

Values of centenarian family firms as a source of longevity

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Abstract

Being in business over a century, Centenarian family firms (CFF) have demonstrated that they adapt to a changing competitive market environment and successfully established longevity, including an efficient succession routine and dynamic capabilities. While family firms are considered to possess a strong set of values (Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011), it has not been observed, which value sets are vital for longevity. Through the close connection between the individual values of family members and the business itself, values influence the behaviour of CFF (Astrachan *et al.*, 2002; Dyer, 2003; Gersick *et al.*, 1997). Conducting nine qualitative interviews, we identify that CFF balance values for change, which leads to innovation, and values for conserving the status quo of the firm in an equilibrium.

Key Words: Values, Centenarian Family Firms, Tradition-innovation paradox, Schwartz's Values

Sommario

Le imprese familiari centenarie, essendo in attività da oltre un secolo, hanno dimostrato di sapersi adattare ad un contesto di mercato competitivo in evoluzione mantenendo una stabile longevità con un'efficiente routine e capacità dinamiche di successione familiare. Sebbene le aziende familiari siano considerate in possesso di un insieme importante di valori (Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011), non è stato analizzato quale insieme di valori è da considerare più vitale per la longevità. Attraverso la

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stretta connessione tra i valori individuali dei membri della famiglia e l'impresa stessa, i valori influenzano il comportamento delle imprese familiari centenarie (Astrachan et al., 2002; Dyer, 2003; Gersick et al., 1997). In particolare, in questo lavoro sono state condotte nove interviste qualitative, rilevando che le imprese familiari centenarie riescono a bilanciare i valori per il cambiamento, che porta all'innovazione, con i fattori di conservazione dello status quo dell'impresa.

Parole chiave: Valori, Imprese familiari centenarie, paradosso tradizione-innovazione, valori di Schwartz

1. Introduction

Values guide entrepreneurial behaviour as decision-making and goal-setting is desired to be in line with personal values of the entrepreneur (Hemingway, 2005). This follows, that actions that are positively associated with serving to show off values as actions that are in line with desired values are more attractive (Fayolle *et al.*, 2014). In family firms, values strongly guide behaviour through the close connection between the individual values of family members and the business itself (Astrachan *et al.*, 2002; Dyer, 2003; Gersick *et al.*, 1997). Thus, owner-manager family values are closely related to the firm values (Tàpies & Ward, 2008) and are therefore especially suitable to how values are anchored. Family firms are typically long-term oriented and values are often lived over generations (Sharma, 2004). An important part of culture are values, which are lived in the family firm (Dyer, 1988). Family firm culture plays an important role, if the firm is successful over more generations (Dyer, 1988). Corbetta and Salvato (2012) name a patrimony of values and dialogues among family members, besides other abilities like leadership succession as a success factor for family firm longevity. Erdem and Başer (2010) show that there are strong values in family businesses, which are also related to the stability of the company and do not change even when the organization is handed over. It is also evident that the second generation has usually lived with the founders for a long time, therefore grows into the company, and in this way adopts their values (Erdem & Başer, 2010). A strong value orientation within the family can therefore support succession processes positively (Tàpies & Ward, 2008). To better understand the influence of values in family businesses, the literature refers to further analyses on this topic, while considering the heterogeneity of family businesses (Duh *et al.*, 2010; Erdem & Başer, 2010).

While it seems popularly accepted that values guide behaviour, we currently lack knowledge about which value sets are lived in family firms. Research addressing the topic values of family businesses is limited and tend

to focus on a range of similar values (Rau, 2019) such as long-term orientation, moral values such as fairness or customer orientation (Ward, 2008; Koiranen, 2002). Values in family business are identified as homogenous, but Rau *et al.* (2019) have refuted this perspective and show the heterogeneity of values in family businesses. For this reason, it is of particular relevance to elaborate the values of CFF and to verify these results in this context.

The present study therefore concentrates on understanding values that guide the behaviour of CFF, thus emerged as sustainable values for long-term family business success. By using the Schwartz values (1991), we take an established framework to identify values in a qualitative content analysis in a structured way, which was not done by previous studies.

The data collection is based on nine qualitative interviews with CFF owner-managers. To stay competitive in the long-run CFF have demonstrated that they are capable of dealing with change and renewal successfully over decades. As CFF demonstrated their longevity, we assume that the value sets we identify are fostering stability of the company (Erdem and Başer, 2010). Examining CFF values therefore has the advantage that the findings of this study might support younger family firms as a role model for orienting or even adapting their values.

