From Profit to Philanthropy

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Abstract

The following case is intended to supplement and apply concepts from entrepreneurship and/or management coursework tying in the importance of philanthropy and service-mindedness. Students are asked to think creatively and critically to maximize profits, which are then shared with a charity of their choice. The instructions for the activity are presented first to give a quick understanding of the teaching design. Then, the importance and relevance of these topics are briefly discussed, followed by the full experiential exercise information.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Start-up team, Team building, Philanthropy, Corporate social responsibility

Introduction

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Student Activity Instructions

With no more than a $10 investment from each team member, your team must identify a way to make money and maximize profit of at least $X (with or without an initial student investment; *threshold is set by the instructor, but a minimum of $50 is recommended to inspire hard work*). Your team needs to be creative and collaborative in finding a business opportunity and use it to make a respectable profit. Examples of prior successful student projects include making/selling crafts (e.g., ornaments, t-shirts), décor (e.g., plants, flowers), food products, and activities/experiences (e.g., hayride, pumpkin painting station). Other service-focused projects might include fitness training, sports lessons, culinary training, and meal preparation/diet consultations. Students may choose a business opportunity *with* or *without* any tangible assets. Upon completion of the project, your team will donate the profit to a local charity of your choosing.

Introduction to Experiential Exercise: Foundational Knowledge

Entrepreneurship is the process of creating, developing, and managing a new business venture to create value, generate profits, and achieve success. In other words, it is "the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled" (Eisenmann, 2013, pp. 1). It is an essential aspect of the study of management and leadership, as it encompasses a wide range of skills, knowledge, and practices that are crucial for building and growing successful organizations. Entrepreneurs are typically the driving force behind new ventures, and they bring a unique set of skills and knowledge that are essential for identifying market opportunities, developing innovative ideas, and creating products and services that meet the needs of consumers. Since entrepreneurship serves as a key driver of economic growth and innovation, it is therefore critical for managers and leaders to understand how to foster and support entrepreneurial activity.

Entrepreneurship is important because it can help organizations to become more innovative and adaptable in the face of changing market conditions. By fostering a culture of entrepreneurship within an organization, managers and leaders can encourage employees to think creatively and take risks, which can lead to the development of new products and services, as well as new business models and strategies. In this way, entrepreneurship can help organizations to stay ahead of the curve and remain competitive in the long run. Rather than relying on established procedures and routines, entrepreneurs must be comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, and be willing to take calculated risks to achieve their goals. By studying entrepreneurship, managers and leaders can learn how to cultivate this mindset within themselves and their teams, and develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in an increasingly dynamic and competitive business environment. By understanding the unique challenges and opportunities associated with entrepreneurial activity, managers and leaders can gain valuable insights into how to create, develop, and manage successful organizations.

For this experiential exercise, students are asked to apply these entrepreneurial concepts to start a small business of their own. These skills, even when applied in a small-scale course activity can help learn applicability of creativity, innovation, market identification, and risk management, all of which can be carried over into personal careers.

Further, philanthropy and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are also important components of the modern business landscape, and they are becoming increasingly essential to the success of companies. Philanthropy refers to the act of giving time, money, or resources to support charitable causes, while CSR involves integrating social and environmental concerns into a company's operations and decision-making as a form of compliance with laws and ethical standards (Adrian et al., 2013). Philanthropy is important for companies because it allows them to give back to their communities and support causes that are important to them. Through philanthropy, companies can help to address social and environmental challenges and make a positive impact on the world.

According to Carroll (1991), philanthropy is one of the four components of CSR, which also includes economic, legal, and ethical responsibilities. By engaging in philanthropic activities, companies can meet their CSR obligations and demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility. In addition to the social benefits, philanthropy can also have a positive impact on a company's bottom line. Research has shown that consumers are more likely to purchase products from companies that are socially responsible (Du et al., 2010). By engaging in philanthropic activities, companies can enhance their reputation and improve their brand image, which can lead to increased sales and customer loyalty.

One of the key benefits of philanthropy and CSR is that it can help organizations attract and retain top talent. Employees are increasingly looking for employers who demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility, and companies that prioritize CSR are more likely to attract and retain the best and brightest employees (Waddock & Bodwell, 2004). In addition, CSR can also improve a company's financial performance, as socially responsible companies are more likely to attract long-term investors and secure financing (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

The final step of this experiential exercise requires that students donate all profits to a charity of their choosing; they also have the option to donate their initial seed money. By exemplifying the importance of philanthropy as embedded in this activity, students can practice skills and see the positive impacts first-hand. This foundational knowledge should be shared with students in related courses to lay the groundwork and emphasize the importance of these topics. Then, to facilitate leaning and application of management and leadership through the lens of entrepreneurship and philanthropy, the following class activity is proposed.

Learning Goals

1. Build an entrepreneurial start-up team.
2. Work as a start-up team to explore business opportunities and assess/generate ideas.
3. Apply necessary entrepreneurial skills to begin a small business and create revenue streams.
4. Manage money flow and revenue sources.
5. Think creatively to solve problems and find solutions.
6. Emphasize the importance of philanthropic giving and the overall benefits of giving back.

Approximate Timing

75 minutes – *initial activity assignment given in class*

30 days/4 weeks –*complete activity and debrief*

Materials Needed

Student handouts, including Resource Profiling Sheet, Instructions, and Peer Evaluation Form.

Preparation Needed for Students and Instructor (*Three Parts*)

1. Self-Introduction (20 minutes)

The class is presented the following questions. Every student should stand and answer the above five questions to complete their self-introduction.

1. What is your name?
2. What is your major?

3. Where are you from?
4. What is your near-term career plan (within five years after graduation)?
5. What is your long-term career plan (five years and onward after graduation)?

2. Resource Profiling (20 minutes)

After self-instructions, all students are provided the following handout.

Resource Profiling Sheet

Student Name:		**Major:**		**Meeting Availability:**	
Identified Problems	**Hobbies**	**Specialties**	**Access to Tangible Resources**	**Social Network**	**Other**
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

Students are instructed to write down their name, major, and times during the week that they are available for team meetings. Each cell under the second-row headers represents a question requiring three answers:

- ***Identified Problems*** – Students identify opportunities for products and/or services that are not readily available in the area (e.g., within 20-mile radius of the campus).
- ***Hobbies*** – Students list three things that they are most passionate about and/or are willing to spend a significant amount of their spare time working on.
- ***Specialties*** – Students list unique skills, training, activities, or knowledge of subject matter.
- ***Access to Tangible Resources* –** Students list valuable, physical resources to which they have direct access. For example, perhaps a student owns a pickup truck that can be used for large deliveries or has access to a uniquely pure mountain spring.

