

THE SOCIALISATION'S IMPACT FROM FAMILY BUSINESS ON YOUTHS PERSONALITY AND CAREER CHOICE MOTIVES

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Abstract:

Applying the five traits theory to the students showed that socialisation with a family business background affected personal traits of these adolescents. It leads to a higher extroversion and higher artistic inclination but lower tolerance. In addition it was tested whether the five traits theory helps determining career choices, e.g, succession. A family firm background was found to induce a lower leisure time orientation, higher strive for independence, higher creativity and a lower safety orientation. Additionally it was tested in what career motives successor and non-successors were differing. It could be shown that the successors displayed a higher independence, displayed a higher resolution orientation and a lower leisure time orientation. It seems that career motives are better predictors to understand the succession decision than the personality traits. Further it can be hypothesized that career choice motives are less resistant to external influence like friends and social activities than the personality traits.

Key Words: family firm, personality, succession, career choice

INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE STUDY

The idea that family businesses play a vital role in our society has been proven time and time again across all continents (Neubauer 1992; Klein 2000; Frey, Halter and Zellweger 2004; Shanker and Astrachan 1996; Poutziouris, O'Sullivan and Nicoescu 1997; Gallo 1995; Cappuyns, Astrachan and Klein o.J.). A notable characteristic of family businesses is that the two social elements of 'family' and 'business' enjoy a significant overlap. The perception of management and supervisory functions, along with the undertaking of financial risks; comprise the two main elements in the contemporary definition of family businesses (Frey, Halter and Zellweger 2004; Klein 2000). Furthermore, the two social elements are completed in the definition by cultural values, which are playing a greater role in defining family business in recent times (Astrachan, Klein and Smyrnios 2002). The present text considers an enterprise as a family firm if the firm is controlled by the mother and / or the father of the interrogated persons.

In the area of entrepreneurship research, some seminal research streams can be identified (Gartner 2001; Shane and Venkataraman 2000; Low and MacMillan 1998). Based on various projects conducted in this research realm, the personal motives and qualities of business founders have been examined in order to determine the reasoning behind and striving for business independence (Fueglistaller, Halter, Blickle et al. 2004; Golla, Halter, Fueglistaller et al. 2004; Fueglistaller, Halter and Hartl 2003; Golla, Holi and Klandt 2003). In the area of family business research, other streams can also be identified (Sharma 2004; Sharma, Chrisman and Chua 1996). A particularly important area of research focuses on the regulations surrounding succession in family enterprises (Brockhaus 2004). There have been some isolated studies that have contradicted the majority of findings in this area (Birley 2002). On the other hand, there is a whole set of entrepreneurship factors that have been investigated, in order to assess any influence they may have on succession and new entry within a family business (e.g. Shepherd and Zacharakis 2000; Stavrou 1999; Covin 1994).

There are three basic aims of the following research. Firstly, an examination will be made into whether growing up within a family business has an effect on the personality traits and career motives of young persons. Secondly, the analysis will expand into finding out whether these characteristics and career motives have any impact on succession decision or not. Thirdly, it will be examined whether personality traits theory or career motives theory is a better predictor for career choices (e.g, succession or not).

For the purposes of this paper, the theoretical framework is presented in the next section, followed by a disclosure of the methodology, ending with the presentation and interpretation of the findings.

THEORETICAL BASIS AND REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

Socialization of children within family businesses

Family is a vital system, one that has a great impact on the development of children. Bratcher describes family as *"the primary and, except in rare instances, the most powerful emotional system we ever belong to, which shapes and continues to determine the course and outcome of our lives."* (Bratscher 1982). Children grown up within this environment in their respective cultures, and utilize the norms and values that derive from these systems. From

this, children develop actions and learning strategies that will help them to cope with new or changed circumstances (Rotthaus 1998). This process is also referred to as socialization.

Here the emergence and development of human personality takes place as a function of and in conflict with both the social and material living conditions. Through this process, a functional personality is established, which helps to develop an individual's life experience (Schmidt 1975). Socialization covers almost all other mechanisms of influence and personality formation, apart from the direct educational actions of parents (Erdmann 1999). There is no distinct line drawn between education and socialization. Educational interaction does not take place within a vacuum; instead there exist many external socialization influences.

Children in family businesses do not just live within the family social system. The family-based company is very often understood and treated as an implicit part of the family. The enterprise is seen to be the glue that holds the family together, sometimes even unwittingly welding its members together. The life of the company is often intertwined with those of the family, and the enterprise is often considered to be part of the family (Müller-Tiberini 2001). This close relationship is often eschewed by the found of the entrepreneurs, who often refers the business as their 'child'. The founder can often see themselves in the firm, as their business tends to reflect their views, hopes and strategies. Frequently, family business founders have a deep emotional attachment to the enterprise.

