

# Special Issue: Emotions in the Strategic Management of Family Business Organizations: Opening up the Black Box

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## Background and Rationale for the Special Issue

Affective factors have been recognized as a key aspect of strategic decision making (Daniels, 1998; 1999; Hodgkinson and Sparrow, 2002; Langley et al., 1995). Specifically, emotions are viewed as an important behavioral process in strategizing (Suddaby et al., 2013). Although an increasing number of strategic actors have confessed openly to the importance of emotions in their decision making and operations, together with rising calls for a comprehensive study of emotions in the strategic management literature (e.g., Huy, 2012), the strategy literature continues to overlook the 'how' regarding the interplay of emotions at different levels (e.g., individuals, teams, business) and important associated strategic dynamics (e.g., repositioning, succession, corporate restructuring and divestiture, corporate social responsibility, internationalization, innovation strategy), as well as their translation into collective phenomena.

While in general emotions are a promising route to better understand strategic management and its underlying mechanisms and outcomes, researching into emotions is particularly relevant in the context of family business organizations (hereafter, FBOs). FBOs are particularly emotion-dense (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). As the family has a substantial ownership stake and is in control of the firm, the family identifies strongly with the firm and perceives the firm's wealth as an extension of the owners' wellbeing (e.g., Davis et al., 1997; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2005). Moreover, the family

and the business are so entwined that in FBOs emotions among family members can be witnessed at their utmost intensity (Brundin & Sharma, 2012). These emotions are important drivers (and outcome) of individual and collective strategic decisions and actions in FBOs (Shepherd, 2016), and have an impact on FBO outcomes.

Most studies exploring the role of emotions in FBOs focus on the socioemotional wealth (SEW; Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007) concept, i.e. the affective endowment of family members, their emotional attachment and shared identification with the firm, their social ties with stakeholders, and their desire to renew family bonds through dynastic succession. However, the influence of emotions in FBOs *goes beyond* the role of SEW to include specific positive emotions (e.g., joy, gratitude, inspiration) as well as negative emotions that are abundant in family business organizations (e.g., conflict, rivalry, jealousy). Although limited, family business research suggests that emotions influence strategic processes in FBOs (e.g., Brundin & Melin, 2006; Brundin & Liu, 2015).

Most of the studies cited above have been conducted by family business or entrepreneurship scholars, and the emotions and strategy literatures have not been tied closely to family business. Specifically, the growing body of research on emotions in strategy (e.g., Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2008; Delgado-García & De La Fuente-Sabaté, 2010; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011; Kim, 2012), has largely ignored the FBO context and its unique concerns. This is problematic as FBOs are peculiar firms, hence, the strategic management implications for conventional organizations cannot simply be transferred to the FBO context. At the same time, studying emotions in the FBO context may challenge prior knowledge on emotions and strategizing in conventional organizations, leading to potentially counter-intuitive theorizing and a rethinking of the role of emotions in the strategic management field.

## **Objectives of the Special Issue**

This Special Issue will push forward research at the intersection of emotions, strategic management, and family business, to integrate these fields. We welcome empirical, conceptual and literature review papers that shed light on the influence of emotions at different levels of analysis in the context of FBOs focusing on different areas in the field of strategic management. We also welcome studies that employ *new methods*, such as physiological measurements (e.g., heartrate, blood pressure, sweating), measures of facial movements in experimental settings, ethnography, and experience sampling methodologies.

Indicative and illustrative questions.

- How do individual characteristics of FBO members affect how other individuals and teams (e.g., top management team, board of directors, family council) strategically respond to various emotional experiences in FBOs?
- How do groups whose members experience diverse emotions create collective emotions in FBOs? How do collective emotions influence the strategic decision-making and outcomes of individuals in FBOs and FBOs themselves?
- What is the relationship between family altruism and emotions? Between family identity and emotions? Between emotions and 'bifurcation bias'?
- What is the interplay of multiple emotions resulting from different emotional experiences of family members in the business family and the FBO?

- Do FBOs have a unique organizational emotional capability (i.e., the organizational ability to recognize, monitor, discriminate, and attend to emotions of employees at both the individual and the collective levels)?
- How do emotions differently affect strategic relations/networks with stakeholders in FBOs vs. non-FBOs? What interactions are most affected (e.g., with employees, customers) and how does this change strategic decision-making processes?
- How does the range, intensity, frequency and duration of emotions vary between FBOs and their non-family counterparts and among different types of FBOs? How does this potential heterogeneity affect strategic decision making?
- Which emotions (e.g., positive vs. negative) emerging from the family environment have stronger effects on FBOs? In which circumstances, and how do positive and negative emotions and their interplay affect FBO survival, innovation and growth strategies?
- How do strategic changes (e.g., the entry of a non-family manager in a FBO, succession) affect emotions of family and non-family members? How are such events affected by emotions?
- FBO behavior is characterized by strategic dilemmas (e.g., family-centered vs. nonfamily-centered utilities, long-term vs. short-term orientation, exploration vs. exploitation) and/or paradoxes (e.g., ability/willingness paradox in FBO innovation): what role do emotions or emotion-related processes play in explaining/resolving such paradoxes?
- Emotional balancing involves some organizational groups displaying high emotional commitment to pursue change projects, with other groups attending to the emotions of change recipients in order to maintain continuity (Huy, 2002). How does emotional balancing continuity and change affect ‘innovation through tradition’ (ITT, De Massis et al., 2016) in FBOs?
- How can “emotional theories” (e.g., appraisal theory, affect infusion model, network theory of affect, affective events theory, affect theory of social exchange) or neuroscience contribute to a better understanding of strategic decision making and strategy implementation in FBOs?

### **Deadlines and Submission Instructions:**

Manuscripts will be reviewed according to LRP’s double-blind review process.

Submissions should be prepared using the Guide for Authors (see: <https://www.elsevier.com/journals/long-range-planning/0024-6301/guide-for-authors>).

The deadline for submission is 30th June 2021.

Manuscripts should be submitted via

<https://www.editorialmanager.com/lrp/default.aspx>

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