

Duque - Güttersberger - Hörzer - Jungwirth - König - Leindl - Otto - Rieger - Wünschl

FAMILIENUNTERNEHMEN IM FOKUS

Empirische Studien zu einem besonderen Unternebenstyp

Beiträge zur wirtschafts-
wissenschaftlichen und technisch-
wissenschaftlichen Forschung

Band 12



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Duque, Güttersberger, Hörzer, Jungwirth, König, Leindl,
Otto, Rieger, Wünschl.

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Vorwort

Familiengeführte Unternehmen sind komplexe sowie sensible Gebilde und langfristig auf Generationen hin ausgerichtet. Sie sind weitaus komplexer, als es zunächst scheint. Sie gelten geradezu als Prototyp eines Forschungsgegenstands, der nur interdisziplinär angemessen beforscht und ganzheitlich analysiert werden kann. Es braucht die Verbindung bzw. die Perspektive mehrerer Disziplinen wie etwa Wirtschaftswissenschaften, Soziologie, Psychologie, Recht, Geschichte u. a. um sich adäquat dem hoch komplexen und dynamischen System dieses Unternehmertyps zuzuwenden und aussagekräftige Forschungsergebnisse zu erzielen (Rüsen u. von Schlippe, 2016). Mit mehr als 27.000 Unternehmen und ca. 403.000 Mitarbeitern stellen die Familienunternehmen (FU) das Rückgrat der steirischen Wirtschaft dar.

Die Studienrichtung „International Marketing & Sales Management“ an der FH CAMPUS 02 setzt seit mehr als 7 Jahren die Erforschung der FU auf Hochschulniveau konsequent um. Im Kompetenzzentrum für FU, der „FU Forschung Austria“, wird das aktuelle Fachwissen am Stand der Wissenschaft mit hoher Praxisrelevanz vermittelt. Durch die Konzentration auf wirtschaftlich interessante Forschungsfragen wird ein wichtiger Beitrag zur Wertsteigerung, Innovation und Entwicklung von FU geleistet.

Durch aktive Einbindung unserer hochmotivierten StudentInnen und AbsolventInnen in die Forschungstätigkeit des Kompetenzzentrums gelang es mit viel Engagement diese Broschüre entstehen zu lassen. Herzlichen Dank dafür!

Einen großen Dank auch an unsere WissenschaftlerInnen, die sich immer wieder mit Begeisterung und hohem Involvement neuen Herausforderungen und Fragen zu den FU zuwenden. Einen Auszug der Antworten auf einige brennende Fragen präsentieren wir in dieser Broschüre. Wir wollen damit auch Ihr Interesse an einer F&E-Kooperation mit unserer Studienrichtung wecken und freuen uns über jede wirtschaftlich relevante Fragestellung rund um das Thema „Familienunternehmen“.

Viel Freude beim Lesen!



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Familienunternehmen im Umgang mit Technologiesprüngen

Einleitung

Der technische Fortschritt und die damit verbundenen Innovationen hatten schon immer das Potenzial, die Wirtschaft und auch die Gesellschaft zu verändern (vgl. Meffert/Meffert 2017, S. 34). Die immer kürzer werdenden Lebenszyklen von Technologien, kombiniert mit einer hohen Wettbewerbsintensität in den Märkten, stellen nicht nur technologieorientierte Unternehmen zunehmend vor ökonomische Herausforderungen (vgl. Vorbach et al 2016, S. 13–14). Dabei haben so genannte Technologiesprünge einen potenziell großen Einfluss auf bestehende Geschäftsmodelle eines Unternehmens und können mitunter auch zu Veränderungen ganzer Geschäftsstrukturen führen (vgl. Baden-Fuller/Haefliger 2013, S. 419–420). Diese Situation erfordert ein solides Management, um das Überleben des eigenen Unternehmens langfristig zu sichern (vgl. Nicholas/Ledwith/Bessant 2015, S. 36).

Und wie gehen speziell Familienunternehmen mit dieser Führungsaufgabe um?

So wurde bspw. festgestellt, dass Familienunternehmen ihre Aufmerksamkeit verstärkt auf endogen entstehende Innovationen und weniger auf externe Marktveränderungen ausrichten (vgl. Baumgartner 2009, S. 23). Sucht man nach Gründen dafür, kann man bspw. an folgende Erkenntnisse anknüpfen:

- Die subjektiven Sichten der EigentümerInnen fließen bei Innovationsentscheidungen stärker ein als spezifische Markt- und Technologieentwicklungen (vgl. Dörflinger et al. 2013, S. 69–70).
- Radikale Innovationen werden in Familienunternehmen durch emotionale Faktoren blockiert. Ein Phänomen, das unter dem Begriff ‚Family Innovators Dilemma‘ bekannt wurde (vgl. König/Kammerlander/Enders 2013, S. 437).

Andererseits wurde aber auch festgestellt, dass bspw. die Überzeugungsarbeit für Veränderungen in Familienunternehmen leichter fällt, als in börsennotierten Konzernen, wo die Governance-Strukturen aber auch Interessensgruppen, wie Aufsichtsräte oder Betriebsräte, bei tiefgreifenden Veränderungen oft bremsend wirken (vgl. Meffert/Meffert 2017, S. 60). Können Gründe dafür in der besonderen Verbundenheit des Personals mit dem Familienunternehmen oder im Vertrauen in die Langfristorientierung der EigentümerInnen liegen?

Vieles deutet darauf hin, dass die Besonderheiten der Familienunternehmen den Umgang mit den Technologiesprüngen beeinflussen, indem sie als Katalysator und/oder als Hemmnis wirken.

Die Forschungsarbeit setzte sich daher die Ziele, speziell für Familienunternehmen

- ein Vorgehen darzustellen, welches die Analyse der Auswirkungen von Technologiesprünzen auf ein Geschäftsmodell unterstützt
- und wichtige Treiber und Hemmnisse aufzeigt, die dieses Vorgehen beeinflussen können.

Primärmarktforschung

Die Untersuchung wurde mittels einer qualitativen Marktforschungsmethode durchgeführt, um in Familienunternehmen den Umgang mit Technologiesprünzen zu erheben und Gründe dafür zu identifizieren. Diese Methode sieht vor, dass ein informativer Wert für das zugrundeliegende Thema generiert wird (vgl. Schreier 2011, S. 245). Das Informationsdefizit wird dabei hauptsächlich durch themenspezifische Inputs, basierend auf psychologischer Repräsentativität, geschlossen (vgl. Oberzucker 2012, S. 35).

Als Instrument der Untersuchung wurde die semistrukturierte Methode mit einem leitfadenbasierten persönlichen Interview, basierend auf explorativen Interviews gewählt.

Branche	Unternehmen	Mitarbeiter	Umsatz in Mio €	Anzahl Interviews
Produktion	17.600	469.400	127.100	4,4 5
% von allen produzierenden Firmen	59%	72%	67%	22% 25%
Baugewerbe	19.700	191.900	25.600	5,2 5
% von allen Bauunternehmen	63%	70%	64%	26% 25%
Handel	41.100	426.500	134.900	10,4 10
% von allen Handelsunternehmen	56%	71%	63%	52% 50%
Summe	78.400	1.087.800	287.600	20 20

Tabelle 1: Qualitativer Quotenplan (eigene Darstellung)

Die Umfrage beinhaltete 20 persönliche Interviews mit GeschäftsführerInnen österreichischer Familienunternehmen. Das Sampling der qualitativen Umfrage stützte sich auf ein gemischtes theoriegesteuertes Verfahren (vgl. Schreier 2011, S. 253), welches aus einem qualitativen Quotenplan (Tabelle 1) und einer gezielten Auswahl auf Basis bestimmter Kriterien bestand.

Ein Kriterium für die Auswahl eines Familienunternehmens war es, dass es sich einem, oder auch mehreren der vier Archetypen eines technologieorientierten Unternehmens (Technologiespezialist, Technologiestrategie, Technologieintegrator, Technologieoptimierer) zuordnen lässt, da sich die Typen in Bezug auf ihr Technologiemanagement unterscheiden. Die Gliederung in vier Archetypen basiert auf einer Einteilung von Stelzer und Brecht auf Basis der beiden Dimensionen „Rolle der Technologie im Geschäftsmodell“ und „technologische Wertschöpfungstiefe“ (vgl. Stelzer/Brecht 2016, S. 116). Weitere Kriterien für die Auswahl waren:

- GeschäftsführerIn eines Familienunternehmens in zentraler Entscheidungsposition
- Familienunternehmen in mindestens zweiter Generation
- Familienunternehmen tätig in der Produktions-, Bau- oder Handelsbranche

Um bei der Auswertung der Interviews die besten Ergebnisse zu erzielen, wurde die inhaltsstrukturierte Methode nach Mayring als passende Methode ausgewählt (Mayring 2015, S. 98).

FU und ihre Sicht auf Technologiesprünge

Technologien werden als auf Theorien basierende Anweisungen zum technischen Handeln definiert (vgl. Vahs/Brem 2015, S. 26). Wird die Leistungsfähigkeit einer Technologie in Abhängigkeit der Zeit oder dem technologiebezogenen F&E-Aufwand betrachtet, ergibt sich idealtypisch ein S-förmiger Kurvenverlauf, weil sich die Leistungsfähigkeit einem Grenzwert nähert (vgl. Vahs/Brem 2015, S. 125–126). Der Ersatz einer bereits reifen Technologie durch eine neue, leistungsfähigere Technologie (= Substitutionstechnologie) und damit der Wechsel von einer S-Kurve zu einer neuen S-Kurve wird als Technologiesprung definiert. (vgl. Vahs/Brem 2015, S. 126; vgl. Specht/Möhrle 2002, S. 377).

Ein **Technologiesprung** entsteht primär durch radikale Innovationen, gekennzeichnet durch mindestens eines der drei Merkmale:

- ein komplett neues Set an Performance-Features
- fünffache Verbesserung von existierenden Performance-Features
- Kostenreduktion von 30 Prozent oder höher (vgl. Leifer 2000, S. 5)

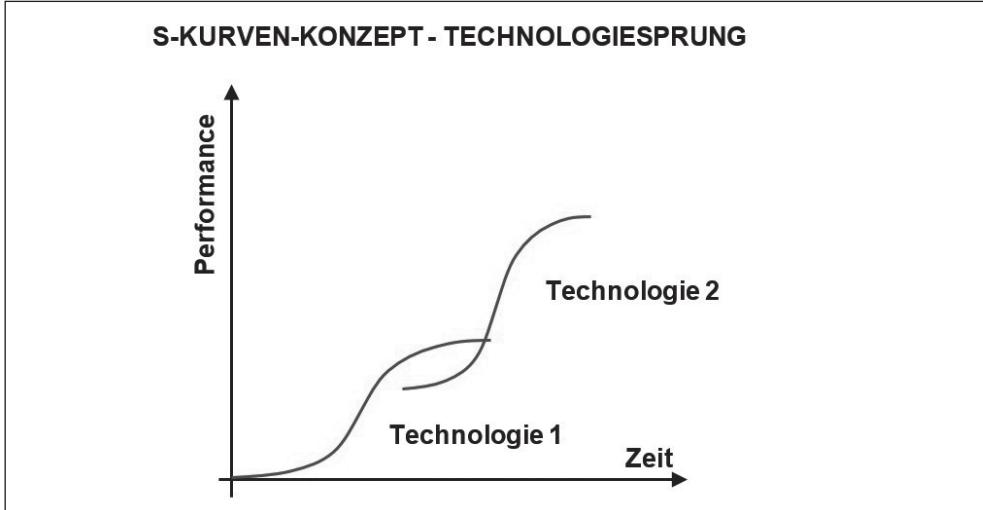


Abbildung 1: Technologiesprung (in Anlehnung an Christensen 1992, S. 359)

Des Weiteren sind die Merkmale technologische Unsicherheit, technologische Unfahrenheit, Geschäftsunfahrenheit sowie hohe Technologie- und Wissenschaftskosten heranzuziehen (vgl. Green/Gavin/Aiman-Smith 1995, S. 208–209).

Je ausgeprägter die Technologiesprünge ausfallen, desto dringlicher ist es, bestehende traditionelle Geschäftsmodelle anzupassen und zu verändern (vgl. Baden-Fuller/Haefliger 2013, S. 419–420). Die Bedeutung, solche Technologiesprünge zu managen, lässt sich an einem Beispiel aus dem Bereich der Digitalisierung veranschaulichen. Einst bestand die Notwendigkeit, Fotonegative im Labor entwickeln zu lassen. Nun ermöglicht es die digitale Fotografie, Bilder innerhalb von Sekunden zu speichern und zu teilen, ohne jemals ein Geschäft zu betreten. Während die klassische Fotografie in eine Nische gedrängt wurde, profitiert die Softwarebranche immens von der Digitalisierung der Fotoindustrie (vgl. Koch 2008, S. 26–27).

