



Learning from family business researchers

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Abstract

Purpose – This article provides commentary from well known family business researchers on what they have learnt about the family business field and tips for the future.

Design/methodology/approach – Well known family business management researchers were contacted in order to provide their feedback on the field of family business management. Their responses were then curated into an article that can help others learn from their advice.

Findings –The family business management researchers provided suggestions on how to succeed in the field of family business management and advice for current and future researchers. Thereby helping to advance the field and provide new novel research ideas that can help science as well as practice.

Originality/value –This article is amongst the first to provide verbatim advice from the leading family business management scholars. Thus, providing original and innovative ideas about what is needed in the field of family business management.

Keywords: family business, family community, family research, family strategy, research strategies

Introduction

Globally most firms are family firms so they represent an important practical as well as academic business topic. Family business research is a critical area of study within the business management area because it incorporates diverse issues such as succession issues, internationalization priorities, digitalization trends as well as organizational behaviour (Pratono and Han, 2022). Many economies rely on family business for continual growth and their spillover effects to other areas of society (Bell and Pham, 2021). This means family firms create value for communities through creating jobs and encouraging innovative behaviour.

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3 Normally firms are identified as family firms through their ownership or management structure that
4 emphasizes an economic contribution. Although increasingly there is a diversity in how family firms
5 are conceptualized and measured in society. Some family firms have had a long history with
6 tradition being a key component of their longevity, which means the original owning family is still
7 evident in the name and logo of the firm (Arteaga and Escriba-Esteve, 2021). A key challenge for
8 family firms is maintaining their competitiveness and involvement of family members over time.
9 This means that many family firms do not survive after the second or third generation due to the lack
10 of interest of family members or poor financial performance. Thus, it is crucial to understand how
11 family business management research is evolving and changing over time (Basco, 2019). This will
12 help us to stop and reflect on what has been done and to learn from past discussions.
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26 The aim of this article is to learn from well known family business researchers about their thoughts
27 regarding publishing research on family business management as well as where the field is heading.
28 This is helpful for other researchers who want to be part of the family business management
29 community. The researchers who contributed to the article are as follows with their responses to
30 each
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38 question included verbatim in the article:
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42 Vanessa Ratten, La Trobe University, Australia

43 James J. Chrisman, Mississippi State University, United States

44 Michael J. Mustafa, University of Nottingham Malaysia, Malaysia

45 Salvatore Sciascia, Cattaneo University – LIUC, Italy

46 Claire Seaman, Queen Margaret University, Scotland

47 Allan Discua Cruz, Lancaster University, United Kingdom
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Feranita Feranita, Taylor's University, Malaysia

Five questions for the well known family business management researchers

Five questions were sent to the well known family business management researchers. They were asked to consider the following questions about their life as a family business scholar and their view of issues in the family business research field today. They could respond to just 1 question, or some or all. The maximum word count per contribution is 1000 words. The five questions asked were:

1. What advice would you give to new family business researchers?
2. Which of your contributions to the family business research field do you think is the most important and why? A contribution can be a article, book, book chapter, idea, conference paper or other intellectual output.
3. What in your view are the positives and negatives in the family business research field now? What changes in strategy would you suggest?
4. If you had to start again your family business research career, what would you have done differently or the same?
5. What are the most urgent needs in family business research?

Responses to the five questions from the family business researchers are verbatim stated in the next section.

1. What advice would you give to new family business researchers?

Vanessa Ratten

My advice is to have fun and enjoy the research. Family business as a topic tends to convey a more personal approach to research which is not evident in other research topics and themes.

This means there is a kind of softness amongst those who do research on family business and a

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2
3 willingness to help. Thus, I would suggest that new family business researchers attend online and
4
5 face-to-face events about family business. There are many family business centres around the
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7 world that focus on family issues from a range of contexts including business management,
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9 economics and finance so I would encourage researchers to become part of this community.
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14 **James J. Chrisman**

