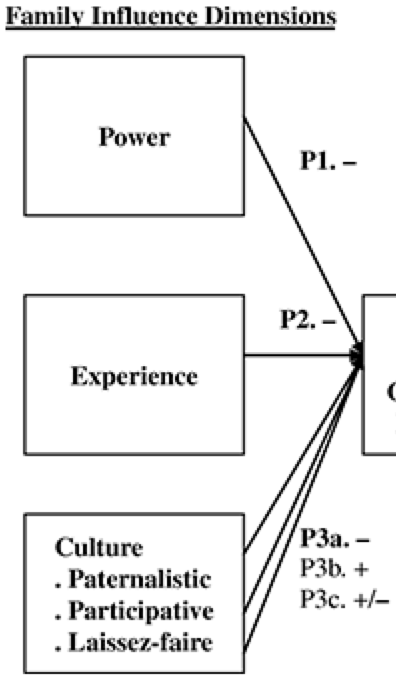

Figure 1 Nonfamily employees' organizational identification and attachment in family firms

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