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EMBEDDEDNESS AND COMMITMENT IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS (SUMMARY)

Dmitry Khanin

California State University, dkhanin@fullerton.edu

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

**EMBEDDEDNESS AND COMMITMENT
IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS**

Dmitry Khanin, Cal State, Fullerton, USA

Principal Topic

Scholars have discussed different types of embeddedness: structural, cognitive, political and normative (Le Breton & Miller, 2009) and different types of commitment: affective, normative, and continuance (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Moreover, some have further broken down continuance commitment into calculative and imperative commitment (Sharma & Irving, 2005). The research question we pose in this paper is as follows: are different types of family embeddedness associated with different types of family and non-family employees' commitment to the family firm?

Methods

We have employed the existing questionnaire (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993) for measures of affective and normative commitment. Measures of calculative and imperative commitment were generated based on the existing scale developed for continuance commitment (Meyer et al., 1993; Meyer et al., 2010a; 2010b) with some additional items specifically designed for family businesses. Measures of the four types of embeddedness in the family firm were proposed based on the existing theory of embeddedness types (Granovetter, 1985; 2005; Uzzi, 1996; 1999; Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2009). The resulting questionnaire was distributed to the family businesses both on the East Coast and West Coast of the U.S. that agreed to participate in the survey.

Results and Implications

Our findings are as follows: (1) Cognitive and cultural embeddedness was associated with affective commitment; (2) Structural and power embeddedness was associated with normative commitment, calculative commitment and imperative commitment. The subject of commitment in the small business is of paramount importance due to resource limitations that make continual recruitment and training of new employees challenging (Uhlener, Floren, Geerlings, 2007). Moreover, family firms may not sufficiently use HR practices and thus depend even more on employee commitment (De Kok, Uhlener, & Thurik, 2006). Commitment plays an important role in family business as a source of strategic flexibility (Zahra, Hayton, & Neubaum, 2008). Understanding how different types of embeddedness (Dacin et al., 1999) are associated with family and non-family employee commitment could allow family firms to enhance specific types of employee commitment and consequently improve their performance outcomes.

CONTACT: Dmitry Khanin; dkhanin@fullerton.edu; (T) 657-278-5569; (F) 657-278-2645; Department of Management, CSUF, 800 N. State Blvd., Fullerton, CA 928314, USA.