The theoretical value considerations of Schwartz are used for the analysis (Schwartz, 1999; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995). To our best knowledge, this value theory has not deeply been applied to the topic of family businesses in previous research.

In the following, we discuss value theory and define CFF in the theoretical background. We also adapt the Schwartz value circle to a company context, which is then used in the discussion of the results, after explaining the method of the study. The results are structured along the value dimension of openness to change, preservation of the existing, exceeding company limits, and strengthening the company. Finally, we end the paper with a discussion section.

2. Theoretical Background

Traditionally, family firms are defined as businesses that are managed by one or more family members, where the values and visions of the founder must be pursued (Dyer, 1988). Family firms follow the idea that one family runs the company and the family of the firm tries to preserve the vision of the organization and the business itself for generations (Chua *et al.*, 1999). As Dyer (1988) points out that to assure the continuity of family firms, the firms might have to adapt their culture to react to a more hostile environment, e.g.

add more professionalization to effectively manage growth. To change, artefacts, rules, norms and thus in some way the organizational values that constitute the routines and rules of the culture are desired to change (Dyer, 1988). As a main part of corporate culture, one must ask, what the consequences of an established value system thus are and if there is need to rearrange core family values to stay competitive in the long-term. CFF have demonstrated that they are capable of family business learning (Löhde *et al.*, 2020), possessing dynamic capabilities (Jones *et al.*, 2013) and thus overcoming barriers to change in family businesses (Rojas & Lorenzo, 2021).

Values in family businesses differ from values in non-family businesses (Ceja & Tapiés, 2011; Vazquez, 2018) and influence the success or consistency of companies (Koiranen, 2002). Hennerkes and Hund (2008) find that values have objective and subjective components. The objective component means that one or more families hold a majority stake in the company. The subjective part represents the values and traditions that influence company management (Hennerkes & Hund, 2008). This shows that values occupy a particularly important place in family businesses (Duh *et al.*, 2010). Lyman (1991) even assumes that in family businesses, one's values often come before the company values or are very close to them. Vazquez (2018) argues that ethics in family businesses are based on the involvement of the family, the founder and the successor. The value system of the entrepreneurial family influences strategic decisions, corporate culture and management style (Koiranen, 2002). Besides, the values shape behaviour regarding investments and assets and can strengthen or reduce the sense of attachment to the family business (Gersick *et al.*, 1997).

Ceja and Tapiés (2011) examine a comparison of family businesses and non-family businesses. In both forms of organizations, the values most frequently cited were integrity, respect and customers (Ceja & Tapiés, 2011). The values that are predominantly only found in family businesses are generosity, humanity, communication, service and quality (Ceja & Tapiés, 2011). Tapiés and Fernández (2012) find a connection between the longevity of companies and the values of quality, honesty and 'hard work' in family businesses (Tapiés & Fernández, 2012). Koiranen (2002) deals with the success of family businesses and their value orientations. Honesty, credibility and quality are essential values. Characteristic for the companies are, above all fairness, sustainability and commitment (Koiranen, 2002).

For family firms, values are a decisive factor, especially in cases of conflicts of interest between family and business goals (Koiranen, 2002). Corporate culture and values are more accepted in family businesses than in non-family companies (Duh *et al.*, 2010). Both emotional, as well as ratio-

nal behaviour and thinking can shape the values in a company. Values within family-owned businesses primarily require trust, goals and other factors of organizational behaviour (Kidwell *et al.*, 2012).

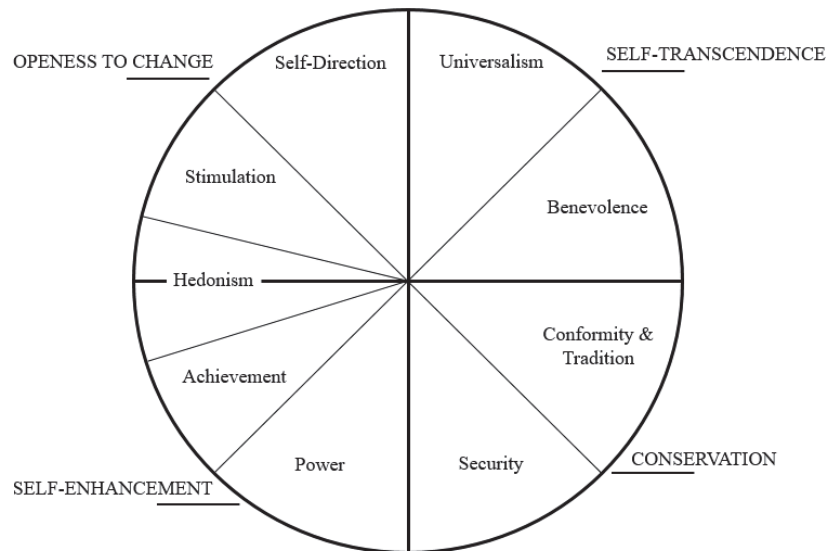
Values depict individual and fundamental orientations in society and play a decisive role in the direction and analysis of corporate behaviour patterns (Agle & Caldwell, 1999; Hofstede, 1976; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 2003). Rokeach (1973, 5) describes values as follows: “Values are determinants of virtually all kinds of behaviour that could be called social behaviour or social action, attitudes and ideology, evaluations, moral judgments and justifications of self and others, comparisons of self with others, presentations of self to others, and attempts to influence others”.

