



**Knowledge Management in Family Business Succession:
Current trends and future directions**

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Knowledge Management in Family Business Succession: Current Trends and Future Directions

Abstract

Purpose – This article aims at reviewing the literature on knowledge management in family business, addressing the research question: “*How is knowledge managed across generations in family business?*”. We synthesize the literature, highlighting the role of multiple stakeholders who affect knowledge management along the phases of the succession process. Stemming from these findings and embracing a practice-based view, we offer research directions to guide future contributions on knowledge construction in family business. The purpose of this article is not only to conclude the previous research but also to provide insights for future research directions and to provide practical implications.

Methodology – Through a systematic integrative literature review, we collect, map, and analytically examine 63 published peer-reviewed articles related to knowledge management in family business from 39 academic journals. We apply a rigorous approach in order to identify the sample of articles, map descriptive information of the reviewed literature, and map theoretical contributions according to a multi-stakeholder and multi-stage framework.

Findings – The sampled articles are analyzed according to a *multi-stakeholder and multi-stage framework* inspired by Daspit et al. (2016). We identify critical gaps emerging from our analysis, thus opening the way to future research directions. In particular, we prompt scholars to advance our understanding of family-related knowledge and to clarify the assumptions on knowledge in their research.

Research Implications – We contribute to the debate on knowledge management in family business, by systematizing the current literature. In addition, we embrace a ‘knowledge from practice perspective’, and offer research directions to guide future contributions on knowledge construction in family business succession and potential areas to further management research investigating the role of family-related knowledge. Practical implications are also provided to benefit family businesses, consultants, and policymakers.

Originality/value – This article provides a systematic integrative literature review of the articles published on knowledge management in family business according to a *multi-stakeholder and multi-stage* framework. Moreover, it draws an agenda for future research advancing a ‘knowledge from a practice perspective’ in the family business literature.

Keywords. Knowledge management, practice perspective, family business, succession, transgenerational dynamics, social interactions.

Introduction

Knowledge is perhaps one of the most debated, yet loosely defined concepts in management research (Barley et al., 2018). It is widely regarded as a condition for superior performance and competitive advantage (Davenport, 1998; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), the foundation to innovative and entrepreneurial endeavors (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2005; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009), and the backbone of businesses in modern society (Nelson, 1982). This warrants research focus on knowledge management within an organization where different actors are involved (Szulanski, 2000; Szulanski et al., 2016). Family businesses, as a unique yet common form of organization, feature a distinctive characteristic – the intertwining family and business systems (Chrisman et al., 2005). Given the different expectations, understandings, and relationships in a family and a business environment (e.g., Hatak & Roessl, 2015; Pérez-Pérez et al., 2019), research in family business faces a unique and complex challenge in understanding knowledge management, especially between generations during successions (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001; Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2018).

In family business literature, knowledge is defined as (family) wisdom (Miller et al., 2016), skills (Cunningham et al., 2016), expertise (Chirico & Salvato, 2016), and information (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001). Scholarly attention to knowledge management in family business succession stresses that the transfer of knowledge between the incumbent and next generation is problematic, yet essential for a successful transition (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001; Handler, 1990). It is widely accepted that family business incumbents, regarded as the leader and the key source of firm-specific knowledge holders, need to pass down knowledge to the next generations through mentorship (De Massis, Sieger, et al., 2016; Distelberg & Schwarz, 2015). The change of key knowledge holder is empirically proven to have negative organisational implications (Massingham, 2008; Zahra & Filatotchev, 2004) as well as posing a grave challenge for family businesses (Daspit et al., 2016). This trend of literature, however, tends to

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2
3 oversee the role of second generations (Woodfield & Husted, 2017) and other family business
4 employees (Holt et al., 2018), who possess different knowledge that posits potential
5 contributions to business development (Long & Chrisman, 2014). Another challenge lies in
6 understanding the social aspects of family business succession. Through a business's social
7 life, incumbents develop social capital and networks that are difficult to transfer (Roscoe et al.,
8 2015; Steier, 2001). Although there is evidence that social relationships play a key role in
9 ensuring the continuity of important resources like knowledge during succession (Chirico &
10 Salvato, 2016; Daspit et al., 2016; De Massis, Sieger, et al., 2016). Interactions among different
11 stakeholders, within and outside the family play a crucial role in better framing and
12 understanding transgenerational knowledge management in family business (Cabrera-Suárez
13 et al., 2018)..

14
15 It is, thus, timely to have a review of the literature and integration of the findings on
16 knowledge management in the family business field to sensitize the family business community
17 on the fundamental role of knowledge in a succession process as well as to foster the discussion
18 about relational dynamics within the general management and organizational studies,
19 considering the unique family business social interactions along a succession process.
20 Therefore, with a systematic literature review, we aim to address the following research
21 questions: "*How is knowledge managed across generations in family business?*", considering
22 especially the role of multiple stakeholders involved in a generational transfer in this type of
23 organization.

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25 We adopt the process by Tranfield et al. (2003) to conduct the systematic literature
26 review and embrace the integrative view by (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020) not just to
27 offer an overarching view of existing evidence, but also to generate a guiding framework for
28 new primary research and theory development. We thus build on the framework by Daspit et
29 al. (2016), who discussed different levels of social exchange along with the different succession
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3 phases, in order to offer an analytical discussion of the sampled articles focused on knowledge
4 management in family business. In particular, we advance a multi-stakeholder and multi-stage
5 framework to systematize the reviewed articles and identify promising avenues for future
6 research.
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12 In doing so, this literature review aims at contributing to the debate in the following
13 ways. First, we synergize the current literature on knowledge management in family business,
14 considering the influence of different stakeholders involved across the phases of the succession
15 process. This offers a broader overview of the state-of-the-art on knowledge management
16 during a succession process. Second, leveraging on our systematic view of the current stock of
17 literature, we identify critical gaps and advance future research directions. We show that the
18 scattered findings that emerged from our integrative review open new avenues for designing
19 primary research and set the basis for new theory building. In particular, we identify ‘family-
20 related knowledge’ as an important yet under-researched area. Moreover, we suggest that
21 strictly adhering to the tenets of different theoretical stances becomes fundamental to advance
22 our understanding of knowledge construction in family business literature. We thus burst future
23 research to embrace a ‘knowledge from a practice perspective’ (for a comprehensive review of
24 different ways to look at knowledge, see Hadjimichael & Tsoukas, 2019), and to investigate
25 the role of family-related knowledge – both topics that are marginally tackled in the current
26 discussion of knowledge management in family business research. We also contribute to the
27 management literature by understanding knowledge management, looking at family’s
28 influences on organizational actors’ behaviors.
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51 From this, we structure the rest of the paper as follows. In the next section, we present
52 a *multi-stakeholder and multi-stage framework* to map the reviewed literature. We then explain
53 our method to systematically identify and analyze the literature, providing all the stages used
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3 for the review. After having shown the results of our review, we then present our suggestions
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5 for future research and implications for practice.
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8 **Conceptualizing knowledge management along the succession process** 9

