Editorial

Niranjan Pati

William G. Rohrer College of Business,
Rowan University,
201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, NJ 08028, USA
Email: Pati@rowan.edu

Biographical notes: Niranjan Pati is a Professor in the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship at the Rohrer College of Business, Rowan University, New Jersey, USA. He served as the Dean of the College during 2008–2012. Before Rowan University, he served as the Dean and Professor at the School of Business, Indiana University, from 2001–2008, and the Chair of the Department of Management at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. He holds a Master's and PhD from Northwestern University, Evanston, USA. He obtained his MTech at the Industrial Management Center, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, and BTech at Ranchi University, India.

I am pleased to introduce the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Family Business and Regional Development* (*IJFBRD*). Scholarly communications and dissemination have been crucial parts of our intellectual progress as new ideas gain grounds, and extant ideas are revised and reinforced. It is anybody's guess that our intellectual pursuits have shaped radically over time with the information explosion. To this end, the need to service the growing and developing area of the family business related to regional development drove us to present the new journal to our global readership.

Family businesses are the most dominant form of organisation found worldwide (Astrachan and Shanker, 2003; Shanker and Astrachan, 1996; Sarkar et al., 2014). Appropriately, an extensive body of peer-reviewed research covering various dimensions of family businesses has been published. These dimensions encompass the characterisation of family firms, innovation and entrepreneurship within them, their performance measures, their governance and technology adoption mechanisms, and how family firms fuel the engine of economic development in the region they call home. However, the last aspect of family businesses is scarce in published peer-reviewed articles.The above explanation leads us to justify the creation of this new journal – *IJFBRD*.

We have seen a surging interest in the family business literature (Colli, 2012; De Massis and Kotlar, 2015; Hisrich et al., 2007). As discussed earlier, despite a groundswell of literature in family businesses due to its contributions to regional, national, and global wealth, the link to the family business to regional development remains a relatively uncharted area in academic literature (Basco, 2015; Benedict, 1968; Butler and Hansen, 1991; Bird and Wennberg, 2014; Block et al., 2013; Carney and Gedajlovic, 2002). Stough et al. (2015) succinctly noted, "This parallel development of both family business and regional science with little cross-knowledge fertilization creates a gap in our understanding of how the two fields are related. We believe that it is time to narrow and help close this gap by promoting research that can offer a better explanation of the relationship between family firms and the regional economy." Thus, the *IJBFRD* will beacon-flash on one of the essential dimensions of family businesses, exploring its connection to regional development by disseminating peer-reviewed theories, applications, innovative pedagogies and pragmatic cases.

The inaugural issue begins with an article by Vardhan et al., females in Asia make significant contributions toward their regions' economic development as was attested to by the Asian Development Bank (2007). Ambrish (2014) and Goldin et al. (2017) argued that female entrepreneurial activity is a vital part of flourishing economies worldwide. Nevertheless, the lack of mobility of women in corporations worldwide is an established phenomenon. This research studies an exciting phenomenon of the evolution of expatriate (migrant) women entrepreneurs in the UAE. By and large, the enterprises developed by this rank of entrepreneurs have been successful. Vardhan et al. characterise various factors that motivate expatriate women to be entrepreneurs. The duality of push or pull factors has been discussed. The explored research question is whether these women start a business out of their motivation by 'pull' factors or the lack of employment opportunities 'pushes' them to become entrepreneurs as a last resort. Some early studies on women entrepreneurship (De Bruin et al., 2006) provided the rationale for female entrepreneurs. Three other independent studies (Campopiano et al., 2017; Hisrich et al., 2017; McAdam, 2013) found that female and male entrepreneurs' response was essentially the same in that they became entrepreneurs due to their need for independence and achievement. Thus, research by Vardhan et al. is in alignment with the previous research in that they found the role of work-life balance in their family as one of the key motivators for migrant women in UAE to become entrepreneurs. The research found that the primary motivation is driven by the 'pull factor' to turn their hobbies into independent income sources.

Marom et al.'s article appears next with its take on gender differences and their consequence on family business management in South America. A significant body of published research in the past century had found gender differences as a factor in determining the effectiveness of management. Specifically, during most of the 20th century, research commonly resulted in findings that support the positive impact of gender differences in management (Powell, 1990; Powell and Ansic, 1997). However, research in the past decade did not support such a position (Collins-Dodd et al., 2004; Sonfield and Lussier, 2009; Sonfield et al., 2001). The paper does not posit a significant difference between women and men in the management of family businesses. The article adds value to the extant literature on the gender differences in the family business (Watson, 2002) by using a quantitative research design.

The authors offer competing explanations of their findings relative to females' social and cultural backgrounds in which the family business management study was conducted.

Succession has been a crucial area in family businesses involving family members (Le Breton-Miller et al., 2004; Sharma et al., 2003). Intra-family business succession has seen increased interests in the family business literature (Cucculelli and Micucci, 2008; De Massis et al., 2008; Wennberg et al., 2011).

