

Knowledge Management in Family Firms

Special Section call for papers from the Journal of Knowledge Management

The submission portal for this special issue will open March 31st, 2020.

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About the Special Issue

Prior research portrays Knowledge Management (KM) as a crucial strategic factor in organizational operations (Martinez-Conesa, Soto-Acosta, and Carayannis, 2017) as it broadly refers to creating, sharing, using and managing the knowledge and information both within an organization and across organizations (Del Giudice and Maggioni, 2014) by guiding the strategy, structure, culture and systems as well as the capacities and attitudes of people with regard to their knowledge (Uit Beijerse, 2000). In this respect, adequate planning and operationalization in KM allow both maximizing a firm's capabilities to achieve a competitive advantage (Teece, 2000) and developing a firm's ability to address current and future business challenges and survival (Durst, and Edvardsson, 2012). This explains why KM has been the subject of extensive theoretical and empirical studies and is now widely considered as a relevant determinant of superior

firm performance (Massaro et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the extensive body of KM research has primarily focused on the study of large corporations while neglecting the study of other types of businesses such as family firms, that are often smaller in size and characterized by idiosyncratic firm behavior (Cerchione, Esposito, and Spadaro, 2016).

Based on the premise that KM is influenced by organizational characteristics (Desouza, and Awazu, 2006), the distinctive features of family businesses (e.g. Zellweger, Eddleston, and Kellermanns, 2010; Kotlar, and De Massis 2013) and their widespread growth worldwide (Holt et al., 2018; De Massis et al. 2018) make this research area especially promising (Biscotti, D'Ámico, and Monge, 2018). In particular, KM in the family business context is a relevant and promising research area as there are strong theoretical reasons to believe that the antecedents, the process and the outcomes of KM in family firms differ from those in their nonfamily counterparts. The family business is commonly characterized by visible and active owners, long-term orientation, collective identity, family values, commitment, emotional ownership and a desire for the firm to endure across generations (e.g. Berrone, Cruz, and Gomez-Mejia, 2012; Chirico, and Salvato, 2016). These organizations are to a great extent influenced by the family, which makes their behavior particularistic (e.g., De Massis, Kotlar, Chua and Chrisman, 2014; Hoy, 2006) due to family firms' distinctive attributes such as centralized authority structures, incentives for parsimonious use of resources, and asymmetrical accountability norms (Carney, 2005; Gedajlovic et al., 2012; Gedajlovic, Lubatkin, and Schulze, 2004). Thus, the family's influence that can manifest itself in the organization may affect the KM activities and practices within these firms (e.g., Döring and Witt 2019; Brinkerink, 2018; De Massis et al., 2016; Kammerlander, and Ganter, 2015; Kotlar, De Massis, Frattini and Kammerlander, 2019). Unfortunately, however, very few studies have directly addressed the unique KM issues (e.g., drivers, impediments, promotion, design, implementation, outcomes...) within the specific field of family business. A recent exception is the study by Casprini et al. (2017) who reveal the specific challenges of a family firm in acquiring and transferring knowledge in its open innovation processes, unearthing two distinctive capabilities that helped the family firm overcome the barriers to knowledge acquisition and transfer.

Thus, we encourage the submission of empirical, conceptual, and literature review papers that explore knowledge management in family business from various theoretical,

methodological and practical lenses, and that examine its complexity and the methodologies suited to analyze this phenomenon in worldwide arenas. Topics and questions that might be addresses in this special issue are:

