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Reasons for Work Performance in Family Businesses: Opinions of Non-Family-Member-Employees, Family-Member-Employees, and Managements

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Abstract
Family businesses are disparate from other forms of businesses because of their stakeholder constituent (i.e. the relationship between family members as owners, top management, board of directors, employees); the emotional attachment to their ownership and ambivalence; duality of goals, i.e. economic and non-economic; a shared sense of identity and a lifelong common history for family-member-employees, which influences their behaviours both on the job and off the job; and the different means used in their communication, documentation, conflict resolution, etc. Therefore in family businesses where some employees are part of the owning family as well, the factors that may motivate such family-member-employees to work may be quite different from those that may motivate workers or employees who are not part of the owning family to work. In this research, we directly asked workers in a family business (categorized into family-member-employees and non-family-member-employees, managers and CEOs) to indicate the reasons for work performances within the family business. The results of the survey showed that, amidst other important factors, the only factor that every group of respondents mentioned as directly contributing to work performance in a family business, regardless of what category of employee one is, is the tying of rewards to performance or productivity.
Keywords: Performance, family business, Ambivalence, Job performance

Introduction

Family businesses, which are defined by scholars from different perspectives, vary in typology: sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, holding companies, publicly traded companies, limited liabilities, among others. Donnelley (1964), Bernard (1975), Barnes & Hershon (1976), Alcorn (1982), Daily & Dollinger (1992), Chua, Chrisman & Sharma (1999), Gallo, Tapies, Cappuyns (2000), McConaughy, Matthews & Fialko (2001), and many other scholars have defined family businesses differently. In their appraisal of 250 papers, Chua, Chrisman & Sharma (1999) cataloged twenty-one different definitions of family businesses, and noted the following about those definitions: first, with few non-inclusions, the definitions do not delineate governance from management. Second, some necessitate controlling ownership or family management alone while others adjure both ownership and management. The definitions therefore inculcate three qualifying combinations of ownership and management: (a) family-owned and family-managed, (b) family-owned but not family-managed, (c) family-managed but not family-owned. They stated that all the twenty-one different definitions accept combination (a) to be a family business. There is disagreement, however, on the other two combinations, although most writers seem to prefer combination (b) over combination (c).

Third, while some definitions do not insist on ownership by family, those that do imply, explicitly or implicitly, controlling ownership, even though they disagree with respect to the acceptable patterns of controlling ownership. Controlling owners include an individual, two persons unrelated by blood or marriage, two persons related by blood or marriage, a nuclear family, more than one nuclear family, an extended family, more than one extended family, and the public. The definitions that center on family ownership consensually view ownership by a nuclear family to be a qualifying ownership pattern. However, there is disagreement about all others, especially public ownership. In a nutshell, there is consistency in extant literature that a business owned and managed by a family is a family business. Once one deviates from this particular combination or ownership pattern and management involvement, however, researchers hold varying opinions (Chua, Chrisman & Sharma, 1999).

Characteristics or Features of the Family Business

In their research on the bivalent attributes of the family firm, Tagiuri & Davis (1996) gave seven (7) important characteristics or unique features that distinguish family businesses from other businesses as below:

Simultaneous Roles

Family members working in the family business (herein after called family-member-employees) can have three simultaneous roles – as relatives, as owners, and as managers because of their overlapping memberships. As family members, their primary concern is the welfare and the unity of the family; as owners, their interest is in returns on investment and in the viability of the business; as managers, they work toward the achievement of operational effectiveness for the business.

Shared Identity

Family-member-employees share a sense of identity or belongingness. For example, the family name is an identity for family members and has a meaning to people inside the family, bonds them together, and at times, even defines codes of conduct or behaviour for relatives. Even though this bivalent attribute seems obvious, it is nonetheless a significant influence on family members' attitudes and behaviours both on the job and off the job. Since work and family domains are intertwined in a family business – a result of the overlap – each action of every family-member-employee, i.e. relatives carries both business and family meanings.

