

Innovation Process through Generational Change of Women Entrepreneurs in Family Business: A Conceptual Framework

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Women have always played an integral part in family business and yet for decades their work has mostly been unrecognized and their presence almost invisible. In the past decade, however, things are starting to look brighter for women in family businesses as the role of women in family business is increasingly acknowledged. This has led to the growth of studies in women entrepreneur's role in family business. Extant studies although growing, still has a long way to go especially in gendered research in innovation and family business. Innovation is especially crucial in the current challenging business landscape particularly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Family businesses are pushed to innovate to be able to survive and grow. Entrepreneurship has been acknowledged by scholars to be a gendered field of study. Women have different cognitive frames, different management and leadership style and different accessibility to resources than men, which influences the way they make strategic entrepreneurial decisions such as those in the innovation process. This paper aims to delve into how being women entrepreneurs in family businesses influence their entrepreneurial abilities and impact their decision making particularly in innovation. As one of the objectives of a family business is to be able to pass the business to the next generation, this paper will also explore the effects of generational change on the innovation process within these businesses. The paper will explore how women entrepreneurs' competencies, entrepreneurial skills and goals would affect their decision making during the innovation process. This study will also explore how this phenomenon changes as the business is passed on to the next generation. This paper contributes to the overlapping of two areas: family business innovation and women entrepreneurship through generational change. A framework is developed to explain the influence of the family business in shaping women entrepreneurs and how this in turn will impact their decision making in the innovation process of the family business. The framework can provide useful insights into the innovation process and outcome of family business managed by women entrepreneurs, through the phenomenon of generational change. This paper also outlines an agenda for future researchers, in the field of family business and women entrepreneurship.

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