Schwartz’s theory of values describes six different main characteristics of values, which in turn refer to varying considerations of other theorists (Schwartz, 1992). Values are goals, which often form the basis for actions (Schwartz, 1999). These actions are then usually long-term, i.e. the values are lived by people (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995). Based on one’s values, not only one’s behaviour can be assessed, but also that of fellow human beings (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Schwartz (1992, 4) defines:

“Values (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance. Values, understood this way, differ from attitudes primarily in their generality or abstractness” (Schwartz 1992, 4).

In Schwartz’s theory, fundamental social values are grouped into ten value types (Schwartz, 1999). They represent the theoretical concept of the value system (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Theoretical circle system of the ten value types with the superordinate value categories according to (Schwartz, 1992)



These values, in turn, derive from three basic human needs: biological needs, social needs and the institutionalisation of social expectations. Identified values are divided into four value dimensions, depending on the goal behind the value. These are self-enhancement, openness to change, self-transcendence and conservation. The ten value dimensions that cannot be reconciled are arranged opposite to each other in the pie chart, and values that have similar motivation and can, therefore, be combined are close together, e.g. the two value dimensions openness to change and preservation of the existing are opposite each other. This shows that the two aspects conflict with each other because resistance to change and progressive thinking are not easy to reconcile. The two other dimensions, ego-transgression and self-strengthening represent a contradiction in terms. On the one hand, self-strengthening primarily stands for performance and power-oriented values and, on the other hand, the ego-transgressing values are concerned with the environment and the well-being of all (Schwartz, 1992, 2012; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995).

In a company context, openness to change stands for independence and willingness to change within the company. The opposite dimension of conservation focuses on tradition and security within the company and is therefore described as preservation of the existing. The third value dimension of self-enhancement is named strengthening the company, where status, per-

formance and company success is central. In contrast to this, the dimension self-transcendence is explained as exceeding company limits, where not only the company itself but also the well-being of others is taken into account (view of the whole, public spirit, corporate social responsibility).

3. Method

This study uses data from nine qualitative, narrative interviews with CFF's owner-managers. To understand values in CFF, Hemingway (2005) suggests collecting qualitative data. All firms are located in the Tirol, Austria. The Tirol is characterized by small- and medium-sized family-run and owned businesses (Glowka & Zehrer, 2019), which contribute a considerable share to gross value added and guarantee long-term stability in the local communities (WKO, 2013). Since the CFF share their location, they share the cultural background due to their demographics. However, to get rich, qualitative data, the CFF differ in size and industry (see Table 1).

Table 1: Presentation of results by category system

<i>Interview</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Founding year</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Generation in business</i>	<i>Number of employees</i>	<i>Sales volume per million/per year</i>
A	Auer	1930	Tourism	3.	160	15 Mio.
B	Becker	1929	Trades and crafts	3.	221	32.000.000
C	Capek	1902	Trades and crafts	4.	600	145 Mio.
D	Daiser Müller	1863	Trades and crafts	5.	185	26.23 Mio.
E	Egger	1895	Trades and crafts	5.	34.000.000	3.5000 Mio.
F	Fischer	1609	Tourism	10. and 11.	320	31. Mio.
G	Gruber Senior Gruber Junior	1873	Trades and crafts	5. and 6.		

H	Huter Bauer	1889	Food	5.	103	28. Mio.
I	Ihle	1912	Tourism	4.		

The branches were classified according to the branch categorisation carried out by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO).