Die Marktforschung zeigte auf, dass keines der befragten Familienunternehmen die oben genannten Merkmale zur Abgrenzung eines Technologiesprungs verwendet. Sie ziehen Merkmale heran, die aus dem täglichen Geschäft resultieren. Ein Großteil der Probanden sehen in einem Technologiesprung die Verbesserung hinsichtlich der Kriterien Produktivität, Profitabilität und Qualität. Andere sehen einen Technologiesprung als eine Art von Innovation oder State-of-the-art Technologie, die fundamentale Veränderungen hinsichtlich des Know-hows mit sich bringt. Als Beispiele solcher Entwicklungen wurden unter anderem der digitale Druck, die Bus-Systeme, die Online-Buchungssysteme oder die komplette Digitalisierung von Unternehmen genannt. Eine Mehrheit der Familienunternehmen bekräftigte explizit, dass es von großer Bedeutung ist, von Beginn an zu verstehen, ob der Technologiesprung in aktuellen Märkten Eingang findet oder ob es notwendig wird, in neue Märkte einzutreten.

treten. Des Weiteren ist es für die Familienunternehmen wichtig zu wissen, ob der Technologiesprung entweder Kostenersparnisse aufgrund von Effizienzverbesserungen mit sich bringt oder zu neuen Produkten oder Services führt.

Treiber/Hemmnisse im Umgang mit Technologiesprüngen

Steht man als Familienunternehmen konkret vor der Herausforderung, auftretende Technologiesprünge im Geschäftsmodell zu berücksichtigen, so ist es von Vorteil, ein klares Bewusstsein über mögliche Treiber und Hemmnisse zu haben, die in diesem Veränderungsprozess wirken. Ausgewählte Beispiele sollen dies illustrieren.

Ein Großteil der Probanden stimmte zu, dass sie Rücksicht auf den langfristigen Planungshorizont und den hohen Emotionsgrad innerhalb des Unternehmens nehmen, was eine Veränderung grundsätzlich begünstigt. Sie erwähnten aber auch, dass sich die Anpassung des Unternehmens an die technologischen Sprünge aus ihrer Sicht erschwert, weil im Unternehmen eine hohe Dynamik herrscht, die von der Familie selbst und den damit eng verbundenen Traditionen respektive von den Mitarbeitern ausgeht. Zudem beeinflussen Herausforderungen wie bspw. die eigene limitierte finanzielle Basis oder das Fehlen von Facharbeitern in bestimmten Branchen den Umgang mit Technologiesprüngen zusätzlich. Von den Probanden wurde auch erwähnt, dass die enge Verbindung mit den Partnern, Kunden und Lieferanten oft dafür ausschlaggebend ist, dass ein Technologiesprung berücksichtigt wird. Dieser findet dann in enger Abstimmung mit dem jeweiligen Netzwerk den Eingang in das Geschäft. Spannend wird es auch dann, wenn der Technologiesprung in die „heiße Phase“ des Nachfolgeprozesses fällt, d. h. wenn die Geschäftsführung innerhalb der Familie wechselt und die nachfolgende Person gerade aufgebaut wird. Dies erhöht die Komplexität, weil die Vorstellungen über die geschäftliche Zukunft von zwei Entscheidungsträgern verschiedener Generationen aufeinandertreffen.

Die nachfolgenden zwei Tabellen geben einen Überblick über Faktoren, die als Treiber und/oder als Hemmnisse den Umgang mit den Technologiesprüngen unterstützen oder erschweren können. Sie sind das Ergebnis der Literaturarbeit und der daran angeschlossenen Marktforschung. Auf der linken Seite jeder Tabelle sind jene Faktoren zu finden, die empirisch und theoretisch übereinstimmen, auf der rechten Seite sind weitere Faktoren aufgelistet, die entweder nur in der Marktforschung oder nur in der Literatur genannt wurden. Anzumerken ist, dass diese Übersichten keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit erheben.

Treiber (Theorie und Marktforschung)	Treiber
Langfristiger Planungshorizont	Flache Hierarchien
Hohe Dynamik, keine Grenzen zwischen Familie und Unternehmen	Bauchgefühl und Mut zum Ausprobieren
Motivierte Mitarbeiter	Hohe Flexibilität für Innovation u. Veränderung
Enge Beziehung zu Kunden	Starke Unterstützung von Partnern
Stark emotionale Bindung	Starke Führungspersönlichkeiten der Familie
Nächste Generation innovationsfreudig	Hohe Konfliktmanagement-Skills
	Klar definierte Rollen im Familienunternehmen
	Große Expertise in der Familie
	Experten in ihren Branchen
	Extensives Partner-Netzwerk

Tabelle 2: Übersicht über mögliche Treiber

Hemmnisse (Theorie und Marktforschung)	Hemmnisse
Hohe Dynamik, keine Grenzen zwischen Familie und Unternehmen	Technologiesprünge sind für FU schwieriger zu managen
Weniger Risikobereitschaft	Limitiertes Vertrauen der Familie
Fehlende Qualifikation von Familienmitgliedern / Mitarbeitern	Notwendigkeit von Experten
Limitierte finanzielle Mittel	Geringe Reputation und fehlender Bekanntheitsgrad
Traditionelles Denken und Orientierung an langfristigen Werten	Hoher Grad an Individualität
	Höheres Risiko für Familienunternehmen
	Analyse resultiert aus dem täglichen Geschäft
	Hohe emotionale Beeinflussung
	Bauchgefühl und Mut zum Ausprobieren
	Investment nur wenn nötig
	Fehlende Informationssysteme
	Familienbedürfnisse stillen
	Nachfolgeplanung beeinflusst wichtige Entscheidungen
	Endogen initiierte Innovation

Tabelle 3: Übersicht über mögliche Hemmnisse

Technologiegetriebene Geschäftsmodellveränderung

Auf Basis der Literatur wurde ein Vorgehen in mehreren Schritten abgeleitet. Dabei wird in einem ersten Schritt der Einfluss der neuen Technologie auf das bestehende Geschäftsmodell analysiert, dann die Optionen für neue Geschäftsmodelle entwickelt, ein neues Geschäftsmodell ausgewählt und dieses im letzten Schritt in der Organisation verankert (vgl. Gassmann/Frankenberger/Csik 2014, p. 14–15; Bouwman et al. 2012, p. 12; Osterwalder/Pigneur 2010, p. 169, 216; Pateli/Giaglis 2005, p. 171). Die Ergebnisse einer umfassenden Technologieanalyse fließen als Input in diesen Prozess ein.

Das Vorgehen wurde von den Familienunternehmen als sehr gezielt, detailliert, theoretisch fundiert, praktisch unterstützend und logisch beurteilt, aber hinsichtlich der Starrheit kritisiert. Die Probanden wünschten sich aufgrund der Dynamik des Themas explizit eine höhere Flexibilität in der Vorgehensweise. Bspw. soll es möglich sein, die Familie oder den Eigentümer in die Entscheidungen miteinzubeziehen und auch mit einem anderen als den ersten Prozessschritt zu beginnen. Diese Anforderungen wurden in der Prozessabwicklung (Abbildung 2) berücksichtigt.

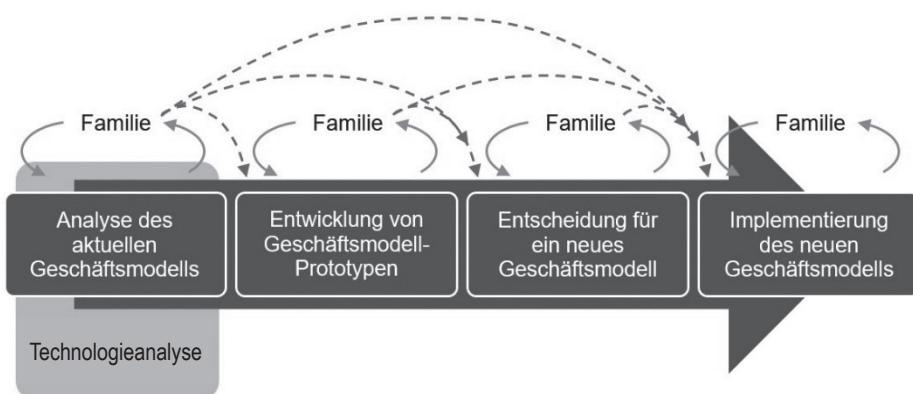


Abbildung 2: Technologiegetriebene Geschäftsmodellveränderung in FU (eigene Darstellung)

Die Pfeile mit durchgehender Linie stellen die Feedbackschleifen dar, die sich durch die Integration der Familie in den Entscheidungsprozess ergeben. Diese sind von Relevanz, wenn die Familie als letzte Entscheidungsinstanz auftritt. Bspw. entscheidet die Familie im ersten Prozessschritt dann darüber, ob die Analyse des aktuellen Geschäftsmodells beendet und der nächste Prozessschritt gestartet werden kann oder ob der Analyseschritt zu wiederholen ist. Die Pfeile mit strichlierter Linie symbolisieren die möglichen Sprünge im Vorgehen, abhängig davon, wann welcher Schritt durchgeführt wird. Damit kann auch mit jenem Prozessschritt begonnen werden, der

aufgrund der Situation im Familienunternehmen gerade passend ist. Eine Flexibilität im Vorgehen, das den Wünschen der Probanden gerecht werden soll. Inwieweit diese Sprünge für ein gutes Ergebnis zweckdienlich sind, ist noch zu prüfen.

Nachfolgend wird auf die Technologie- und Geschäftsmodellanalyse eingegangen.

Technologieanalyse

Die Technologieanalyse ist ein Teilschritt des Technologiemanagementprozesses. Der Gesamtprozess besteht aus den Schritten Technologieanalyse, Technologiestrategieentwicklung, Technologieentwicklung und -akquisition sowie Technologieintegration (vgl. Vorbach et al. 2016, S. 11). Ziel der Analyse ist es, jene technologischen Entwicklungen und Technologiesprünge aufzuspüren, die für das zukünftige Geschäftsmodell von Relevanz sind. Instrumente, die in der Analysephase verwendet werden, sind bspw. der Technologielebenszyklus, das Technologie-Radar und das Technologie-Roadmapping (vgl. Vorbach et al. S. 11–15).

Die befragten Familienunternehmen tendierten eher dazu, keines der genannten Instrumente einzusetzen. Stattdessen setzen sie auf das Wissen ihres Netzwerkes, bestehend aus Partnern, Kunden oder Lieferanten. Als weitere Informationsquellen über potenzielle Technologiesprünge dienen Messen, Ausstellungen, Events und diverse branchenspezifische Fachmagazine. Auch wenn die Familienunternehmen die genannten Instrumente nicht einsetzen, werden sie hier als fester Bestandteil dieses Schrittes empfohlen.

Ein Großteil der befragten Familienunternehmen war auch der Auffassung, dass es zunehmend schwieriger wird, Technologiesprünge vorherzusehen und diese professionell zu managen. Gerade deshalb argumentieren sie, die Versuch-Irrtum-Methode in Kombination mit dem Bauchgefühl sei eine gute Vorgehensweise. Bemerkenswert ist in diesem Zusammenhang, dass Familienunternehmen auch dann Entscheidungen aufgrund des Bauchgefühls treffen, wenn sie eine detaillierte Analyse durchführen. Findet beispielsweise eine ausführliche Technologieanalyse statt, wird nicht mit der Geschäftsmodellanalyse begonnen, wenn das Bauchgefühl die Auswirkungen eines Technologiesprunges als nicht bedeutsam einstuft.

In dem hier verwendeten Kontext basiert das Konstrukt Bauchgefühl auf zwei Elementen. Das eine Element beschreibt Faustregeln, also Heuristiken, welche pragmatische Lösungsansätze darstellen, die aufgrund sehr hoher Komplexität Einsatz finden, wie beispielsweise die Versuch-Irrtum-Methode. Das zweite Element sind die „entwickelten Fähigkeiten“, definiert als die kognitive und soziale Fähigkeit, die aus Wiederholungen entstehen und somit als fundiert angesehen werden. Das Bauchgefühl führt zu Entscheidungen, die einerseits auf einer logischen Grundlage oder Regeln beruhen, andererseits psychologische Faktoren wie Erfahrungswerte und Fähigkeiten berücksichtigen (vgl. Gigerenzer 2008, S. 25–27).

Geschäftsmodellanalyse

Wird ein Technologiesprung als relevant eingestuft, folgt die Geschäftsmodellanalyse. In diesem Schritt werden die Auswirkungen der Technologiesprünge auf das Geschäftsmodell analysiert, wofür in der Literatur unterschiedliche Methoden herangezogen werden: Die Business Model Canvas Analysis, die Initiierungsphase des St. Gallen Business Model Navigators, der Business Model Stress Test oder die szenariobasierte Geschäftsmodell Analyse. In dieser Arbeit wurde der Business Model Stress Test ausgewählt. Entscheidend dafür war die Einfachheit der Vorgehensweise und die Möglichkeit zur Kombination mit dem Business Model Canvas Framework. Tabelle 2 zeigt die einzelnen Schritte, um den Business Model Stress Test in Kombination mit dem Business Model Canvas Framework durchzuführen.