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11 Knowledge management is used to safeguard the business over time, given its crucial
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13 importance during a succession process (e.g., Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2018). In particular,
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15 managing knowledge can prove a key success factor for handing over the business to the next
16
17 generation members. Indeed, this is not a unidirectional process where all knowledge is passed
18
19 over from the incumbent to their children during succession, but it is a bidirectional process
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21 (Woodfield & Husted, 2017), which involves a complex and time-dependent set of activities
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23 and practices to succeed (Le Breton-Miller et al., 2004), as well as the social interactions within
24
25 and outside the family and the business (Hall & Nordqvist, 2008; Konopaski et al., 2015).
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30 Knowledge management could manifest in different ways considering the different
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32 phases of a succession process and the various types of social interactions that can be
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34 considered. To better understand what has been discussed so far and what we still need to
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36 investigate in future research, this review relies on an existing framework encompassing the
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38 major phases of the succession process and the most important social exchanges that occur
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40 along this process (Daspit et al., 2016). On the one hand, the framework considers the main
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42 challenges encountered when setting the rules (Phase 1), grooming the successor (Phase 2),
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44 and passing the baton (Phase 3); on the other hand, social interactions are considered (i)
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46 between incumbents and successors, (ii) within family boundaries, and (iii) across family
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48 boundaries. This framework is rooted in the ongoing debate considering the succession as a
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50 process characterized by a complex set of actions, events, and mechanisms involved (Le
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52 Breton-Miller et al., 2004; Nordqvist et al., 2013), in which all phases are influenced by the
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54 type of exchanges occurring within and outside the family, ultimately affecting behavior in the
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56 business (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchanges have been also broadly discussed
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3 in the family business context, as they can explain, for instance, the ethical behavior of family
4 firms (e.g., Long & Mathews, 2011) or the outcome of the relationships between supervisor
5 and employees (e.g., McLarty et al., 2019). Daspit et al. (2016) highlight, in particular, three
6 aspects entailed in social exchanges strongly influencing the succession process, i.e. exchanges
7 of resources, reciprocal obligations and expectations, and relationships where exchanges
8 depend on the development of social networks, reciprocity norms, and shared schemata.
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11 Overall, social interactions can affect the way individuals learn about family business
12 continuity, thanks to the sharing of skills, norms, and values (Konopaski et al., 2015), but little
13 is known about how knowledge is managed along the major phases of the succession process
14 and considering the interactions among different stakeholders imply considering the dynamics
15 between incumbent and successor, within the family, as well as across the family boundaries.
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17 **Methodology: A systematic integrative literature review**

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19 In this study, we conduct a systematic, explicit, and reproducible review of the literature on
20 knowledge construction in family business based on an analytic framework, as presented
21 above, to classify existing contributions and to formulate a future research agenda (Light &
22 Pillemer, 1984). In doing so, we provide an unbiased view of the current “stock” of knowledge
23 in family business (Patriotta, 2020). We adopt Tranfield et al. (2003)’s three-step process to
24 conduct the systematic literature review. The first step is the planning of the review in which
25 the researchers get familiar with the problem domain, frame the research aim, and state research
26 questions (Tranfield et al., 2003). We thus engaged with seminal articles about knowledge in
27 family business (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001; Cater III & Justis, 2009; Chirico, 2008) and
28 developed the research question that we presented above.
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31 The second step consists of the review that includes the selection, extraction, and
32 synthesis of articles on knowledge in family business. Selection needs to focus on relevant
33 articles to support a comprehensive and representative overview of the research domain, while
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3 extraction and synthesis are directed towards gathering the information from the articles and
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5 classify the information with regard to the analytical framework. Hence, after the core
6
7 information of the articles was extracted, each article was synthesized in accordance with the
8
9 classification framework. Therefore, each article was read and reflected on the theoretical
10
11 concepts from the framework presented in the previous section. Finally, according to Tranfield
12
13 et al. (2003), the third step is the reporting and dissemination of the results, giving room to
14
15 draw future research directions and practical implications.
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19 This systematic approach thus allows the *identifying* and *mapping* process of the
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21 existing literature, thus leading us to embrace an integrative view of the literature review,
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23 overcoming the sole presentation of the findings in existing studies, but aiming at providing
24
25 “new insights (theoretical and/or conceptual) that arise from a synthesis and/or critique of
26
27 extant research” (Elsbach & van Knippenberg, 2020, p. 3). In the following sections, we
28
29 explain the exact review process we undertook.
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32 33 **Identifying the sampled articles**

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35 In this stage, we aimed to conduct a comprehensive search in the field by identifying the
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37 relevant literature in an inclusive set of keywords. We started with the key terms – “knowledge”
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39 and “family business”. Guided by family business and knowledge management literature, we
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41 expanded the primary key terms “family business” into “family business*” OR “family own*”
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43 OR “family firm*” OR “family enterprise*”, and “knowledge” into “knowledge” OR
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45 “know*how” OR “knowing” OR “Knowledge construct*” OR “knowledge transfer” OR
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47 “Knowledge acqui*ition” OR “knowledge management” OR “knowledge shar*” OR
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49 “knowledge differentiat*” OR “knowledge integrat*” OR “knowledge process” OR
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51 “knowledge speciali*ation” OR “knowledge flow*” OR “knowledge exchange”. Our search is
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53 conducted following three main steps.
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3 First, as the nature of family business involves a wide spectrum of fields including both
4 business management and social science, we did not limit our search to business literature. We
5 conducted our search in two highly respected and comprehensive search engines - EBSCO and
6 Web of Science, using the keywords listed above. As both “knowledge” and “family” have a
7 broad application in speech, we limited the search of the keywords in titles and abstracts. In
8 addition, we limited our search to English articles in peer-reviewed journals to ensure the
9 quality of the articles (Campopiano et al., 2017). This yielded 532 results. We then merged the
10 results from the two databases and deleted the duplicate articles, which left us with 457 articles
11 in total. This is done by using Web of Science and EBSCO’s exporting function and Endnote’s
12 importing and finding duplicate functions.
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26 Second, following Heisig and Kannan (2020), we then read through the titles and
27 abstracts and decided if the articles were relevant to our research question. We considered
28 irrelevant all articles that are not investigating knowledge-related topics or not about family
29 business. For example, if articles refer to the knowledge of an issue or topic, they were
30 excluded. A total of 80 articles was left in this step.
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38 Third, the two authors downloaded the remaining 80 articles and read them
39 independently. Then we compared and discussed the lists of excluded articles that we produced.
40 In this way, we increased rigor in the identifying process. A further 17 articles were excluded
41 after close read for reasons such as the lack of an explicit link to knowledge. We admitted 63
42 articles as our final sample for this literature review (see Table 1).
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51 *Insert Table 1 about here*
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53 We consolidated our final data set in an excel sheet, in which we extracted two types
54 of information from our detailed reading – descriptive and theoretical. For the descriptive
55 elements, we included the articles’ basic information (e.g., year, authors, journal, keywords,
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3 and abstract), other categories that provide insights (e.g., research methods, research regions,
4 theoretical perspective, definitions of knowledge, knowledge type, and knowledge reservoirs).
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6 This process helped us to establish the current stock of contributions in the field. For the
7 theoretical elements, we tracked information on the succession phase (i.e. set the rules,
8 grooming the successor, passing the baton) and the type of social interactions where knowledge
9 is constructed (i.e., incumbent-successor, within the family, across the family boundaries).
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11 These categories are further illustrated and discussed in the finding and discussion sections.
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20 **Mapping descriptive data**

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23 The topic appears as its infant stage, with the earliest in 2001 (N = 1) and peaked in 2013 (N =
24 11). This is reasonable, as knowledge re-emerged as a topic of interest in business and
25 management research in the 1990s (e.g., Grant, 1996; Nonaka, 1994). Despite the recent
26 decrease in the number of publications, the importance of knowledge in family business is not
27 dismissed. For example, Cabrera-Suárez et al. (2018) were invited by *Family Business Review*
28 to review their 2001 article about knowledge in succession to re-initialize the conversation.
29 This indicates that this field has great potential for future research. The overall trend of this
30 line of research is increasing (See Figure 1).
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41 *Insert Figure 1 about here*