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17 The best advice I can give to a new family business researcher is to find someone who is better
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19 than you to work with. A large part of my success has been due to my collaborations with
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21 partners with exceptional skills such as Jess Chua and Pankaj Patel. Another way to approach the
22
23 selection of team members is to look for someone with skills that complement or supplement
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25 your own. For example, working with someone with more experience in family business
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27 research will help you identify important problems and relevant research studies.
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31 I have also found that junior scholars tend to be better at research methods than theory
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33 development or manuscript preparation. Therefore, in seeking collaborators an effective strategy
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35 might be to work with someone who is well-versed in theory and able to write effectively. These
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37 points might seem obvious until you have had a chance to review a large number of unpublished
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39 journal submissions.
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44 **Michael J. Mustafa**

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47 FBs is a very exciting field to be in right now and one that is growing rapidly. I would
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49 advise new researchers to the field to bolder, to experiment with new research designs
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51 and methods and to push traditional approaches and studies to family business. In this
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53 regard I see two important aspects. 1. Consider importing or extending different theories
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3 outside of FBs into FBs more. 2. Get involved more with family business from around
4 the global and consider in more detail the practical implications of ones work. Currently,
5 the FB field I feel gives little back to the FBs in terms of advice.
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11 **Salvatore Sciascia**

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17 In general, for new researchers in any field, I would suggest to ask themselves if they are 100%
18 committed to the call of academia, which means being ready for an immersive job where research
19 is a risky activity requiring hard work, passion and a lot of time (and is not even the only thing to
20 do...). In particular, for new research in the field of family business, my most important (additional)
21 advice is to let their senior colleagues guide them in formulating relevant research questions to
22 answer: the risk I see in many young scholars is the excessive focus on methods, i.e. the use of
23 sophisticated techniques to answer questions that are not so relevant. In other words, I suggest to
24 balance the attention to the “how” with the attention to the “what” in their research activities.
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40 **Claire Seaman**

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42 One activity I would commend to early and mid-career researchers is the development of places
43 to be published. Publishing opportunities in the widest sense certainly help to build a career but
44 they also help to develop the field of family business research. Those opportunities are also a
45 constant learning curve. Viewed internationally, the publishing systems are complex and the
46 various ranking systems a continually developing melange of nuance, but for researchers new to
47 the field they offer a great opportunity to get involved.
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Allan Discua Cruz

Any researcher new to the field must keep in mind that family businesses are ubiquitous and heterogeneous. They thrive and survive in diverse industries and come in different guises - from small corner shops in towns and cities around the world to multinational conglomerates and groups. Whilst any family business is a rich context that allows exploring all areas of business management there are some items that warrant attention.

First, it is important to consider, or compose, a definition that would reflect the reality of family businesses in their context(s) of study. In that way any new study would be able to shape a robust theoretical framing and support a nuanced analytical approach, whether focusing on one business or many and in one or across countries.

Second, scholars need to keep in mind that family business management is complex. A family business often emerges as a small, yet energetic start-up. Over time, it can develop into a large and diversified organisation. The influence that the close relationship of family and business objectives has on the pace of such progression and the management of such complexity will vary. While some family businesses may showcase a harmonious coexistence of objectives in the management of their firm(s) others may reflect constant incompatibilities and tensions.

Finally, new scholars need to be aware that family business management will often offer counterintuitive explanations to the broad and novel themes in management. This provides an opportunity to expand what we know in the family business field but also refine mainstream academic conversations.

Feranita Feranita



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3 My academic career commenced when I assumed a faculty position at a private university in
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5 Asia, presenting me with a complex dichotomy. On one side of the spectrum, there was the
6
7 pressing demand for teaching-driven commitments imposed by my employer university. On the
8
9 other side lay the memory of my research-oriented alma mater in the UK, which emphasized the
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11 importance of rigorous research and publication. Balancing these conflicting demands proved to
12
13 be a formidable challenge, leaving me feeling isolated in the academic landscape. My colleagues
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15 and I often held divergent views on research and publications, particularly concerning issues of
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17 quality versus quantity, research rigor, and the utilization of theories. Additionally, witnessing
18
19 my peers excel in publishing top-tier journals exacerbated my anxiety regarding the trajectory of
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21 my academic career.
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28 With hindsight, I now view my early-stage career choices not as right or wrong but as a matter of
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30 aligning one's aspirations with personal background and context. Aspiring family business
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32 scholars must reflect on their passions and interests. They may choose to work directly with
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34 business families in the field, contribute to the education of the next generation, or engage in
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36 theoretical advancements within family business literature. These choices need not be mutually
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38 exclusive; they can complement and build upon each other as one progresses through different
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40 career stages. For example, working closely with business families in the field can provide
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42 invaluable insights that inform the development of novel theoretical frameworks.
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- 49 **2. Which of your contributions to the family business research field do you think is the most**
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51 **important and why? A contribution can be an article, book, book chapter, idea, conference**
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53 **paper or other intellectual output.**
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**Vanessa Ratten**

a) Ratten, V. (2021). Family business and sport entrepreneurship. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 11(3), 300-312.