Emotional Involvement and Confusion

The lifelong relationship that family members share with one another proffers benefits and drawbacks, which lead to the wielding of positive and negative feelings for each other. Thus family members develop ambivalent feelings toward one another, which may act as an obstacle to objectivity, or positively, lead to the expression of love, generate motivation and trust, among others.

A Lifelong Common History

The attitudes and behaviours of blood relatives working together are influenced, in part, by the fact that they dwelt with one another all their lives. This common history that they share carries with it a considerable amount of shared experience and knowledge about one another, which they could use to draw on one another's strengths and weaknesses and work to complement each other.

The Private Language of Relatives

One fascinating characteristic of the work interaction among family members is the relative's private language that develops. The many years that family members share life together generates special words, phrases, expressions, and body movements, etc. that have agreed meanings peculiar to them, which could be called 'private language' or 'family language.' Such private languages allow family members to communicate more efficiently than is generally possible among non-family members, facilitating the exchange of more information with greater privacy and decisions-making more rapidly than can two non-relatives.

Mutual Awareness and Privacy

Family members know much about one another, e.g. what pressures they are under, what makes them happy or angry, how they are feeling physically, etc. This knowledge about each other comes in three ways: first, there is explicit communication among family members aided by the fact that they see each other more often in many types of business and social settings. Second, as already stated, family members have a private language which facilitates this awareness of each other. Third, family members share common relatives, who may pass on information from one relative to another. The mutual awareness developed privately among family members can enhance communication, understanding, trust and support for one another in the business.

Meaning of the Family Company

The length of a family's association with it and the generation of the company may influence what the company means or signifies for members of the owning family. The firm (especially a first-generation firm) is usually regarded as a part of the family and family members often bear strong feelings about it. To a founder-father, it often represents a wife, mistress, or child. For a son (especially the one that grew up with the firm), the company is the father's creation and the son becomes its guardian. Later generations can also have strong personalized attachments to the business but this seems to seldom occur. What the firm means to a family member and the corresponding attachment to it are important influences on work relationship between relatives. A founder can fight to maintain control over the business and could seem to love the business more than he loves any member of his family. When strong attachments exist, discussions about organisation control can become subjective and highly charge emotional confrontations. On the other hand, family members' strong attachments to the business can bring unity of purpose and willingness to contribute to the business.

In summary, the important things to note are that family businesses are different from traditional corporate firms in many ways, such as their stakeholder constituent (i.e. the relationship between family members as owners, top management, board of directors); the emotional attachment to ownership and ambivalence; duality of goals, i.e. economic and non-economic; a shared sense of identity and a lifelong common history for family-member-employees, which influences their behaviours both on the job and off the job; and the different means used in their communication, documentation, conflict resolution, etc. (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996; Mustakallio, Autio & Zahra, 2002; Roy, 2010; Poza, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

In this research, we refer to work performance, employee performance, or job performance as employees' attitudes toward work and/or what they are able to achieve, accomplish or attain in the execution of their duties.

It is the efficiency with which employees fulfil their assigned jobs or responsibilities, their quality of functioning or mode of conduct or behaviour towards work. Literature on employee performance at work focuses on the evaluation of how variables such as empowerment, innovativeness, organizational commitment, job involvement, etc. help the attainment of individual and organizational goals. Others focus on the application of the ACHIEVE Model by Hersey & Goldsmith (1980) to determine employee performance. The acronym 'ACHIEVE' used in naming the model by Hersey & Goldsmith (1980) stands for Ability (knowledge and skills), Clarity (understanding or role perception), Help (organizational support), Incentive (motivation and willingness), Evaluation (coaching), Validity (procedures, practices, rules, and regulations), and Environment (outsider or external factors) (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2011, 2013; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999; Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1992, 1995; Lee, Cayer, & Lan, 2006; Nielsen & Pedersen, 2003; Spreitzer, 1995; Bowen & Lawler, 1992; Davies, Laschinger, & Andrusyszyn, 2006; Fulford & Enz, 1995; Kim, 2002; Klecker & Loadman, 1996; Koukkanen, Leino-Kilpi, & Katajisto, 2003; Ugboro & Obeng, 2000; Guthrie, 2001; Coye & Belohlav, 1995; as in Dehaghi & Rouhani, 2014).