- ***Social Network*** – Students write down the names of their top three unique, valuable social network connections. Instruct students to focus on individuals from whom they can directly benefit (e.g., advice or help in building/broadening a business network).
- ***Other*** – In this column, students list any other pertinent information they want to provide to the team.

3. Team Formation (25 minutes)

Upon finishing the Resource Profiling Sheet, students are instructed to post their completed work on white boards, classroom walls, or a digital platform (if the class is online). Then, students should go around the classroom, read the posted sheets from their peers, and, using their disciplined imagination, decide who they want to approach regarding team formation.

Based on self-introductions and resource profiles, students will form their own teams of 3-5 members (depending on the class size). The following factors are recommended in team formation:

- Select team members based on resource profile information that may be conducive to a business idea.
- If possible, form a team of diversity in terms of major and sociocultural backgrounds.
- Ensure that the team meeting availability provides adequate time during the week for all members.

Review Activity Instructions with Students (10 minutes)

With no more than a $10 investment from each team member, your team must identify a way to make money and maximize profit of at least $X (with or without an initial student investment; *threshold is set by the instructor, but a minimum of $50 is recommended to inspire hard work*). Your team needs to be creative and collaborative in finding a business opportunity and use it to make a respectable profit. Examples of prior successful student projects include making/selling crafts (e.g., ornaments, t-shirts), décor (e.g., plants, flowers), food products, and activities/experiences (e.g., hayride, pumpkin painting station). Other service-focused project examples might include fitness training, sports lessons, culinary training, and meal preparation/diet consultations. Students may choose a business opportunity *with* or *without* any tangible assets. Upon completion of the project, your team will donate the profit to a local charity of your choosing.

Requirements for Making Money:

1. Your actions must be legal and ethical.
2. Your quest for profit must involve creativity and innovation. That being said, asking friends or family for donations is not creative.

As with any entrepreneurial start-up team, contribution from each team member is critical for success. To encourage participation, you will be provided peer performance review forms which are used to gauge team member contributions (handout included directly below).

Your team will be required to prepare a final presentation, graded upon two factors: (a) the ***quality*** and completeness of the final presentation, and (b) the ***peer evaluation*** of your own contribution. This is how it works. First, your team will receive a grade for the presentation. Suppose your team's presentation grade is 80%. Then, this grade will be adjusted based on the peer evaluation points. For example, if a team member receives 80% of all the possible points on the peer evaluations, then this team member's grade will be calculated as 80% * 80% = 64% of all the possible points for the presentation.

A 10% tolerance shall be employed for peer assessments. In essence, when a team member garners a minimum of 90% of the total attainable points in peer evaluation, it strongly indicates substantial contribution. Consequently, this individual will receive the group grade. Conversely, if the said member accumulates 89% or less of the total available points in peer evaluation, it implies compelling evidence of inadequate contribution. Thus, the group project grade for this member will be modified as previously mentioned.

If a team member's lack of contribution is impeding the team's progress, the member may be fired by a unanimous vote of all team members. If this happens, the fired team member will be assigned to new, individual written analysis assignment by the instructor.

Peer Evaluation Form

Instructions:

1. Write all of your team members' names in the first column. Do <u>not</u> include your own name.
2. Using the provided scoring scale, assign scores to each of your teammates, and sum the Total Score.
3. Write any additional comments on the back of this page about the effectiveness of any or all of your team members.
4. Return your completed form to your instructor. Your responses will not be revealed to your teammates in any form in which you will be identifiable.

Peer Evaluation Form Continued[1]

Scoring Scale:

1 = Caused Major Problems 2 = Not Enough 3 = Enough 4 = Most of the Time 5 = All of the Time

Team Members' Names → *(Do not write in your own name)*				
1. Attends all classes, meetings, and events, and is on time or early.				
2. Notifies other members if going to miss class or a meeting, or if s/he will be late.				
3. Is professional and polite. Treats others (and their opinions) with respect. Doesn't make anyone feel stupid or left out.				
4. Completely fulfills his/her obligations by established deadlines. Does what he/she agreed to do.				
5. His/her **written work** is high quality.				
6. His/her **research** is high quality.				
Total Score:				

Write any additional comments on the back of this page.

[1] Thank you to colleagues at the University of Central Florida who made this form available to an author of this case.

Debriefing

Student teams conclude the project with a 15-minute in-class presentation to answer the following questions, which tie directly back to the learning goals:

1. How did your start-up team self-select? On which resource profiles did you find similarities/differences?
2. What are the some of the ideas that your team considered to raise capital?
3. What was the selected idea and how/why did the team choose this option?
4. How was your project implemented, step by step?
5. How much did it cost (up front), how did you manage your revenue streams, and how much money did the team make?
6. What would your team have done differently?
7. What are the important takeaways from this project? *Key tiebacks to entrepreneurship and philanthropy topics*
8. To which charity did your team donate the profit (*must provide receipt*)?
9. Why did your team choose this charity?

Optional Class Discussion Questions

These questions are intended to help facilitate dialogue and tie in weekly lectures to anchor learning in entrepreneurship and philanthropy as the students work on the project (or after the project is completed). These questions might be included either as an in-class discussion, as a Discussion Board assignment, or as a reflection paper assignment to complement learning.

What resources (capital, or otherwise) are being/were used in the project?

Interestingly, some teams may have used very little or no money at all. Rather, they may have mostly capitalized on their specialties and/or social network to make a profit. This demonstrates two critical take-aways. First, financial constraints are not the number one constraint for startups; the knowledge and creativity in opportunity exploration, evaluation and resource combination are. Second, in line with resource-based view (Barney, 1991), intangible resources (e.g., specialties and social network) are more important than tangible resources.

What is the relationship between profit and philanthropy?

Even though students are instructed to donate their profits, some teams may have donated their seed money as well. Ask the students directly whether they will “close down” their business (analogous to their seed money) and donate to a charity. Students will likely say no. They will need to understand the pyramid of corporate social responsibility with economic responsibility at the base (Carroll, 1991).

Notes to Instructors and Conclusion

The student teams' project outcomes exhibit a range of results in terms of generated profit, thereby influencing the donation amount, as well as the quality of their presentations. To gauge the success of these teams, a comprehensive assessment incorporating both quantitative and qualitative measures is recommended, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. For instance, a profit/donation amounting to $50 should not be inherently deemed inferior to a $150 contribution, as the $50 profit may have been the result of significantly greater effort and strategic experimentation during the phases of entrepreneurial opportunity exploration and assessment. Alternatively, it might demonstrate greater sustainability over a time frame extending beyond a single semester. Consequently, a qualitative evaluation is also suggested to underscore the collective team endeavor and the caliber of work. The creativity of the team in choosing a business venture often determines the monetary success of the project; even when the business doesn’t thrive as students expect, important lessons are learned.