This paper I really like as it recognizes that there are still missing gaps in the family business field with certain industries such as sport. This paper links the family entrepreneurship and sport entrepreneurship fields together in a way that is not done before. Thus, I hope to contribute to new research trajectories that focus on the role of family business in the sport field.

b) Ratten, V., & Jones, P. (2020). Enhancing policies and measurements of family business: macro, meso or micro analysis. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 11(3), 257-263.

This article was part of a special journal issue on family business so I think it is important to enhance the ways family business is measured. In the article suggestions on how to do this are stated including looking at the macro, meso and micro level of analysis. This will enable different ways of thinking about family business performance to be evaluated.

James J. Chrisman

Picking my most important contribution to family business research is difficult so I picked two.

a) Chua, J.H., Chrisman, J.J., & Sharma, P. (1999). Defining the family business by behavior.

This article explains the requirements for building theoretical definitions and then develops the foundation for a theory of family business that suggests the idiosyncratic behaviors of family

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3 firms constitutes their essence. Based on those arguments we posit a theoretical definition of
4 family business that is still used as foundation for theorizing in the field. We also provide
5 evidence that the operational definitions typically used in family business research are weak
6 predictors of intentions and therefore may not always reliably distinguish between family and
7 nonfamily firms. This problem lingers to this day.
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17 **b) Zellweger, T.M., Kellermanns, F.W., Chrisman, J.J., & Chua, J.H. (2012). Family**
18 **control and family firm valuation by family CEOs: The importance of intentions for**
19 **transgenerational control.**
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26 This article provides empirical evidence that intentions for transgenerational control have a
27 positive impact on the price a family owner is willing to sell a family firm to a buyer from
28 outside the family. This finding not only validates the premises of Chua et al. (1999) regarding
29 the fundamental importance of transgenerational succession for the theory and definition of
30 family firms but also confirms that socioemotional wealth (SEW), as originally conceived by
31 Gómez-Mejía et al. (2007), has economically measurable value to family business owners.
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44 **Michael J. Mustafa**

45 It would definitely be my research on psychological ownership in family firms and that from a
46 non-family members perspective. I believe this research has added an additional layer of
47 complexity surrounding family business ownership and its effect on the strategies and behaviours
48 of FBs and individuals within them. Additionally, it highlights the importance of the emotional
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3 element in family business research and why we may need a deeper dive into this area to actually
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5 understand FBs and their behaviours more.
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11 12 **Salvatore Sciascia**

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14 I guess that my most important contribution to the field is the paper I published in 2008 on Family
15 Business Review (Sciascia and Mazzola, 2008). It was my very first study on family firms - as I
16 spent my PhD and my post-doc on other topics. The paper was much appreciated because it
17 introduced in the field a different way to approach the Janus-faced nature of family involvement,
18 i.e. the exploration of its nonlinear effects on the business. From that moment on, many family
19 business scholars – included myself (Sciascia et al 2013a; 2013b) - started to explore the nonlinear
20 effects of family involvement in any business activity. It's a case that the paper won the FBR best
21 paper award (the very first award assigned by FBR and FFI in 2009) and has been receiving a
22 considerable number of citations in the last 15 years.
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38 **Claire Seaman**

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40 An important paper was published in Family Business Review in 2017 (Cunningham et al, 2017)
41 looked at perceptions of knowledge sharing among small family firm leaders, which I believe is
42 a topic that merits further research. I very much value the time I spent editing the Journal of
43 Family Business Management, which allowed me to create opportunities for publication and
44 shape the field by that route. The metrics by which 'high-quality journals and publications' are
45 assessed varies widely, and usually involve some permutation of ranking system, citations and
46 downloads, but for new researchers finding and creating publication opportunities is key.
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Allan Discua Cruz

Having the opportunity to say something about the phenomenon of families starting, managing, and ensuring the continuity of several firms over time has informed my contributions.