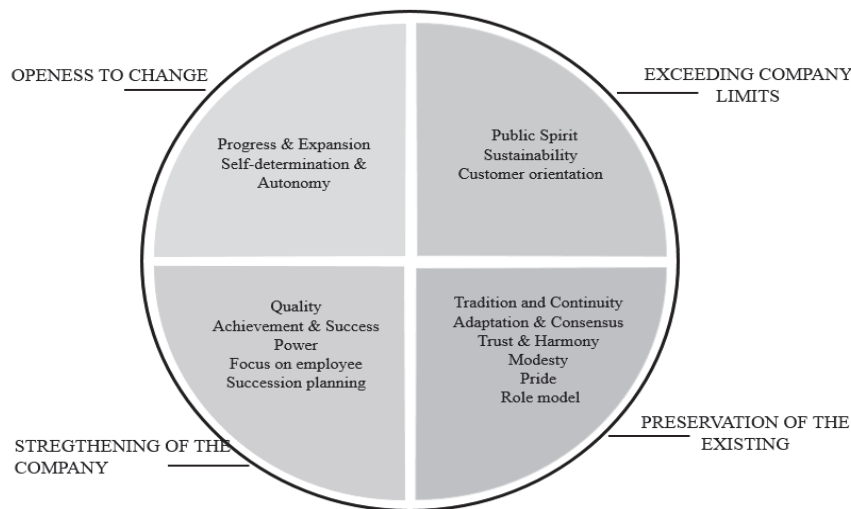
The open interview length was between 50 minutes and 70 minutes, being conducted on-site between February and September 2016. A total of four women and five men were interviewed. In the beginning of the interviews, the interviewer asked to narrate the company and family history in an open, unstructured way. When a natural, trustful atmosphere was established, the interviewee asked about topics that came up while narrating in more detail. Values were not explicitly suggested, thus, the interviewer did not ask about any specific value. This can be regarded a strength, since underlying values were identified in a qualitative content analysis and not by directly asking about them. The latter would bear a bias risk, e.g. most interviewee would probably name socially desirable values (Fayolle *et al.*, 2014) as important to them and their firm. After transcription, the data, like location or names of third parties, was anonymised and interviewees were pseudo-anonymised so that no conclusions can be drawn (Mayring, 2010). A deductive-inductive approach was suitable for the content analysis (Mayring, 2010; Reichertz, 2019) as it allows to maintain flexibility during the interview - with a theory-based, systematic analysis of the results (Hussy *et al.*, 2010). According to Rokeach (1979) a content analysis is one suitable method to examine organisational values.

The data was first paraphrased using MAXQDA, i.e. the text passages assessed as relevant are summarised gradually and thus reduced. These texts were then coded and named independently of the value dimensions and value types are shown above. This resulted in a total of 40 values. Then, the Schwartz (1992) value dimensions were used to order the identified values. The identified values are assigned to one of four value categories, namely openness to change, preservation of the existing, crossing company boundaries and strengthening the company (see Figure 1).

Thus, the theoretical considerations of Schwartz (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) are applied to the values in family businesses and thus become the theoretical basis for the following data analyses. The procedure was open, and new value categories were found that did not exist in Schwartz (1999). The category system was supplemented accordingly. In the last step of the analysis, the existing and the newly identified value types were assigned to the value dimensions shown in Figure 2. Inter-coder reliability was applied

to enhance validity of the results (Mayring & Fenzl, 2014). Additionally, the interview data was complemented with secondary data available on the CFF websites and online (Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

Figure 2: Value category system according to with Schwartz (1999) the assigned values of family businesses



4. Results

The qualitative analysis reveals that CFF balance values that keep them open to change with values for preserving the status quo. Additionally, while CFF possess values that drive them to exceed the company limits, strong values that are strengthening the company, are equally found. Figure 2 organizes the values identified in the coding procedure.

Values describing exceeding company limits are sustainability, public spirit and customer orientation. The analysis contains six value types that can be assigned to the value dimension preservation of the existing. These are tradition & continuity, adaptation & consensus, trust & harmony, modesty, pride and role model function. During data preparation, two value types could be assigned to the value dimension openness to change. These are progress & expansion and autonomy & self-determination. The analysis identified six values that belong to the value dimension of strengthening the company. The values achievement & success, power, quality, focus on the employees and customer orientation are now described below.

4.1. Openness to change

To stay sustainable in the long-run, CFF have learnt to adapt to a changing environment. The value progress & expansion appeared as representing openness to change in CFF, as innovation and technical progress play a significant role. Some CFF have been able to play a pioneering role in their respective industries, like installing wireless WLAN at an early stage or offering electric car filling stations or being the first to offer a 7-day service (Interview I, 152, Interview B, 76). Some tourism CFF were the first to stay open all year, changing their business models from typical seasonal tourism accommodations to all year around destinations (Interview A, 150; Interview I, 20). Jäger and Daiser emphasize high innovativeness from the beginning and that the drive for innovation is a core value of the CFF (Interview D, 18).