In a broader context, drawing from our prior experiences, variations in the outcomes of this scenario align well with discussions surrounding the question of "*What resources (capital or otherwise) are being/were used in the project?*" In essence, the amalgamation of resources, coupled with the exploration and assessment of opportunities, stand as fundamental pillars in the initiation of a new business venture.

Through engagement with this practical case, students are expected to achieve two primary objectives: 1) to gain hands-on exposure to entrepreneurship and demystify the intricacies of starting a business, and 2) to actively embody the principles of corporate social responsibility.

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Family Businesses and Performance: The Effect of Intangible Resources

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Abstract

This research seeks to examine possible advantages that may lie with family firms and their intangible resource base. Drawing upon the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, we investigate the relationship between three intangible resources regarding performance in family versus non-family businesses. Knowledge, organizational and human resources are analyzed using survey data collected from a sample of 430 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) from family and non-family firms in the United States and Australia. We attempt to find answers to three questions: 1) which, if any, intangible variables have the strongest effect on firm performance; and 2) which of these relationships will be stronger in the case of family firms. Controlling for size and age using hierarchical regression, we find that knowledge resources were significant for both family and non-family firms, however, human resources were also significant for family firms. It is argued the presence of certain intangible resources, particularly human resources as found in the concept of *familiness*, could be a key factor in the advantage of the family firm.

Keywords: family business, non-family business, resource-based view, intangible resources, knowledge, human, organizational resources, SMEs, performance.

Introduction

Family firms are the dominant form of business organization in many countries, contributing for example to more than 60 percent of employment in the United States (Bressler, Campbell & Elliot, 2014). They add value due to their comparative longevity, and therefore understanding how family firms achieve high performance has implications for owners, managers, employees, and the economies in which they operate. The family firm tends to be unique compared to their non-family counterparts, as Stafford et al., (1999) suggested "it is not the business that makes a family firm unique from other business arrangements; rather it is the family" (p. 206). In trying to understand the uniqueness of family firms, it may be explained by its combination of resource bundles, which can create competitive advantage and distinguish them from competitors, allowing them to be entrepreneurial and innovative (Barney, 1991).

The Resource-Based Theory, or RBV, suggests that resources should not only be acquired but leveraged to create competitive advantage. It argues that while the resource profile of a firm is obviously important, but that these resources must be integrated and deployed effectively to achieve competitive advantage and in particular, its resources must be managed to increase the difficulty for competitors to imitate or develop substitutes for these resource bundles (Kahn, Yang & Waheed, 2019). Resources that provide family firms with strategic advantages are often considered to be intangible, as they allow for a dynamic and complex structure in which to operate, and this can create sustained competitive advantage within the family firm.

Family firms as an area of study are unique in many ways. Many of their attributes create distinct advantages, such as their ability to survive and adapt given a multitude of environments (Schulze & Gedajlovic, 2010). Conversely, the same unique criteria of close involvement and connections can lead to poor performance due to personal conflict (Shukla, 2014). A term used to describe this uniqueness of the family firm is 'familiness' or a unique bundle of resources created by the interactions that occur between the firm and its family members (Habbershon & Williams, 1999). However, this bundle of distinct attributes has been difficult to determine for researchers and remains elusive (Huybrechts et al., 2011). Therefore, comparative studies of family and non-family businesses can add to the existing body of literature by determining possible causal relationships between family and non-family variables (Collins and O'Regan, 2011). Additionally, it is hoped these findings can add to the discourse of family firm literature as we examine the results with the context of existing family firm research.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the effect of intangible variables that may influence the performance of SMEs in either family or non-family firms. Specifically, we attempt to answer two questions: 1) Which intangible variables have a positive effect on performance of SMEs; and 2) that these relationships will be stronger in the case of family firms. Finally, we discuss if and how these findings can add to our understanding of the differences between family and non-family owned businesses and how the results can contribute to our understanding of the field.

Literature Review

Family Business

Early family research focused on SMEs and the influence of ownership and management of family members (Davis, 1982). Chua, Chrisman and Sharma (1999) saw family firm behavior at the core of a family business, and it being the differentiator between family and non-family businesses. Their well-accepted definition of a family businesses is described as "governed and/or managed with the intention to shape and pursue the vision of the business held by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family or a small number of families in a manner that is potentially sustainable across generations of the family or families" (p.25).

Literature on SMEs often involves family firms, as SME resource constraints frequently resemble those encountered by smaller-sized family firms (Eddleston, Kellermans & Sarathy, 2008). For example, family firms often lack capabilities with infrastructure, technology and management knowledge similar to that experienced by SMEs (Chirico et al., 2011). Entrepreneurship scholars have investigated the family firm as this is often where entrepreneurial behaviour begins, with many new firms being founded by two or more individuals who are related (Sharma, Chrisman & Chua, 2012).

An important concept in the family research field is the concept of ‘familiness’ that originated with Habbershon and Williams (1999) and was created through the lens of the resource-based view (RBV). The concept attempts to capture the ‘unique bundle of resources’ developed through the ‘systems interaction between the family, its individual members and the business’ (p. 11). Since this seminal article, there is yet a measure that captures its essence, most likely as it is still an evolving concept and remains a challenge in the discipline. Scholars agree that the ‘familiness’ of the firm is an important and critical point of difference, but due to the heterogeneous nature of family businesses, which resource bundles affect family firm performance require more research and an appropriate method of inquiry (Tabor et al., 2018).

The family firm concept has been studied in greater depth in the last two decades (Chrisman, Steier & Chua, 2006; Kraus, Harms & Fink, 2011; Tokarczyk et al., 2007) and has led to new theories about how and why family firms are unique. For example, stewardship theory suggests the family firm has an advantage as people in the organization are often motivated members that wish to work together collectively, for a greater good, and achieve organizational goals (Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson, 1997). Family firms often have an altruistic outlook by family members, which tends to lead to high involvement and collaboration, enhancing organizational success (Eddelston & Kellermans, 2007). Interestingly, these same associations can be a disadvantage for family firms when these relationships produce conflict and create negative results (Shukla, Carney & Gedajlovic, 2014). Additionally, many family firms choose not to incorporate, wanting instead to maintain the reigns of control, but this can lead to a shortage of additional resources, particularly financial, and this can leave them more vulnerable to failure (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2018). This leads us to attempt to understand which resources could be most valuable to family (and non-family) firms.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) and Intangible Resources

Scholars have widely acknowledged that the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm is one of the most prominent and powerful theories in understanding the organizational relationships and performance of firms (Barney, 1991; Barney, Ketchen & Wright, 2011; Crook et al., 2008; Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984). The RBV is an internal focus on the firms' resources and each organization is perceived as a bundle of resources that focuses on different resource combinations (Connor, 1991). These resources are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable, or otherwise known as the VRIN attributes (Barney, 1991). Barney (1997) altered the VRIN framework to the VRIO framework, and this included that resource creation is a dynamic process and ‘inimitability’ described the organization of resources as critical. In either case, the RBV provides an established and accepted approach to research in family business.

