

## Call for Papers



*International Journal of Transitions and Innovation Systems*

### **Special Issue on: "Professional and Managerial Challenges in Driving Transition Processes and Innovation in Small and Medium-Sized Family Businesses"**

*Guest Editors:*

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In recent years, researchers and practitioners in the family business (FB) and SMEs fields are more and more considering those organisational forms as heterogeneous (Chua et al., 2012). Notwithstanding, it is possible to highlight some common features that characterise the organisational forms that fall in the intersection of the two fields – that is family SMEs. For example, depending on their organisational lifecycle, informal structures (Stewart and Hitt, 2012; Songini, 2006; Gedajlovic et al., 2004) and low widespread adoption of formal managerial mechanisms (Songini et al., 2015; Senftlechner and Hiebl, 2015) often characterise family SMEs, especially during the founder stage (Zahra and Filatotchev, 2004; Daily and Dalton, 1992).

A transition to more formal structures and mechanisms requires appropriate and consistent competences and specific mechanisms to influence and direct behaviours. This transition mainly occurs through organisational changes in response to environmental challenges, which require modifications to the traditionally informal structures and mechanisms of those organisations. The transition toward new structures requires the introduction of professional competences and managerial mechanisms.

Professional competences and managerial mechanisms relate to each other. Indeed, the adoption of managerial mechanisms, such as strategic management, human resource management (HRM), accounting, marketing and operations management mechanisms, requires the introduction of professional competences, consisting of different knowledge, skills and experiences in designing, implementing and managing the various managerial mechanisms. Nevertheless, the transition to professional competences and managerial mechanisms may lead family SMEs to lose the innate and intrinsic characteristic that led them to success in the past: the entrepreneurial spirit (Cavusgil and Knight, 2015). Accordingly, a considerable stream of literature is highlighting the importance of considering the introduction of professional competences and managerial mechanisms without losing the entrepreneurial spirit (Songini et al., 2015; Songini and Gnan, 2015; Stewart and Hitt, 2012; Poppo and Zenger, 2002; Mustakallio et al., 2002; Moores and Mula, 2000). Following this stream of literature, this special issue aims at challenging authors to investigate, understand and propose the challenges raised by the transition to professional competences and managerial mechanisms in family SMEs, and how to manage them.

The purpose of this special issue is twofold. Firstly, to deliver answers on how, why and what questions both on:

- The design, adoption, use and (non-)change of managerial mechanisms within family SMEs, and;
- The acquiring, nurturing and fostering of skills, knowledge and experiences matching the request of implementing and adopting those managerial systems.

Secondly, to engage in the cross-disciplinary debate on the conceptual relationships and frameworks that these fields (family SMEs, managerial systems and professional competencies) might share and benefit from.

Where the first goal intends to leverage one field with the other, the second objective aims at a reciprocal benefit from an exchange between both fields.

This call for papers welcomes multidisciplinary and novel theoretical contributions about the transition to professional competences and managerial mechanisms in family SMEs. Also, papers approaching this through qualitative, quantitative or mixed method are welcome. We are looking for contributions which employ explorative and original approaches or methods that investigate the issues concerning the transition to professional competences and managerial mechanisms in family SMEs.

We invite submissions from various disciplines, such as entrepreneurship, SMEs, management, family business, or combinations thereof. Contributions can be conceptual (including critical literature reviews or “state-of-the-art” articles) and/or empirical (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods). The special issue aims to critically review and advance theorisations and methodological applications to the study of managing and developing transition to professional competences and managerial mechanisms in a family business context, highlighting the relevance of different theories in advancing our knowledge of small and medium family firms. Papers which adopt innovative approaches or challenge our understanding of family business and the balance between entrepreneurial spirit and professional competences and managerial mechanisms are welcome. Action research papers with an intervention focus are also welcome. Review papers as well as empirical and theoretical papers will be considered.

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## Subject Coverage

Suitable topics include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Why do SMEs and FBs managerialise and/or professionalise?
- How do SMEs' and FBs' managerialisation and professionalisation contribute to economic growth?
- How can we distinguish SMEs and FBs based on the professionalisation and managerialisation processes? Are there specific industry or public infrastructure contingencies pushing for innovation?
- How can SMEs and FBs balance entrepreneurial spirit and managerialisation/ professionalisation over time?
- What are the roles of family members and non-family members in balancing entrepreneurial spirit and managerialisation/professionalisation?
- What is the role of women in such a balance in terms of gender equality?
- What are the implications of managerialisation and professionalisation for key employee relations?
- How do SMEs' and FBs' managerialisation and professionalisation contribute to developing mutual gains with respect to employees (decent work)?
- How and why do owner/managers' approaches to managerialisation and professionalisation differ?
- To what extent do professionalisation and managerialisation affect firm performance?
- How do SMEs' and FBs' managerialisation and professionalisation set a specific educational goal for new generations of managers?
- How is the relationship between governance, strategy and professionalisation and managerialisation processes in SMEs articulated?
- What is the content of the professionalisation construct within a family SME context?
- What is the content of the managerialisation construct within a family SME context?
- How and why do family SMEs professionalise and/or managerialise?
- How can we distinguish family SMEs based on the professionalisation and the managerialisation constructs?
- To what extent does professionalisation and managerialisation affect family SMEs performances?
- How and why do owner/managers' approaches to professionalisation and managerialisation differ?
- Which are the technological instances, the national and international environmental dimensions, and the internal organisational factors that influence the intensity and speed of the adoption decision, on the one hand, and the implementation process, on the other hand of managerial systems in family SMEs?
- How do managerial systems affect family SMEs' processes of professionalisation and succession, and 'familiness' or 'socioemotional wealth'?
- How do ownership and governance changes in family SMEs draw on managerial systems?
- How are professionalisation and managerialisation processes involved in developing a family SMEs' identity, reputation and/or legitimacy?
- How is the relationship between governance, strategy and professionalisation and managerialisation processes in family SMEs articulated?
- How do generational transitions, involving top-management teams and other corporate governance structures, play out within managerial systems in family

## Notes for Prospective Authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. (N.B. Conference papers may only be submitted if the paper has been completely re-written and if appropriate written permissions have been obtained from any copyright holders of the original paper).

All papers are refereed through a peer review process.

**All papers *must* be submitted online.** To submit a paper, please read our [Submitting articles](#) page.

## Important Dates

Manuscripts due by: *30 September, 2020*

Notification to authors: *15 June, 2021*

Final versions due by: *30 June, 2021*