Besides valuing progress & expansion, self-determination & autonomy is seen as a central value throughout and fostered by CFF ownership as “you can do what you want with it.” (Interview A, 220). CFF perceive self-determination as a core value, offering a competitive advantage in the market by quickly responding to demand and guaranteeing a higher degree of flexibility that is essential for long-term success (Interview C, 21; Interview I, 6, 12; Interview J, 40). In one CFF, there is a tradition that the family lives next to the CFF. Mr. Becker broke this tradition, which led to an ongoing discussion within the family. Even if Mr. Becker breaks this family tradition by deliberately changing his place of residence, tradition remains a significant part of his company and his work. He also mentions that his son will continue this tradition and will live in the apartment above the CFF again in the future (Interview B, 290-292).

4.2. Preservation of the existing

The example above demonstrates that while the interviewees perceive the importance of change and self-determination, they value tradition and continuity at the same time. For Mr. Becker work and action are always connected with tradition and consistency even though he moved out and broke with one family tradition (Interview B, 18). Tradition is seen here as something positive and lasting for a longer period in time and is even associated with Austria, the Alps and the Tirol. The repeatedly mentioned reference to the Tirol and the homeland can be more easily placed in a traditional worldview. Tradition seems omnipresent in CFF and is held high, although some traditions might be abandoned over time as a necessary act of change. Discrepancies and different views within the different generations

concerning tradition can also be identified. Symbolic of this is the interview with Mr. Becker, who decided to separate the entrepreneurial and the private by changing his place of residence. Mr. Becker: “(...) that was tradition, and that was an ongoing discussion [in the family]. So my father would like me to live next to the CFF. No, that’s where we grew up, and from now and then I need an hour of privacy because I didn’t have any privacy. I was 48 years old when I moved out” (Interview B, 292).

Ms Fischer explains that in their CFF, tradition is seen as a source for innovation. She gives the example of a yearly event organized by the CFF, that, over the years, grew bigger and bigger. At some point, even though profits were high, they became uncomfortable with hosting the modernized event and turned back to what it traditionally was. They limited the number of invites and returned to serving the original, traditional food, instead of high standard chef menus.

Continuity is closely related to tradition. At Daiser, the term continuity is used twice in connection with quality (Interview D, 18). Moreover, according to Ms. Daiser, it is a value that has always been handed down in the family from generation to generation (Interview D, 204) and has thus been continuously present and has become a tradition. Ms. Daiser: “I would say that this concept of quality and honesty and continuity has always been a part of the family tradition.” (Interview D, 18).

At management level, reaching an alignment across family members after discussions or disagreements is perceived as essential (Interview F, 54). In being able subordinate yourself in the interests of the CFF, a culture for solving conflict is created (Interview D, 46). It is perceived as essential to “be flexible enough to adapt or reconsider your opinion.” (Interview F, 54) when it is necessary to find consensus, and almost seen as an obligatory responsibility to the CFF. Harmony and trustworthiness serve as an umbrella regarding relationships within the family, with employees and equally as with suppliers. Modesty is partly a traditional reference for the CFF, as it has always been considered an important value and is intended to underline the down-to-earth nature of family businesses. Nevertheless, CFFs are proud of the (first) products that were produced in their CFF (Interview C, 93) or of the projects that were implemented in the CFF (Interview E, 138; Interview J, 82). They show pride in the CFF itself and in what the family, the founders and ancestors and oneself have created (Interview B, 136; Interview C, 59, 31; Interview H, 173; Interview J, 10, 34). In this context, specific areas and experiences are mentioned, such as the responsibility one has been given, the consistency and success of previous generations or the goals and awards one has achieved in or for the CFF. Former generations are mentioned to have a role model function. While values are indirectly

conveyed through role model function or from own actions (Interview E, 42; Interview J, 20), none CFF except for one has its values written down.

The interview with Mr. Fischer shows that values within the family and within the CFF are difficult to separate. One continues what previous generations have exemplified. In the process, the ways of thinking of parents and grandparents are often adopted rather unconsciously (Interview E, 40). Some of the entrepreneurs now try, just like their parents, to pass on the work ethic and values agenda to the next generation (Interview C, 59; Interview F, 32).