The RBV analyzes the firm or business unit through a specific resource or set of resources that can be complex and intangible (Barney, 1991). It often requires the firm to combine or bundle resources to configure them into complex combinations, so as to yield competitive advantage (Brush, Greene & Hart, 2001). Resources should not be viewed as homogenous but as heterogeneous and variable, meaning that the value of these resources depends on the combination with other resources (Barney, 2001). Because family firms have been said to be complex, dynamic and rich in intangible resources, the RBV offers a suitable approach for examination. The RBV provides a framework for research investigating the unique essence of the family firm structure (Xi et al., 2015).

There has been a great deal of research regarding intangible resources as they are considered the most likely sources of firm success (Molloy & Barney, 2015). While the RBV does not distinguish between resource types, the most influential appear to be intangible (Hitt et al., 2001) and are therefore used in this research. We define intangible resources as a subset of resources (tangible or otherwise) under the RBV umbrella, which combines assets as well as capabilities. Resource categories fall into two distinct classifications involving tangible and intangible aspects, with tangible resources typically referring to input resources, that can include facilities, raw materials, equipment, location, finances and technology; among others (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). However, research suggests that tangible resources have less importance than intangible resource stocks due to their tendency to be more easily imitated (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1991; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

Intangible resources may be more important for promoting sustainable competitive advantage in both family and non-family firms because they are difficult to imitate, thus facilitating differentiation (McEvily & Chakarvathy, 2002). They must be valuable, rare, be difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable (Barney, 2001) and therefore they play an essential role in the firm's ability to be entrepreneurial and improve venture performance (Crook et al., 2008). Intangible resources can provide characteristics that Barney (1991) suggests are necessary to provide a sustained competitive advantage and their relationships have been largely supported in the literature (Galbreath, 2005; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

This research investigates intangible resources that may be found in the concept of familiness and add to the advantage of the family firm and propose three unique intangible resources that may contribute to competitive advantage for family firms: human, organizational and knowledge resources.

Human Resources

The importance of human resources in enhancing firm performance has been widely studied (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011; Nolan & Garavan, 2016) and there is little disagreement that human capital constitutes an important element in the 'bundle' of resources that a firm owns (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). To increase or maintain these advantages human capital theory suggests that effective organizations encourage employees to invest in themselves, through education, skills and industry knowledge to develop synergies towards competitive advantage (Nerdrum & Erikson, 2001; Nolan & Garavan, 2016).

There appear to be several human resource advantages that family firms may have over their non-family counterparts. For example, turnover rates in family firms have been found to be lower than that of non-family firms (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2006), which means that knowledge and experience is preserved within the business for a longer period. Family members and their descendants often get involved in the family business at a young age, which gives them an opportunity to develop deep, firm-specific knowledge so that they are familiar with tasks and job duties (Ward, 2016). Additionally, family-owned businesses often have a stronger commitment to their job that is greater than that of non-family employees and are often willing to sacrifice time for training in order for the firm to succeed (Dyer, 2006).

Human resources represent the tacit knowledge that is embedded in the minds of its members and their ability to interact appropriately for the benefit of their organization (Kong, Chadee, & Raman, 2013). By leveraging the unique family-firm human resource advantages, organizations can increase firm performance, as human resources are often the glue that hold or bind other resources together (Mathis, Jackson & Valentine, 2015). Following research by Carmeli and Tishler (2004), human resources advantages are measured using various attributes, such as the level of education of employees, mastering job duties, familiarity with tasks, adequate training and suitable work experience. Therefore, the first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: Family firms will place a stronger value on human resources than non-family firms.

It is not likely that a firm's advantage relies solely upon a single resource, even if that particular resource is viewed as critical. Heterogeneity among family firms suggest that other factors will be involved (Garcia-Castro & Aguilera, 2014). Another intangible variable that may offer competitive advantage is organizational resources.

Organizational Resources

Organizational resources are described as a combination of resource elements that often includes systems and policies, as well as organizational routines, culture and structure (Dollinger, 1995; Greene & Brown, 1997). They can be described as processes that are constantly changing whether consciously or unconsciously, or more simply a way of working (Teece, 2003). A firm's ability to alter, reconfigure and integrate other resources of the firm add to its competitive advantage (Grant, 1996). For example, a firms' long-term success such as Walmart (Stalk, 1992) and Southwest Airlines (Porter, 1996) cannot be explained through a single factor; as evidenced by their business models being ineffectively copied in different situations over several years. By having a number of elements that positively interact with one another a firm can reduce the possibility of imitation, even in the case of elements that are easily copied.

Organizational abilities such as these can be particularly critical for small and family firms, as they seek complementary external resources as their internal resources are comparatively weak compared to larger firms (Arregle et al., 2007). Family businesses develop a unique culture surrounding their firms, stemming from varied behavioral and historical circumstances embedded in the family itself (Dyer, 2006). While the non-family organization model has been characterized by an extended hierarchy, narrowly segmented job design, rule-bound procedures and a lack of employee autonomy (Peters, 1988), family firms differ due to their ability to use a unique internal structure to strategically configure these resources in such a way that creates competitive advantage (Dawson & Mussolino, 2014).

Similarly, unique interactions between family members and business systems may create organizational advantages, including organizational culture (Olson et al., 2003). Family firms have distinctive intangible resources that merge with tangible firm assets to create an environment that is difficult for competitors to copy. As can be seen, several factors can contribute to a firm's unique organizational resource bundle. Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: Family firms will place a stronger value on organizational resources than non-family firms.

Another intangible variable that may be critical for family and non-family firms are knowledge resources.

Knowledge Resources

It has been suggested that knowledge has the greatest ability of all resources to serve as a source of sustainable differentiation (McEvily & Chakravarthy, 2002; Villasalero, 2017). Knowledge permits firms to predict more accurately the nature and commercial potential of changes in the environment and the appropriateness of strategic actions, and without knowledge an organization is less capable of discovering and exploiting new and emerging opportunities (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). In family firms, knowledge can take various forms and are generally classified as being abundant (Habbershon & Williams, 1999). The long term-orientation of family firms suggests that much of the knowledge resources lies with family members, who have a strong inclination to disseminate with others.