This special relationship is very important, and is often identified as a major advantage for family-operated businesses (Habig and Berninghaus 2003; Schwass, Amann and Ward 2004). It brings security, loyalty and a sense of attachment to the firm (Nicholson and Björnberg 2004). If this bond becomes too strong, then family often comes second. This situation highlights the dual role of company founders: one of owner, manager or director of the family firm; and the other of parent. A particular sense of responsibility exists based on mixing these two systems, as company founders must deal with people who have roles in both the family and business contexts (LeMar 2001). We assume that children within family businesses have a special set of bonds separate from children outside this context, due mainly to the unique and close relationships built in a family business. These experiences have an impact on family life and education, along with the value orientation and other personality-connected characteristics of children in family businesses (Klein 1991). These traits are further analyzed in Section 2.2, with the help of the five main personality factors (the Big 5) (Schallberger and Venetz 1999).

Values influence a person's perception and have orientation- and action-based characteristics (Erdmann 1999). They are developed both socially and culturally, and are bound to an external social frame of reference (Klein 1991). Values imply a high level of emotional participation, thanks to their centrality within the mental systems, differentiating values from norms. Due to this emotional participation, values have a great impact on a person's behaviour. Hence, within a family, the values determine the family atmosphere. The establishment of a value system is usually established firstly within the family, via initial behaviour imitation, which eventually gives way to identification with parental values and valuations (Erdmann 1999). Establishment of one's own values and norms is a signpost of the moral development of growing up (Dreikurs 1987). This acceptance of parental values does not happen in every case, especially when the characteristic interests, goals, and valuations are not reconciled with those established within the family (Erdmann 1999).

Characteristics

The so-called traits or personality traits, deal with the very stable and inherited qualities which determines how one perceives their external environment. Colloquially, the term ‘character’ best describes this concept. A model that attempts to describe a person’s character, established from the field of psychology, is the ‘Big Five Factors’ model, also called the ‘five-factor model of personality’ (Schallberger and Venetz 1999). This model was developed factor-analytically, and later attempts by other personality models (e.g., 16 primary factors) (Catell, 1943, 1946, 1947, 1948) failed to properly replicate its usefulness. The five-factor model has endured (Fiske 1949; also Tupes and Christal 1961; Norman 1963; Borgatta 1964; Hakel 1974). In order to be able to determine the influence of character qualities on vocational choices, we enlisted the help of the short version of the MRS Inventory from Shallberger and Venetz. (1999). The five factors are designated as follows: Extroversion, Emotional Stability, Openness to Experiences, Tolerability, and Conscientiousness. In different languages and cultures, with differing measurement instruments and varying sample populations; these factors could be replicated. In their research McCray and Costa (1987) determined that these five factors are independent of intelligence. The following section presents briefly the five factors with a short explanation and examples taken from the Amelang and Zielinski (1997) questionnaire and shows the evidence of this construct based on the used sample for the analyse.

Table 1: Factor analysis of personality according to the Big Five traits

Factors	Number of Items	Example of Items (Likert Scale 1-6 with counter poles)	Cronbachs Alpha (standardised)
Extroversion	4	very uncommunicative – very communicative very close – very sociable	0,810
Openness	4	very unimaginative – very imaginative very unartistic – very artistic	0,797
Conscientiousness	4	very unprecise – very meticulous very disordered – very ordered	0.794
Emotional Stability	4	very vulnerable –very robust very hypersensitive – very relaxed	0,725
Tolerance	4	very aggressive – very peaceable very curt – very forgiving	0,667
Explained total variance of the construct: 60,2% n = 4,912 KMO criterium: 0,790 Bartlett significance 0.000			

Motives behind career choice

In family businesses, success can be determined by a number of indicators, such as employees that are proud, productive and happy. As well, owners with a secured financial future and solid profits can also signal success, along with a consistent set of innovative products being produced. Other indicators of a strong family-run firm focus on the enterprise itself being a place for personal growth, social progress and autonomy; so that the family itself can see the business as a place for social interaction while simultaneously offering the comfort of job security (Sharma, Chrisman and Chua 1996).

These goals mentioned above form the framework of what Entrepreneurial research describes as motives for making career choice. However, there exist other goals that might actually conflict directly with those of company founders. McClelland (1961) coined the

term ‘achievement motivation’, to describe the guiding motive of entrepreneurs. In actual fact, in studies conducted using various measuring methods, it was found that entrepreneurs had a much stronger achievement motivation than other studied groups, such as managers (Begley, and Boyd 1987; Green, David and Dent 1996; Utsch, Rauch et al. 1999). Other studies found either no or very little difference. Based on these findings, Rach and Fress (2000) discovered that the displayed correlations fail, however statistically small, which infers that these findings fundamentally contradict themselves.