4.3. Exceeding company limits

Public spirit is a value that is manifested in many and very different aspects. This can be social responsibility for employees, political commitment, sponsoring or regional ties. Through regional integration, one feels connected both to the employee and to the location and assumes responsibility for the community. In some CFF, the employees have been working for several generations and therefore one feels obliged to ensure CFF survival in the long-term (Interview E, 186) and to “accompany the employees until their well-deserved retirement” (Interview B, 110). Social responsibility should really be a permanent feature (Interview B, 320) and be implemented, for example, through sponsoring. For example, the Becker CFF sponsors the local soccer club or donates new computers for the school (Interview B, 172). In other CFF, political commitment contributes to the community. Some interviewees recognize that family entrepreneurs have the necessary skills and opportunities to get involved in politics (Interview E, 118). The Daiser CFF is known for its social responsibility, since former generations began to build social buildings and thus strongly supported the local community (Interview D, 126). Even if not all interviewees explicitly mention community spirit or social responsibility, everyone tries to maintain and support the destination and the community, because “our Tirol is simply something special” (Interview I, 6).

Sustainability is an important topic in family businesses. At Huter, for example, the CFF works energy-efficiently and with renewable resources. “I say everyone is always talking about sustainability now and sustainability is on everyone’s lips. 125 years is proof enough that every generation lives, thinks and works sustainably” (Interview H, 50). The Huter CFF is thus convincing not only its customers, but also potential applicants who are interested in the CFF because of its sustainability concept. The CFF tries to rely on photovoltaic systems or to drive electric cars and gas-hybrid cars. In this

way, the upcoming generation can also be inspired by the CFF and be bound to it, whether as employees or customers (Interview H, 21-24). Sustainability is closely linked to nature and its conservation. The entrepreneur Mr. Huter explains, “these natural raw materials, as the name suggests, originate from nature, which is why we actually have to deal with our nature as carefully and responsibly as possible, because otherwise we will, so to speak, destroy our own raw material base at some point” (Interview H, 23). Ms. Ihle sees another reason to treat nature with care: “(...) the Tirolean, who simply shapes nature, I believe the character of man somehow, shapes nature and the environment already shapes that.” (Interview I, 6). Sustainability is important for CFF to preserve nature and the environment. It is therefore safe to say that they not only look after their own CFF, but also after the well-being of others. The CFF Daiser also tries to meet the wishes of their customers with regional, qualitative and sustainable products (Interview D, 93). Nevertheless, it must be mentioned critically here that the CFF want to reach more customers and also a higher employer attractiveness through sustainable efficiency, and have not exclusively focused on the common good. The statement by Mr. Huter also confirms the assumption that, unlike many large CFF, values such as sustainability or social responsibility need not be mentioned in reports or marketing measures (Interview H, 51).

Customer orientation in CFF often exceeds the classical understanding of a customer-business relationship, since friendships are formed, or customers have private phone numbers. The wishes, satisfaction and loyalty of the clientele are important aspects that are taken into account in family businesses. The CFF have different methods to satisfy their customers. One possibility is to be always available for the customer: “I don’t care if something substantial is important; I can be reached on holiday. I’m also available 24 hours a day for my customers, my important customers all have my mobile phone number, that’s because of the night box” (Interview B, 76). Another possibility is to determine the wishes of the customers in a questionnaire and orientate oneself on the results. For example, if the customers want a water slide, then a water slide is built (Interview A, 134). The wishes of the customers play a very important role, because they are the key to the success of the CFF (Interview D, 97). The Gruber CFF tries to deliver customers’ orders the next day to meet their needs (Interview G, 142) and the Huter family business adapts its products to the nutritional trends in society (Interview H, 26). “When a satisfied guest checks out of the hotel, you can’t imagine it could be more beautiful” (Interview I, 116). The orientation of the clientele goes beyond the corporate context and also tries to capture and fulfil the perspective and wishes of the consumer, which is why this type of value can be subordinated to the dimension of crossing corporate boundaries.

4.4. Strengthening of the company

Quality plays a vital role among all generations and all departments in the CFF. Mr. Huter: “So I think there is a gene in the family that goes back to the founder and forms a continuous thread. This is the striving for the best possible, for the best product in the best quality” (Interview H, 48). The CFF try to ensure the best quality for their customers, in raw materials used and in their products and services and to improve continuously (Interview I, 144; Interview D, 204). Excellent and constant quality is a claim that customers expect. If this expectation is not fulfilled, this can have negative consequences for the CFF. For this reason, it is important for the CFF Daiser and Huter, for example, which are active in trade and production, to constantly check the quality of their products by means of standards, good machines and constant controls (Interview D, 204; Interview H, 50). The Grand Prix, which the Huter CFF received, proves that quality has been a priority from the very beginning (Interview H, 50). More than half of the CFF addressed the issue of quality in the interview. This shows that quality is a particularly important value for the family CFF under study. Quality strengthens the CFF, as more customers are won.