So far, there is no known empirical research that has sought the opinions of workers in a family business directly on the reasons for behaving the way they do toward their job roles. More so, in family businesses where some employees are part of the owning family as well, the reasons or factors that may motivate such family-member-employees to work may be quite different from those that may motivate workers or employees who are not part of the owning family to work. In this research, we directly ask workers in a family business (categorized into family-member-employees and non-family-member-employees, managers and CEOs) to indicate the reasons for their performance at work. Hence, the research sought to address the following questions:

1. What major reason accounts for the performance of family-member-employees working in the business?
2. What major reason accounts for the performance of non-family-member-employees working in the business?
3. Are there any similarities between the reasons for the performance of family-member-employees and non-family-member-employees in a family business?
4. From a management perspective, what major reasons account for the performance of these two groups of workers in a family business?

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this research was to identify the reasons for the performance of family business employees from the perspective of the employees. Specifically, the research sought to:

1. ascertain by allowing (without giving or suggesting any clues) family-member-employees working in a family business to personally state the major reasons accounting for their performance.
2. ascertain by allowing (without giving or suggesting any clues) non-family-member-employees working in a family business to personally state the major reasons accounting for their performance.
3. determine, from the respondents' responses, any similarities and differences within the reasons that account for the performance of both groups of workers in a family business.
4. ascertain whether the views of CEOs and managers regarding the reasons for the performance of both groups of workers in a family business are true.

Scope and Methodology

In this research, we used data collected from 193 respondents from Ghana, West Africa. The respondents comprise CEOs (entrepreneurs) of family businesses, management personnel, employees who are also members of the owning family, and employees who are neither management personnel nor family-member-employees. Thirty (30) questionnaires were distributed to management personnel of three family businesses out of which sixteen (16) were retrieved, representing 53% response rate for management. 3 CEOs, who are also the entrepreneurs of three family businesses surveyed were given questionnaires to answer. All 3 responded, representing 100% in their case. Similarly, out of 55 questionnaires that went out to family-member-employees, 23 were received, which represents 42%. Non-family-member-employees, who constituted the majority of employees in every firm that was visited were given a total of 200 questionnaires but 151 responded, representing 76%. Overall, the response rate was 67%.

In order to ensure a balance, family businesses were grouped into three categories and a sample chosen from each of them. The first group consisted of family businesses that are 10 years old or less. The second group consisted of family businesses that had existed for more than 10 years but up to 30 years, and the third group was made up of family businesses that are more than 30 years old. The family businesses that were selected had branches in Koforidua, Somanya, Suhum, Accra, and Kumasi; and all these branches were surveyed, covering the Greater Accra, Eastern, and Ashanti regions. The Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Eastern regions of

Ghana together constitute the most populous and commercially centered regions of the country. All the sampled firms were in the hospitality and catering industry and were 100% owned family businesses.

The difficulty associated with identifying and contacting all the elements in our population of study as well as the necessity to purposively select respondents in some cases (e.g. management) because, in our judgment, they could provide answers that would enhance the attainment of our objectives led the researchers to adopt Convenience and Purposive sampling techniques in the administration of questionnaires, which in some cases, were followed with interviews to clarify unclear responses. The use of these sampling tools are consistent with the suggestions by De Vos (1998) and Saunders et al. (2007).

The respondents' responses were analysed using frequencies, percentages, and means, among others. In order to test the reliability and internal consistency of the gathered data and the relationships between the individual items in the scale, alpha (Cronbach) was tested using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 21, based on the average inter-item correlation. The mean, variance, and standard deviation are the reliability analysis algorithms employed. The results from the reliability tests proved that the data is highly reliable with the various data reported Cronbach's Alpha shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Reliability test conducted on the data collection using SPSS.