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44 With regards to the academic journals, we have articles from 39 journals in total.
45 Despite the efforts to consciously included searches in the broader social science journals, most
46 of the articles are in the business and management discipline. The top four journals (see Table
47 2) that publish articles related to the topic are *Family Business Review* (N = 10), *Knowledge*
48 *Management Research & Practice* (N = 6), *Journal of Family Business Strategy* (N = 4), and
49 *Journal of Knowledge Management* (N =3).
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58 *Insert Table 2 about here*

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3 With respect to the research methods of the articles, most of them are empirical (79%).
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5 We identified 13 theoretical / conceptual articles (21%). Out of the empirical articles, there are
6
7 three main types of research methods – qualitative (52%), quantitative (42%), and mixed
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9 methods (6%). Different from other research topics in family business, which were reported to
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11 have more quantitative than qualitative methods (Hair & Sarstedt, 2014), we found in our
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13 sample a balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. (See Table 3)
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21 Organizational studies scholars have been warned of “geographically fragmentation in
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23 organizational studies” with the missing attention to certain regions (March, 2005, p. 6).
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25 Country differences imply important contextual/institutional elements that contribute to the
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27 boundary building and testing of important business theories (e.g., Asian family businesses,
28
29 see Sharma & Chua, 2013). Yet, we found research on knowledge management in family
30
31 business, which is underrepresented in certain regions, leaving potential avenues for future
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33 research. This is not to say that these countries are under-researched, but that these regions are
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35 probably less mentioned in English articles. We acknowledge that there could be research done
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37 in local languages that fell out of our search, but we consider this inclusion could be nonetheless
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39 an important feature of the ongoing debate on knowledge management in family business field.
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44 With regards to the distribution of the regions where the research was conducted (see
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46 Figure 2), there are a total of 29 different countries identified in the empirical articles. West
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48 European (Italy = 10; Spain = 9, etc.) and North American (USA = 7) countries are the most
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50 popular research contexts. We identified East Europe, Mid East, East Asia, and Africa as the
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52 underrepresented areas.
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55 *Insert Figure 2 about here*
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3 As regards the type of knowledge, we considered whether it is tacit and/or explicit, whether it
4 is business- and/or family-related, and whether it resides within and/or outside the family
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6 business.
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10 *Tacit and/or explicit knowledge.* One of the most accepted ways to understand
11 knowledge is by its tacit and explicit distinction, where tacit knowledge can be understood as
12 knowledge that is hard to express and explicit knowledge is understood as knowledge that can
13 be articulated or codified. It is widely accepted that tacit knowledge is key in family business
14 and that it needs careful management (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001). Yet, tacit knowledge is
15 hard to transfer (sticky to its origins) (Szulanski, 1996) and it is hard to be even aware of
16 (Polanyi, 2015).
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26 *Business- and/or family-related knowledge.* Family businesses present unique types of
27 knowledge due to family involvement, which contributes not only to differentiate family and
28 non-family firms, but also to explain family business heterogeneity. On the one hand, family
29 business needs general business knowledge, such as knowledge about the industry (Le Breton–
30 Miller & Miller, 2015), business/trade-related education (Perez & Puig, 2004), and business
31 processes (Guo & Miller, 2010). On the other hand, family involvement brings unique family
32 features to the business, resulting in knowledge from, for example, family values and goals
33 (Kotlar & De Massis, 2013), or family history (Hjorth & Dawson, 2016). This type of family-
34 related knowledge, undoubtedly, is an important source of competitive advantage in family
35 businesses.
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51 *Knowledge within and/or outside the family business.* Despite the emphasis on the
52 importance of the incumbents' business-related knowledge (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001), other
53 sources of knowledge are either within or outside the family business that attracts scholarly
54 attention. Innovation, for example, requires collaboration with outside companies (Lopes et al.,
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3 2017). Also, external stakeholders, like advisors, could make different contributions to the
4 family business (Nason et al., 2019).
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8 **A Multi-stakeholder and Multi-stage Framework of Current Literature**

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11 The systematic analysis of the sampled articles reveals different ways knowledge is managed
12 considering the different stakeholders involved across the different phases of the succession
13 process. In the following sections, we are going to present the contributions of the sampled
14 articles to knowledge construction, considering the three main succession phases presented in
15 the framework above, i.e. setting the rules, grooming the successor, and passing the baton.
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17 Table 4 outlines the review of the literature.
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28 **Succession phase 1. Setting the rules**

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31 In this section, we include 19 articles that focus on the way knowledge is constructed in the
32 preliminary stage of the succession process, i.e. to set up the ground rules to plan the transition
33 from generation to generation.
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38 *Between incumbent and successor.* When considering the interaction between
39 incumbent and successor, scholars have identified a few dimensions that can determine how
40 knowledge is managed. A key aspect that emerges is the extent to which incumbents ensure
41 that successors refrain from opportunistic behavior, thus suggesting that trust plays a relevant
42 role to construct knowledge when planning the succession: incumbents, indeed, need to build
43 relational competence, i.e. the ability of a party to initiate and maintain relationships, to ensure
44 effective knowledge transfer (Hatak & Roessl, 2015). Indeed, the incumbent is responsible for
45 both tacit and explicit knowledge in processes of knowledge integration, e.g. through family
46 meetings that help translate tacit into explicit knowledge, in family firms with high
47 transgenerational control intention (Carr & Ring, 2017). Related to this, stemming from a
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3 transaction cost approach, planning a succession depends on the idiosyncratic knowledge of
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5 how to run the business and access network relations within the business environment, as well
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7 as contingent on the institutional context, e.g. subject to inheritance laws (Bjuggren & Sund,
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9 2002). Moreover, studying a long-lived case study in Colombia, both private knowledge of
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11 family members and specific knowledge about the business are fundamental to set the ground
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13 for family business continuity, despite the low human capital of successors who led the family
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15 firm over time (González Ferrero et al., 2010).

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19 *Within the family boundary.* Including other family members, a study highlights that
20
21 leadership styles determine the rules of succession processes, although these are strongly
22
23 dependent on contextual contingencies, e.g. distinguishing among baby boomers, generation
24
25 X, generation Y (Klenke, 2018). Similarly, it emerges that a more participative leadership style
26
27 encourages more open knowledge sharing, especially in small family businesses (Cunningham
28
29 et al., 2016, 2017). Instead, in a sample of Taiwanese family firms, paternalistic leadership
30
31 emerges as the dominant approach to transfer knowledge (Lin, 2013). From a different
32
33 perspective, what is important in planning succession is to make the sources of knowledge
34
35 explicit, by establishing knowledge management systems that allow to transfer not just
36
37 individual knowledge, but also transfer know-what, know-why, know-how, know-who, and
38
39 know-where, with a focus on familiness (Nicholson & Rao-Graham, 2016), namely the bundle
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41 of resources and capabilities that are available in the business thanks to the family (Habbershon
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43 & Williams, 1999).