1	Beschreibung des aktuellen Geschäftsmodells anhand der neun Elemente des Business Model Canvas Frameworks												
2	Auswahl der Technologiesprünge, die für das Geschäftsmodell relevant sind												
3	Abbildung der Auswirkungen der Technologiesprünge auf das Geschäftsmodell												
4	Bewertung - „Heat signature“ <table border="1" data-bbox="306 867 1029 1181"> <thead> <tr> <th>Farbe</th> <th>Beschreibung</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Rot</td> <td>Aufmerksamkeit aus strategischer Sicht notwendig</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gelb</td> <td>Aufmerksamkeit ist aufgrund von möglichen positiven oder negativen Effekten zu empfehlen</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grün</td> <td>Negative Aspekte werden nicht erwartet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grau</td> <td>Einfluss nicht relevant</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Farbe	Beschreibung	Rot	Aufmerksamkeit aus strategischer Sicht notwendig	Gelb	Aufmerksamkeit ist aufgrund von möglichen positiven oder negativen Effekten zu empfehlen	Grün	Negative Aspekte werden nicht erwartet	Grau	Einfluss nicht relevant
Farbe	Beschreibung												
Rot	Aufmerksamkeit aus strategischer Sicht notwendig												
Gelb	Aufmerksamkeit ist aufgrund von möglichen positiven oder negativen Effekten zu empfehlen												
Grün	Negative Aspekte werden nicht erwartet												
Grau	Einfluss nicht relevant												
5	Detaillierte Analyse der betroffenen Geschäftsmodell-Elemente												
6	Fazit und Empfehlungen für betroffene Geschäftsmodell-Elemente												

Tabelle 4: Schritte im Business Modell Stress Test (eigene Darstellung, in Anlehnung an Bouwman et al. 2012, p. 11)

Die hier dargestellte Vorgehensweise wurde von Familienunternehmen als sehr unterstützend eingeschätzt. Dafür können zwei Gründe genannt werden:

- Die Vorgehensweise des Business Modell Stress Testings kommt dem pragmatischen Ansatz von Familienunternehmen entgegen.
- Die Elemente des hier empfohlenen Business Model Canvas decken sich fast

gänzlich mit den Elementen, die Familienunternehmen als relevant ansehen und in der Regel bei Entscheidungen nutzen.

Anzumerken ist, dass die befragten Familienunternehmen neben dieser inhaltlichen Analyse auch eine finanzielle Überprüfung, bspw. in Form von Deckungsbeitragsrechnungen, Break-even Analysen oder Investitionsrechnungen, als für die Entscheidung relevante Informationen ansehen. Generell kann festgehalten werden, dass Familienunternehmen sehr detailliert planen und bestrebt sind, die Komplexität der Entscheidungssituation mit pragmatischen Ansätzen zu reduzieren.

Resümee

In den Ergebnissen der Marktforschung ist eine deutliche Tendenz dahingehend zu erkennen, dass die Familienunternehmen selten bis kaum spezifische Modelle, Instrumente, Systeme oder Verfahren nutzen, um technologische Entwicklungen zu orten und deren Auswirkungen auf das eigene Geschäftsmodell zu erarbeiten. Vielmehr wird eine sehr pragmatische Herangehensweise praktiziert, um diese Aufgabenstellung zu lösen. Sicherlich kommt es darauf an, welcher Typus von Projekt und welche Art von Technologie dahintersteht. Aber unabhängig davon werden technologische Entwicklungen gerne pragmatisch und situationsspezifisch behandelt. „Trial and Error“ erfreut sich bei der Mehrheit der Familienunternehmen an Beliebtheit. Hausverstand, logisches Denken und Erfahrungen aus der Vergangenheit bilden das Fundament für diesbezügliche Entscheidungen. „Einen Block und einen Stift in die Hand zu nehmen und ein Konzeptpapier mit Hausverstand zu gestalten“, ist in diesem Zusammenhang von mehreren Interviewpartnern erwähnt worden. Bemerkenswert ist auch, dass die technischen Entwicklungen im Team besprochen werden, was die zentrale Stellung der Mitarbeiter in einem Familienunternehmen hervorhebt.

Des Weiteren sind zwei Erkenntnisse besonders hervorzuheben:

- Die engen Beziehungen mit den Beratern, aber vor allem mit den eigenen Kunden führen sehr oft dazu, dass Technologiesprünge nur dann im Geschäftsmodell Berücksichtigung finden, wenn Sie empfohlen oder von den Kunden direkt gefordert werden.
- Einige Familienunternehmen evaluieren ihre Entscheidung, ob der Technologiesprung in ihrer Organisation Eingang findet, auf Basis sorgfältiger Kalkulationen und damit auf Basis von rationalen Investitionsmethoden.

Erwähnenswert auch deswegen, weil die Verknüpfung mit den Erkenntnissen von Christensen, dem Autor von „The Innovator’s Dilemma“, ein gewisses Gefahrenpotenzial deutlich macht: Erfolgreiche Unternehmen investieren viel Geld in Technologien, mit denen sie derzeitige Kunden halten können, versäumen aber zugleich in Technologien zu investieren, die Kunden von morgen verlangen werden (vgl. Bo-

wer/Christensen 2008, S. 126–127). Und rationale Investitionsmethoden machen es fast unmöglich, dass die Ressourcen, die für Produktpflege und damit für die Befriedigung bekannter Kundenbedürfnisse in bestehenden Märkten eingesetzt werden, auf Kunden in kleinen oder neu entstehenden Märkten umzulenken (vgl. Bower/Christensen 2008, S. 129). Der technische Wandel bringt meistens ein anderes Bündel an Leistungsmerkmalen hervor, dass die bestehenden Kunden zumeist anfangs noch nicht schätzt, aber in einer Nische durchaus positiv aufgenommen wird. Die Leistungsmerkmale verbessern sich aber derart rasch, „dass die neue Technik etablierte Märkte auch später erobern kann. Wenn der Moment kommt, wo auch normale Kunden diese Technik wollen, ist es für die etablierten Produzenten zu spät: Die Pioniere der neuen Technik beherrschen bereits den Markt“ (Bower/Christensen 2008, S. 129).

Interessant ist auch die Erkenntnis, dass ein Großteil der GesprächspartnerInnen die praktizierte Herangehensweise mit der Tatsache, dass sie ein Familienunternehmen sind, begründen. Als EigentümerIn tragen sie bei hohen Investitionen das unternehmerische Risiko, sie tragen aber auch die Verantwortung für die eigene Familie. So fundamentale Themen wie diese nehmen zu Hause ihren Raum ein und werden im Kreis der Familie besprochen bzw. auch kritisch hinterfragt. Das in den Entscheidungsprozess eingebrachte Involvement der Familie ist hoch, denn sie hat über Generationen hinweg stetig ihren Beitrag dazu eingebracht, das Unternehmen dorthin zu bringen, wo es gegenwärtig steht. Ein Grund, warum für einige Personen mögliche radikale Änderungen des eingeschlagenen Pfades grundsätzlich undenkbar werden. Zudem schätzen einige der befragten GeschäftsführerInnen ihre eigene Organisation als flexibler ein als die von Nicht-Familienunternehmen und setzen bei ihren Entscheidungen gerne auf das Bauchgefühl und die Erfahrungen.

Da sich diese Arbeit auf den Analyseteil des Vorgehens fokussiert, wird ein Forschungsbedarf in der Aufarbeitung der restlichen Prozessschritte gesehen. Des Weiteren ist zu empfehlen, eine digitale Lösung für den Gesamtprozess in Form einer Applikation zu entwickeln, die für Familienunternehmen systematisch anwendbar ist. Eine solche Lösung würde der Komplexität mit der notwendigen Diversität begreifen (vgl. Malik 2008, S. 180–185), indem es eine Datenbank mit Sammlungen technischer Entwicklungen sowie Methoden und Instrumenten liefert. Dies würde einem Familienunternehmen eine flexible und breit anwendbare Lösung für dieses komplexe Thema liefern und schrittweise durch die Thematik führen.

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UNTERNEHMERFAMILIEN: Die Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen

Einleitung

Die gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung von Familienunternehmen in Österreich spiegelt sich in der großen Wirtschaftsleistung dieser Unternehmen wieder. 54 % aller Unternehmen in Österreich sind Familienunternehmen mit mindestens einem Mitarbeiter oder einer Mitarbeiterin, d. h. ohne die Berücksichtigung von Ein-Personen-Unternehmen. Insgesamt beschäftigen Österreichs Familienunternehmen 1,7 Millionen Menschen, was 67 % aller Beschäftigten in Österreich ausmacht. Im Jahr 2013 haben Österreichs Familienunternehmen 365 Milliarden Euro erwirtschaftet, was 58 % des Gesamtumsatzes aller Unternehmen Österreichs repräsentiert (vgl. Haushofer 2013, S. 3). Gesamt gesehen sind Österreichs Familienunternehmen der größte Arbeitgeber und einer der wichtigsten Wachstumstreiber der Wirtschaft. Folglich sind der langfristige Erfolg und das Wachstum von Familienunternehmen in Österreich von entscheidender Bedeutung für den ökonomischen Wohlstand des Landes (vgl. Doerflinger et al. 2013, S. 2).

Die Universität St. Gallen hat im Rahmen einer Studie herausgefunden, dass die Familie hinter dem Familienunternehmen einen signifikanten Einfluss auf den langfristigen Erfolg des Unternehmens über Generationen hinweg hat (vgl. Sieger/Zellweger 2012, S. 12). Prozesse im Unternehmen etwa sind sehr eng verknüpft mit den Prozessen und Verhaltensweisen innerhalb der Familie (vgl. Meyer 2007, S. 12). Als Schlüsselaktoren für den langfristigen Erfolg wurden u. a. die unternehmerische Ausrichtung der Familie und deren zukünftige Generationen identifiziert (vgl. Sieger/Zellweger 2012, S. 36).

Unter der Berücksichtigung der ökonomischen Gesamtbedeutung des langfristigen Erfolgs und des signifikanten Einflusses der Familie auf diesen Erfolg, beschäftigt sich diese Arbeit mit der zentralen Fragestellung, ob diese unternehmerische Orientierung bzw. das Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg gefördert werden kann. Anknüpfend an die Beantwortung dieser Ausgangsfrage hat diese Arbeit auch zum Ziel, Schlüsselmethoden zu identifizieren, die von Familien eingesetzt werden, um das Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg zu fördern.

Familienunternehmen in Österreich

Familienunternehmen unterscheiden sich gegenüber anderen Unternehmen vor allem in der Eigentumsstruktur und in der internen Firmenorganisation. Die Interaktion zwischen Familie und Unternehmen ist besonders (vgl. Doerflinger et al. 2013, S. 1).

Insgesamt gibt es drei Kriterien, die die Art der Familienbeteiligung beeinflussen:

1. Eine oder mehrere Personen der Familie besitzen Firmenanteile.
2. Eine oder mehrere Personen der Familie sind in einer Position, die das Firmengeschehen signifikant beeinflussen kann.
3. Mehrere Familienmitglieder sind in Positionen mit hoher Verantwortlichkeit und die Familie ist vertraglich gebunden, das Unternehmen zu führen (vgl. Baumgartner 2009, S. 19).

Diese drei Kriterien führen zu vier möglichen organisatorischen Kombinationen wie in Abbildung 1 grafisch veranschaulicht wird.

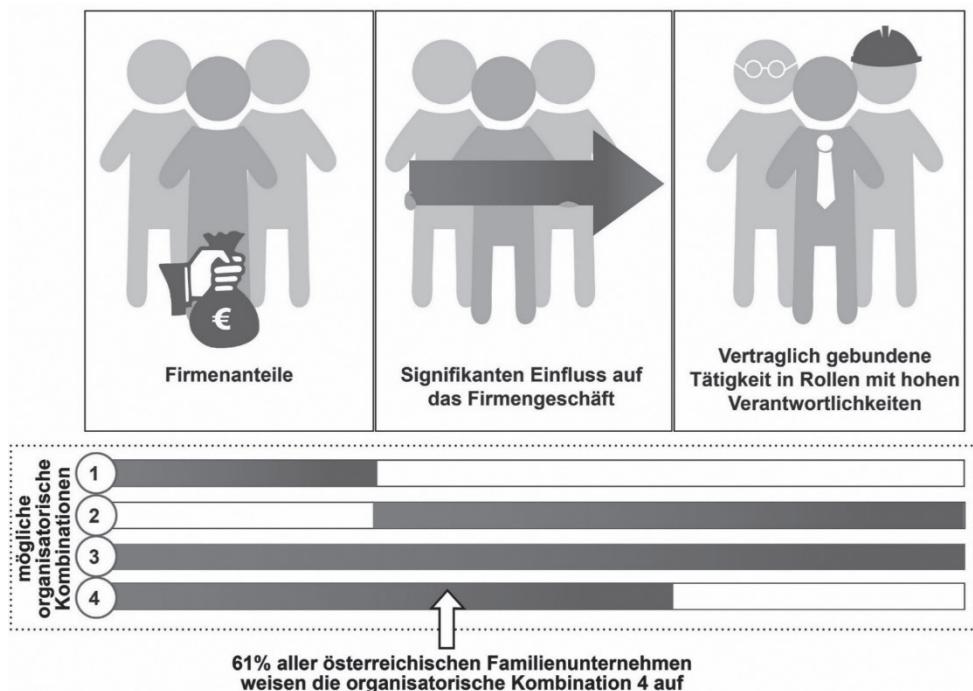


Abbildung 1: Mögliche firmenorganisatorische Kombinationen in Familienunternehmen (in Anlehnung an Baumgartner 2009, p. 19; Doerflinger et al. 2013, S. 3; Klein 2010, S. 2–4)

Langfristigkeit und das Denken in Generationen ist ein zusätzlicher signifikanter Unterschied zu Nicht-Familienunternehmen (vgl. Meyer 2007, S. 33). 43 % aller Familienunternehmen in Österreich sind älter als 30 und 36% älter als 50 Jahre. Insgesamt sind lediglich 20 % aller österreichischen Familienunternehmen jünger als 10 Jahre (vgl. Doerflinger et al. 2013, S. 51–52). Abbildung 2 fasst die Generationen und Gesamtaltersstruktur der Familienunternehmen zusammen.