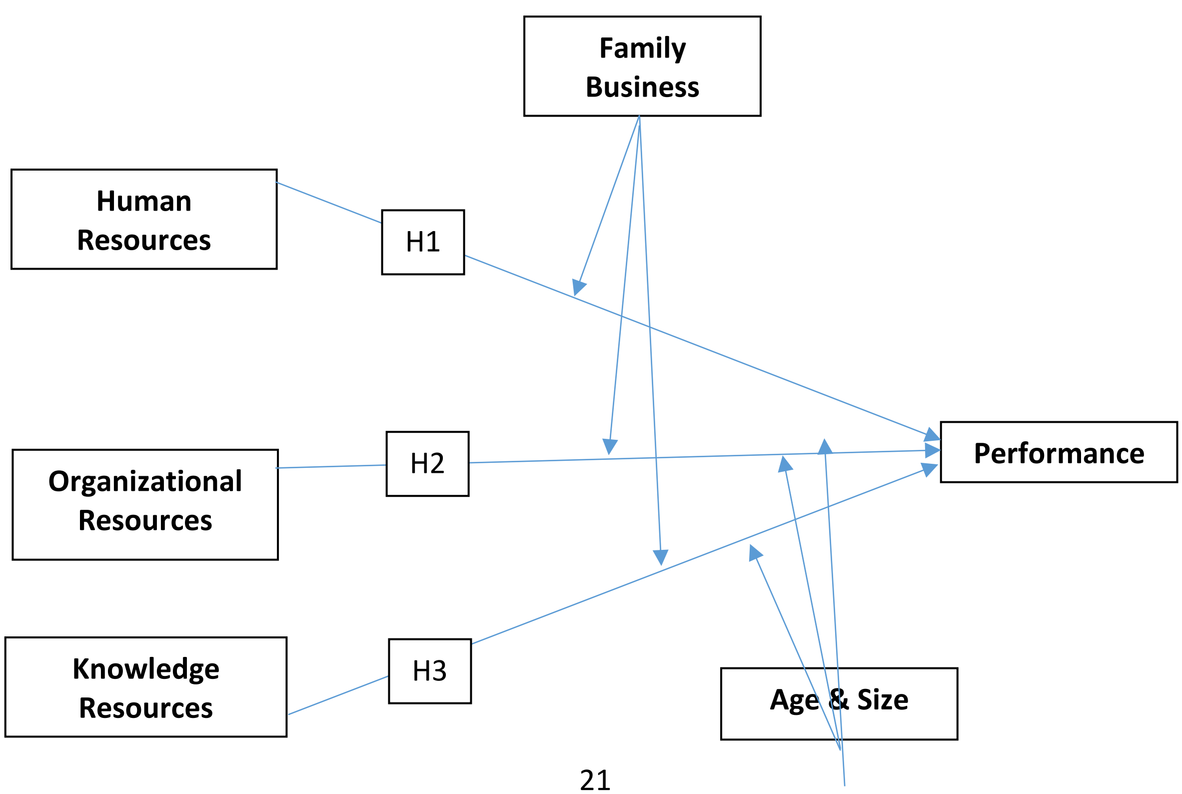
Knowledge management is defined as the process of creating, storing/retrieving, transferring and applying knowledge, and this continuous process is critical as it is used to identify and exploit existing and acquired knowledge as well as develop new opportunities for the firm (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Knowledge resources for SMEs can lead to the development of other important resources, one of the greatest challenges of new and small firms. For example, complex, intangible knowledge resources possessed by founders who are often leading family firms, are instrumental in acquiring other tangible resources such as financial and physical capital (Brush, Greene & Hart, 2001). A key role of management is to identify and evaluate resources, and this resource may explain a potential source of competitive advantage in family firms that improve their efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991; Price & Stoica, 2015).

Therefore, knowledge resources represent a resource of competitive advantage for family businesses. High levels of knowledge resources in family businesses often lie with certain individuals, most commonly the business founder, and thus knowledge resources are key to understanding the potential advantages within the family business. Therefore, the final hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3: Family firms will place a stronger value on knowledge resources than non-family firms.

The final model and hypotheses for this research is shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Model and Hypotheses



Methodology

This study utilized combined samples of SMEs from Australia and the United States and this approach was implemented for two main reasons. First, research suggests that Australian and the US societies share many of the same characteristics; economically, culturally, politically, etc., and hold similar western individualist values that give priority to personal goals (Harrison et al., 1994). Second, from a methodological perspective, by combining the two samples, greater stability can be achieved through an increase in the sample size. The benefits of an increased sample size outweigh the disadvantages, through developing a more reliable sampling group. Research suggests this method can be appropriate when the research design is consistent by ensuring constant definitions, measurements, models, and variables (Kish, 1994). Dubbed "*multipopulation design*", the combination of samples is permissible, and indeed very efficient, if the sample design and allocation are adhered to (Kish, 1994, p. 168).

All respondents must have been an owner/manager within the business. The SBA (US) defines a small business as any firm with fewer than 500 employees and this definition was applied to both samples. The bulk of the Australian responses were obtained from a database of SMEs participating in a state government program that had received government incentives during the early stages of their development. Additional surveys were completed using traditional mail through local networks, word of mouth and random in-person delivery. In total, 201 total responses were received, of which 114 were family-owned and 87 non-family. The majority of the US sample was collected via email from a database of a small business member organization. Similarly, physical distribution via local networks, other partner institutions and word of mouth created the aggregate total. This generated 229 useable responses of which 179 were family-owned businesses and 50 non-family. In total, 430 responses were obtained using this method, often termed snowball sampling (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001). The total number used in the final sample was 293 family businesses and 137 were non-family.

Questions included in the survey were sourced from existing scales within the entrepreneurship, management and strategy literature. The questionnaire was developed by using seven-point Likert scales that were pre-tested with a representative set of respondents in order to reveal errors in questionnaire design prior to administering the survey (Cavana et al., 2001). A portion of the pretesting was conducted by personal interviews to ensure direct observation of respondent behaviors (Bassili & Fletcher, 1991). The questionnaire was then pilot tested in two phases. In the first phase, a small sample of four business owners and three academics and one business development specialist from an SBDC were asked to complete a hard copy of the survey instrument. Each of the respondents consulted with the researchers to deliver their recommendations. Entrepreneurs who participated in the pilot test survey were asked not to participate in the final survey. Final versions of paper and online surveys were completed and distributed via email, mail or in person in both countries.