Given the findings, we decided to develop a new set of scales, based on our previous studies on entrepreneurship. It is here where we take a step away from the existing scales that measure the motivation and related phenomena, which address the related context of future decisions of university graduates. Based on this modification, we designate these latent variables as ‘demands on the future career’, to go along with classical measurement criteria like ‘need for achievement’ or ‘locus of control’. Due to the factor-analytical selection basis of our initial studies, other commonly used criteria were not used in our investigation. The Harabi and Meyer (2000) study showed that independence, implementation of one’s own ideas, and self-actualization, are three of the most important motives for entrepreneurship. The pursuit of profit was seldom a significant motive in similar studies. The research of Arvanitis and Marmet (2001) came up with similar conclusions. It is very interesting to note that inherently extrinsic motivations like reputation, acknowledgement and higher income are not nearly as highly regarded as intrinsic motivations like independence and self-actualization (Harabi and Meyer 2001).

Creativity and brainstorming are designated by company founders as high, in an Arvanitis and Marmet (2001) study it was found that more than seven in ten (71%) of respondents were very developed in these areas. Douglas and Shepherd (2003) argue that persons with a higher level of motivation, a higher risk tolerance, a positive view towards independence, and an autonomy towards making decisions will have a greater likelihood towards seeking autonomy. Furthermore, students that are self-sufficient and whom embrace independence will have a stronger inclination for autonomous work situations. Establishing personal creativity is likely to be easier for those with independence than those working in salaried firm employment (Arvanitis and Marmet 2001). Finally, it is noted that students who focus greatly on personal progress and their personal ascent, will tend to embrace independence sooner than those who do not – even if the literature does not necessarily support this connection (Arvanitis and Marmet 2001; Harabi and Meyer 2000).

The research of Fueglistaller, Halter, and Hartl (2003 and 2004) shows that, above all, the aspects of motivation, autonomy, individuality, safety consciousness, and creativity motive all play a significant role in the development of independence (see also Fueglistaller, Volery, Halter et al. 2003; Golla, Holi and Klandt 2003). The construct for the measurement of motives, which explains the definition in a purposeful manner, consists of the five following factors:

Table 2: Factor analysis of the career motives (1=very unimportant; 6=very important)

Factors	Number of Items	Example of Items (Likert Scale 1-6)	Cronbach Alpha (standardised)
Independence	6	Autonomy of decision Working independently	0,774
Leisure time	5	A less exhausting job Enough leisure time	0,773
Creativity	4	To take advantages form creative potential to create something new	0,709
Resolution Orientation	2	To improve existing products To improve the level of detail of a product	0,671
Safety Orientation	2	A secure job Stable circumstances on the place of employment	0,750
Explained total variance of the construct: 62.9%			
n = 4,413			
KMO criterium: 0.824		Bartlett significance: 0.000	

In the following section, two main questions are investigated. The first focuses on whether socialization in the environment of a Family business has an effect on shaping a personality and the career choice motives of young people. The second stage of the research will look at personality influences along with motives behind career choice; in order to determine what roles these factors play in determining the likelihood of succession in a firm.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The following investigation is based on secondary data analysis. The data was collected in Summer 2004, under the auspices of data collection relating a research project about Academic Entrepreneurship in Germany and Switzerland (Golla, Halter, Fueglistaller and Klandt 2004; Fueglistaller, Halter, Blicke et al. 2004). The collection method was in the form of an online questionnaire. The data was sorted by descriptive attributes, such as study location, age, and sex. Further, environmental questions were asked of respondents, including the basic conditions of the university, and the nature of entrepreneurship activity in the family. The high quality of generated data was ensured by the insistence that only satisfactorily answered questionnaires would be used as data sources. The data was stored by a partner company, and an identification-based server prevented multiple responses to the questionnaire by allowing only one-time access to the on-line survey.

The fact that the link for the questionnaire was provided via email meant that a number of restrictions could be made to ensure the authenticity of the results. The selection effects of respondents included self-selection effects of students and a relatively small penetration rate. For the purposes of data collection in Germany, approximately 40 department heads were contacted. They were chosen based on their affinity for empirical data collection and for an interest in and ability to discuss entrepreneurship and career development along with the required willingness to cooperate in the study. The chairs were active mostly in the economics-related fields, leading students' strong interests in business economics (Primary chairs were sought from the FGF Society, which oversees investigative research). At the same time, some universities did specialize exclusively on offering business certificates (e.g. the European Business School, ebs). In Switzerland, access to students at the master's level, along with the cooperation of the institutions, were almost guaranteed. Hence, a greater dispersal amongst students with varying faculties could be achieved.