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49 *Across the family boundary.* Considering the exchanges across the boundaries of the
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51 family, first, embracing the concept of intellectual capital, successors might need to manage
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53 three types of knowledge, namely structural capital, social capital, and human capital: it is
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55 important to grasp, respectively, to what extent knowledge about processes is formalized, what
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57 type of knowledge about branding, customer loyalty or reputation is available, as well as the
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3 competences and abilities of employees on which especially small firms rely on (Bracci &
4 Vagnoni, 2011). Similarly, being able to identify and measure intellectual capital dimensions,
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6 e.g. capabilities and knowledge of both family and non-family members, is fundamental to
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8 build a competitive advantage for family businesses (Claver-Cortes et al., 2013; Claver-Cortes
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10 et al., 2015). This “knowledge related human capital” depends on several aspects – such as
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12 social interactions in the family business, motivation, commitment, psychological ownership,
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14 as well as education and experiences within and outside the business – thus explaining the
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16 knowledge accumulation process that characterizes family firms over time (Chirico, 2008).
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18 Moreover, establishing knowledge management systems to integrate the knowledge of new
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20 employees with retiring and retired ones (Doring & Witt, 2020), as well as setting up
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22 management accounting systems (Giovannoni et al., 2011) can affect the transfer of knowledge
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24 across generations and between the owner family, the management team and the workforce,
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26 thus supporting a successful succession process. Furthermore, in response to strategic renewal
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28 goals, family businesses might show different behaviors in terms of establishing knowledge
29
30 management practices, thus being proactive, adaptive, rather than rigid family firms (Pérez-
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32 Pérez et al., 2019). Also cultural aspects, in particular family wisdom, shape familiar
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34 relationships in the business and determine how knowledge is transferred (Wasim et al., 2018).
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36 Outside the family and the business, sharing knowledge among external advisors improve the
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38 quality of the service offered by each advisor, which can support the set-up of the activities for
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40 the future of the business (Su & Dou, 2013).
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49 Interestingly, in this section, it emerges that a few core practices are planned or
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51 established to construct knowledge to ensure a trustful relationship once the successor joins the
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53 family business. Moreover, in some papers, the attention is directed towards the establishment
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55 of knowledge management systems or management accounting systems to facilitate knowledge
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57 management to prepare for the succession process.
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Succession phase 2. Grooming the successor

Grooming the successor is the most crucial phase of the succession process when knowledge is shared, transferred, acquired, and created, as 17 studies discuss the importance of nurturing and training next generation members.

Between incumbent and successor. Looking at the social interactions between incumbent and successor, first, several articles discuss the main drivers to transfer knowledge to the successor. For example, it is important that family members value commitment and psychological ownership towards the business, appreciate family relationships working in the business, as well as engaging in training courses and gaining experience outside the business or from non-family members (Chirico, 2008). In addition, both intra- and inter-generational dynamics, trust and predecessor involvement in the successor training, as well as business culture and linkages with Family Business Associations are significant antecedents of effective knowledge transfer (Martínez et al., 2013).

In particular hands-on knowledge is regarded by employees as necessary to ensure that next generation members acquire knowledge in small family businesses (Cater III & Justis, 2009). This is also facilitated when familiness and high levels of trust positively affect power relationships among incumbent and successor (Muskat & Zehrer, 2017). These aspects, moreover, resonate with the idea that knowledge is created thanks to the bidirectional exchange between incumbent and successor, who have different knowledge bases, i.e. sources of knowledge and extent to which they have tacit versus explicit knowledge (Woodfield & Husted, 2017). It cannot be overlooked also the nurturing style in the social interaction between incumbent and successor, who can engage in “learning alongside” versus “learning apart” thus granting different levels of autonomy in sharing both tacit knowledge – about internal operations, client management, and competition – and institutional knowledge, which includes the experiences and understanding of institutional framework, rules, norms, and values (X. T.

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2
3 Wang & Jiang, 2018). On top, transferring moral values and competence values, more than
4 cognitive heuristics, ensures the imprinting of entrepreneurial practices in nurturing successors
5
6 (Dou et al., 2020). Interestingly, in nurturing the successor, the focus on the process of
7
8 knowledge transfer is relevant to build a competitive advantage if the successor learns how to
9
10 use that knowledge (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001).
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14 *Within the family boundary.* This debate has been also furthered by insights on
15
16 knowledge construction looking at social interactions within the family. In a follow-up study,
17
18 Cabrera-Suárez et al. (2018) discuss the role of a combined effort of a wide range of members
19
20 to leverage familiness to construct knowledge. In addition, extending the 4I model that stems
21
22 from organizational learning theory, family members are “knowledge supervisors” who enable
23
24 information intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalizing, thus transferring
25
26 knowledge to foster strategic change in the family business (Lionzo & Rossignoli, 2013).
27
28 Nevertheless, while family ties foster both formal and informal knowledge sharing, jealousy
29
30 and rivalry can dampen it, although this is lessened by having multiple generations involved
31
32 and a high number of family members in the TMT (Zahra et al., 2007). In addition, taking
33
34 advantage of the unique potential of family ties, leading to generalized social exchanges, makes
35
36 family members engage in effective tacit knowledge management, in terms of knowledge
37
38 transfer, assimilation, and protection (Jaskiewicz et al., 2013). Similarly, a study about
39
40 mentoring and coaching suggests that tacit knowledge, which is intrinsic in family
41
42 relationships, rather than explicit knowledge, can explain performance advantages of family
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44 firms (Utrilla & Torraleja, 2013).
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51 *Across the family boundary.* More insights are, instead, offered to understand the
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53 phenomenon of knowledge construction during the phase of grooming the successor, looking
54
55 at social interactions across the family boundaries. A focus on the socialization of next
56
57 generation members suggests that both bonding and bridging social capital determine the
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3 collective knowledge structure of the owning family, changing reference points in the family
4 business and, in turn, strategic decision-making (Nason et al., 2019). To nurture successors,
5 leveraging social interactions with actors outside the family, knowledge to share encompasses
6 experiential knowledge assets, i.e. know-how, and knowledge from serving multiple roles, e.g.
7 managers and owners (Pipatanantakurn & Ractham, 2016). Training successors both inside and
8 outside the business requires involving next generation members in strategic planning activities
9 (Mazzola et al., 2008). Joining this conversation on training successors beyond the boundaries
10 of the family business, from a socio-historical perspective, also institutional dimensions have
11 to be accounted as, over time, affect training practices in a specific context (Perez & Puig,
12 2004).

13
14 Overall, it is relevant to this phase of the succession process to establish practices aimed
15 at training and mentoring successors, for example involving them in strategic planning,
16 granting them autonomy to acquire knowledge from the incumbents, or transferring them both
17 moral and competence values.

18 **Succession phase 3. Passing the baton**

19
20 When the succession process is at the end and successors are ready to take the lead of the
21 business, there are several issues about knowledge management that have implications for the
22 business, as underlined in the following 27 articles.

23
24 *Between incumbent and successor.* Considering the social interaction between
25 incumbent and successor, there is evidence that when the senior generation is the source of
26 knowledge, the business persists in its strategies, while, when the source of knowledge is the
27 next generation, new approaches are introduced, with potential for innovation activities and
28 outcomes (Woodfield & Husted, 2019). Further, the drivers of absorptive capacity, i.e. the
29 ability of the business to acquire and integrate knowledge from external sources, can be
30 identified in the low motivation gap, juxtaposed by a high implementation gap, typical of the

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3 moment in which incumbents pass the baton to successors, suggesting that, although potential
4 absorptive capacity improves, realized absorptive capacity actually deteriorates (Kotlar et al.,
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6
7
8 2020). From a different angle, a focus on the opportunity to embrace innovativeness for the
9
10 future of the family business, it is important that successors gain experience externally in other
11
12 businesses to finalize the takeover of the inherited business (Letonja & Duh, 2016). Similar
13
14 findings emerge in a study on sustainable innovation, considering however that successors'
15
16 willingness to take over can be constrained by the incumbents' approval (Y. Z. Wang et al.,
17
18 2019).