Developing a portfolio of businesses is an admirable achievement but also a complex undertaking in terms of business management. Family members do not successfully establish or acquire businesses instantaneously, but engage and re-engage in the crafting and pursuit of opportunities at different paces, at diverse points in time, and by involving others in the process, whilst still managing existing firms (Discua Cruz *et al.*, 2013). Such contributions have helped closed the gap between family business and entrepreneurship research by moving beyond a focus on the firm *per se* to a closer look into families that manage several firms.

Feranita Feranita

Feranita, F., Kotlar, J., & De Massis, A. (2017). Collaborative innovation in family firms: Past research, current debates and agenda for future research. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 8(3), 137-156.

This journal article stands as a cornerstone in my list of publications, holding the distinction of being my favorite and most frequently cited work. The genesis of this paper can be traced back to my tenure as a dedicated full-time PhD student, a collaborative effort undertaken with my esteemed PhD supervisors, Alfredo De Massis and Josip Kotlar. In essence, this article serves as a comprehensive literature review that delves into the realm of collaborative innovation, drawing upon diverse theoretical perspectives to chart a course for future research endeavors in the domain of family business studies. I consider the contribution of this paper to be of paramount significance, for it not only synthesizes existing knowledge on collaborative innovation but also bridges the realms of general management literature and family business research, offering a vital resource for scholars in both domains.

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6 **3. What in your view are the positives and negatives in the family business research field**
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8 **now? What changes in strategy would you suggest?**
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12 **Vanessa Ratten**
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14 The positives is the willingness to help other family business researchers in terms of contributing
15 to the development of the field and doing article reviews. This means there is a stronger sense of
16 engagement amongst family business researchers than other business management fields that
17 makes it a good community to be part of. The negatives is that the same topics seem to keep
18 appearing in the literature that emphasise certain trends and industries. Thus, there are numerous
19 opportunities for new areas to be explored.
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31 **James J. Chrisman**
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33 The biggest positive in the field is its relatively small size. This makes it easier for people to
34 work together and to achieve consensus on the kinds of work that needs to be done. The biggest
35 negative in the field is also its relatively small size. The reason it is also a negative is that the
36 field gets overlooked by business scholars outside the discipline, which makes it harder for new
37 scholars to be recruited, to publish, and to be successful.
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44 Another factor that is both a positive and a negative is that we tend to be influenced by
45 academic fads. This can be a positive when the fad leads us in a direction that enhances the
46 potential contributions of our research to management practice and value creation (of both the
47 economic and noneconomic varieties) for customers and owners but can be a negative when the
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3 fad leads us toward topic areas that are weakly related at best to management practice and value
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5 creation.
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10 **Michael J. Mustafa**

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12 FB is a small community and a supportive one and its findings can have a significant
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14 impact on how we understand economic development and firm behaviour. The negative is that
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16 its also very insular and very narrowly focused. The communities and researchers view is mostly
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18 a Western Euro centric view. This has often come at the expense of great FB research occurring
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20 in Africa and Asia regions. I would say in this regard our knowledge is limited because FBs
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22 behave differently in different contexts.
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28 **Salvatore Sciascia**

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30 I currently see more positives than negatives in the family business research field, luckily. Let me
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32 sketch four positives and one (hardly found!) negative. Among the positives, I would list first of
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34 all a great community of scholar, where cooperation is much higher than competition, thanks to
35
36 the simultaneous presence of harmonious senior scholars and energetic young scholars. Second, I
37
38 would mention the pleasure to contribute to a very relevant economic phenomenon: indeed, family
39
40 firms are the most ubiquitous forms of business around the world, therefore understanding their
41
42 functioning may help the vast majority of individuals, companies and economies. Third, I would
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44 stress the enthusiasm of working in a growing research field, where journals and conferences are
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46 flourishing, just as the chairs and the job positions. Fourth, we need to acknowledge a clear rise in
47
48 the methodological quality of family business research, as witnessed by a more frequent
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50 appearance, in the last years, of family business papers in the most selective scientific journals.
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3 Among the negatives, I can mention just one. The heart of family business functioning rests in
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5 relational and emotional aspects: data on emotions and relations are of course less accessible than
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7 business data, also for legal/privacy reasons, making some research efforts particularly difficult.
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11 12 **Claire Seaman**