In this paper, Lockamy has extended his previous research with his colleagues (Lockamy et al., 2016) that found four factors, e.g., context, individual/relationship, process, and governance, and 23 variables that have negative implications on intra-family business successions. Lockamy et al. (2016) creatively used the results of his prior research to form a Bayesian belief network by categorising the size of the firms in terms of the number of employees, i.e., below 50, between 50 and 100, and above 100, and then using *a priori* probabilities obtained on each of the four factors, i.e., context, individual/relationship, process and governance. The research culminated in assessing the probability of no intra-family succession of family-based businesses with the number of employees below 50, between 50 and 100, and over 100 to be 0.46, 0.45 and 0.43, respectively.

The next paper by Bhasi et al. addresses the succession issues (Sampath, 2001; Sharma, 2004; Watts and Tucker, 2004) in family businesses like the previous article, but from the micro-regional perspective of Kerala, one of the 29 constituent states in India. With its vast diversity, the country has progressed briskly after the opening of its economy in the 1990s. Indian family businesses have played a significant role in its economic transition because 85% of companies are family-run, employing 57% of India's workforce and contributing about 70% to its GDP (CII, 2013). Kerala is the 10th largest economy of India (Dhanam, 2013). It is one of the most progressive states in terms of the highest human development index (HDI) 0.784 in 2018 and the highest literacy rate of 93.91% in the 2011 census. As can be guessed, family businesses are the predominant form of business structure in Kerala. Bhasi et al. explored the research question relative to the owner and business-related factors that lead to the success of inheritance in Kerala's family business.

They tested eight hypotheses relating to the above factors leading to success in inheritance. The owner's age and religion, under the owner related factors, were found to have a positive bearing on the success in inheritance. Similarly, the nature of the organisation's constitution, its size, and the generation that started the family business were found to imply the inheritance's success. As discussed, these three factors were categorised under the business-related factor domain. All these factors have a bearing on inheritance success except the generational factor that showed a negative correlation with inheritance success.

In the following article, Jamali et al. discuss the adoption of information communications technology (ICT) by using the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) (Saaty, 1980; Oudah et al., 2018) in the family owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Iran. Family owned SMEs are often resource strapped (Igbaria et al., 1997; Mejri and Zouaoui, 2020). Thus, it becomes crucial for them to identify the ICT that will maximise the attainment of their objectives while minimising costs (Jamali et al., 2015; Wang and Yang, 2007). The article by Jamali et al. uses the AHP to address this issue by identifying short-term and strategic objectives. They arrive at the family objectives by administering a closed-question questionnaire. The most important criteria for selecting ICT were identified to be:

1 minimisation of family conflicts
2 preservation of family independence
3 increasing market share
4 maximising profits
5 growing sales.

ICT options were identified as e-mail, internet/website, intranet, extranet, electronic data interchange, electric funds transfers, and the bar code. Using the AHP, the authors concluded that using internet/website ICT will be the best option for SMEs in Iran. The deployment of the internet/website will assure their survival while addressing both long-term and short-term business and family objectives.

Lastly, Lee and Pati present their research on strategic performance measures of family businesses operating in the USA and Canada. The growth of the USA and Canada's economy is dictated by the family businesses (Shanker and Astrachan, 1996; Astrachan and Shanker, 2003) because of their contributions to their respective national economies. Thus, performance measures of family businesses are essential to study. These measures are quantitatively assessed by accounting-based measures such as ROA, ROE, ROI, and marketing-based measures such as Tobin's q, market value, and compound growth rate in sales. The explanatory variables incorporated in this study are the size of the firm (Belenzon and Patacconi, 2014), capital intensity (Hecht, 2008), R&D intensity (Block and Spiegel, 2013), advertising intensity (Sun, 2014), debt leverage (Yildirim, 2015), current ratio (Zainudin and Regupathi, 2010), labour productivity (Chrisman et al., 2017), and firm's age (Sorensen and Stuart, 2000). Besides, one dummy variable (manufacturing vs. non-manufacturing) was employed to investigate the influence of different industries on performance. Each of the above variables was operationalised to investigate eight hypotheses. The study found that the firm size, advertising intensity, capital intensity, labour productivity, and farm's age are positively correlated with market-based performance measures. On the other end of the gamut, capital intensity and current ratio appear to be uniformly and positively correlated with all accounting-based performance measures. This empirical research sheds light on how strategic factors can be addressed within the realm of family businesses' operations in the USA and Canada context.

I hope you will find this inaugural issue intellectually stimulating as it covers family businesses in seven countries spanning three continents. We would invite you to offer your scholarships for peer review in this journal's future issue so that we exchange our thought leadership to include multiple contexts and cultures embedding more countries and continents.

I am grateful to the authors of this issue for their patience because a new journal has many operational issues that require time to address. On behalf of the journal, I thank each of you for having confidence in this new journal. Rest assured that we have kept a low acceptance rate from the 'get-go'. I would be remiss if I did not extend my special appreciation to our esteemed *ad hoc* reviewers, editorial board, and Inderscience Publishers staff who provided intellectual and professional leadership to launch *IJFBRD*.

Thanks for reading. We look forward to your patronage.

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