19
20
21 *Within the family boundary.* Extending the analysis to social interactions within the
22
23 family, it emerges that such interactions are relevant for knowledge integration, a dynamic
24
25 capability aimed at recombining knowledge, to sustain the competitive advantage of family
26
27 businesses (Chirico & Salvato, 2008). Moreover, focusing on knowledge sharing in different
28
29 world regions, it emerges that previous experiences, accumulation of explicit knowledge, and
30
31 its conversion into tacit knowledge enable value creation across generations (Duarte Alonso &
32
33 Kok, 2020). Also, generational involvement affects value creation over time, as Memili et al.
34
35 (2015)'s research suggests that family-owned businesses with a first generation's majority have
36
37 higher value appropriation abilities compared to non-family firms, while family ownership
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39 with second or later generation's majority exhibits lower levels of value creation capabilities.
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46 From a different angle, knowledge sharing enables psychological ownership to make
47
48 family businesses entrepreneurially oriented, and this is dependent on the generation in control,
49
50 generational involvement, and family involvement in the TMT (Pittino et al., 2018). In a similar
51
52 vein, it emerges that the strengthening effect of family influence on the role of knowledge
53
54 transfer in explaining entrepreneurial orientation and performance (Martínez et al., 2016).
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56 Furthermore, the difference between family and non-family firms in finding new
57
58 entrepreneurial opportunities lies in the differences in knowledge stocks, knowledge
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3 combination, and the long-term orientation of family managers (Patel & Fiet, 2011).
4
5 Nonetheless, a study also highlights that family involvement can exert a negative impact on
6
7 the effect of internal, collaborative, and external knowledge sources on innovation performance
8
9 (Serrano-Bedia et al., 2016). Along this line, in a study on small family businesses, Yew and
10
11 Gomez (2014) find that these organizations need to codify existing tacit knowledge to innovate
12
13 and thrive.
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16
17 In addition, internalization of knowledge among family members is essential to make
18
19 family social capital and family relationship conflict affect product development in family
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21 business (Chirico & Salvato, 2016). Moreover, having family members on the board of
22
23 directors allows conveying family-specific knowledge, which is helpful to determine board
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25 compensation (Wu, 2013).
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29 *Across the family boundary.* Spanning across the boundaries of the family, absorptive
30
31 capacity requires leveraging knowledge transfers from external sources – such as counseling,
32
33 publications, as well as training and education programs – to make family firms thrive over
34
35 time (Duh & Belak, 2008). This, indeed, supports especially small family firms to sustain
36
37 performance by innovating products, processes, and the organization via knowledge
38
39 acquisition and assimilation (Chaudhary & Batra, 2018). This insight is also reflected in
40
41 acknowledging how small and medium-sized family firms rely on external knowledge to spur
42
43 innovation, which is inherent in an industry's technological opportunities and inter-
44
45 organizational collaboration (Kallmuenzer & Scholl-Grissemann, 2017). Networking is also
46
47 accounted as a relevant driver supporting adaptation and change thanks to the firm's
48
49 engagement in tacit knowledge operationalization, explicit knowledge acquisition, and
50
51 knowledge sharing (Duarte Alonso et al., 2019). Similarly, social capital is accounted as
52
53 significant to foster the family business's capacity for knowledge transfer and intellectual
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55 capital formation, in turn affecting innovation and strategic differentiation (Su & Carney,
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3 2013). There is evidence that family businesses, from a historical perspective, manage to
4
5 become multinational organizations thanks to a continuous process of knowledge
6
7 accumulation, passing the firm's legacy across generations via building networks,
8
9 internationalizing and overcoming historical critical events, such as economic crises, wars, and
10
11 market disruptions (Fernández Moya, 2010). Similarly, discussed study shows how absorptive
12
13 capacity leverages on existing accumulated knowledge and experiences to enable the family
14
15 business to acquire new knowledge and cope with disruptions and crises, as investigated in the
16
17 case of a family-owned airline (Boyd & Hollensen, 2012).
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21
22 It is important that firms build knowledge management process capabilities to foster
23
24 organizational flexibility (Bamel & Bamel, 2018). And besides that, the presence of non-family
25
26 members, on the one hand, and familiness on the other hand, have different effects on
27
28 knowledge acquisition and assimilation (potential absorptive capacity), and knowledge
29
30 transformation and exploitation (realized absorptive capacity) activities, thus affecting
31
32 innovation (Daspit et al., 2019). Furthermore, emblematic the case of a family business that
33
34 has managed to integrate external knowledge to embrace open innovation, by relying on
35
36 absorptive capacity, in order to implement sustainable innovations and thus contribute to the
37
38 sustainability agenda (Lopes et al., 2017). In discussing the specific challenges in knowledge
39
40 acquisition and transfer, Casprini et al. (2017) show how a family business has developed,
41
42 through its open innovation processes, two idiosyncratic capabilities, namely imprinting and
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44 fraternization.
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49 As regards the use of market and technological knowledge, it is knowledge sharing,
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51 more than the availability of these types of knowledge, that allows family firms to leverage this
52
53 external knowledge to increase their performance (Alberti & Pizzurno, 2013). Relying on a
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55 single case study, Pogutz and Winn (2016) discuss how family firms that develop deep
56
57 knowledge about sustainability can increase their innovative capability and, simultaneously,
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3 reduce their environmental impact. Finally, transferring and integrating specific knowledge
4 about finance and a family firm's capital structure, along with positive experience with debt
5 suppliers and owner-managers' financial attitudes toward debt, is deemed fundamental to
6 increase debt financing (Koropp et al., 2013).
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12 In sum, accumulating experience outside the family business emerges as a crucial
13 practice to construct knowledge in the ultimate phase of the succession process. Considering
14 the multi-stakeholder and multi-stage framework used above (see Table 4), we found some
15 popular topics peculiar to each phase. Among the most investigated, we identified (i) the factors
16 enabling the set-up of the succession, e.g. establishing a knowledge management system; (ii)
17 training, mentoring, coaching of potential successors, especially during the phase of grooming
18 the successor; and (iii) acquiring knowledge that influences firm outcomes such as innovation,
19 when passing the baton to the successor. We identified that, in particular, more discussions in
20 phase 1 setting the rules within family boundary would be especially needed in the current
21 literature to enrich our understanding of knowledge management in family business succession.
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36 **An Agenda for future research**

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38 We addressed our research question "*how is knowledge managed across generations in family*
39 *business?*" in the multi-stakeholder and multi-stage framework above. In this section, based
40 on a solid understanding of the current stock on research on knowledge management in family
41 business field, we advance the field by focusing on three main areas – future research
42 directions, contributions to literature, and practical implications.
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51 **Future Research Directions**