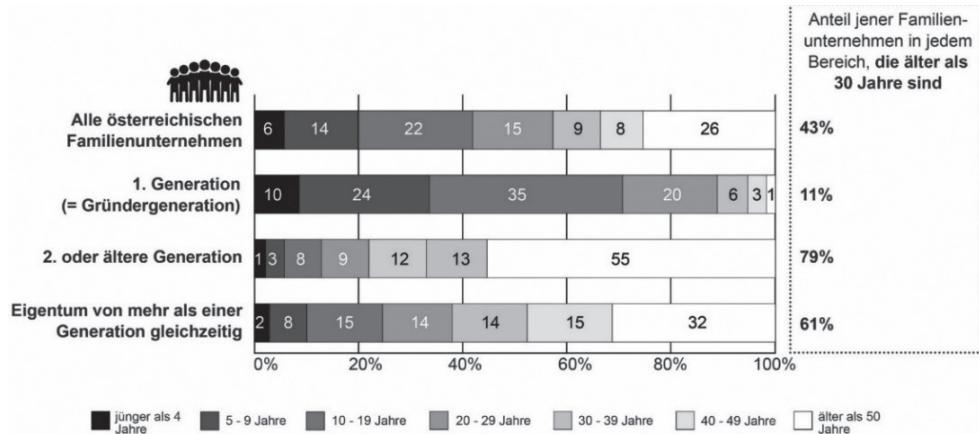


Abbildung 2: Alter und Generation von Österreichs Familienunternehmen (in Anlehnung an Doerflinger et al. 2013, S. 52)

Insgesamt sind Österreichs Familienunternehmen primär über sechs Branchen verteilt wie in Tabelle 1 dargestellt.

	Anzahl der Familienbetriebe	% von allen Familienbetrieben	% der Familienbetriebe innerhalb jeder Branche	Anzahl der Mitarbeiter in Familienbetrieben	% der Mitarbeiter innerhalb jeder Branche	Umsatz von Familienbetrieben (in Mio. €)	% des Gesamtumsatzes innerhalb jeder Branche
Produktion	17.600	11%	59%	469.400	72%	127.100	67%
Bauindustrie	19.700	13%	63%	191.900	70%	25.600	64%
Handel	41.100	26%	56%	426.500	71%	134.900	63%
Tourismus	32.700	21%	74%	210.500	80%	11.500	78%
Wirtschaftsservices	18.000	12%	32%	130.100	57%	23.300	64%
Andere Services	27.300	17%	52%	305.200	53%	42.400	32%
Alle Familienbetriebe in Österreich	156.400	100%	54%	1.733.600	67%	364.800	58%

Tabelle 1: Branchenübersicht der österreichischen Familienunternehmen (in Anlehnung an Haushofer 2013, S. 6; Doerflinger et al. 2013, S. 3, 36)

Zur Branche „Wirtschaftsservices“ zählen beispielsweise Beratungs-, IT- oder Werbeunternehmen und zur Branche „Andere Services“ beispielsweise Versicherungen, Finanz-, Transport- oder Lageranbieter.

Primärmarktforschung

Zur Beantwortung der zentralen Fragestellungen, ob und wie Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg gefördert werden kann, wurden insgesamt fünf Forschungsfragen sowie fünf Hypothesen für die Primärmarktforschung definiert, welche in Tabelle 2 aufgezeigt werden.

Forschungsfragen (F)	Hypothesen (H)
F1: Wie beschreiben österreichische Unternehmerfamilien das Unternehmertum?	H1: Österreichische Unternehmerfamilien fördern das Unternehmertum über Generationen.
F2: Fördern österreichische Unternehmerfamilien das Unternehmertum über Generationen?	H2: Das Hauptziel der Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg ist die zukünftige Übernahme des Familienunternehmens durch ein Familienmitglied der nächsten Generation.
F3: Wie fördern österreichische Unternehmerfamilien das Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg?	H3: Die Förderung von Unternehmertum wird von österreichischen Unternehmerfamilien als wesentlicher Faktor für den langfristigen Erfolg des Familienunternehmens über Generationen hinweg gesehen.
F4: Was sind die Kernziele hinter der Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg?	H4: Österreichische Unternehmerfamilien wenden gebräuchliche, aus der Literatur bekannte Methoden an, um das Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg zu fördern.
F5: Welche Dimensionen von Unternehmertum sind für österreichische Unternehmerfamilien in den jeweiligen Industrien am wichtigsten?	H5: Bezugnehmend auf die sechs Dimensionen von Unternehmertum, benötigen unterschiedliche Industrien unterschiedliche Schwerpunkte.

Tabelle 2: Forschungsfragen und Hypothesen zur Primärmarktforschung (eigene Darstellung)

Im Rahmen der Primärforschung wurden qualitative, persönliche Interviews mit Familienmitgliedern durchgeführt, die eine strategisch wichtige Position in Ihrem Familienunternehmen innehaben. Insgesamt haben anhand eines qualitativen Stichprobenplans unter der Berücksichtigung der beiden Kriterien „Branche“ und „Generation des Familienunternehmens“ 19 österreichische Unternehmerfamilien teilgenommen. Alle im Stichprobenplan inkludierte Familienunternehmen waren schon über mindestens drei Generationen lang erfolgreich am Markt sind aus sechs verschiedenen Branchen wie in Tabelle 3 aufgelistet.

Branche	Familienbetrieb	Mitarbeiteranzahl (ca.)	Gründungs-jahr	Generation	Website
Produktion (11%)	Einrichtungshaus & Tischlerei Knittelfelder eU	15	1939	3.	www.knittelfelder.at
	Josef Göbel GmbH	300	1874	5.	www.josefgoebel.at
Bauindustrie (13%)	Kovac Management GmbH	70	1967	3.	www.kovac-immobilien.com
	Lieb Bau Weiz GmbH & Co KG	1.000	1931	3.	www.liebbauweiz.at
	Schotter- und Betonwerk Strobl GmbH & Strobl Asphalt und Tiefbau GmbH	130	1930	4.	www.strobl-schotter.at
Handel (26%)	Hermann Weikhard Juwelier & Uhrenhaus GmbH & Co KG	60	1680	10.	www.weikhard.at
	Reisinger GesmbH	320	1878	4.	www.reisinger-bauen.at
	Franz Gady GmbH	300	1936	3.	www.gady.at
	Landmaschinen Gaugl GmbH & Co KG	17	1628	12.	www.gaugl-landmaschinen.at
	Bartelt GmbH	60	1936	3.	www.bartelt.at
Tourismus (21%)	Romantik Hotel GMACHL Elixhausen GmbH & Co KG	80	1334	23.	www.gmachl.com
	Weitzer Hotels Betriebsges.m.b.H	320	1910	4.	www.weitzer.com
	Pierer Gastronomie GmbH	115	1893	4.	www.hotel-pierer.at
	Posthotel Thaller – Genusshotel im Apfeldorf OG	25	1875	5.	www.posthotel-thaller.at
Wirtschafts - services (12%)	Wurzer Solutions GmbH	15	1906	4.	www.wurzer-solutions.at
	Bestattung Koller-Adlmann OG	10	1887	6.	www.bestattung-weiz.at/
Andere Services (17%)	Baader Johannes GesmbH	10	1895	5.	www.gebaudereinigung-baader.at
	Stradner Reise GmbH	5	1928	4.	www.stradner-reise.at
	Freismuth Oliver Transporte eU	5	1957	3.	www.freismuth.at

Tabelle 3: Familienunternehmen (19), die an der Primärstudie teilgenommen haben (eigene Darstellung)

Im Durchschnitt sind die befragten Familienunternehmen bereits in der 5,7. Generation, wobei der Median 4 beträgt, was darauf zurückzuführen ist, dass drei Familienunternehmen bereits in der 10. Generation oder noch als Familienunternehmen geführt werden und den Durchschnitt somit erheblich beeinflussen. Die Familienunternehmen der Primärmarktforschung sind zudem im Schnitt 160 Jahre alt, mit einem Median von 111 Jahren. Das älteste befragte Unternehmen ist bereits 683 Jahre, das zweitälteste 389 Jahre und das drittälteste 337 Jahre alt. Im Durchschnitt beschäftigen die befragten Unternehmen 150 Mitarbeiter, wobei auch hier der Median mit 60 aufgrund der großen Bandbreite deutlich unter dem Durchschnitt liegt.

Spontanassoziationen mit Unternehmertum

Die befragten Familienmitglieder assoziieren mit dem Begriff „Unternehmertum“ vor allem Verantwortung, Unabhängigkeit, Mitarbeiter, Gesellschaft, Familie, Generationsdenken, Entscheidungen zu treffen sowie, dass die Rolle des Unternehmers 24 Stunden am Tag und 7 Tage die Woche einzunehmen ist. Abbildung 3 zeigt eine Zusammenfassung der Antworten, gruppiert in eher positiven, neutralen und negativen Assoziationen.

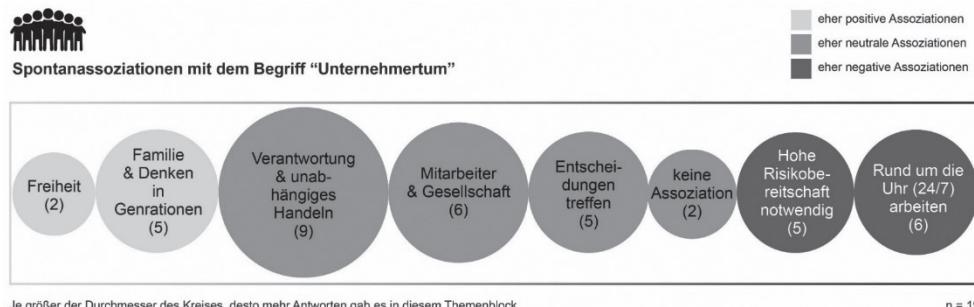


Abbildung 3: Spontanassoziationen mit dem Begriff „Unternehmertum“ (eigene Darstellung)

Die Zahlen innerhalb der Klammern beschreiben die Anzahl der Assoziationen in der jeweiligen Antwortgruppe.

Dimensionen von Unternehmertum in Familienunternehmen

Die unternehmerische Ausrichtung wird als organisatorische Qualität gesehen, welche durch verhaltensorientierte Dimensionen beschrieben wird (vgl. Martens et al. 2016, S. 557).

Basierend auf Miller, Lumpkin/Dess und Morris/Paul, kann Unternehmertum durch folgende Dimensionen beschrieben werden:

- Innovation
- Risikotoleranz
- Autonomie
- Proaktivität, insbesondere eine zukunftsorientierte Perspektive
- Aggressives Konkurrenzverhalten

(vgl. Morris/Paul 1987, S. 251; Lumpkin/Dess 1996, S. 136–138; Miller 1983, S. 771).

Die permanente Involvierung der Familie in das Unternehmensgeschehen führt zu einer exogenen Dynamik in Unternehmerfamilien. Aus diesem Grund gibt es kaum eine Unternehmensentwicklung ohne Familienentwicklung, was zu einer bemerkenswerten und besonders wichtigen, zusätzlichen Dimension in Familienunternehmen führt, die Tradition (vgl. Baumgartner 2009, S. 23–24). Abbildung 4 fasst die insgesamt sechs Dimensionen von Unternehmertum in Familienunternehmen und die Beziehung dieser untereinander zusammen.

