

# Preface

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This review and annotated bibliography of family business studies is intended to update the previous effort by Sharma, Chrisman, and Chua in 1996. Research on this subject has expanded rapidly in the last 15 years and scholars in a wide range of disciplines such as entrepreneurship, strategic management, economics, finance, organization behavior, organization theory, and family sciences now regularly investigate topics pertaining to the behavior and performance of family firms. As the field expands, however, the communities of scholars in these disciplines do not always interact, thereby losing touch with the work being conducted outside their base discipline. Indeed, with the pace of growth of scholarship on family enterprises, just keeping up with the work done from a single disciplinary perspective is becoming increasingly difficult. Thus, there is a need for a book that covers the most important developments in the field over the past 15 years.

This updated review and annotated bibliography consolidates the most cited published research on family business over a 15-year period to provide a source for researchers, students, consultants and practitioners on the progress that has been made in better understanding family enterprises. More specifically, the book is intended to be a reference volume of the most cited theoretical/conceptual, empirical, and practical articles on family business from 1996 to 2010. The annotations for each article consist of a summary of key findings, research questions, contributions, and research implications. They also include a detailed description of the methodologies, empirical data, definitions, and conceptual models used. In addition, the book features chapters that review the literature, discuss how family businesses have been defined, present recent trends in family business empirical research, and provide an agenda for future research.

## THE INTENDED AUDIENCE OF THE BOOK

When researchers survey the literature on a particular topic of interest, they try to find out what other work has already been done in order to guide the development of their study. While literature-searches using

the Internet are always possible, such searches typically yield many irrelevant articles. Furthermore, the titles, and sometimes even the abstracts, obtained are not always sufficient to indicate whether the study is relevant or not because information on the research questions, conceptual model, data, and analytical methods used may be left out. By carefully describing each study in great detail, this review and annotated bibliography helps researchers save time and effort by allowing them to quickly identify the central features of the studies. The index provided at the end of the book is another excellent avenue for interested scholars to locate notable studies on topics of interest.

As a result, we believe the book provides interested scholars and doctoral students from all disciplines with an important resource that consolidates noteworthy research on family enterprises. The topics covered in the book should also be of interest to practitioners – both advisors and operators of family enterprises – as it will provide evidence-based knowledge on issues and dilemmas faced by them in everyday life.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 describes the methodology adopted to analyse the family business literature and provides an overview of developments in the field. It presents and discusses the growth of the literature from 1996 to 2010.

Chapter 2 provides a critical perspective on the state of the art in family business research. In particular, this chapter reviews trends in the definitions of family business that have been adopted in theoretical and empirical articles. It also discusses the extent to which the literature has dealt with a variety of family business research topics from a strategic management perspective.

Chapter 3 discusses trends in empirical research on family business. Specifically, that chapter analyses the data sources, sample sizes, and the characteristics of family firms that have been studied, such as firm size, firm age, family generation, geographic location, and industry.

Chapter 4 contains the annotated bibliography with the individual annotations, arranged by author in alphabetical order. Each of the 215 most-cited articles includes a systematic and detailed description of: the type of article (theoretical/conceptual, empirical qualitative, empirical quantitative, experiential, literature review, editorial, critiques and responses), strategic management topic classification, keywords, subject of study, research questions, key findings, contributions and research implications, implications for practice, research methodologies, definition

of family business adopted, empirical data and key conceptual models used. It is important to clarify here that the purpose of the annotations is to provide information about each of the studies rather than express opinions regarding their relevance, rigor, or conceptual adequacy.

Completing the literature review and preparing the annotations that led to the development of this book has been a long and rewarding journey for us. We hope that researchers, scholars, consultants, educators, and family business owners and managers who use this book will find it to be a useful resource.

The articles annotated here were selected from the vast literature using what we believe is an objective process. It is possible, however, that very important studies have been excluded by the process. For example, more recent publications that require additional time for their importance to be noticed will not have been included. We acknowledge this weakness in the process and apologize to the authors for the exclusions.

Finally, no undertaking of this magnitude is possible without the support of our respective institutions and sponsors. Therefore, we express our profound gratitude to them for their support without which this bibliography would not have been possible.