52 Knowledge is undoubtedly a vital resource for generational activities in family businesses, in
53 particular during succession processes (e.g., Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2018; Y. Z. Wang et al.,
54 2019; Woodfield & Husted, 2017), as well as one of the key sources of competitive advantage
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3 for family businesses (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001; Chirico & Salvato, 2008; Zahra et al., 2007),
4
5 which contribute to family business's idiosyncrasies (Bjuggren & Sund, 2002). Research finds
6
7 that knowledge between generations has an impact on important firm outcomes like innovation
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9 (e.g., De Massis, Frattini, et al., 2016; Yew & Gomez, 2014), crisis management (e.g., Boyd &
10
11 Hollensen, 2012), and sustainability (e.g., Pogutz & Winn, 2016; Y. Z. Wang et al., 2019), to
12
13 name a few. Despite the current research, we advance two main areas to advance this line of
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15 research – knowledge from a practice perspective and family-related knowledge.
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22 *Knowledge from a Practice Perspective.* We notice from our analysis that different
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24 authors apply different theoretical assumptions in understanding knowledge, which however
25
26 are left unexplained or un-clarified. This makes it difficult both theoretically and practically to
27
28 advance the field of knowledge in family business research.
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30
31 Theoretically, there is an observable monopoly of knowledge-based view, rooted
32
33 especially in the work by Nonaka (1994), in knowledge management research in family
34
35 businesses. We found that even if some researchers are vague on their epistemology of
36
37 knowledge, it could be inferred from their work that they emphasize the conversion and transfer
38
39 of knowledge. Knowledge in this view follows the Cartesian philosophy and the traditional
40
41 definition of “justified true belief” (Nonaka, 1994, p. 15), with a locus on the individual. As a
42
43 result, Nonaka's (1994) SEIC¹ model is the most widely cited. For example, by combining
44
45 Handler's (1990) succession process with Nonaka's SEIC model to show the knowledge
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47 progress in the succession process, Pipatanantakurn and Ractham (2016) look for “tools to help
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49 owners replicate and create new sets of information for their successors” in their research. This
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51 is theoretically problematic. Firstly, this model neglects the discussion on social dimensions
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58 ¹ Tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge transfer and convert model - S(ocialization) - E(xternalization) -
59 I(nternalization) - C(ombination)
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3 (Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009). Therefore, it overlooks discussion on social interaction
4 dynamics. Secondly, this monopoly also hinders the development of the topic, as there are new
5 ways to understand knowledge, which have opened many conversations in organizational
6 research. These different views lead to interesting outcomes and advance the development of
7 the knowledge management field (for detailed discussions, see Cook & Brown, 1999;
8 Hadjimichael & Tsoukas, 2019; Tsoukas & Vladimirou, 2001).
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17 In order to provide a linkage between research on knowledge in family business field
18 with organizational research, we provide a preview of the latest discussion on looking at
19 ‘knowledge from a practice perspective’. According to Hadjimichael and Tsoukas (2019), from
20 this practice perspective, knowledge is embedded in practices. This leads attention to the taken-
21 for-granted daily activities in an organization – “dynamics, relations, and enactment” (p.1240),
22 which provides timely understanding to contemporary organizing (Feldman & Orlikowski,
23 2011). Therefore, knowledge can be seen not as a “static entity or stable disposition, but rather
24 an ongoing and dynamic production that is recurrently enacted as actors engage the world in
25 practice” (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1243).
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38 Taking this perspective, knowledge comes in a constructivist manner that involves the
39 work of a combined effort of a wide range of stakeholders who have both temporal (e.g.,
40 childhood) and spatial (e.g., in school) dimensions (Nason et al., 2019). Considering learning
41 as situated in different situations is also found to be highly relevant in entrepreneurial learning
42 in family business between generations (Hamilton, 2011). Giovannoni et al. (2011) find that
43 family businesses have knowledge embedded in accounting practices, which are vital for
44 business survival.
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54 We observe in our literature review that this perspective is much less discussed and
55 used. Yet, due to the change of epistemological assumptions that knowledge is embedded in
56 practices rather than individuals, and its focus on social dynamics, this perspective can provide
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3 insights to advance knowledge management literature within the debate on succession
4 processes in family business research. Accordingly, we suggest that future research should
5 engage in re-thinking the most appropriate research designs to collect data about *dynamics*,
6 *relations*, and *enactment* and investigate research questions that stem from a practice
7 perspective and ensure a fit between theory and empirics. For example, the change of “basic
8 unit of analysis from individuals and their actions to practices and their relationships” (Nicolini,
9 2011, p. 603). Haag (2012) proposed a ‘methodological bricolage’ (p. 68) combining a few sets
10 of data sources to overcome the difficulties of data required for practice studies. Therefore, we
11 call scholars to seek for more innovative ways to collect and analyze qualitative data to
12 investigate knowledge management practices, for example, the use of ethnographic studies to
13 understand network and relationships within and across the family and business boundaries
14 from a practice-based perspective, thus addressing those types of research questions (for the
15 recent development of qualitative research in family business, see De Massis & Kammerlander,
16 2020).

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Family-related knowledge. It is well known that family involvement in family business brings in unique features to this field (Chua et al., 1999). Family routines, for example, are theorized to perform an important role in influencing next generation’s future engagement in family businesses (Reay, 2019). Recently, family science, which looks at the heterogeneity of families, has also been raised to advance the family business field (Combs et al., 2020; Jaskiewicz & Dyer, 2017; Neubaum, 2018).

We propose future research directions encompassing family-related knowledge to advance knowledge management in family business succession. In particular, from a ‘knowledge from practice perspective’, we call for more studies in practices that happened in the family domain. We propose that upon closer inspection, family becomes the site where purposeful and un-purposeful activities happen (Schatzki, 1996), in which participants

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2
3 (successors) construct their own meaning, identity, and agency (Nicolini, 2011). Activities in
4 families, including the mundane activities (e.g., chaos), that insert influence on the successors,
5 are more than what meets the researchers' eye (Morgan, 1996). Therefore, there are potential
6 fruitful outcomes to explore knowledge management through their practices in the families'
7 daily activities.
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15 In addition, this would also enable investigation of temporal considerations (Le Breton-
16 Miller & Miller, 2014; Sharma et al., 2014) in succession research as practices in families not
17 only extend the research to practices in the family domain but also stretch the consideration of
18 'when succession starts'. Through their informal participation in the family sphere, potential
19 successors get involved in the family business long before they actually join the family business
20 (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2018; Cater III & Justis, 2009; Handler, 1992; Hatak & Roessl, 2015;
21 McMullen & Warnick, 2015), and their impact could exceed the business boundary to
22 institutional effects (Cappelen & Pedersen, 2020; Konopaski et al., 2015). Yet, we know little
23 about the influences of such practices, which can open interesting discussions on topics like
24 successor engagement and successor training, to name a few. In particular, this would provide
25 important insights for succession phase 1 – Setting the rules. For example, scholars can study
26 how practices in the family domain introduce important elements of family-related knowledge
27 to the successor, including family values, family traditions, and family histories. How do family
28 values and norms evolve in the accumulation and integration of knowledge, thus affecting goal
29 setting (Kotlar & De Massis, 2013) and reference points (Nason et al., 2019)?
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Lastly, family practices are not static, but continuously change. Scholars have a greater
opportunity to build on family theories (Jaskiewicz et al., 2017) and contribute to better explain
how family-related knowledge is passed and integrated over time. Life course theory and
family developmental theory, for instance, stress the importance of transitions, which could be
relevant triggers for change in knowledge management and significantly affect knowledge

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3 creation (Howard E Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). The birth of a new baby, marriage, death, and
4
5 divorce are all events that can change family dynamics and trigger changes in daily practices,
6
7 including setting new goals, raising expectations, and new wishes for the family and the
8
9 business. Yet, also drastic changes in the family business, such as a failure (e.g., liquidation
10
11 and bankruptcy) can pose serious challenges to the family, which can leverage on its knowledge
12
13 to make a new plan for the family and how to make a living (File & Prince, 1996; Miller et al.,
14
15 2003). Considerations about succession as a planned or sudden phenomenon require more
16
17 attention (e.g., Steier, 2001), as the unintended consequences of a sudden succession can
18
19 provide fertile ground to study practices to enable the knowledge management process. All the
20
21 changes in family practices, therefore, make knowledge creation a fundamental aspect. We
22
23 prompt future research to integrate these theories and look at knowledge from new and novel
24
25 perspectives in management as well as social science fields. In doing so, we would also suggest
26
27 embracing alternative research designs, which consider the family as the object of analysis,
28
29 focusing on the household composition or characteristics of the family members, such as
30
31 gender, ethnicity, age, and so forth (H. E. Aldrich et al., 2021; Winter et al., 1998).
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37 38 **Contributions to Management Research** 39