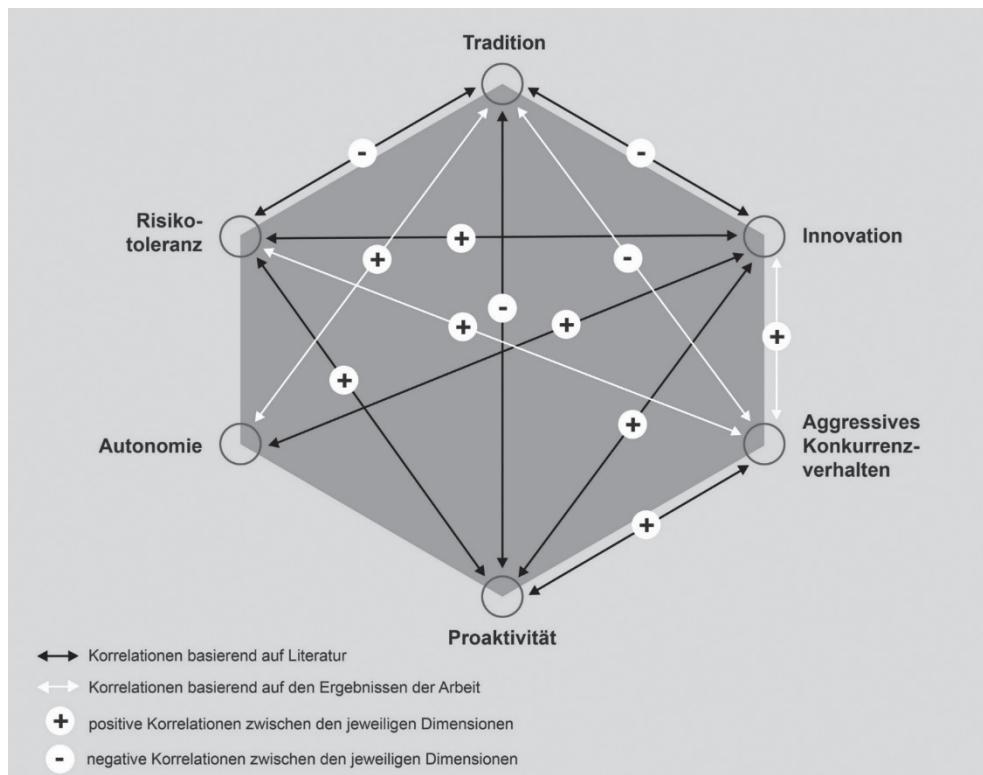


Abbildung 4: Dimensionen von Unternehmertum in Familienunternehmen und die Korrelationen dieser untereinander (in Anlehnung an Bateman/Crant 1999, S. 67, 69; Baumgartner 2009, S. 26, 28; Hülsbeck et al. 2012, S. 77–78; Hisrich/Antoncic 2003, S. 18; Antoncic/Hisrich 2001, S. 495–500; Kammerlander/Mühl/Rieg/Röhm 2016, S. 8; Naldi et al. 2007, S. 33–35; Knight 1997, S. 214; Zellweger/Sieger/Englisch 2012, S.16)

In der Befragung wurden die Probanden gebeten, die sechs Dimensionen anhand der Wichtigkeit dieser für ihr eigenes Unternehmen und für ihre Branche zu reihen. Insgesamt wurde erhoben, dass Innovation, Proaktivität und Tradition als die drei wichtigsten Dimensionen gesehen werden. Tabelle 4 fasst die Ergebnisse in den jeweiligen Branchen sowie die Gesamtergebnisse zusammen.

	Produktion	Bauindustrie	Handel	Tourismus	Wirtschaftsservices	Andere Services	Gesamt
Tradition	3	2	1	4	3	2	3
Innovation	1	4	2	1	4	3	1
Aggressives Konkurrenzverhalten	6	6	6	6	6	4	6
Proaktivität	5	1	3	2	1	6	2
Autonomie	2	5	4	3	2	5	4
Risikotoleranz	4	3	5	5	5	1	5

Tabelle 4: Reihung der sechs Dimensionen von Unternehmertum in Familienunternehmen je Industrie und gesamt (eigene Darstellung)

Ein aggressives Konkurrenzverhalten wurde in fast allen Industrien als die am wenigsten wichtige Dimension gereiht.

Förderung von Unternehmertum in Familienunternehmen

Insgesamt sind 17 der 19 Probanden der Meinung, dass Unternehmertum innerhalb der Familie über Generationen hinweg gefördert werden kann. Aus der Sicht von zwei Personen kann das Unternehmertum nicht gefördert werden.

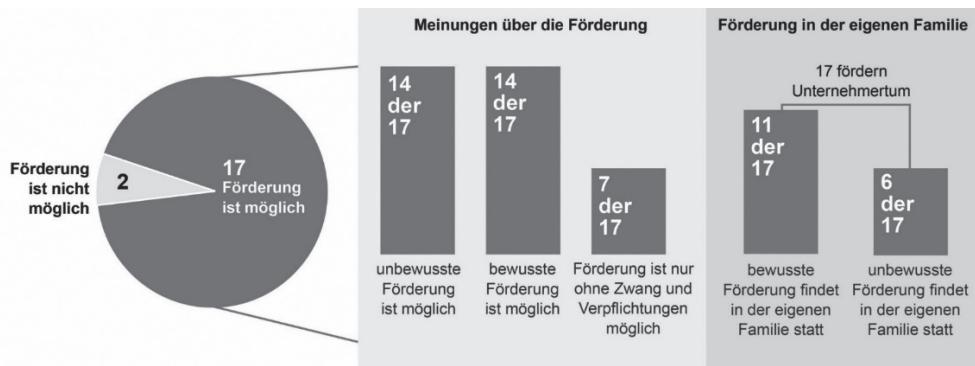


Abbildung 5: Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen (eigene Darstellung)

Von den oben genannten 17 Probanden halten 7 Personen eine Förderung nur dann für sinnvoll, wenn kein Zwang besteht. Für einen weiteren Probanden ist vor allem das Interesse für das Familienunternehmen ein entscheidendes Kriterium.

Ziele der Förderung

Insgesamt haben 17 Probanden angegeben, dass Unternehmertum in Ihrer Unternehmerfamilie bewusst oder unbewusst gefördert wird. Als Grund für die Förderung von Unternehmertum werden vor allem folgende genannt (die Werte in der Klammer beschreiben wieder die Anzahl der Gründe innerhalb der jeweiligen Antwortgruppe):

- die Übernahme des Unternehmens durch ein Familienmitglied (13)
- der nächsten Generation eine gute Zukunft bieten (5)
- etwas hinterlassen (3)
- Werterhalt des Unternehmens (2)

Zudem sind 11 der 17 Probanden, in deren Familien das Unternehmertum bewusst oder unbewusst gefördert wird, der Meinung, dass diese Förderung ein wichtiger Erfolgsfaktor für den langfristigen Erfolg des Familienunternehmens darstellt.

Methoden und Techniken zur Förderung von Unternehmertum in Familienunternehmen

Auf Basis eines Literaturstudiums wurden fünf Methoden zur Förderung von Unternehmertum ausgewählt und diese dahingehend geprüft, ob sie die Dimensionen von Unternehmertum fördern. Die Tabelle 5 fasst die Ergebnisse zusammen.

Dimensionen des Unternehmertums ↓	Methoden zur Förderung von Unternehmertum				
	3-3-3 Framework	Der unternehmerischer Prozess	Familienunternehmensvision	Wanderjahre	Design-Thinking
Tradition					
Innovation					
Risikotoleranz					
Autonomie					
Proaktivität					
Aggressives Konkurrenzverhalten					

Tabelle 5: Methoden zur Förderung der Dimensionen von Unternehmertum (in Anlehnung an Sun 2011, S. 159–166; Heinonen/Poikkijoki 2006, S. 80.94; Hinterhuber 2015, S. 85–95; Baumgartner 2009, S. 61–67; Duval-Couetil/Dyrenfurth 2012, S. 146)

Des Weiteren wurden diesen fünf Förderungsmethoden nachfolgende acht konkrete Förderungstechniken zugeordnet:

1. **3-3-3 Framework:** Malen und Schreiben in der Kindheit fördern
2. **3-3-3 Framework:** frühe Praxiserfahrung und ein „Mithelfen“ im eigenen Familienunternehmen
3. **Unternehmerischer Prozess:** virtuelle Projekte, um die nächste Generation auf die „reale Unternehmenssituation“ vorzubereiten
4. **Familienunternehmensvision:** frühe Information über die Vision des Familienunternehmens und Involvierung in deren Entwicklung
5. **Familienunternehmensvision:** Unternehmensgeschichten von älteren Familienmitgliedern oder pensionierten Mitarbeitern
6. **Strategische Wanderjahre:** Arbeitserfahrung in anderen Unternehmen vor dem Einstieg in das eigene Familienunternehmen
7. **Strategische Wanderjahre:** Auslandserfahrung
8. **Design-Thinking:** Reise durch das Familienunternehmen aus Sicht des Kunden anhand der Erstellung eines Kunden-Mappings und die Definition sowie Reihung der Wichtigkeit der Berührungspunkte (Touchpoints)

Tabelle 6 zeigt die Reihung der Wichtigkeit aller acht Techniken zur Förderung von Unternehmertum aus Sicht der Probanden.

	Produktion	Bauin-dustrie	Handel	Touris-mus	Wirtschafts-services	Andere Services	Gesamt
3-3-3 Framework: Malen & Schreiben	8	8	5	6	8	8	8
3-3-3 Framework: Frühe Praxiserfahrung	2	1	2	4	1	3	1
Unternehmerischer Prozess: Virtuelle Projekte	4	7	6	7	7	5	6
Familienunternehmensvision: Frühe Information über und Involvierung in die Erstellung	1	2	3	2	4	1	2
Familienunternehmensvision: Unternehmensgeschichten	3	6	8	8	3	8	7
Strategische Wanderjahre: Arbeitserfahrung in anderen Firmen	6	3	1	1	2	2	3
Strategische Wanderjahre: Auslandserfahrung	7	5	4	3	5	6	4
Design-Thinking: Kundenreise	5	4	7	5	6	7	5

Tabelle 6: Reihung der acht theoretischen Techniken zur Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen in Unternehmerfamilien je Branche durch die Probanden (eigene Darstellung)

Abbildung 6 zeigt in absteigender Reihenfolge, welche der acht Methoden tatsächlich von den befragten Unternehmerfamilien angewendet werden.

Anwendung der acht Techniken in den Unternehmerfamilien der Primärforschung

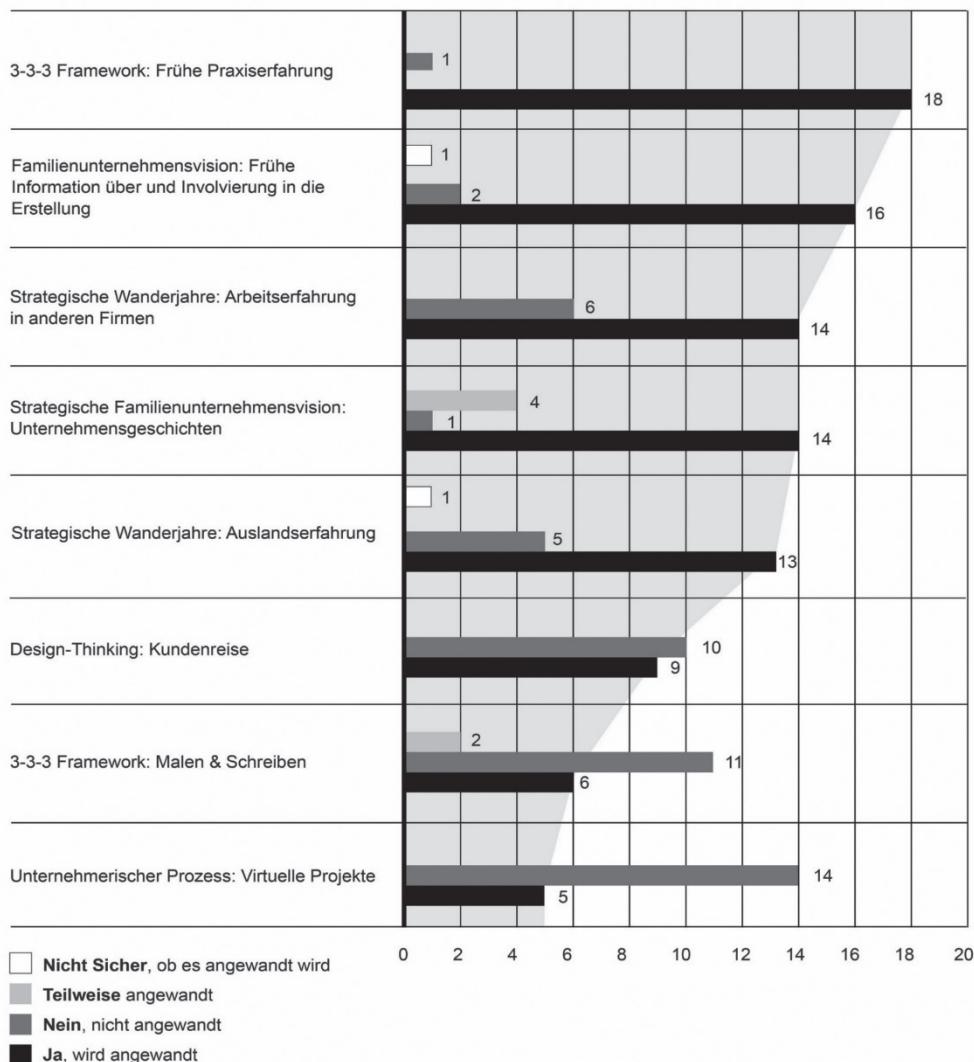


Abbildung 6: Anwendung der acht theoretischen Techniken zur Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen in Unternehmerfamilien (eigene Darstellung)

Zusätzlich zu den acht Förderungstechniken aus der Theorie wurden von den Probanden spontan auch folgende vier Techniken zur Förderung genannt:

- Vorteile des Unternehmertums und Unternehmerseins aufzeigen
- der nächsten Generation die freie Wahl geben

- Förderung außerhalb der Familie im Rahmen von Ausbildungen und Kurse (z. B. Unternehmerkurs)
- strukturierter Übergabeplan

Die Tabelle 7 fasst alle von den Unternehmerfamilien der Probanden angewandten Förderungstechniken aus der Theorie und den Spontanantworten der Probanden in Kombination mit den sechs Dimensionen von Unternehmertum zusammen.