A further restriction lays in the distribution of the online questionnaires. Undoubtedly, all university students have some form of access to the Internet at school or home, however it was discovered that few universities have standard forms of email communication devices. This meant that there was the potential for chair of departments, especially in Germany, to specifically (and possibly in a biased manner) decide the nature and makeup of the student respondents. However, when looking at similar previous studies, one finds that the response behaviour ended up being rather similar when it came to faculty and student distribution (Golla, Holi and Klandt 2003). Despite the aforementioned restrictions, a participant ratio of between 11 and 29% was achieved among registered students at six Universities.

RESULTS

Descriptive characteristics

Of the total of 5,059 completed questionnaires, 1,736 came from Germany and remaining 3,323 from Switzerland. A total of 13 department chairs were available, while a total of six Universities and Universities of Applied Science were reached to give answers to the survey. Of the 5,059 students, close to three-quarters (73.6%) responded that neither of their parents had any entrepreneurial or independent inclinations. Slightly over five percent (5.3%) of the students did have some familial entrepreneurial activity, but that the company is no longer in the family. The present text considers an enterprise as a family firm if the firm is controlled by the mother and / or the father of the interrogated persons. The remaining 21.1% of the students indicated that the business remains in family hands (see Illustration 1). There were no discernable differences in results from Germany and Switzerland.

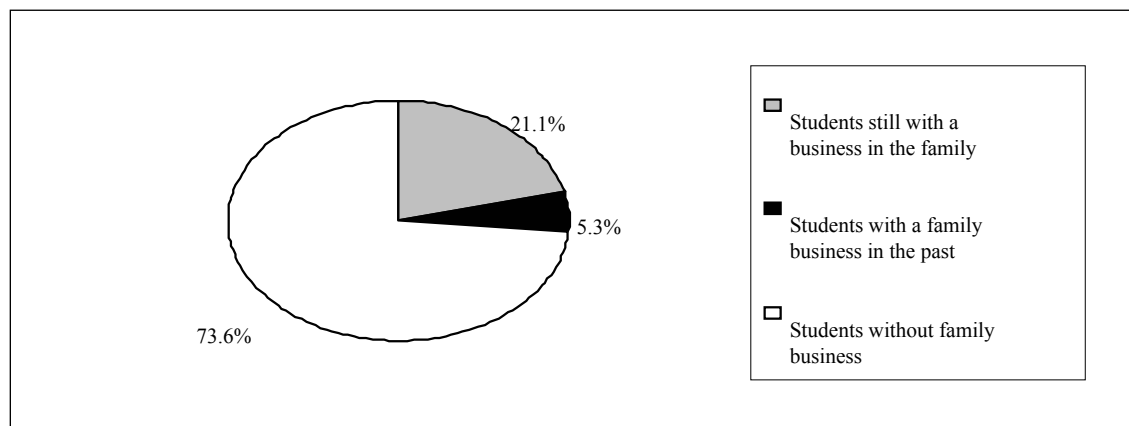


Illustration 1: Students with (out) family business (n = 5,059)

Of the 1,068 students (21.1% of the total) associated with a family business, it is assumed that each one of these students could be a potential successor to the business. Of these respondents, 5.6% believe that they will undertake the responsibilities of running the family firm immediately after graduation. Another 13.2% plan on waiting for 5 years. Other respondents were going to pursue a salaried position or some other independent activity, while others remained uncertain as to their plans in the five years immediately following graduation from university.

Impact of socialization

In the following sections, it will be examined how growing up in family business has an effect on both the characteristics and the career choice motives. This examination will be completed on all (5,059 students) respondents, were as students with no family business with students where their parents still hold the Family business will be compared.

Characteristics

As described in Section 2.2, the Big 5 construct provides the basis to understand the characteristic traits of students. Illustration 2 shows the result of a t-test completed between students having a background with a family business and those students who have no experience with family firms.