Data	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	No of variables N	Cronbach's Alpha
	Statistical Scale				
Family Employee	247.96	403.68	20.09	54	0.684
Non-Family Employee	200.66	262.11	16.20	48	0.605
CEO	363.67	926.33	30.45	82	0.665
Managers	280.38	411.583	20.29	70	0.547

Research Limitations

The research is limited in scope and depth. First of all, all companies surveyed were 100% family-owned businesses within the hospitality and catering industry. Second, we did not cover the entire country but limited our scope to 3 regions. Even though 3 entrepreneurs and their family businesses were targeted, and 3 regions out of 10 regions in Ghana were surveyed, the study's significance is not annihilated because little or virtually no work has been done in this area and the conditions that exist for firms to operate within the 10 regions of Ghana are not very different from each other. We recommend further research into this area using different industries and family businesses with different ownership stakes. We also recommend the inclusion of more entrepreneurs and family businesses in further researches.

Analysis and Discussion

CEOs' Views about Reasons for Employee Performances in Family Businesses.

The CEOs were asked an open-ended question to state one major reason that accounts for the performance of family-member-employees working within their establishments. In their responses, 2 out of the 3 respondents reported that the performance of family-member-employees is the result of 'their sense of ownership of the family business.' In follow-up interviews, they explained that the family-member-employees should know that the business is for them and hence if they conduct themselves well and work harder to boost the firm's performance and profitability, they would be enhancing family wealth and ultimately their own future welfare. Alternatively, if they boss around lazily on other staff, show disrespect to their superiors, etc. because they think they are part owners of the business and hence cannot be touched, the business may collapse and all family members will be ultimate losers. The other CEO was, however, of the view that it is the reward (compensation) that is given to target achievers that drives his family members working in the business to work the way they do. He was of the firm belief that as long as the family-member-employees were paid well, just like other staff, they would generally work well and vice versa.

Coincidentally, when asked to indicate one major reason that accounts for the performance of non-family-member-employees, 2 of the CEOs attributed it to compensation (higher pay for better performance) as well. But one CEO indicated that the performance of non-family-member-employees was mainly because of the fear of losing their jobs. In his own words, he stated: "if you're not family, you need to work well, else I'll fire you! Every worker knows this! I won't sit down and allow a stranger to ruin my business, which my family depends on and has worked so hard to bring this far!" As far as he was concerned, the fear of losing one's job was enough motivation to keep a non-family-member-employee working harder.

Managers' Views about Reasons for Employee Performances in Family Businesses.

Managers were asked an open-ended question to state one major reason that accounts for the performance of family-member-employees working in the business, just as the CEOs, without providing them with any clues. Their responses were grouped for coding purposes, with results displayed in Table 2. The largest category of management respondents (50.0%) stated that it is because of the sense of ownership, i.e. the business is for their family and hence they needed to work well to protect and ensure its long-term survival. This was followed by 'rewards for better performance' (18.8%). In all, 5 major reasons were provided by the managers to account for the conduct and performance of family-member-employees in a family business, with just 6.3% stating that performance was the result of 'the desire to improve upon family wealth.' Table 2 throws more light on the above.

Table 2 Management's views of reasons that account for family-member-employees' performance within the family business

Major Reason They work well because: …	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
of the sense of ownership, i.e. the business is for the family	8	50.0	50.0	50.0
of the desire to improve upon family wealth	1	6.3	6.3	56.3
they are satisfied with and love the type of work they do	2	12.5	12.5	68.8
managers and the CEO do not entertain laziness and insubordination	2	12.5	12.5	81.3
good performance is rewarded	3	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	16	100.0	100.0	