Anzahl der Unternehmer-familien, die dieser Technik anwenden	Methoden zur Förderung von Unternehmertum	6 Dimensionen von Unternehmertum in Familienunternehmen ↓					
		Tradition	Innovation	Risiko-toleranz	Autonomie	Proaktivität	Aggressives Konkurrenz-verhalten
18	3-3-3 Framework: Frühe Praxis-erfahrung						
16	Strategische Familienunter-nehmensvision: Frühe Information über und Involviering in die Vision						
14							
14	Strategische Wanderjahre: Arbeitserfahrung in anderen Firmen						
13	Strategische Wanderjahre: Auslandserfahrung						
9	Design-Thinking: Kundenreise						
6	3-3-3 Framework: Malen & Schreiben						
5	Unternehmerischer Prozess: Virtuelle Projekte						
Zusätzliche Methoden zur Förderung von Unternehmertum: Spontanassoziationen der Probanden							
11	Vorteile des Unternehmertums aufzeigen						
6	Der nächsten Generation die freie Wahl geben						
2	Förderung außerhalb der Familie im Rahmen von Ausbildungen und Kursen						
2	Strukturierter Übergabeplan						

Tabelle 7: Zusammenfassung der von den Unternehmerfamilien der Probanden angewandten Förderungstechniken (eigene Darstellung)

Die Zahl in der linken Spalte gibt einen Überblick darüber, wie viele der in der Studie inkludierten 19 Unternehmerfamilien die jeweilige Technik zur Förderung von Unternehmertum anwenden.

Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen und Hypothesen

Insgesamt verifiziert die Primärforschung mit einer Tendenz alle fünf Hypothesen wie in Tabelle 8 zusammengefasst.

Hypothesen (H)	Verifikation mit einer Tendenz
H1: Österreichische Unternehmerfamilien fördern das Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg.	17 der 19 Probanden fördern Unternehmertum bewusst oder unbewusst.
H2: Das Hauptziel der Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg ist die zukünftige Übernahme des Familienunternehmens durch ein Familienmitglied der nächsten Generation.	13 der 19 Probanden haben gesagt, dass das Hauptziel der Förderung von Unternehmertum die zukünftige Übernahme des Unternehmens durch ein Familienmitglied ist.
H3: Die Förderung von Unternehmertum wird von österreichischen Unternehmerfamilien als wesentlicher Faktor für den langfristigen Erfolg des Familienunternehmens über Generationen hinweg gesehen.	11 jener 17 Probanden, die Unternehmertum bewusst oder unbewusst fördern, denken, dass die Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen definitiv ein Erfolgsfaktor für den langfristigen Erfolg des Unternehmens ist.
H4: Österreichische Unternehmerfamilien wenden gebräuchliche, aus der Literatur bekannte Methoden an, um das Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg zu fördern.	Mehr als sechs der acht aus der Theorie heraus beschriebenen Förderungstechniken werden von mind. 9 (mehr als 50%) in den in der Primärforschung teilnehmenden Unternehmerfamilien angewendet.
H5: Bezugnehmend auf die sechs Dimensionen von Unternehmertum, benötigen unterschiedliche Industrien unterschiedliche Schwerpunkte.	Jede Branche hat ein unterschiedliches Wichtigkeitsranking in Bezug auf die Dimensionen von Unternehmertum.

Tabelle 8: Zusammenfassung der Verifikation der Hypothesen basierend auf der Primärmarktforschung (eigene Darstellung)

Um eine klare Verifikation oder Falsifikation zu bestätigen, wird vom Autor eine größere Stichprobe empfohlen.

Abbildungen 7a und 7b geben einen Überblick über die Beantwortung aller Forschungsfragen.

Primärmarktforschungsergebnisse – Zusammenfassung

Die Förderung von Unternehmen über Generationen

Forschungsfrage 1:

Wie beschreiben österreichische Familienunternehmen Unternehmertum?

Top 6 Spontanassoziationen:



Forschungsfrage 5:

Welche Dimensionen von Unternehmertum sind für österreichische Unternehmensfamilien in den jeweiligen Industrien am wichtigsten?

Meinungen über die 6 Dimensionen:

13 der 19 Probanden stimmen dieser Definition aus der Theorie zu



Top 3 Dimensionen in jeder Branche:

	1	2	3
Produktion	Innovation	Autonomie	Tradition
Bauindustrie	Proaktivität	Tradition	Risiko-toleranz
Handel	Tradition	Innovation	Proaktivität
Tourismus	Innovation	Proaktivität	Autonomie
Wirtschaftsservices	Proaktivität	Autonomie	Tradition
Andere Services	Risiko-toleranz	Tradition	Innovation
GESAMT	Innovation	Proaktivität	Tradition

Forschungsfrage 2:

Fördern österreichische Unternehmerfamilien Unternehmertum über Generationen?

Förderung von Unternehmertum:



17 der 19 Probanden gaben an Unternehmertum über Generationen bewusst oder unbewusst zu fördern

Forschungsfrage 4:

Was sind die Kernziele hinter der Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen?

3 Hauptziele der Förderung von Unternehmertum:

13

Übernahme des Unternehmens von einem Familienmitglied

5

Der nächsten Generation eine gute Zukunft bieten

3

Etwas hinterlassen

Abbildung 7a: Beantwortung der fünf Forschungsfragen (eigene Darstellung)

Primärmarktforschungs-Ergebnisse - Zusammenfassung

Forschungsfrage 3:

Wie fördern österreichische Familienunternehmen Unternehmertum über Generationen?

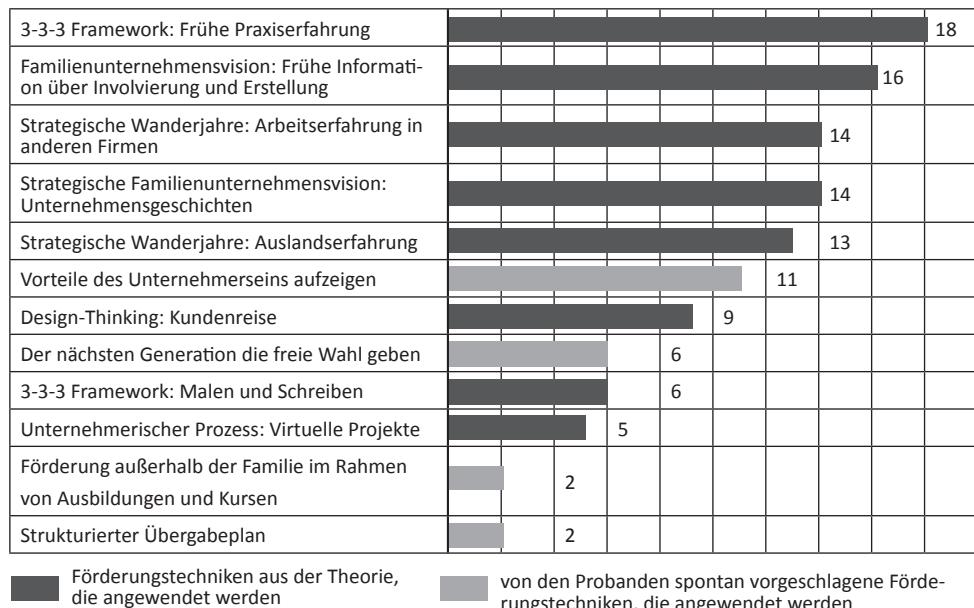


Abbildung 7b: Beantwortung der fünf Forschungsfragen (eigene Darstellung)

PREOG-Modell

Auf Basis des Literaturstudiums und der Ergebnisse der Primärforschung wurde das PREOG-Modell (Promotion of Entrepreneurship Over Generations) entwickelt, welches alle angewandten Techniken zur Förderung von Unternehmertum zusammenfasst (Abbildung 8). Jede im Modell genannte Förderungstechnik wird von mindestens acht der 19 Familien angewendet.

Insgesamt ist das Modell als Empfehlung von Techniken zur Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen zu sehen.

Resümee

Österreichische Familienunternehmen tragen mit ihren Leistungen wesentlich zur Entwicklung der heimischen Wirtschaft bei. Diese Arbeit möchte einen Beitrag dazu leisten, die Unternehmerfamilien in ihrem Bestreben zu unterstützen, das Familienunternehmen von Generation zu Generation weiterzugeben. Mit dem PREOG-Modell soll eine Möglichkeit aufgezeigt werden, wie Unternehmerfamilien das so wichtige Unternehmertum über Generationen hinweg fördern können. Es zeigt auf,

PREG Model - PRomotion of Entrepreneurship Over Generations

Förderungsvorschläge basierend auf den Ergebnissen der Interviews

Vorgeschlagene Methoden werden von mindestens

8 der 19 Interviewpartner innerhalb der
Familie angewendet

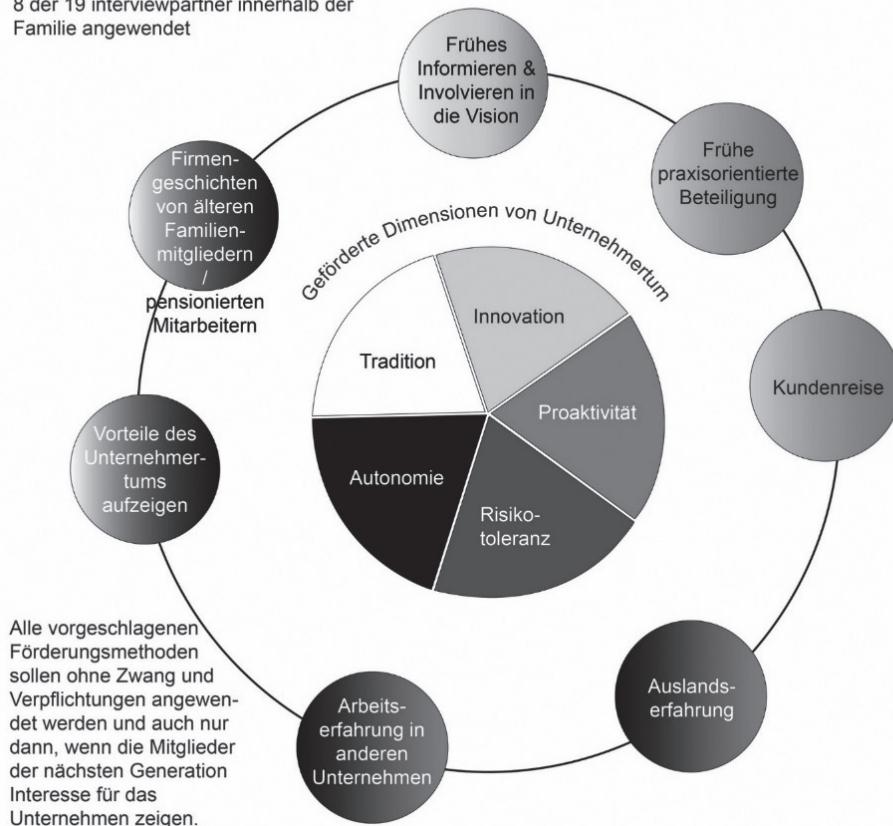


Abbildung 8: PREOG-Modell (eigene Darstellung)

was Unternehmerfamilien in der Praxis bereits dafür tun und soll außerdem dazu anregen, weitere Möglichkeiten in Betracht zu ziehen.

Die in dieser Arbeit durchgeführte qualitative Primärforschung beinhaltet eine Stichprobe von 19 Unternehmen aus sechs Branchen. Eine darauf aufbauende, quantitative Marktforschung kann auf Basis einer größeren Stichprobe zusätzliche Erkenntnisse bringen. Um das Modell zu verifizieren bzw. falsifizieren kann im Rahmen der quantitativen Marktforschung analysiert werden, welche im PREOG-Modell inkludierte Techniken tatsächlich von den Unternehmerfamilien verwendet werden. Auch eine Diskussion über das PREOG-Modell im Rahmen einer Gesprächsrunde, an der Familienmitglieder von Unternehmerfamilien teilnehmen, welche schon seit mindestens drei Generationen lang ein Unternehmen erfolgreich führen, kann der Weiterentwicklung dieses Modells dienen.

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Sales Management 2.0

Impulse für ein professionelles Vertriebsmanagement in Familienunternehmen

Einleitung

Das Vertriebsmanagement zählt zu den komplexesten Bereichen in Unternehmen und stellt gleichzeitig ein wesentliches Differenzierungsmerkmal zur Stärkung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit dar. Wie gelingt Vertriebsmanagement in Zeiten von einschneidenden Strukturumbrüchen und zunehmender Vielfalt? Der Beitrag zeigt, wie durch die Anwendung eines Komplexitätsreduzierenden Kategoriensystems mit entsprechender Kennzahleninterpretation auf Herausforderungen im Vertriebsmanagement wirkungsvoll eingegangen werden kann.

Vertriebsorganisationen als komplexe Unternehmensbereiche

Vertriebsorganisationen sehen sich mit gestiegener Komplexität und starken Veränderungen auf unterschiedlichsten Ebenen konfrontiert. Viele dieser Herausforderungen resultieren unter anderem aus einer erhöhten Beschleunigung integrierter Prozesse (Stichwort Automatisierung), grenzüberschreitender Vernetzung von Menschen und Märkten (Stichwort Globalisierung) oder ubiquitärer Verfügbarkeit von Informationen (Stichwort Digitalisierung) und können mit traditionellen Vertriebsmanagementansätzen nur unzureichend bewältigt werden.