- How does KM in family businesses differ from KM in non-family businesses?
- How does KM vary across family firms and as a family firm evolves over time?
- How does KM create value and by which criteria is this assessed in family vs. nonfamily firms?
- What factors enhance or prevent the development of KM and decision-making in family businesses?
- How do family firms engage in KM to support the growth of the enterprising family?
- What family-related factors and contingencies determine the way KM is operationally managed?
- What are the components of family and organizational culture that are at work in promoting, designing and implementing KM systems?
- What are the main sources of family business owners' and managers' cognitive biases and how does family involvement matter in KM? Do differences in the extent and type of family involvement (e.g., in ownership, management, governance) produce different effects in KM?
- How do capabilities and attitudes towards KM evolve and interact over time? Does the family's influence on KM processes in family firms change with time, especially as later generations take over? If yes, how and why?
- How do these patterns relate to the complexity of the family business system?
- What is the role of social dynamics (such as social exchange, social comparison and social identity processes) in KM within family firms?
- How does a family firm's embeddedness in a local innovation ecosystem affect KM and its outcomes?
- What are the various (formal and informal) configurations of KM and decision-making in different types of family businesses (e.g., closely held vs. dispersedly owned, early vs. later generation family firms, etc.)?
- Through which processes and mechanisms (at micro, meso, and macro levels) does KM operate?

- How does KM affect family business relationships with external (e.g., supply chain) partners and their transactions (e.g., speed of decisions, locus of control, and so forth)?
- How does the environmental context interact with KM in family firms?
- Do the distinctive features of family firm actors and groups, and their interactions, determine the KM processes in family firms and if so, how and why?
- How do the social interactions processes between family-centered and business-centered organizational goals determine the KM in family firms?
- What are the benefits and risks of family owners' emotional attachment and power that may influence the KM process of a family firm? How do such effects evolve over time?
- How do the family and nonfamily managers' heuristics influence the family firm's KM processes and decisions?
- How do differences in the time orientation of different family firm actors result in different KM behavior?
- What is the role played by learning and unlearning dynamics at individual, group, and organizational levels in shaping family firm KM processes and outcomes?
- What determines a controlling family's ability to influence firm KM?
- How do different aspects of family heterogeneity (i.e., different family functions, structures, interactions, and events) affect the family's ability and/or willingness to influence firm KM?
- How do different configurations of the family's ability and willingness to influence affect the drivers of family firms' KM and ultimately its outcomes?
- Are different degrees of the family's ability and willingness related to different types of KM?
- How does the KM of family firms change as the business and/or the family systems evolve over time?
- How do situational events such as family firm succession or entry of nonfamily manager(s) affect KM in family firms?
- Which family characteristics (in terms of structures, functions, interactions, and events) are conducive to more effective and/or efficient KM processes?
- How does the organizational design of boards and TMTs affect KM processes and outcomes?

- What is the interplay of boards/TMTs demographic characteristics (e.g., board/TMT composition) and boards/TMTs organizational design configurations in shaping KM processes and outcomes?
- What are the microfoundations of KM in a family business setting?

These areas and questions are examples of apparent research gaps and prominent opportunities for extending current knowledge at the interface of family firms and knowledge management. Many other possibilities and topics would also be good fits for this SS. The SS seeks papers that adopt or develop new or original theoretical perspectives that will result in major leaps forward in our understanding of how family firms manage knowledge in broader terms. We welcome both conceptual and empirical papers. For questions regarding appropriate content concerns and proposed topics, please contact the special issue guest editors.

Timetable:

Submission deadline: August 31, 2020

Decisions: October 31, 2020

Publication: expected within 2021

Special issue Workshop:

June 25, 2020 at University of Cantabria (Santander, Spain) during the International Family Enterprise Research Academy (IFERA) international conference 2020.

To help authors advance their manuscripts, the proponents of the Special Issue will organize a special issue workshop. Prospective authors and interested contributors will be invited to present their papers and react to their colleagues' papers during the workshop, but presentation at the workshop will not guarantee acceptance of the paper for publication in JKM. Attending the workshop will not be a precondition for acceptance into the Special Issue.

Submissions:

Submissions should be accompanied by an assurance of originality and exclusivity and should adhere to the 'Style and Format' author guidelines that can be found on the journal's website at:

http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=jkm.