On the reasons for the performance of non-family-member-employees working in the business, managers' responses to the open-ended question were categorized into 8 as provided in Table 3. The largest group believed that non-family-member-employees' performances at work could be attributed to their 'fear of losing their jobs.' 18.8% of managers thought that non-family-member-employee performances were tied to 'their satisfaction with and the love they have for the type of work they do.' An equal proportion of managers (18.8%) believed that performances of this group of workers were attributable to 'the knowledge, skills, and experiences of the workers', i.e. the more knowledge they had, the more their skills levels, and the longer their experiences on the job, the better they are able to perform. Other reasons given to explain employee performances and their respective percentages are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Management's views of reasons that account for non-family-member-employees' performance within the family business

Major Reason They work well because: …	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
they are satisfied with and love the type of work they do	3	18.8	18.8	18.8
good performance is rewarded	1	6.3	6.3	25.0
there is a good working relationship among managers and workers	1	6.3	6.3	31.3
they have the knowledge, skills, and experience to work better	3	18.8	18.8	50.0
they do not want to lose their jobs	4	25.0	25.0	75.0
managers and the CEO do not entertain bad performance regardless of who you are	2	12.5	12.5	87.5
they do not want to disappoint managers who understand the workers and share their problems	1	6.3	6.3	93.8
there are no conflicting nor overlapping roles and responsibilities of workers	1	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total	16	100.0	100.0	

Reasons behind the Performances of Family-Member-Employees in Family Businesses.

Each family-member-employee was asked, in an open-ended question, to state the major reason behind their work performance or conduct at the work place and their responses were coded to allow for analysis. 30.4% stated that the business entity was theirs so they work with that fact in mind, which drives them to behave the way they do at the work place. 17.4% indicated that their desire to improve upon the wealth of the family that owns the business wheedles their behaviour. Those whose conduct were motivated by the satisfaction with and love for the work they do constituted 8.7% while 17.4% were enticed by the rewards that go with better performance at work.

Table 4 State one major reason that accounts for your working performance/conduct as a family-member-employee.

My conduct at work is influenced by: …	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
the sense of ownership, i.e. the business is for my family	7	30.4	30.4	30.4
my desire to improve upon family wealth	4	17.4	17.4	47.8
I am satisfied with and love the type of work I do	2	8.7	8.7	56.5
good performance is rewarded	4	17.4	17.4	73.9
there is a good working relationship among managers and workers	1	4.3	4.3	78.3
working colleagues have the desire and help each other to become productive	2	8.7	8.7	87.0
managers and the CEO do not entertain bad performance regardless of who you are	3	13.0	13.0	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

4.3% loved the good relationship that existed between them and management and that good rapport was just enough to coax them to work. 8.7% also depended on the help of colleagues at work to be productive and 13.0% would work well because of possible punitive measures that the CEO and management could mete out to them when they perform poorly. In all, seven reasons were enumerated by the family-member-employees to support their conduct at work as presented in Table 4.

Reasons behind the Performances of Non-Family-Member-Employees in Family Businesses.

Each non-family-member-employee was asked, in an open-ended question, to state the major reason behind their work performance or conduct at the work place and their responses presented below in Table 5. In all, 13 reasons are given by the non-family-member-employees as influencing their conduct/performance at work. The performance of 15.9% of the non-family-member-employees are driven by 'the rewards that are attached to worker performance', with 12.6% being influenced by 'their satisfaction with and the love they have for the type of work they do.' Those that are influenced by 'the fear of losing their jobs' constitute 10.6% while 9.9% stated that their work performance is motivated by 'the desire to gather experience for the future'.

Table 5 State one major reason that accounts for your working performance/conduct as a non-family-member-employee.

My conduct at work is influenced by: …	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I am satisfied with and love the type of work I do	19	12.6	12.6	12.6
managers and the CEO do not entertain laziness and insubordination	8	5.3	5.3	17.9
Compensation is good/adequate and good performance is rewarded	24	15.9	15.9	33.8
there is a good working relationship among managers and workers	8	5.3	5.3	39.1
working colleagues have the desire to help each other to become productive	7	4.6	4.6	43.7
the need to gather experience for the future	15	9.9	9.9	53.6
my knowledge, skills, and experience in my field which makes me work better	7	4.6	4.6	58.3
I do not want to lose my job	16	10.6	10.6	68.9
of the joy and inner satisfaction that goes with achieving results and targets	7	4.6	4.6	73.5
managers and the CEO do not entertain bad performance regardless of who you are	6	4.0	4.0	77.5
I do not want to disappoint managers who understand me and share in my problems	6	4.0	4.0	81.5
there are no conflicting nor overlapping roles and responsibilities of workers	14	9.3	9.3	90.7
in-service training gave me the knowledge and skills to work well	14	9.3	9.3	100.0
Total	151	100.0	100.0	