Availability are important for the existence and survival of a CFF. Business success is perceived as positive validation of the family work. Ms. Ihle says: “my father sat in the office on Saturday and Sunday, he had to finish some contracts or whatever else I know until late at night” (Interview I, 74). The positive result, i.e. the success, is important to continue working and not to lose motivation during crisis. Success over generations is perceived as confirmation of the work you have done, and also creates a strong belief that the CFF is able to overcome future crisis (Interview C, 59; Interview F, 76; Interview H, 163). Thus, CFF carry a resilient mind set, built on the business success of previous generations and the trust that the CFF will therefore endure in the future.

In family firms, there is largely little separation between professional and private life; you are there for the CFF 24 hours a day. They are also available to staff and customers during holidays and discuss questions concerning the CFF at home, at family gatherings or outside the company (Interview B, 74; Interview C, 120; Interview E, 34). At Daiser, managing directors are immediately on hand, even if a customer calls during the night (Interview D, 164; Interview B, 80). Succeeding generations grow up with the CFF and begin to work in the CFF from a very young age and thus contribute to its success (Interview A, 41; Interview B, 280; Interview D, 168; Interview F, 28; Interview I, 14;). Many stay in the CFF until old age and try to take part in decisions, come to the CFF or help in the CFF (Interview A, 37; Interview B, 62; Inter-

view G, 410; Interview I, 48). Often, there is not much time left for the family and children. Ms. Auer: “That was really embarrassing, our son walked through the dining room once and complained to the guests: ‘Mum no time, dad no time, grandma no time’” (Interview A, 55).

The managers interviewed are the owners of the CFF and therefore have the opportunity to have power and control over the CFF. This is particularly evident in the decision-making process within the CFF. Usually, options are discussed in meetings together with other management members, the final decision is made by the family members. Ms. Ihle’s need for power and control was already conveyed through the upbringing and behaviour of her father, whom she describes as a patriarch. However, she admits that she also increasingly includes other opinions in the decision-making process and learns from their respective behaviour (Interview I, 156). The constant commitment and great dedication that the respondents show to their CFF also indirectly has something to do with power (Interview E, 42). In this way, one tries to gain insight into all areas and pays close attention to the CFF and its success.

All CFF strongly focus on employees, offering training and further education. Employees and CFF are mutually dependent on each other. Mr. Huter emphasizes that he knows almost every employee in his CFF personally and that they often have been with the CFF for over 40 years. This is why he has a completely different relationship with his team (Interview H, 26,184).

CFF are consciously having succession planning and are aware what it means to deal with success successfully during the business lifecycle. Long-term thinking and the handing over of the business to the next generation are very important and determine the strategic decisions and ways of thinking within the CFF. Mr. Becker: “The main difference: we think in terms of principle in generations. Everything we decide, we think in generations and from a certain point on you have to include the children, even if it is not yet time to hand over the CFF, but you have to include the children at an early stage, I think” (Interview B, 104). Here the entrepreneurs also clearly emphasize the difference to non-family businesses. Other companies often think only “in the short term and about making money fast, not in the long term” (Interview B, 106), which is mainly because ownership and management are not linked (Interview E, 50). For some CFF, taking risks is part of a long-term strategy, and this is an attraction for them (Interview F, 30). Other CFF shy away from investment and the associated risk. Ms. Ihle: “Investments are just so difficult for us and you can’t just, I can’t just say well the interest rates are low and you get what you want from the bank” (Interview I, 54). Every CFF pursues different strategies, but the goal is always to run a successful, functioning CFF. Therefore, the value type strategy can also be assigned to the dimension strengthening the company.

Table 2 presents the identified values and value types in the coding process.