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41 Due to the involvement of family in business management (Chua et al., 1999), family business
42
43 literature can contribute to the knowledge management research, by providing insights on
44
45 influences and perspectives from a family-related topic on understanding individual behaviors.
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47 In our review, we find ample research emphasizing the importance of family or family units
48
49 (Carr & Ring, 2017; Zahra et al., 2007). Broadly speaking, family is the basic unit of society;
50
51 families, in many aspects, “influence entrepreneurs, employees, managers, and their
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53 organizations” (Jaskiewicz et al., 2017, p. 309). Families, especially through family practices,
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55 embed knowledge like family values, family traditions, and family history. Family practices
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57 like story-telling about families pass on transgenerational entrepreneurship and resilience
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3 (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015). In our review, for example, Dou et al. (2020) find that values (as one
4 element of knowledge) rather than heuristics are passed between the two generations in new
5 entrepreneurial settings. Su and Dou (2013) suggest that knowledge of family vision among
6 advisors has a relevant impact on the quality of advisors' service. Notwithstanding these initial
7 efforts, we reconcile with Jaskiewicz et al. (2017) and call for future research in management
8 to look at organization actors' families to understand the potential impact of knowledge coming
9 from actors' families of origin on important behavior variance including resilience,
10 entrepreneurial orientation, and, potentially, teamwork.
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22 **Practical implications**

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25 We believe that, although a literature review mainly aims at systematizing existing knowledge
26 about a topic and offering avenues for future research, better understanding the status quo about
27 knowledge management in family business provides several implications for family
28 businesses, consultants, and policymakers.
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34 First, family business owners and managers can get a glimpse of the core dimensions
35 that represent opportunities as well as hurdles in managing knowledge. In other terms, we invite
36 family businesses to constantly reflect on their practices at work and at home, considering their
37 stage in the succession process and taking into account the stakeholder involved. For example,
38 family business owners and managers can consider establishing a knowledge management
39 system while planning a succession, as well as creating some best practices to train and groom
40 the successor, but also consider the role of managing knowledge to effectively run the business
41 as there are significant effects on innovation, entrepreneurial endeavors, sustainability and so
42 on.
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55 Second, there is ample room for family business consultants and therapists to reflect on
56 the actual needs of their clients, considering the core, yet sometimes indistinct, role of
57 knowledge. Understanding how knowledge flows, who is keeping knowledge, and what might
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3 be the difficulties in mobilizing it and make it explicit, could help their work in supporting
4 family businesses through their struggles. For example, consultants might consider the insights
5 from this study to design a succession plan for businesses, which might consider factors
6 affecting knowledge management, including for instance commitment, psychological
7 ownership, leadership styles, just to name a few (for a comprehensive picture, see Table 4).
8 Moreover, this literature review can inform advisors who could learn about the mechanisms to
9 transfer knowledge and, at the same time, train and nurture the entrepreneurial skills of next
10 generation members.
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21 Third, policymakers might consider the importance of knowledge accumulation and
22 integration to create value in businesses that, in most countries, represent the backbone of
23 economies (Oxford Economics, 2018). Installing policies that allow firms to interact, learn and
24 acquire new capabilities from a dynamic and munificent environment can be key to make
25 family firms survive, grow, and thrive across generational transitions. Knowledge construction
26 can develop many opportunities to innovate that, especially looking at the digitization
27 revolution, seem otherwise unreachable for many family firms. It would be a great chance for
28 policymakers and family business associations to foster a practice perspective on knowledge
29 and encourage training and learning opportunities dedicated to family and non-family
30 managers.
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45 **Conclusions**

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48 Knowledge is undoubtedly a vital resource for businesses (Barley et al., 2018) and a key source
49 of competitive advantage (Spender & Grant, 1996). There are many different ways to frame
50 knowledge and many of these ways are under heated discussion and rapid development (for
51 detailed discussions, see Cook & Brown, 1999; Hadjimichael & Tsoukas, 2019; Tsoukas &
52 Vladimirou, 2001).
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3 This literature review provides a systematic overview of the studies on knowledge
4 construction across generations in family business. According to a *multi-stakeholder and multi-*
5 *stage knowledge-succession process* framework, we systematically analyze the reviewed
6 literature, offering a broader picture of the complexity of delving into knowledge management
7 in business that deals with two different systems, the family and the business. Our analysis
8 highlights the core items that have been discussed and identifies the key practices to construct
9 knowledge in each phase of the succession process. This, therefore, gives a comprehensive
10 picture of the findings of different studies and sheds light on the complicating factors of having
11 the family involved in the business when it comes to managing and creating knowledge. We
12 identified (i) the factors enabling the set-up of the succession (phase 1), (ii) training, mentoring,
13 coaching of potential successors (phase 2), and (iii) acquiring knowledge that influences firm
14 outcomes such as innovation (phase 3) are the three most investigated areas. From our
15 framework, we concluded that, in particular, more discussions for themes and characteristics
16 within family boundary during phase 1 would enrich our understanding of knowledge
17 management in family business succession process.

18
19 This enables us to call for future research using a 'knowledge from a practice
20 perspective', which challenges the current assumptions of knowledge management and the role
21 of family-related knowledge, as well as "family-related knowledge". Moreover, our review
22 also benefits management research by highlighting the impact of family involvement in
23 individual behaviors. We have, in addition, pointed out three practical implications for family
24 business owners, consultants, and policy-makers respectively.

25
26 We hope these insights will be seriously taken in designing ad-hoc solutions for these
27 organizations. We believe this work has only shown the surface of a deep and under-
28 investigated realm, which requires novel approaches to completely unfold, helping us
29 understand knowledge management in family business succession process.