Der Vertrieb in wirtschaftlichen Organisationen zählt zu den wichtigsten Funktionen an der Schnittstelle zwischen Unternehmen und Kunden. Eine Differenzierung über beispielsweise das Produkt selbst und dem dahinterstehenden Preis erscheint namentlich aufgrund der zunehmenden Austauschbarkeit von Produkten und Dienstleistungen nur mehr bedingt geeignet (vgl. Hofbauer, 2012, S. 22). Die Fülle von Instrumenten, Modellen und Formalismen, die sowohl im Rahmen der strategischen als auch in der operativen Planung einer Vertriebsorganisation Anwendung finden, führen jedoch oft zu Ergebnissen, die nicht zufriedenstellend sind, da sich Planung und Steuerung aller organisatorischen Maßnahmen vermehrt als wirkungslos und unzureichend erweisen (vgl. Backhausen, 2009, S. 3ff.). Der strukturelle Wandel am

Marktfeld vollzieht sich gegenwärtig nicht nur immer häufiger, sondern auch immer schneller, wodurch die Gestaltung einer Vertriebsorganisation sowie deren bewusste Steuerung zunehmend komplexer werden (vgl. Steinkellner, 2005, S. 22). Die Herausforderung besteht nun darin, einen Ansatz zu verfolgen, welcher es einer Vertriebsorganisation ermöglicht, Unsicherheiten zu reduzieren und eine Stabilisierung der geplanten Maßnahmen zu bewirken, um somit in adäquater Weise auf die sich stetig verändernden Marktverhältnisse reagieren zu können. Zu diesem Zweck wird ein Komplexitätsreduzierendes Kategoriensystem in Anlehnung an systemtheoretische Überlegungen mit entsprechenden Kennzahleninterpretationen vorgestellt und die derzeitige Sichtweise auf Vertriebskennzahlen sowie deren Informationsgehalt und Aussagekraft kritisch reflektiert.

Modellierung eines konzeptionellen Kategoriensystems

Im Wege der Modellierung eines Kategoriensystems zur Neuinterpretation von Kennzahlen werden systemtheoretische Überlegungen tradierten Ansätzen gegenübergestellt. Das Kategoriensystem lehnt sich an einem jeweils sechsteiligen semantischen Differential an, welches seine Gegensatzpaare einerseits in Anlehnung an **mechanistische Überlegungen** und andererseits an **systemtheoretische Zugänge** ausrichtet. Das Kategoriensystem soll es ermöglichen, einen Blick auf die Aussagekraft und den Informationsgehalt von Vertriebskennzahlen zu werfen bzw. soll durch dieses aufgezeigt werden, dass eine einmal festgelegte Definition einer Vertriebskennzahl zur Steuerung und „Navigation“ in einem **dynamischen Marktumfeld** durchaus hinterfragt werden kann.

Überlegungen zu Kennzahlen im Vertriebsmanagement sowie deren Einsatz

Bevor im weiteren Verlauf das Kategoriensystem einer ersten Anwendung zugeführt wird, sollen einige Überlegungen zu Kennzahlen im Vertriebsmanagement das Thema aufbereiten.

Moderne Vertriebsinstrumente setzen häufig Kennzahlen ein. Sei es als Informationssystem, zur Steuerung von Vertriebsorganisationen oder auch als Unterstützung bei strategischen Überlegungen. Durch den systematischen Kennzahleneinsatz und dahinterstehende Abweichungsanalysen soll es gelingen, auf die vertrieblichen Aktivitäten bewusst Einfluss zu nehmen. Es zeigt sich, dass Vertriebsorganisationen traditionell und überwiegend auf finanzwirtschaftliche (Leistungs-)Kennzahlen bzw. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) respektive möglichst objektiv messbare Größen setzen (vgl. Kaplan/Norton, 1997, S. 20). Dies wird damit begründet, dass Mitarbeiter im Vertrieb oftmals gezwungen sind, zwar beständige aber dennoch ausgezeichnete **kurzfristige, finanzwirtschaftliche Leistungen** zu erbringen, an welche entsprechende Performance- und Vergütungssysteme geknüpft sind.

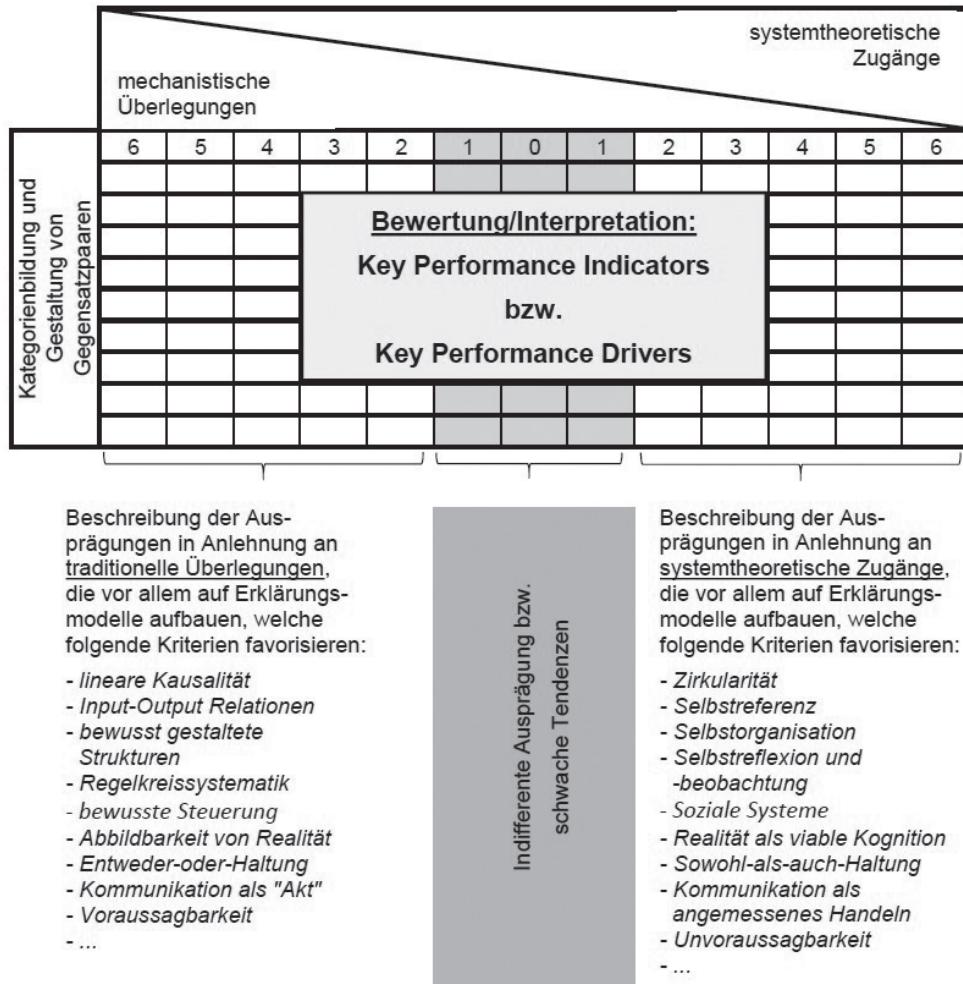


Abbildung 1: Kategoriensystem als semantisches Differential zur Kennzahleninterpretation (eigene Darstellung)

Häufig wird übersehen, dass sich ein modernes Managementinstrument nicht nur an Leistungskennzahlen, sondern auch an unterschiedlichen Key Performance Drivers (KPD) wie beispielsweise Zufriedenheitsindizes als „Enabler“ ausrichten sollte (vgl. Kaskey, 2013, S. 22). Mit Bedacht eingesetzt gibt ein solcher Mix aus KPIs und KPDs in verdichteter Form Informationen über quantifizierbare betriebliche Tatbestände wieder, wodurch ein Kennzahlensystem als wirkungsvolles Informationssystem Einsatz finden kann (vgl. Preißner, 2002, S. 45). Ziel sollte es sein, nicht nur auf **vergangenheitsorientierte Kennzahlen** zu fokussieren, sondern auch aussagekräftige Informationen über die Zukunft zu liefern, um künftige Entwicklungen antizipieren zu können (vgl. Pufahl, 2012, S. 102). Vordergründig gilt es, eine Ver-

triebsorganisation hinsichtlich der zu treffenden betriebswirtschaftlichen Entscheidungen sowie deren **Durchsetzung, Steuerung, Koordination und Kontrolle** mit Hilfe von Kennzahlensystemen zu unterstützen (vgl. Piontek, 2008, S. 201ff.) und auf Verhaltensmuster von Mitarbeiter Einfluss zu nehmen vgl. (Ewert/Wagenhofer, 2014, S. 513ff.).

In der Fachliteratur werden Kennzahlen häufig in Anlehnung an mechanistische Überlegungen beschrieben und für den Einsatz empfohlen. Zur Verdeutlichung werden die Kennzahlen Mitarbeiterzufriedenheit, Kundenkenntniswert und Angebotserfolgsquote aus einer Balanced Scorecard einer Vertriebsorganisation aus dem Sektor Anlagenbau näher beschrieben:

Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex: Bei dieser Kennzahl bedient man sich eines Vergleichsprozesses, bei dem ein Abwägen zwischen dem erwarteten und dem tatsächlich wahrgenommenen Arbeitsumfeld stattfindet. Der in der Literatur beschriebene Grundgedanke ist, dass eine hohe Mitarbeiterzufriedenheit bessere Arbeitsergebnisse erzielt und in weiterer Folge eine höhere Kundenzufriedenheit erreicht wird (vgl. Stock, 2003, S. 17). Für die jährliche Erfassung des Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex müssen im Vorfeld sämtliche relevanten Kriterien zur Messung festgelegt werden, um unter zweckmäßigem Einsatz von Punktebewertungsverfahren zur Indexbildung diese Kennzahl ausdrücken zu können. (vgl. Weber, 2006, S. 319).

Kundenkenntniswert: Dieser Wert drückt das Verhältnis der Anzahl der erfassten Kriterien pro Kunde zur Anzahl der verhaltensrelevanten Kriterien aus. Grundlage für diese Kennzahl bietet eine laufende Informationsbedarfsanalyse im Rahmen der Vertriebsarbeit und Marktforschung. Diese Kennzahl kontrolliert, inwiefern Informationen über Kunden eingeholt und genutzt werden. Ihre Ermittlung lehnt sich an die erhobenen (relevanten) Kundenwünsche an und hilft dabei, lösungsorientierte und kundenspezifische Leistungen anzubieten (vgl. Preißner, 2002, S. 186).

Angebotserfolgsquote: Diese Zahl errechnet sich aus dem Verhältnis der Anzahl der erteilten Aufträge zur Anzahl der abgegebenen Angebote. Die Kennzahl gibt darüber Aufschluss, wie erfolgreich die Angebotspolitik eines Unternehmens ist. Eine hohe Angebotserfolgsquote lässt Rückschlüsse auf eine hohe Produktqualität, niedrigere Preise im Vergleich zur Konkurrenz oder kurze Lieferzeiten zu. Eine geringe Angebotserfolgsquote gilt hingegen als Indiz für einen ineffizienten Ressourceneinsatz oder unbefriedigende Leistungserfüllung (vgl. Haring-Ossola, 2006, S. 291).

Vorteile einer mechanistischen Beschreibung von Kennzahlen

Ein wesentlicher Vorteil ist die quantifizierbare Darstellung ausgewählter Kennzahlen und somit die Möglichkeit, zielorientiert Veränderungen einzuleiten und kontrollierend zu begleiten. So lässt sich die Mitarbeiterzufriedenheit in einem klaren

Ursache-Wirkungs-Zusammenhang darstellen, der Kundenkenntniswert durch Sammlung ausreichender Informationen über den Kunden abbilden und die Angebotserfolgsquote einzelner Vertriebsmitarbeiter oder -teams aufzeigen. Vertriebsziele wie Kundenzufriedenheit, Auftragssteigerung und Vorhersage von Kundenverhalten können effektiver und effizienter verfolgt werden. Die Entscheidungen zu den gesetzten vertrieblichen Aktivitäten beruhen auf objektiven Informationen, beispielsweise aus Kundenbefragungen oder auch Marktanalysen, welche durch die Vertriebsmitarbeiter generiert werden können (vgl. Hörzer, 2014, S. 34ff.). Dieser Zugang entlastet sowohl das Management als auch die Mitarbeiter und gibt **Orientierung sowie Struktur**.

Grenzen einer mechanistischen Sichtweise auf Kennzahlen

Klassische Managementmethoden in Vertriebsorganisationen, für die mechanistische Ansätze im Allgemeinen plädieren, stoßen jedoch gegenwärtig oftmals an die Grenzen ihrer Leistungsfähigkeit. Eine reine Konzentration auf Handlungen wie Steuern, Kontrollieren, Organisieren, rational Entscheiden und Motivieren berücksichtigt nur bedingt die Vernetzung von Systemen. Rückkopplung und Phänomene der **Selbstorganisation** sowie die intrinsische Beschaffenheit absichtsvoller Systeme werden kaum berücksichtigt (vgl. Backhausen, 2009, S. 124).