Table 2: Presentation of results by coded values

<i>Values</i>	<i>Schwartz value dimension</i>	<i>Interviews</i>
Innovation & Expansion	Openness to change	Interview A, B, C, D, E, F, H, I
Autonomy *		Interview A, B, C, E, F, I
Customer orientation		Interview A, B, C, D, F, I
Tradition* & Continuity	Preservation of the existing	Interview B, C, D, F, I
Adaption & Consensus		Interview C, D, F, I
Modesty		Interview C, D
Pride		Interview B, C, E, F, H
Trust & Honesty		Interview D, F, I
Role model function		Interview A, B, C, F
Sustainability		Exceeding company limits
Public spirit*	Interview B, C, D, F, H, I	
Quality	Strengthening of the company	Interview C, D, F, G, H, I
Availability		Interview A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I
Power*		Interview B, C, F, H, I
Focus on employees		Interview B, C, E, F
Succession planning		Interview A, B, F, H

Note: The values marked with * can also be found under this name in Schwartz (1999)

5. Discussion

It can be stated that family businesses place value on tradition & continuity, performance & success, progress & expansion, responsibility & honesty, customer orientation and quality. The qualitative study by Ceja and Tapiés (2011) comes to similar conclusions. In this study, values such as responsibility, quality, innovation and customer orientation have also emerged as essential values in family businesses. In Ceja and Tapiés (2011), other values such as generosity, communication and respect proved to be relevant, which were hardly relevant in this research. Tapiés and Fernández (2012) find a connection between the longevity of companies and the values of quality, honesty and “hard work” in family businesses (Tapiés & Fernández, 2012)

Similar to this study, the results of Rau et al (2019) show that not all of Schwartz’s values can be found in family businesses. However, especially hedonism or conformity are values that cannot be found in either work. Schwartz’s values had to be expanded and Rauch *et al.* also find that some values can be found in family businesses that are not captured in Schwartz’s 20 value types such as community, responsibility, equality and solidarity. Similar values can also be identified in this paper, with sustainability or innovation revealed as other particularly important values. This also highlights the heterogeneity of CFF’s values; the interviews showed that although similarities can be identified, the focus among the identified values is on different aspects. Koiranen (2002) examines companies that have existed for more than 100 years. Here too, similarities and differences in the results can be identified. In both studies, quality is considered a central value in family businesses. The values of honesty and diligence (here called 24-hour entrepreneur) also crystallize as relevant values, but in the analyses conducted here, these are mentioned less frequently than quality. The values “obey laws” and the entrepreneurs do not explicitly mention credibility in the interviews.

The results of Koiranen (2002) show that the structure of family businesses has a positive effect on the transmission of values to the next generation. This can also be seen in the CFF under study here, as the constant presence of the company and its early integration into the business provide a reasonable basis for the transmission of values. Besides, the upbringing and the living of the values within the family have an important influence on the values. However, it is also clear that within the generations, other values are often perceived and pursued as necessary for the company. This can lead to conflicts between the generations, even if the goal always remains the same and only the values and ways to achieve the change.

Values can influence decision-making and the strategic orientation of the company. Questions regarding investments, risk or even the company’s

progress and expansion are shaped by values. These results are also confirmed by the research of Gersick *et al.* (1997). In the interviews, it becomes clear that the surveyed companies make predominantly long-term decisions but are willing to take risks. This can be attributed to the values explained above. Values such as sustainability, public spirit, and role model function, as well as focus on employees and values of the buyers, which are designed for long-term thinking and acting. The entrepreneurs live these values. The companies pay attention to success and performance and try to develop themselves continuously. This may be associated with risk, and some companies even see the possibility to comply with these values in risky investments and decisions.

6. Conclusion

This qualitative study identifies values that drive CFF actions. Using the Schwartz's value system (Schwartz, 1999; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995), CFF possess openness to change as well as strong conservation values. We propose values from the openness to change dimension support the CFF's ability to adapt to a changing market environment, and thus, stay sustainable in the long-term. Adding to the tradition–innovation paradox, we find that tradition can be seen as a source of innovation. Regarding succession processes, CFF seem to have developed a routine with underlying values of strengthening the company to hand over the business successfully to the next generation.

This also has some practical and theoretical implications. Younger family firms could analyse their value set and compare it to CFF. This analysis could help them to identify potential strengths and weaknesses in their value-driven firm culture that might hinder their ability to innovate or develop dynamic capabilities, thus, guarantee longevity.

The study also has some limitations. Even though a deep understanding of the values in CFF could be achieved through the qualitative approach, these results cannot be generalized. Further quantitative research could be conceived in this context to verify the present results. The results also refer only to centennial family businesses in Tyrol, here it would be conceivable to check whether the results can also be transferred to other cultural contexts. Furthermore, it would have to be examined in more detail how the results differ from those of non-family businesses. Future research could address to test, if younger family firms do have such an equilibrium of Schwartz values in their company. If they lack a whole Schwartz dimension of values, practitioners should work on developing or changing values towards a better equilibrium.

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