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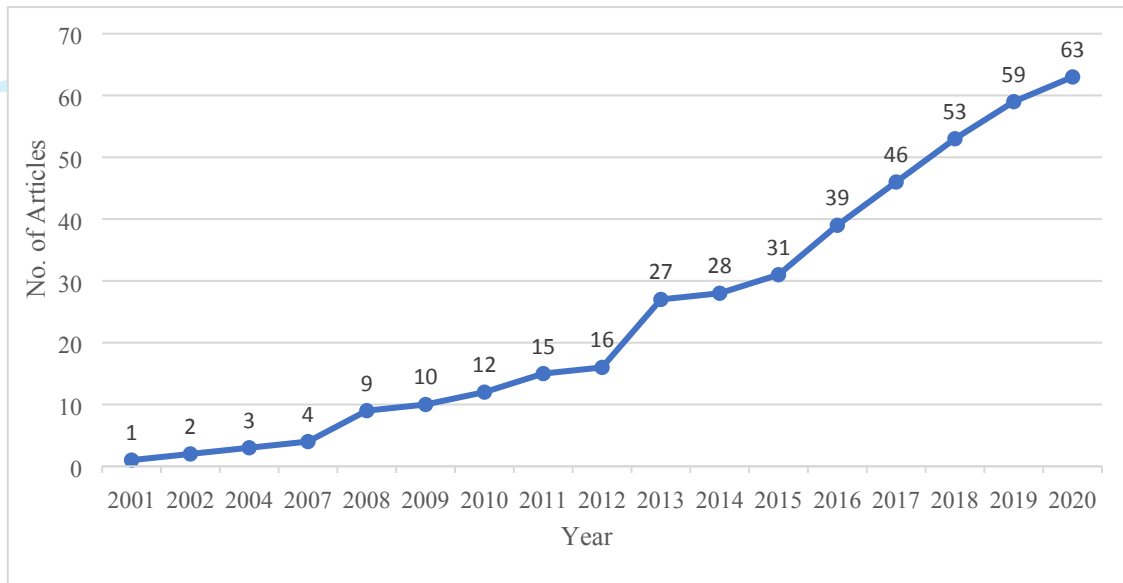
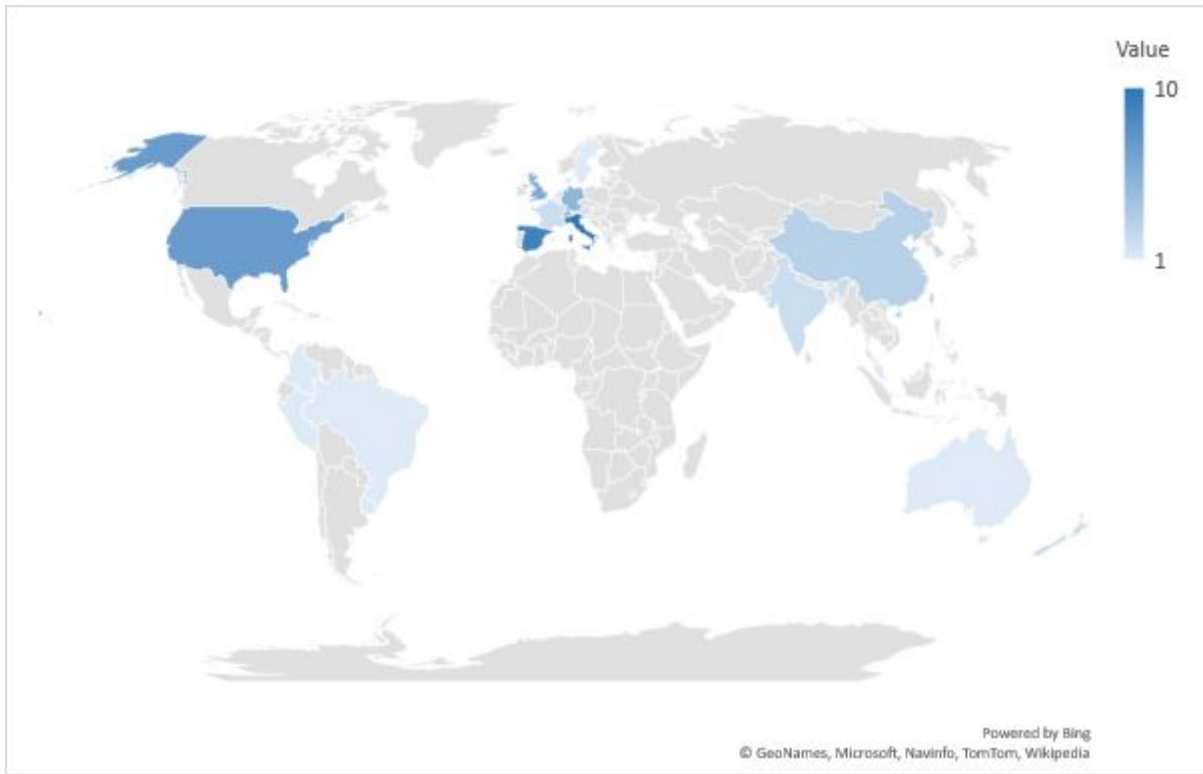
Figure 1. Cumulative number of articles published by year

Figure 2. Descriptive map of regions (empirical papers only)



Journal of Knowledge Management

Table 1. Systematic literature review procedure

	Description	Web of Science	EBSCO	Total
Step 1	Articles with selected keywords After merging the results from the different databases and deleting duplicate articles	292	240	532 457
Step 2	After reading the titles and abstracts, eliminating the non-relevant articles			80
Step 3	After reading the full articles and eliminating the non-relevant articles			63
	Final sample			63

Search criteria for Web of Science: Date Range: All years (1900 – 2020) (Maximum range available for this database). Citation Databases: Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-Expanded) 1900–present; Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) 1990–present; Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) 1975–present. Document Type (Article). Language (English). Web of Science Categories (Anthropology; Business; Management; Cultural Studies; Economics; Regional Urban Planning; URBAN STUDIES; Psychology Applied; Humanity Interdisciplinary; History of Social Science; Sociology; Area Studies; Educational Education Research; Psychology Social; Political Science; Family Studies; Psychology Multidisciplinary; Social Sciences Interdisciplinary; Education Scientific Disciplines; Ethnic Studies; History; International Relations; Social Issues; Communication; Business Finance). Search strings: in topic.

Search criteria for EBSCO: Search Modes (Boolean/Phrase). Apply related words. Only Scholarly (Peer reviewed) Journals. Language (English). Document Type (Journal Article). Geographic Region (All). Publication Status: Fully published. Database: Business Source Complete, EconLit, APA PsycArticles, SocINDEX with Full Text.

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Table 2. Journals that published more than one article

Journal	Number of articles
Family Business Review	10
Knowledge Management Research & Practice	6
Journal of Family Business Strategy	4
Journal of Knowledge Management	3
Business History	2
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	2
International Journal of Business & Management Science	2
Journal of Business Research	2
Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship	2

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Table 3. Descriptive data on articles by methodology adopted

Methodology Adopted	Number of articles	
Theoretical/Conceptual	13	
	Qualitative	26
Empirical	Quantitative	21
	Mixed	3
Total no. for empirical papers		50
Total		63

Table 4. Findings of the literature review

		Phases of Succession		
		Phase 1 Setting the rules	Phase 2 Grooming the successor	Phase 3 Passing the baton
Stakeholders involved	Between incumbent and successor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relational competence • Idiosyncratic knowledge • Private versus specific knowledge management • Knowledge integration process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment and psychological ownership • Engaging in training courses • Gaining experience outside the family business or from non-family members • Business culture • Linkages with Family Business Associations • Power relationships and trust • Nurturing style: “learning alongside” versus “learning apart” • Transfer of moral values and competence values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge reservoirs • Motivation gap versus implementation gap between generations • External knowledge • Constraint of incumbent’s approval
	Within the family boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership styles (e.g. participative, paternalistic) • Set-up of knowledge management systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiness • Family members are “knowledge supervisors” • Multiple generations involved • Number of family members in the TMT • Family ties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of knowledge integration as dynamic capabilities • Previous experiences • Accumulation of explicit knowledge and its conversion into tacit knowledge • Internalization of knowledge • Psychological ownership • Social capital • Relationship conflict • Generation in control • Generational involvement and family involvement in the TMT • Long-term orientation
	Across the family boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simultaneous set-up of ways to transfer structural, social, and human capital • Measurement of intellectual capital • Set-up of management accounting systems • Sharing of knowledge among external advisors • Family wisdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialization of next generation members • Combination of experiential knowledge assets (know-how) and knowledge from serving multiple roles (e.g., managers and owners) • Training inside and outside the family business • Training practices changing over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to external sources of knowledge (including specific knowledge, e.g. sustainability or finance) • Development of knowledge management process capabilities • Networking and social capital • Internationalization • Survival across historical critical events (e.g., economic crises or wars) • Open innovation approach • Imprinting and fraternization as dynamic capabilities • Leveraging on technological opportunities and inter-organizational collaboration • Experience with debt suppliers • Owner-managers’ financial attitudes toward debt • Presence of non-family members • Familiness