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14 I see lots of positives in the field of family business research, especially around the development
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16 of specific journals, such as the Journal of Family Business Management, and further
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18 development of family business journals is going to be very important to the field. For those who
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20 get involved in the editing process, this is an on-going piece of work, adding a journal to the
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22 various rankings, alongside publicizing the journal in a manner that ethically build citations and
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24 downloads. Be very wary of attempts to subvert the citation system. Coercive citation (for
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26 example, asking for papers to be cited to ensure smooth publication) is taken extremely seriously
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28 by journals. For those at an earlier career stage, reviewing papers is a useful way to build initial
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30 involvement with a journal and if you meet the editor or editorial team at a conference, that is all
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32 to the good. if the journal you want to publish in is not listed in your local journal ranking
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34 system, write to the editor and politely ask if they would consider having it added. The editor
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36 may not know the process for your country, and indeed may not speak the language, but it is in
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38 everybody's interest to make sure journals are added to ranking lists from as many countries as
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40 possible and if you are prepared to help with the process the editor may be very pleased to hear
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42 from you.
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53 54 **Allan Discua Cruz**

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4 The positive: Increasing acknowledgment of the richness and diversity of entrepreneurial
5 families and the way they approach business management around the world (James *et al.*, 2020)
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8 Aspects to work on: exploring topics that deal with thorny issues. We have still little
9 understanding of family crisis in business management. Topics like sudden death, religious
10 differences, terminal illness, life changing events (e.g. accidents, forced migration), disabilities,
11 infertility, adoption, divorce, to name a few, may influence family business management
12 tremendously.
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18 Strategy: In many instances, we frame our studies around existing and mainstream theoretical
19 perspectives only to realise that they are limited in explaining what is going on. Complementary
20 perspectives focusing on aspects such as context, culture, place and meaning as well as family
21 dynamics could provide an opportunity to bridge theoretical perspectives and illuminate difficult
22 topics around world.
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29 **Feranita Feranita**

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31 Being of Asian heritage and having lived in various parts of the world, I have observed that
32 Western family businesses tend to be more extensively researched compared to their Asian
33 counterparts. In another word, existing research on family business is skewed towards more
34 studies on family business in the Western part of the world. One explanation for this discrepancy
35 is the scarcity of structured databases that capture data on Asian family businesses. Additionally,
36 many Asian family businesses are still in their second or third generations, potentially
37 contributing to the paucity of available data. Cultural differences also play a significant role, as
38 Asian families often exhibit reluctance to share sensitive information. It is crucial to note that
39 while the East-West comparison is made here, it should not be oversimplified, as Asia itself
40 encompasses a diverse range of cultures and ethnicities, each with distinct value systems. Future
41 family business scholars should avoid generalizations and delve deeper into the heterogeneity of
42 Asian family businesses to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this multifaceted
43 landscape.
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6 **4. If you had to start again your family business research career, what would you have done**
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8 **differently or the same?**
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12 **Vanessa Ratten**
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14 I probably would have started researching family business much earlier in my career. I came into
15 the field relatively late and then realized it was a great research field to be part of. Coming from
16 a family business background I realized the importance of family businesses and had personally
17 experienced the triumphs and failures of family business but had not connected it to the
18 academic research area.
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28 **James J. Chrisman**
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30 I have been exceptionally blessed in my family business career. I worked with some amazing
31 scholars and was fortunate enough to be able to attract some very talented doctoral students (e.g.,
32 Pramodita Sharma, Esra Memili, Chevy Fang, Vitaliy Skorodziyevskiy) who were willing to
33 work extremely hard and put up with me even after their graduation.
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40 If I had to do it over the only things I would change would be to more carefully follow
41 the plans Jess Chua and I laid out at the beginning of our research journey, to more effectively
42 leverage the Theories of Family Enterprise conference that Jess, Lloyd Steier, and I created, and
43 to more aggressively pursue work on a theory of the family firm.
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51 **Michael J. Mustafa**
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53 Would focus more on how culture and context shape FBs values and behaviours.
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Salvatore Sciascia