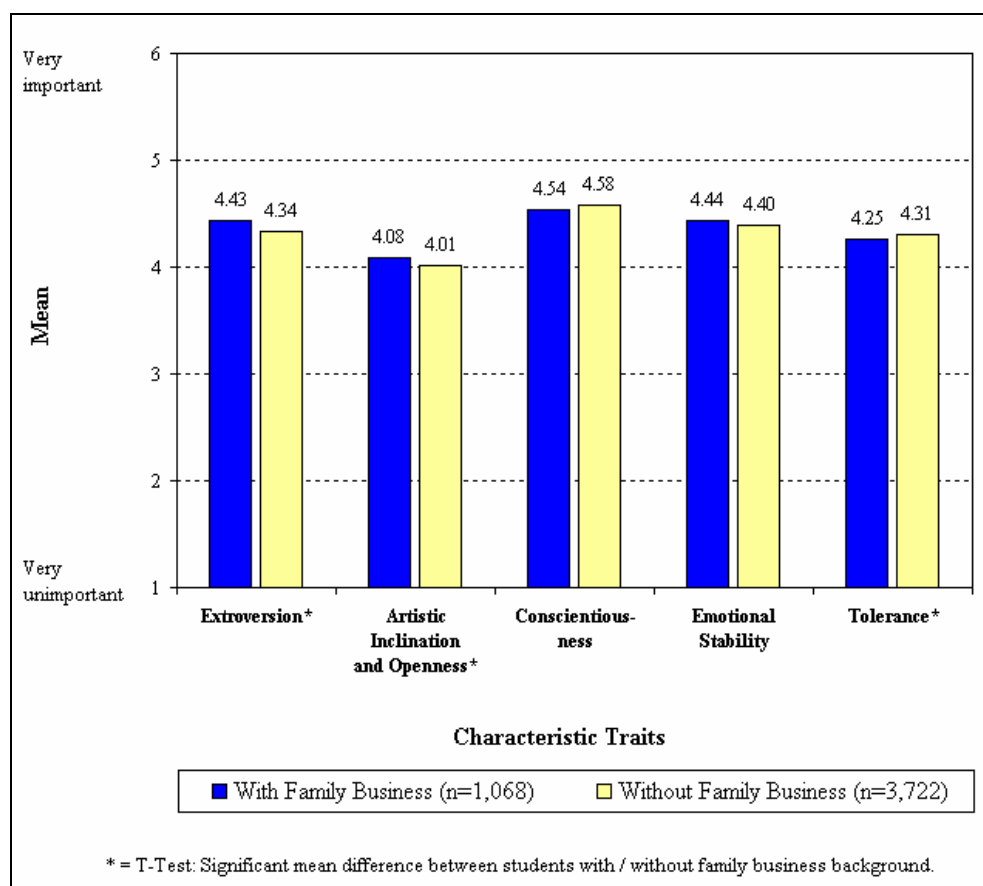


Illustration 2: Characteristic traits of students with (out) family business background (n=5,059)

A look at the mean values shows that significant deviations arose for three factors. According to our findings, students who grew up with a family business tend to be significantly more extroverted, open to new ideas or situations but less tolerant than students who grew up without a family business background. The findings therefore show that a family business has little effect on the youth personality during their socialisation process (for statistical details see Appendix). On the other hand we can not identify any impact on their Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability.

Motives for career choice

Illustration 3 shows the mean value differences between students with and without family business histories, concerning their motives behind career choice. With a significance level of $p < 0.001$, a significant difference was discovered in the areas of independence, leisure time, creativity and safety orientation. For children coming from a family business, the idea of spare time is not as important as it is to those coming from nonfamily business background. On the other hand, the desire for independence is stronger among students who have grown up with exposure to family businesses, as well as the importance of creativity. For those children with family business backgrounds, the need for security is not as acute as for the others.