The scale to measure knowledge resources followed a ten-item knowledge management process as described by Alavi and Leidner (2001) that included knowledge creation, acquisition, conversion and integration of knowledge. Organizational resources were measured following a scale developed by Edelmen, Brush and Manolova (2005), the five-item scale included firm technology, employee characteristics, strategic alliances, customer service ability and products/services offered. The scale used for human resources followed a scale by Carmeli and Tishler (2004) that included 12 items referring to level of education, mastering the job, familiarity with the task, training, work experience and job performance. All scales were tested for reliability and validity utilizing Cronbach Alpha and factor analysis and the samples ranged from 0.71 to 0.92. Factor analysis led to some items being deleted leaving nine items in the human resources scale, four items in organizational resources and eight items in knowledge resources. Firm size and age were added to the final model as control variables, firm size was measured using the number of employees and firm age using years in business.

With the differences between industries in the sample acknowledged, subjective performance measures were utilized to measure performance. Using a seven-point Likert scale based on the Typology of Strategy scale by Miles and Snow (1978), perceptions of performance goals were measured including exceeding sales goals, positive future intentions towards growth, increased production, opening new locations and the introduction new products/services.

Results

Descriptive Statistics:

A total of 430 completed questionnaires were available for analysis. The sample consisted of 201 respondents (46.8 percent) from Australia and 229 (53.2 percent) were US-based SMEs that included 293 family businesses and 137 non-family businesses. Table 1 shows the distribution of type of businesses for both family and non-family firms. Retail businesses represent the highest share in the sample for both type of firms, followed by professional and technical and manufacturing. The χ-square test performed showed no significant difference between the two types of business.

Table 1: Firm characteristics – Industry type

Type of Business	Primary NAIC Code	Businesses participating in the study			
		Family		Non-Family	
		Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture	1	12	4.1	1	0.7
Construction	2	20	6.8	15	10.9
Manufacturing	3	28	9.6	12	8.8
Wholesale	4	14	4.8	3	2.2
Retail	5	112	38.2	46	33.6
Transportation	6	1	0.3	1	0.7
Information	7	14	4.8	7	5.1
Finance & Insurance	8	14	4.8	11	8.0
Real Estate	9	7	2.4	6	4.4
Professional & Technical	10	31	10.6	16	11.7
Health & Social	11	3	1.0	5	3.6
Arts & Entertainment	12	7	2.4	5	3.6
Accommodation & Food	13	26	8.9	5	3.6
Other Services	14	4	1.4	4	2.9
Total		293	100.00	137	100.0

The SBA (US) defines a small business as any firm with fewer than 500 employees. Most family businesses have between 1 and 10 employees (Table 2), with a small number in the sample have zero employees and businesses with more than 50 employees represented 2 percent. For non-family businesses the distribution shows 56 firms having between 1 and 10 employees (41.8 percent) and 47 firms between 10 and 20 employees.

Table 3 shows the age distribution for both family and non-family firms. Fewer businesses are older than 20 years (8.8 percent for family and 10.2 for non-family), and most businesses are relatively young in both samples, with over 60 percent of family businesses between 4 and 14 years old. The same is true for the non-family firms (60 percent). There is no statistical difference between the two samples.

Table 2: Firm characteristics – Size (number of employees)

Characteristic	Range	Family Businesses % (n = 293)	Non-Family Businesses % (n = 137)
Number of Employees	0	46 (15.7%)	4 (3.8%)
	From 1-10	200 (68.1%)	56 (41.8)
	From 10 to 20	34 (11.6%)	47 (33.2%)
	From 21 to 50	7 (2.4%)	20 (14.4%)
	More than 50	6 (2.0%)	10 (7.1%)

Table 3: Firm characteristics – Age (in years)

Characteristic	Range	Family Businesses % (n = 293)	Non-Family Businesses % (n = 137)
Number of Years in Business	1 to 3 years		
	From 4 to 6	58 (19.8%)	24 (17.5%)
	From 7 to 9	74 (25.2%)	51 (37.2%)
	From 10 to 14	46 (15.7%)	14 (10.2%)
	From 15 to 19	56 (19.1%)	24 (17.5%)
	20 & above years	33 (11.2%)	10 (7.3%)
		26 (8.8%)	14 (10.2%)

Analysis:

The firm-level data was entered into a hierarchical regression model with performance as the dependent variable. The variables in the model included control variables age (AGE) in years and size (SIZE) as number of employees. Independent variables included in the analysis are human resources (HUMAN), organizational resources (ORGAN), knowledge resources (KNOW), with the dependent variable performance (PERF). The results are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Results. Family Businesses

Dependent Variable: Performance

	Model 1		***Model 2***		***Model 3***	
Control Variables	***β***	***t***	***β***	***t***	***β***	***t***
Age	-0.05	-0.42	-0.03	-1.05	-0.20	-1.12*
Size	0.02	-0.19	0.21	.99	-0.22	-1.19*
Independent Variables						
Human Resources (HUMAN)			0.26	2.73**	0.16	3.01**
Organizational Resources (ORGAN)			0.18	.87		
Knowledge Resources (KNOW)			0.36	4.09**	0.18	4.13**
Adj. R^2	0.03		0.39		0.44	
F value	5.77***		19.89***		28.94***	
Delta R^2			0.36		0.05	

*p< .10, **p< .05, ***p< .01

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Results. Non-Family Businesses

Dependent Variable: Performance

	Model 1		*Model 2*		*Model 3*	
Control Variables	***β***	***t***	***β***	***t***	***B***	***t***
Age	-.053	-0.68	-0.13	-1.09	.11	-1.54*
Size	-.00	-0.09	-.04	-0.87	.07	.089
Independent Variables						
Human Resources (HUMAN)			.13	1.10		
Organizational Resources (ORGAN)			.31	1.98*	.33	2.17**
Knowledge Resources (KNOW)			.44	4.65***	.47	5.63***
Adj. R^2	.04		.33		.39	
F value	4.83**		20.07***		33.83***	
Delta R^2			.29		.06	

*p< .10, **p< .05, ***p< .01

As shown in the preceding tables the control variables do not affect performance (Model 1). Less than 5 percent of variance is explained in the size and age for both family and non-family businesses. Model 2 added the three main independent variables, and the results show that the addition of these variables increased the variance explained by the model (adjusted R-square) and increased the result to 0.39 for family businesses and to 0.33 for non-family businesses. The F-ANOVA test is significant for both tables. Therefore Hypothesis 3 cannot be supported, as Model 2 shows strong results for both family and non-family businesses, with non-family slightly stronger. The variable human resources is significant for family businesses (β = 0.26, t = 0.273, $p < 0.05$) but not significant for non-family businesses (β = 0.13, t=1.10). Therefore hypothesis 1 is supported but to a weaker extent. Organizational resources is not significant for family businesses (β = 0.18, t =0.87) but is significant for non-family businesses but again to a lesser extent (β = 0.31, t = 1.98 at $p < 0.05$). Therefore Hypothesis 2 is not supported in Model 2.