I'm happy with my career in this field and therefore I would do it as I did. In particular, I think a real booster was the time spent abroad attending international conferences, Ph.D. courses and visiting other Universities, like the Jonkoping International Business School. This behavior allowed me to learn a lot and to join the international community of scholars as an active and engaged player. There are probably a couple of things that I have been doing in the recent years that I could have started before. First, adding to the portfolio of research projects (mostly quantitative) also some qualitative studies: they allow you to learn more about the single companies, individuals, and families, strengthening your knowledge base also for teaching and advisory. Second, coupling knowledge creation with knowledge dissemination: research findings often deserve to be spread beyond the publication in academic outlets in order to reach those who are supposed to exploit them. Luckily, today we have initiative as familybusiness.org that may help in this sense.

Claire Seaman

I have been very lucky to work with many wonderful researchers, teachers and students in my career and I would not want to change any of that! If I was starting again, though, I would probably develop my interest in family business earlier and I would certainly get actively involved with the publishing process from the beginning. Coupling knowledge creation, transfer, and dissemination across all our work would also be a key goal.



Allan Discua Cruz

I would not change anything. I was blessed with my supervisors, who had experience in family business management and with whom I continue to publish to this day. I have been fortunate to collaborate with great colleagues from around the world from my early years on interesting and meaningful topics around family firms (Johannisson *et al.*, 2007; Rautiainen *et al.*, 2019). Over the years, I realise that what is interesting to me is also interesting to other researchers. As I mature in my career, working with many colleagues has allowed the materialization of unique resources that enriches family business research in diverse contexts around the world (Howorth and Discua Cruz, forthcoming).

Feranita Feranita

While I am content with my current position, I might have opted for a research-oriented university to launch my academic career in hindsight. Educating and mentoring the next generation is undeniably crucial, particularly in assisting the successors of family businesses to comprehend their roles in preserving the family enterprise and upholding its legacy.

Nevertheless, I believe that prioritizing early research publication endeavors would have been advantageous before transitioning to a greater focus on teaching and engagement with business families. Furthermore, I could have better capitalized on opportunities to cultivate relationships with my students, many of whom are the next generation of family business leaders.

5. What are the most urgent needs in family business research?

Vanessa Ratten

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3 Researching new industries and contexts. Mixing up theories and introducing new theories into
4
5 the family business management field. Taking a holistic and different perspective to family
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7 business that values diversity.
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14 **James J. Chrisman**

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17 The most urgent needs in family business research are two-fold. First, we need to develop a
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19 theory of the family firm that will provide a stronger direction for the field and distinguish its
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21 unique contribution; enable work to be better integrated; and provide the basis for a classification
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23 system that identifies discrete populations of family firms.
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27 Second, more research is needed on the determinants of family firm performance in terms
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29 of the achievement of economic and family-centered non-economic (FCNE) goals. Obviously,
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31 some work has been done on the determinants of economic performance but more is needed. For
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33 example, in a recent review of the literature on strategic change in family firms regarding
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35 internationalization, innovation, and diversification we found that only 12% of the articles
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37 focused on firm performance (23 of 193). Moreover, despite the recognition of the importance of
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39 FCNE goals that generate SEW, we are unaware of any studies that use SEW as a dependent
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41 variable (cf., Fang et al., 2022). If we are going to make progress in understanding family firms
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43 and provide family owners with the knowledge they need to effectively manage their enterprises,
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45 we need to be able to explain how both their economic and FCNE goals can be achieved.
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51 **Michael J. Mustafa**

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3 See points 1 and 3 – more openness to non-FB related theories and a stronger focus on
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5 micro-foundations and behaviours of individuals in FBs.
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10 **Salvatore Sciascia**

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12 In my opinion, there are four urgent needs in family business research. They refer to development
13 trajectories that field has been already following and should keep on doing it. First, the cross-
14 fertilization with other disciplines, especially family science, psychology, and sociology: family
15 firms are the most complex form of business, therefore we require a combination of disciplines to
16 grasp their functioning. Second, the focus on the business family, rather than the family business:
17 it's the family the locus of those phenomena that makes the business peculiar. Third, the
18 contamination of scholars with practitioners, to make family business research as relevant as
19 rigorous: we can't work in an ivory tower. Last, the exploration of family business issues in the
20 context of developing countries, where not only the economy but also research is growing: those
21 are geographical areas where family firms are even more present and relevant.
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40 **Claire Seaman**