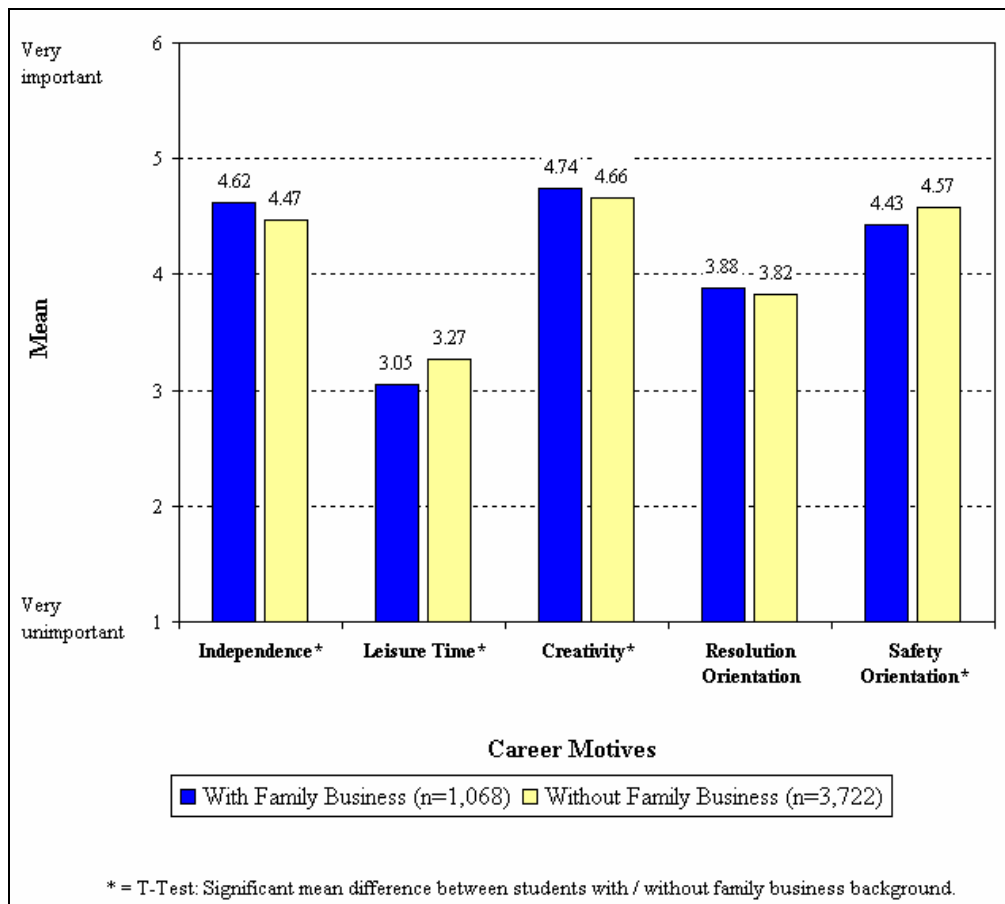


Illustration 3: Career motives for students with (out) family business background (n = 5,059)

The results show that the influence of the family business background has an effect on student career choice motives through the socialization process (for statistical details see Appendix).

Succession decision

The question now is, whether the career choice motives and the personality have an influence on the succession decision of students where their family still holds a family business. Of the total of 5,059 students from this study, only 1,068 students (21.1 %) have still a family business background and can be seen as potential successors (see Illustration 1). However, a smaller number of students can be confidently termed to be 'successors', by

either taking over the family business immediately after or within five years of graduation (n=153).

Characteristics

In Illustration 4, the mean values of the characteristics of successors and non-successors are presented, wherein only one significant difference could be detected. Students with a higher level of conscientiousness will more go into the succession. For all the other personality traits there is no significant difference between successors and non-successors.

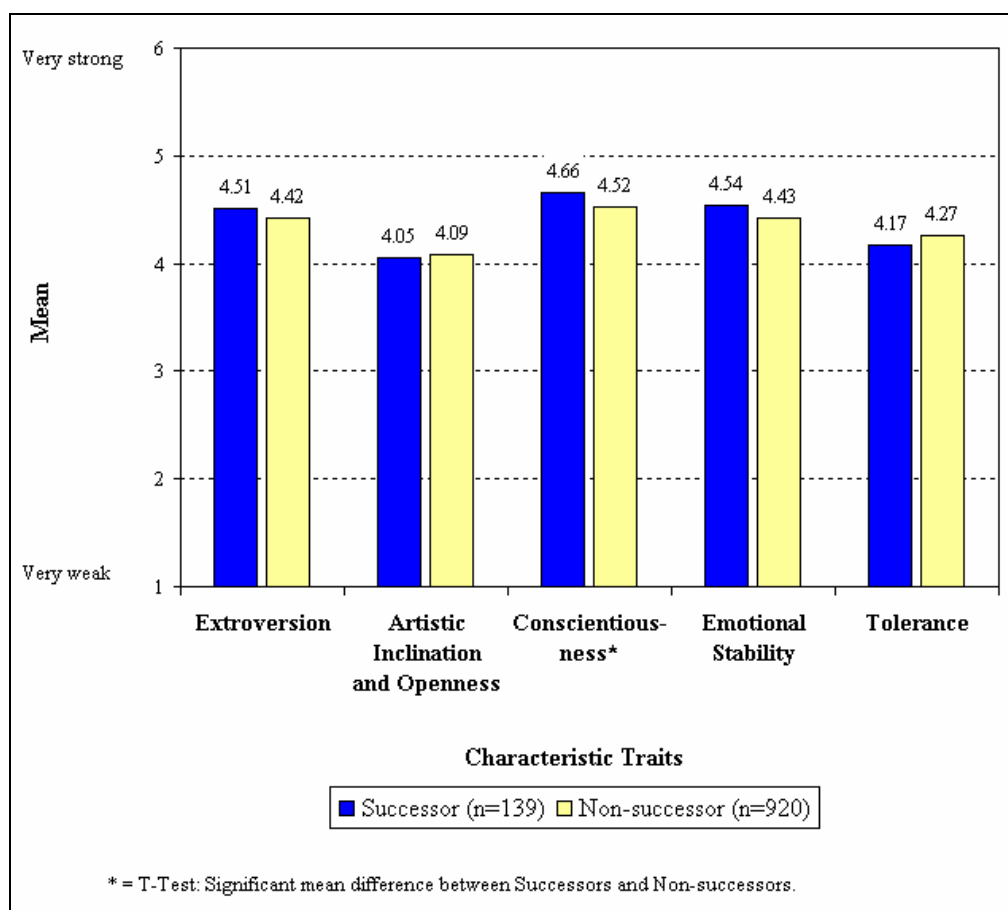


Illustration 4: Characteristics of (non-) successors (n = 1.068)

