

Organizational and individual factors influencing the internationalization pattern of family firms

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Abstract

In the current dissertation, the focus is on the study of internationalization pattern of family enterprises in the context of today's global economy. The main problem addressed by the dissertation study is why family enterprises lag behind non-family enterprises in their internationalization, i.e. which are the basic influencing factors. The study encompasses a combination of basic factors at different levels – organizational and individual, affecting the internationalization pattern. The originality of the thesis is associated with the assumed holistic approach to internationalization. In other words, the study examines internationalization regarding the variety of modes, different business status, and elements of the internationalization pattern, related to born globals and similar concepts. Therefore, the study covers from traditionally internationalized firms to born globals employing a variety of modes, with different sizes, business status, and internationalization status. In particular, the study's focus is on family internationalized small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In this sense, the originality can be viewed in several directions. First, an interdisciplinary approach was applied, combining established theories of firm's internationalization, international business and management, with the more recent theoretical perspective of international entrepreneurship. Second, a particular scientific method was utilized in the field of study – a systematic integrative review. Third, existing theories and concepts were tested in a country with a small and open economy in Central and Eastern Europe, a former socialist republic. In these conditions, family enterprises are predominantly first generation and their differentiating characteristics compared with non-family enterprises are not as distinct as in Western European countries with a developed market economy. This statement is particularly true for SMEs, where ownership and management are concentrated in a narrow circle of persons or a single individual, and there is an overlap of implemented functions. These characteristics determine the need to consider factors not only at the organizational level but also at the individual level. The main unit of analysis is the family business status.