Model 3 eliminated the weaker variables (ORGAN for family businesses and HUMAN for non-family businesses) in order to understand which variables have the strongest predictive power. Results show a slight increase in performance (adjusted R-square increases in Table 4 to 0.44 and in Table 3 to 0.39). Age of the firm remains marginally significant in Model 3 for both tables. This means that younger businesses for both family and non-family businesses tend to perform better.

Discussion and Implications

The results show strong support for knowledge resources for both types of firms. Knowledge represents a key resource in organizations independent of their ownership, and this finding is consistent with the strong support shown for knowledge resources in the literature (Dalkir & Beaulieu, 2017; West, & Noel, 2009; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). The creation of new knowledge or transferring knowledge into the family business can help to exploit opportunities and add to sustainability, even though the development of knowledge resources can be a complex and time-consuming process. As knowledge resource features are often firm-specific and difficult to imitate, they are potential sources of competitive advantage. The bundle of resources that creates a unique and sustainable competitive advantage for the firm must be constantly assessed and managed, and the organization must invest in replenishing knowledge resources as suggested by Grant (1996).

While our hypotheses posited that this effect would be stronger for family firms than non-family, our findings suggest that the importance of knowledge resources remains constant for any organization. A distinction of knowledge is that the acquisition of knowledge can be tacit (gained through experience and application) or explicit (which is acquired via communication and abstractness). Tacit knowledge is often found in family members (and often with the founder/entrepreneur) and is critical as it requires a knowledge transfer process to ensure succession and to maintain competitive advantage. Founders/owners should transfer that knowledge between generations as it represents a strategic asset that a family firm can develop and transfer more efficiently and effectively than non-family firms (Cabrera-Suárez, De Saa-Perez & Garcia-Almedida, 2001).

The findings here highlight the importance of knowledge resources as the ability to manage knowledge is becoming increasingly crucial in today’s knowledge economy (Jansen, 2017). The management of knowledge resources, both for family and non-family firms, require the development of systems to ensure the full application of an organization’s knowledge base, together with the potential of individual skills, competencies, thoughts, innovations, and ideas to create a more efficient and effective organization. The sharing of knowledge involves providing other employees, whether or not family members, with explicit and tacit knowledge to help others accomplish goals, collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures (Wang, Noe & Wang, 2014).

Human resources were also supported in family firms, and this represents an important source of competitive advantage for family businesses. The concept of familiness was introduced as a potential source of differentiation between family and non-family firms and this may play a role in furthering our understanding of the concept. This partially begins to answer the question posed by Pearson, Carr and Shaw (2008) in trying to understand the specific resources that are unique and embedded in the concept. The stronger effect of human resources for family firms contributes to our understanding of stewardship theory, which suggests that family firms possess an advantage over their non-family counterparts as their family employees are more likely to exhibit mutual trust and work harder for the greater good of the organization (Davis et al., 1997). Their intimate and innate knowledge of the organization form an intricate web of knowledge and relationships.

Human capital represents a far-reaching construct that is intertwined with knowledge, and human capital helps facilitate a constant flow of external knowledge into internal organizational learning processes (Nolan & Garavan, 2016). These qualities are more critical for family firms, and its human resource base places more importance on the creation, diffusion and utilization of collective human knowledge for strategic decision making (Bontis, Crossan & Hulland, 2002; Eddelston & Kellermans, 2007). Family firms with a focus on human resources are more likely to sense and understand the need for acquiring additional external knowledge, and this is compounded by the innate ability of family members to manage knowledge resources that aid in other important strategic decisions. In short, human resources – or the makeup of employees in the firm – is concerned with understanding the development of internal intellectual resources that can benefit the organization with activities such as how external knowledge is strategically acquired and managed (Kong, 2014). Furthermore, strategic perspectives of individual CEOs can be influenced by their family interactions, and this can affect competitive advantage (De Massis, Kotlar & Frattini, 2013).

Results obtained when using Model 2 showed family businesses put less emphasis on organizational resources than non-family businesses (Table 4). While human capital within the family firm is a beneficial resource (Dawson, 2012), both family and non-family organizations require systems to properly leverage the human capital resource advantage. The answer may lie in the 'informal' procedures that are often present in family firms where relational governance based on family social capital and trust informs decisions rather than formal systems (Mustakallio, Autio & Zahra, 2002).

Family firm members often have a unique advantage as they can acquire firm knowledge at an early age by learning at home or part-time work separate from formal procedures, giving them understanding that provides tacit knowledge that is difficult to transfer to outside employees (Memili et al., 2011). Further, this ability and tenure can lead to other advantages such as building a deeper trust with customers and suppliers, creating an emotional attachment with the firm lowering absence from work (Block et al., 2015). It is these advantages that may help explain the lack of significance for organizational resources.

Table 5 (Non-family Businesses) showed human resources having some influence in the results, but marginally, as Model 3 eliminates the human resource variable and results improved. This suggests that a mediation effect may be present that was not analyzed and may be an interesting area for future research. However, organizational resources were significant for non-family firms and an explanation may again lie in the informal networks that exist in family firms.

That is, non-family firms that lack the informal network for knowledge management must create their own formal systems to achieve operational efficiencies.

This research strongly supports the notion that both family and non-family firms possess a tendency for the successful management of knowledge resources, and that human resources are also a key factor in successful family firms, while organizational resources are more significant for non-family businesses. Intangible resources and in particular, knowledge resources, are a strong predictor of firm performance in SMEs, family-owned or otherwise. As can be seen, there appears to be a strong interconnectedness between variables and relationships, as suggested in the literature (see Hult & Ketchen, 2001). Firms should create an organizational learning process to manage these resources as they are likely a key to business success.

Limitations, Contributions and Further Research

As with most research, limitations exist and require acknowledgment. This research included findings that are drawn from a convenience sample across multiple industries, and the cross-sectional nature of the data collection limits potential findings. It is unclear if similar results would be found in a comparison of larger-sized companies, and a longitudinal approach would offer insight as to how resources are accumulated and managed over time. The use of combined samples offered several advantages and benefits due to the increased sample size, but can limit the generalizability, further examination through SEM path analysis would help in explore relationships in more detail. Thus, the results should be considered within these acknowledged limitations.