The emotional burden of the succession process for both the retiring and succeeding generations is very high (Ciampa and Watkins 1999). In this context, the students being considered as successors in our investigation can rely upon a relatively high level of emotional stability. However, there is not a substantially high level of stability among the entire group. Even though the significance is not substantial, students that are ready to take charge, will be doing so with a higher level of emotional stability than their counterparts who decide not to enter into the family business.

Motive for career choice

Illustration 5 takes a comparative look at successors and students with family business backgrounds, but with no intention on taking over the family firm. It can be stated that for three career choice motives a statistical significant difference can be identified. The results

show, that successors have a stronger will to attain independence and display a stronger value on resolution orientation, than non-successors. On the other hand, successors have lower expectations on leisure time than non-successors.

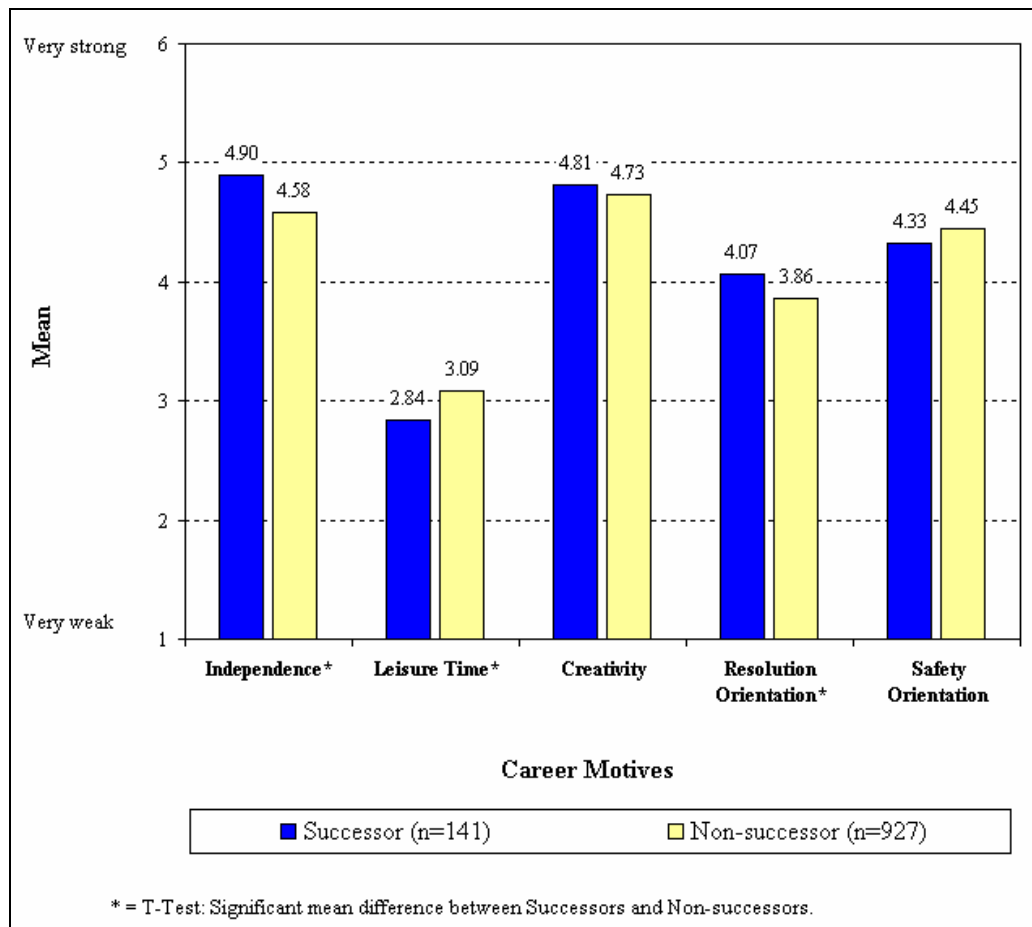


Illustration 5: Motive for career choice amongst (non-) successors (n = 1.068)

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The first goal of the preceding discussion was to investigate whether socialisation with a family business background affects personal trait and career choices (e.g, succession or not). Applying the five traits theory to the students showed that socialisation with a family business background affected personal traits of these adolescents. It leads to a higher extroversion and higher artistic inclination but lower tolerance. In addition it was tested whether the five traits theory helps determining career choices, e.g, succession. However, the five factor theory on personal traits did not prove to be very prolific to explain and finally predict who might become successor. At least the study showed that based on the five traits theory there is only one trait in which successors and non-successors differ, namely conscientiousness. This is still insightful as it provides additional evidence that for many successors taking over the business rather is a question of conscientiousness than a question of self-actualization and challenge. This is in line with the finding that succession can be an emotional burden not only for the retiring but indeed also the succeeding generations (Ciampa and Watkins 1999).