All submissions are through the online submission system ScholarOne. Full submission details are in the author guidelines. Please ensure you submit to this special section using the drop down menu on ScholarOne. All submissions will be subject to a rigorous double-blind peer review process, with one or more of the guest editors acting as action editor. As a JKM publishing rule, every paper submitted to the Special Section is firstly screened and validated by the Editor-in-Chief or by the Consulting Editor for compliance with the Special Section topics and with the general aims and scope of the JKM. Unsuitable submitted papers will be rejected prior to be assigned to the Guest Editors. Every paper accepted by the Guest Editor should anyway be finally approved for publication by the Editor-in-Chief.

For more information, visit the journal's [author guidelines page](#).

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Editors' biographical notes:

Alfredo De Massis is Full Professor of Entrepreneurship, Family Business and Strategic Management and the Director of the Centre for Family Business Management at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy. He is also affiliated with Lancaster University Management School, UK. In September 2015, *Family Capital* ranked him among the world's top 25 star professors for family business, and in March 2018 the *International Family Enterprise Research Academy* (IFERA) in a review of "Rising Stars in Family Business Research" included six of his articles among the most influential recent ones on family firms worldwide. He serves as Associate Editor of *Family Business Review* and on the Editorial Boards of *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* and *Journal of Family Business Strategy*. His research has been published widely in leading academic and professional journals including *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Research Policy*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, *Long Range Planning*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Family Business Review*, *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *California Management Review*, *Small Business Economics*. He has been Guest Editor of 17 special issues on family business- and strategy-related topics in journals including *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Global Strategy Journal*, *California Management Review*, *International Journal of Management Reviews* and *Small Business Economics*. His interdisciplinary research has been featured in various media outlets including the *Financial Times*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Campden FB*, *Family Capital*, *Reuters*, *Nasdaq*, *Yahoo Finance*, *CNBC*, and he is regularly interviewed in TV programs, newspapers and magazines on family business issues.

Frank Hoy is the inaugural Paul R. Beswick Professor of Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Worcester Polytechnic Institute's School of Business. Formerly, he served as dean of the College of Business Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso, held the Carl R. Zwerner Professorship in Family Business at Georgia State University, and was state director of the Georgia Small Business Development Center while on the faculty of the University of Georgia. Dr. Hoy's professional service includes having been chair of the Entrepreneurship Division of the Academy of Management, senior vice president of the International Council for Small Business, vice president of the Family Firm Institute, president of the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE), and co-president of the Family Enterprise Research Conference. He is a recipient of USASBE's Max S. Wortman, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Hoy's research contributions to family business include *Entrepreneurial Family Firms* (Co-authored with Pramodita Sharma, 2010) and *The Routledge Companion to Family Business* (Co-edited with Franz Kellermanns, 2017). His most recent co-edited and co-authored books are the *Handbook of Research on Franchising*, 2017, and *Small Business Management: Launching & Growing Entrepreneurial Ventures*, 19th Ed., 2020. Hoy is a Fellow of the Family Firm Institute, the International Council for Small Business, the International Family Enterprise Research Academy, and the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Nadine Kammerlander is Full Professor of Family Business, Academic Director of the Institute of Family Business and Mittelstand, and Speaker of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group at WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management. In 2018, Nadine Kammerlander was named as “Top 40 under 40” talent by the magazine *Capital*. Prof. Kammerlander has published in academic journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Small Business Economics*, and *Family Business Review*, amongst others. Her research has been awarded with numerous awards such as the Carolyn Dexter Best International Paper Award, the Latsis Prize, the Jürgen-Hauschildt-Award, the Schulze Award, the FFI Best Unpublished Paper Award, and the FFI Best Dissertation Award. Moreover, her research has received considerable media attention, amongst others by *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Family Capital*, as well as major newspapers in the German-speaking area. Nadine Kammerlander regularly serves as a keynote speaker for companies, universities, ministries, and associations, for instance on topics such as innovation, digitalization, succession, growth, entrepreneurship, and investment of family businesses and family offices. Since 2015, Nadine Kammerlander has been serving as an Associate Editor for *Family Business Review*. Moreover, she is an Editorial Board member of *Journal of Management*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, as well as *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*.

Professor Unai Arzubiaga is Assistant Professor (with national habilitation as

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