This study utilized the variable ‘performance’ as a subjective measure as opposed to other more common measures such as profitability or sales. However, family businesses often pursue non-economic goals that may not be wholly consistent with the pursuit of economic performance (Ward, 2016) and thus this measure was deemed appropriate. Other limitations might include the selection of the samples from two countries, albeit similar cultures, but future research could eliminate such bias.

Theoretical contributions are made to the further development and in the growing area of family firm research. The family firm business model has been shown to be a unique resource in of itself, that is sustainable and non-imitable (Habbershon, 2006). The similarities and differences between family and non-family firms found in this research are necessary for understanding how family firms, and the potential resource advantages that come with them, can influence their strategic management process and performance. Knowledge resources in particular were found to be just as significant to non-family firms as family-operated enterprises. At its core, knowledge is typically an individual action, and an organization can attempt to influence this knowledge base but the act lays ultimately with the employee (Simon, 1991). Fortunately, family employees tend to have interests that are more closely aligned with the firm, and family members learn to behave in the best interests of the firm as their own personal goals are bested by that of the firm, instead choosing to follow relational contracts that govern behavior (Dawson, 2012).

Human resources, while not as significant as knowledge, were of more value to family firms. Hoy and Sharma (2009) developed a taxonomy of human capital that categorizes the concept to include both psychological and intellectual dimensions that include integrity, compassion, commitment and forgiveness. Human resources help facilitate a constant flow of external knowledge into internal organizational learning processes and allows new knowledge to emerge from interactions within and across networks. Thus, human resources places importance on the creation, diffusion and utilization of collective human knowledge for strategic decision making and thus is a source of knowledge capability, innovation and strategic renewal in of itself (Bontis, Crossan & Hulland, 2002)

The natural advantages of human capital from family employees combined with a common theme of promotion due to succession plans, necessitate procedures such as fair processes that work to both family and non-family employees. Van der Heyden, Blondel and

Carlock (2005) suggest that the fair and equitable allocation of resources within a firm minimizes potential conflict among employees. Socially responsible HR practices tend to be a major concern for many family firms, not only to reduce conflict, but to improve or maintain the reputation of the firm and create an innovative and supportive atmosphere (Bammens, Notelaers & Van Gils, 2015). Samara and Arenas (2017) extend these notions of fairness and develop a 4-step model that encourages family firms to offer equal opportunities and to incorporate equitable practices in the workplace.

While it is true that family employees are afforded many advantages, their non-family counterparts have opportunities to contribute in other ways, and a diversity of family and non-family employees can be advantageous for the family firm. Non-family employees may often have a greater range of skill-sets as they come from a wider range of talent and backgrounds (Chua, Chrisman & Bergiel, 2009) or family members may simply not possess the skill required for a job (Kidwell et al., 2013). Furthermore, family employees with advantages of tacit knowledge and experience may never exhibit the skill or initiative to exploit the opportunity afforded to them (Gilding, Gregory & Cosson, 2015).

Stewardship theory examines situations in which executives, as stewards of the company, are motivated to act in the best interest of the principal (Donaldson & Davis, 1991). Given the numerous objectives of the shareholders' objectives, the steward behavior is considered as organizationally centered (Davis et al., 1997) and therefore sensitive to intangible resources. By combining RBV and stewardship theory, we argue that superior performance can be obtained in family-centered businesses. While the RBV suggests that intangible resources contribute to superior performance, stewardship theory research in family firms (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007) suggests that family firms would be better stewards of certain intangible resources (e.g. knowledge resources), and the family has a social effect on related processes and outcomes relative to those resources that would be standard across both family and nonfamily contexts (such as organizational resources).

Competitive advantage in today's economy may depend more on a deliberate and systematic approach to ensure the full utilization of the organization's knowledge base, combining human resource factors such as individual employee skills, competencies, idea generation, innovative capacity and willingness to create more efficient and effective organizations. With these different perspectives in mind, perhaps there is no single, universal formula for managing knowledge, rather each organization must develop its own design and approach (Dalkir & Beaulieu, 2017).

By investigating a pool of SME companies, we examined which intangible resources are stronger for both family firms and non-family firms. Utilizing a hierarchical regression analysis, these specific resource categories are applied to family firms and non-family firms to quantitatively examine their possible relationships with performance. These three resource variables have not been previously considered in the context of family versus non-family SMEs and can be an important contribution to the field. While much recent research has focused on family relationships, and how these relationships can be critical to operating family businesses, it is how these relationships affect performance that is most important. Thus, through the lens of the RBV, this research has presented important intangible resources and attempted to investigate their possible relationships with performance. The complex and heterogeneous nature of the family firm suggests that multiple factors can contribute to their success and failure, but intangible resources, particularly knowledge and human resources, may play a critical factor in their future success.

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Appendix A

Survey questions used in research (all questions utilized a seven-point Likert scale)

Knowledge

1. Our company exchanges knowledge with our business partners
2. Our company can acquire knowledge about new products/services within our industry
3. Our company can acquire knowledge about our competitors within our industry
4. Our company can convert competitive information into plans of action
5. Our company takes knowledge from individuals and uses it in the organization
6. Our company can integrate different sources and types of knowledge
7. Our company can apply knowledge learned from our mistakes/experiences
8. Our company can use knowledge to develop new products/services
9. Our company uses knowledge to improve efficiency
10. Our company quickly applies knowledge to critical competitive needs and problems

Organizational Resources

1. This company has up-to-date equipment and computer technology
2. We have employees with international experience
3. This company has strategic alliances/linkages
4. This company has key customer service abilities
5. This company has unique products & services

Human Resources

1. Our employees have a suitable education to fulfill their jobs
2. Our employees are well trained
3. Our employees hold suitable work experience for accomplishing their job successfully
4. Our employees are well skilled professionally to accomplish their job successfully
5. No one knows their job better than our employees
6. Problems here are easy to solve once employees understand the consequences of their actions, a skill they have acquired
7. Our employees do not know why, but sometimes when they are supposed to be in control they feel they are being manipulated

8. If anyone can find an answer, it is our employees
9. Employees go home the same way they arrived, feeling they’ve not accomplished much
10. Considering the time spent on the job, employees feel thoroughly familiar with their tasks
11. Doing this job well is a required in itself
12. Mastering their jobs meant a lot to our employees

Performance

1. Our company is exceeding our sales goal.
2. Our company is exceeding our growth goal.
3. Our company is performing well.
4. We perform better than our competitors
5. We intend to significantly increase production
6. We intend to open new locations
7. We intend to introduce new products/services