The second goal was to examine whether career motives differ between students with or without socialisation in a family business environment and if these career motives affect

career choices (e.g, succession or not). A family firm background was found to induce a lower leisure time orientation, higher strive for independence, higher creativity and a lower safety orientation. Additionally it was tested in what career motives successor and non-successors were differing. It could be shown that the successors displayed a higher independence, displayed a higher resolution orientation and a lower leisure time orientation.

Finally, regarding the predictability of career choices the results from career motives analysis were more marked (3 out of 5 significant differences) compared to the outcome of the five trait analysis (1 out of 5 significant differences). It seems that career motives are better predictors to understand the succession decision than the personality traits. Further it can be hypothesized that career choice motives are less resistant to external influence like friends and social activities than the personality traits.

To further improve our understanding of the decision processes during succession, further research is needed to investigate for example the role of tradition and cultural values. Compared to the findings of entrepreneurship research, in family firms other factors seem to be decisive in the decision making processes. This question can not be thoroughly answered with the empirical sample used for this study as it solely contains students from Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences. It can be expected that results would look different in a purely commercial family environment.

The practical use of the present study is twofold: first of all it could be shown that an adapted integration of potential successors into business affairs has an influence on career motives. Second, the finding that career motives are better predictors to understand the succession decision than the personality traits provides business families and also consultants a tool to measure the inclination by potential successors to enter the family business.

APPENDIX:**Statistical Details to Illustration 2:**

1=very weak; 6 = very strong	Family business	n	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	T-Test Sig. (2-sided)
Extroversion	Presence of Family business	1,059	4.43	0.84	0.001
	No Family business	3,678	4.34	0.84	
Openness	Presence of Family business	1,063	4.08	0.83	0.010
	No Family business	3,705	4.01	0.83	
Conscientiousness	Presence of Family business	1,060	4.54	0.76	0.202
	No Family business	3,702	4.57	0.76	
Emotional Stability	Presence of Family business	1,061	4.44	0.69	0.069
	No Family business	3,700	4.40	0.71	
Tolerance	Presence of Family business	1,061	4.25	0.71	0.022
	No Family business	3,699	4.31	0.68	

Statistical Details to Illustration 3:

1=very unimportant; 6 = very important	Family business	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Test Sig. (2-sided)
Independence	Presence of Family business	1,068	4.62	0.67	0.000
	No Family business	3,722	4.47	0.67	
Leisure Time	Presence of Family business	1,068	3.05	0.78	0.000
	No Family business	3,722	3.27	0.79	
Creativity	Presence of Family business	1,068	4.74	0.74	0.002
	No Family business	3,722	4.66	0.73	
Resolution Orientation	Presence of Family business	1,068	3.88	1.00	0.081
	No Family business	3,722	3.83	0.99	
Safety Orientation	Presence of Family business	1,068	4.43	0.91	0.000
	No Family business	3,722	4.57	0.89	

Statistical Details to Illustration 4:

1=very weak; 6 = very strong	Family business	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Test Sig. (2-sided)
Extroversion	Non-successor	920	4.42	0.83	0.246
	Successor	139	4.51	0.80	
Artistic Inclination and Openness	Non-successor	922	4.09	0.84	0.606
	Successor	141	4.05	0.77	
Conscientiousness	Non-successor	921	4.52	0.77	0.045
	Successor	139	4.66	0.67	
Emotional Stability	Non-successor	921	4.42	0.69	0.065
	Successor	140	4.54	0.67	
Tolerance	Non-successor	921	4.27	0.72	0.139
	Successor	140	4.17	0.62	

Statistical Details to Illustration 5:

1=very unimportant; 6 = very important	Family business	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Test Sig. (2-sided)
Independence	Non-successor	927	4.58	0.66	0.000
	Successor	141	4.90	0.65	
Leisure Time	Non-successor	927	3.09	0.77	0.000
	Successor	141	2.84	0.77	
Creativity	Non-successor	927	4.73	0.75	0.207
	Successor	141	4.81	0.70	
Resolution Orientation	Non-successor	927	3.86	0.99	0.018
	Successor	141	4.07	1.01	
Safety Orientation	Non-successor	927	4.49	0.93	0.152
	Successor	141	4.33	0.86	

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