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42 The continued development of opportunities for high quality research to be published in
43 well ranked journals is essential. Commitment to the field from individuals and research teams is
44 central to the future of the field and I encourage all of those involved in the field to take part
45 where they are able.
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Allan Discua Cruz

Further examination of unexplored contexts, unique paradoxes and difficult issues. For example, we still know little of how family businesses are managed in countries that face a transition from encouraging free enterprise to a strict government control and vice versa. We have limited understanding of how family businesses respond to diverse (and adverse) circumstances and the factors that influence their approach.

Moreover, family business paradoxes in contemporary management need further exploration. For example, as there is greater demand for family businesses to address socioeconomic and environmental issues we overlook that international initiatives (e.g. Triple Bottom Line, Corporate Social Responsibility or the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals) may be influenced by the interplay between family and contextual dynamics. Dilemmas and tensions that influence the adoption, adaptation or dismissal of such initiatives need further attention (Tyler *et al.*, 2023; Vu *et al.*, 2023) as demands pose an inescapable challenge to family businesses: securing their survival through sound management without diminishing the chances for future generations.

Third, methods that allow a team composed of researchers and practitioners to collaborate. A family business member involved in management can enhance the analytical efforts to understand inherent processes (e.g. succession) that affect family business management. For example, recent developments on autoethnography reveal the relevance of contextual and cultural dynamics, as well as key actors in family business management who may be overlooked or dismissed (Discua Cruz *et al.*, 2021). Similar methods that allow the co-creation of meaningful research may increase our understanding on family business management.

Feranita Feranita

Succession remains a central topic in the field of family business, as the intention to perpetuate the enterprise within the family lineage defines its essence (De Massis & Foss, 2018). It is imperative that family business scholars revisit the subject of succession and explore alternative avenues for its realization. What precisely constitutes succession? Must the next generation assume leadership

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3 roles within the business to be considered successors, or can they make transformative
4 contributions as intrapreneurs? As we celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit of the founding
5 generation, we must recognize the potential of the next generation to introduce innovative ideas
6 that may tap into new markets. Consequently, should we acknowledge individuals as successors if
7 they serve as intrapreneurs within the family business? Furthermore, the emergence of family
8 offices has introduced novel approaches to structuring family businesses, managing family
9 members, distributing power and control, and facilitating wealth and ownership transitions.

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12 In conclusion, my journey as a family business scholar has been shaped by a profound fascination
13 with the intricate dynamics of family businesses. Balancing the demands of teaching, research and
14 administrative tasks has been a formidable challenge, but it has also provided valuable insights
15 into the importance of aligning career choices with personal passions. Succession, a central theme
16 in family business research, requires reevaluation in light of evolving family business structures
17 and the diverse roles that next-generation members can play. Furthermore, the underrepresentation
18 of Asian family businesses in research underscores the need for scholars to explore the unique
19 complexities and cultural nuances within this context. As family business scholars, we must
20 continue to navigate these intricacies, expand our horizons, and contribute meaningfully to the
21 advancement of knowledge in this field.

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 **Conclusion and future research suggestions**

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40 This article has provided commentary from well known family business researchers as to what
41 they have learnt about doing research in general and especially on family business management.

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43 This is helpful in obtaining advice and suggestions about what makes a good family business
44 researcher. As we often continually do research without stepping back and thinking strategically
45 about what to do this article provides a useful way to obtain tips and feedback. This will be
46 important in contributing to the future development of family business management research.

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48 From the commentary of the family business researchers there are numerous future research
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3 areas ripe for more discovery including the emphasis on theory development. Many of the
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5 respondents stated that they wished more emphasis would be placed on family business theory.
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8 Thus, new research could focus on embedding the COVID-19 pandemic effects on family
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10 business management research. Other suggestions for future research focus on new geographic
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12 or cultural contexts for family business. Therefore, further research is needed on comparing and
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14 contrasting family business theory and management in different areas. This would yield new
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16 areas of interest.
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