The other reasons influencing their work performance and their corresponding percentages, as presented in Table 5, are in-service training (9.3%), well-defined job roles that do not overlap nor conflict (9.3%), punishments for laziness and insubordination (5.3%), good rapport between management and the workforce (5.3%), working colleagues' desire to help one another (4.6%), employees' knowledge, skills and experiences (4.6%), the joy and inner satisfaction associated with achieving results and targets (4.6%), punitive measures that are associated with inability to meet targets or bad performance (4.0%), and the unwillingness to disappoint managers that have understood workers and reposed trust in them (4.0%).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis and discussion led the researchers to conclude that:

From the perspective of CEOs of family businesses, the major reason that accounts for the performance of family-member-employees is 'the sense of ownership of the firm' but 'compensation commensurate with work performance' accounts for the conduct or performance of non-family-member-employees working in a family business.

Managers, on the other hand, popularly shared the same view as CEOs that 'sense of ownership' was the driving force behind the conduct and behaviour at work (performance) of family-member-employees, even though four other reasons were enumerated. On the part of non-family-member-employees, however, majority of managers believe that their work performances could be attributed to the fear of losing their jobs if they do not put up better performances.

Three major reasons given by family-member-employees as contributing to their work performances were 'the sense of family ownership,' 'the desire to improve upon family wealth', and 'performance rewards.'

Three popular views among non-family-member-employees that contribute to their performances were 'performance rewards', 'satisfaction with and love for their jobs', and 'the fear of being sacked for poor performance.'

From the results of the survey, the following were common reasons assigned to the performance of family-member-employees by CEOs, managers, and the family-member-employees themselves:

- the sense of ownership, i.e. being a part-owner of the business as a member of the family, which scored the highest percentage among all the groups where it appeared; and
- the tying of rewards to performance or productivity.

On the side of non-family-member-employees, common reasons assigned to their performance by CEOs, managers, and the non-family-member-employees themselves were:

- the tying of rewards to performance or productivity; and
- the fear of losing their jobs as a result of bad or poor performance.

Clearly, the only factor that every group of respondents mentioned as contributing to work performance in a family business, regardless of what category of employee one is, is the tying of rewards to performance or productivity. Consequently, we wish to state that managements should consider compensation plans of workers and fashion out structures that adequately reward productivity. Measures should be put in place to assess workers' outputs or productivity and link them to compensation plans appropriately.

One very significant factor (negative; though it may seem to be achieving results) which CEOs and Managers should work assiduously to erase or correct is "the fear of losing one's job", which has appeared everywhere on the reasons necessitating non-family-member-employees' performances. CEOs and Managers must not rely on the idea or notion that employees are working hard and will continue to work hard because if they don't, they'll lose their jobs. Such employees are still with the firm because they have not got a better option now, a place where they can work comfortably without fear. Once they get, they will leave. When this happens, the firm might lose competent and skilled employees and their replacement is not a guarantee. Additionally, even though performance may be at acceptable levels for such category of staff, the firm may not be getting the best out of workers who are under the fear of losing their jobs if they do not achieve results or targets. Such workers could achieve more than they are doing currently if they were positively well-motivated.

We wish to state also that even though some reasons for work performance were common among categories of the family business employees, every reason assigned and presented in this report should be taken seriously by managements of family businesses if they want their businesses to succeed. Each reason is important and managers should carve policies that support each of them. Once that is done, all workers' needs could be met and family firm performance enhanced.

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