Der Versuch die Mitarbeiterzufriedenheit durch von außen gesetzte Maßnahmen zu steigern, erweist sich als herausfordernd und lässt sich auch nur schwer durch Fokussierung auf einzelne Mitarbeiter realisieren. Der ständige Austausch mit anderen „**Systemelementen**“ (Kollegen, Vorgesetzten, Kunden, etc.) und die permanente wechselseitige Beeinflussung sind nur eingeschränkt durch objektiv messbare Verfahren darstellbar. Die „Errechnung“ eines Indexwertes erscheint unter dieser Betrachtung nur bedingt hilfreich. Die Grenzen, den Kundenkenntniswert exakt darzustellen, werden beim Versuch sämtliche Faktoren zu erheben, welche den Kunden in seiner „Gesamtheit“ beschreibbar machen, sichtbar. Dieser Herausforderung kann nur begrenzt nachgekommen werden. Alle Bereiche eines Kunden und die damit verbundenen unternehmerischen Verknüpfungen abzubilden, würde eine Komplexität erschaffen, welche prinzipiell nicht zu verarbeiten ist. Jedoch sollte überlegt werden, ob ein willkürliches Weglassen von Informationen als geeigneter Zugang erscheint, um eine **Komplexitätsreduktion** zu bewerkstelligen (vgl. Backhausen, 2009, S. 18).

Systemtheoretische Sicht auf Kennzahlen des Vertriebsmanagements

Im Lichte oben aufgezeigter Überlegungen werden nachfolgend die zuvor herangezogenen Kennzahlen auf Basis systemtheoretischer Zugänge erläutert. Dies mit

dem Ziel aufzuzeigen, wie mit Hilfe des Kategoriensystems eine **Neuinterpretation von Kennzahlen** ermöglicht wird, um darauf aufbauend den genannten Grenzen mechanistischer Überlegungen begegnen zu können und gleichzeitig eine Komplexitätsreduktion im Vertriebsmanagement zu erreichen. Zuvor werden einleitend ausgewählte **systemtheoretische Zugänge** diskutiert.

Als systemtheoretische Zugänge können im Allgemeinen interdisziplinäre Erkenntnismodelle verstanden werden, deren gemeinsamer Nenner der Blick auf zusammengesetzte Einheiten sowie die Konstruktion von Erklärungen mit Hilfe systemischer Kernaussagen (u. a. Zirkularität, Rekursivität, Autopoiese) bildet. Die Systemelemente sind wiederum durch dynamische Wechselbeziehungen miteinander verbunden, wodurch jedes Element die Bedingungen aller anderen und somit das Gesamtsystem beeinflusst (vgl. Simon, 2011, S. 15ff.).

In einem systemtheoretischen Kontext treten somit an die Stelle von linearen, kausalen Zusammenhängen, zirkuläre Relationen, bei denen ein Objekt nicht als isoliert betrachtet wird, sondern als ein Element, welches stets in **Beziehung zu anderen Elementen** oder auch ganzen Systemen steht (vgl. Simon, 2011, S. 12ff.). Durch systemeigene Operationen erwächst auf Grundlage dieser basalen Zirkularität eine Form von Selbstorganisation (vgl. Maturana/Varela, 2010, S. 51). Wirtschaftliche Institutionen werden in der **systemischen Denkweise** als Ganzheit erfasst, als soziale Systeme, die mehr sind als die Summe ihrer einzelnen strukturellen Elemente (vgl. Luhmann, 1991, S.16ff.). Durch ein rein analytisches Prinzip wissenschaftlichen Denkens oder etwa durch die Zerlegung in ihre Einzelteile können sie demnach nicht vollständig erfasst werden (vgl. Simon, 2011, S. 14). Sie sind hoch komplex, da beispielsweise alle Abteilungen, operative Subeinheiten und Individuen etc. in einem Unternehmen **strukturell gekoppelt** sind und somit interdependente Vernetzungen aufweisen. Mitarbeiter in Organisationen werden im Kontext komplexer sozialer Systeme nicht als „trivial“ im Sinne eines Maschinenersatzes angesehen, sondern als nicht-triviale absichtsvolle Systeme (vgl. Backhausen, 2009, S. 22). Dabei steht nicht die physische Person alleine im Fokus, sondern die strukturelle Kopplung zwischen der Person und deren Rolle sowie die Kopplung zwischen den **Mitgliedern einer Organisation** und der Organisation selbst (vgl. Simon, 2011, S. 32). Bei einer systemischen Ausrichtung wird Macht in einer Organisation nicht als einseitig und hierarchisch geordnet verstanden, sondern beruht aufgrund einer strukturellen Kopplung gewissermaßen auf Gegenseitigkeit (vgl. Hörzer, 2012, S. 30ff.).

Neuinterpretation von Kennzahlen

Unter Einbindung systemtheoretischer Zugänge können nun die obigen Kennzahlen wie folgt erläutert werden.

Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex: Durch die Brille systemtheoretischer Zugänge betrachtet, steht nicht mehr die Person selbst im Fokus. Vielmehr sind die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Personen sowie deren Rolle im sozialen System einer Vertriebsorganisation von Bedeutung. Ebenso bezieht sich der Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex nicht auf eine Person alleine, sondern aufgrund der dynamischen Wechselwirkungen in einer Vertriebsorganisation, auf eine Vielzahl weiterer Personen sowie übergreifend auf andere Abteilungen und ergibt sich im Umkehrschluss wiederum aufgrund (kommunikativer) Wechselwirkungen in einem sozialen System. Der Begriff der bewussten Steuerung der Mitarbeiterzufriedenheit, in hierarchischer Weise durch einen Vorgesetzten, kann durch eine mögliche Steuerungsabsicht ersetzt werden, da die Zufriedenheit eines Vorgesetzten aufgrund der Wechselbeziehungen wiederum an jene des Mitarbeiters gekoppelt ist. Es besteht folglich die Möglichkeit der Beobachtung interrelationaler, kommunikativer Beziehungen, in welchen Mitarbeiterzufriedenheit durch einen systemimmanenteren selbstorganisierenden Prozess erzeugt wird.

Kundenkenntniswert: Der Fokus der Kundenkenntnis zielt unter systemischen Gesichtspunkten auf dynamische Wechselbeziehungen in einer Vertriebsorganisation ab. Folglich wird es ermöglicht, den Kunden als Beteiligten, als Element des sozialen Systems Vertriebsorganisation zu betrachten. Der Kunde kann dadurch Einfluss auf die Vertriebsorganisation nehmen und beeinflusst sich aufgrund der Wechselbeziehungen in rekursiver Weise wiederum selbst. Dabei soll verstanden werden, dass der Begriff des Kunden nur als Synonym verwendet wird. Bei näherer Betrachtung wird ersichtlich, dass jeder Kunde wiederum selbst Teil eines (sozialen) Systems, mit beispielsweise unterschiedlichen Abteilungen, Mitarbeitern, Kunden, etc. ist. Es zeichnet sich ab, dass durch eine reine Informationssammlung die spezifischen Anforderungen und in weiterer Folge die Kenntnis über den Kunden und dessen Verhalten aufgrund der **Wechselbeziehungen** in und zwischen den Systemen nur mehr bedingt beschrieben werden können. Eine bewusste Steuerung des Kundenverhaltens scheint dabei auf Basis einer von unmittelbaren Informationen abgeleiteten Kundenkenntnis unmöglich. Vielmehr kann dem Gedanken gefolgt werden, dass auf das System Kunde nicht bewusst eingewirkt werden kann, sondern dass Kunde und Vertriebsorganisation ein gemeinsames Zielsystem darstellen.

Angebotserfolgsquote: Aus systemtheoretischer Sicht kann, wie bereits beschrieben, der Kunde als integraler Bestandteil einer Vertriebsorganisation betrachtet werden, wodurch sich der Fokus wiederum auf die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Kunde und Vertriebsorganisation richtet. Die Einflusssphären der Systeme Kunde und Vertrieb überschneiden sich folglich, wodurch in rekursiver Weise auf die vertriebliche Leistungsfähigkeit und auf jene der Kundenseite eingewirkt wird. Dabei entsteht nun eine strukturelle Kopplung zwischen Vertrieb und Kunde, wodurch die Angebotserfolgsquote nicht nur auf ein isoliertes Objekt (Kunde) bezogen wird und

auch nicht den vertrieblichen Aktivitäten eines einzelnen Vertriebsmitarbeiters oder auch eines Vertriebsteams zugeordnet werden sollte. Vielmehr gründet der Erfolg sowohl auf Seite der Vertriebsorganisation als auch auf Kundenseite auf einem gemeinsamen und wechselseitigen Wirkungsgefüge.

Vorteile und Grenzen systemtheoretischer Zugänge

Die Berücksichtigung einer systemischen Betrachtung von Kennzahlen ermöglicht es, die **Komplexität** des vertrieblichen Tuns beschreibbar zu machen und in der Folge ein tieferes Verständnis zu erlangen, in dem sich der Fokus nicht nur an losgelösten Objekten (z. B. Vertriebsmitarbeiter, Kunden, Lieferanten) und hierarchischen Perspektiven (z. B. Prozesse, Finanzen) orientiert, sondern sich auf deren **Wechselgefüge** konzentriert. Die Geschehnisse können somit aus einer übergeordneten Perspektive beschrieben werden (vgl. Sherwood, 2011, S. 22). Durch das Verständnis einer strukturellen (Rück-)Kopplung rücken die Eigenschaften der einzelnen Elemente (z.B. Verhalten oder Zufriedenheit von Mitarbeitern und deren Rolle) in den Fokus der Betrachtung, wodurch diese als **nicht-triviale absichtsvolle Systeme** erkannt werden und ein adäquates Reagieren auf beispielsweise (system-immanente) Konfliktsituationen ermöglicht wird (vgl. Backhausen/Thommen, 2006, S. 97). Spannt man den Bogen weiter in Richtung des Kunden und wiederum dessen Kunden, besteht die Möglichkeit einer Nutzengenerierung (angefangen von der Angebotserstellung bis zum Abschluss eines Auftrages) im Sinne einer abgeleiteten Nachfrage, wodurch sich für einen Anbieter die Chance eröffnet, die Probleme seiner Kunden nicht nur zu erkennen, sondern ganzheitliche Lösungen herbeizuführen (vgl. Kleinaltenkamp/Plinke, 2002, S. 285). Wird der Kunde als **Element einer Vertriebsorganisation erkannt**, besteht die Möglichkeit einer gemeinsamen Lösungsfundung, wodurch eine transparente Darstellung der gewählten Lösung ermöglicht und eine weiterführende Argumentation zur Lösung vermieden werden kann (vgl. Luhmann, 2000, S. 142). Durch das Driften von einer Entweder-oder-Haltung hin zu einer **Sowohl-als-auch-Haltung** (vgl. Backhausen, 2009, S. 116) wird weiterführend das Handlungs- und Maßnahmenspektrum in einer Vertriebsorganisation erweitert und eine planmäßige Generierung von Entscheidungsalternativen im Rahmen eines kollektiven Ansatzes ermöglicht.

Die Kehrseite systemischer Überlegungen zeigt sich jedoch darin, dass ein Verständnis im Umgang mit komplexen sozialen Systemen ein Bündel an Fähigkeiten voraussetzt. Diese Fähigkeiten benötigen Erfahrung und setzen Lernen voraus – beides braucht Zeit und Raum, vor allem Handlungsspielraum. Basis für eine Realisierbarkeit ist dabei eine systemische Grundhaltung (vgl. Leu, 2004, S. 13). Ebenso sollte berücksichtigt werden, dass systemisches Denken kein Werkzeug darstellt, welches wahlweise eingesetzt werden kann. Eine inkonsequente Anwendung kann von Ver-

wirrung der Mitarbeiter bis hin zum Widerstand bei sämtlichen Anspruchsgruppen (z. B. Kunden, Lieferanten) führen (vgl. Steinkellner, 2005, S. 321). Ein weiterer möglicher Kritikpunkt liegt in der zirkulären Denkweise. Ereignisse, Handlungen und Verantwortlichkeiten können nur mehr bedingt auf einzelne Personen bezogen werden. Falsch angewendet oder interpretiert kann dies in der Folge in einer individuellen Verantwortungslosigkeit münden. Somit gäbe es auch kein verantwortliches Handeln einzelner Akteure mehr (vgl. Bleckwedel, 2011, S. 152ff.).

Praktische Anwendung des Kategoriensystems

Eine Unterscheidung hinsichtlich der Aussagekraft respektive des Informationsgehaltes der Vertriebskennzahlen lässt sich bereits auf Basis der oben gezeigten Interpretationen erkennen. Eine Unterscheidung, im Sinne einer Selektion aus zahlreichen weiteren Möglichkeiten, kann unter Zuhilfenahme des Kategoriensystems umgesetzt werden und soll den Informationsgehalt weiter vertiefen. Wie bereits erwähnt, beruht das Kategoriensystem auf einem **semantischen Differential** und erlaubt die Erstellung spezifischer Polaritätenprofile ausgewählter Vertriebskennzahlen. Darauf aufbauend kann auf Basis der individuellen Beschreibung einer Vertriebskennzahl erläutert werden, über welchen Informationsgehalt diese verfügt und welche Aussagekraft sie über die Erreichung strategischer Ziele besitzt.

Dies bedeutet, dass situationsbedingt eine Aussage darüber getroffen werden kann, ob mit Hilfe einer Kennzahl eher **mechanistische Überlegungen** oder **systemtheoretische Zugänge** verfolgt werden und welche Auswirkungen dies wiederum auf eine Vertriebsorganisation selbst sowie daran partizipierende Systeme wie beispielsweise Kunden, Lieferanten oder auch die Gesellschaft als „Ganzes“ haben kann. Exemplarisch wird nachfolgend, anhand der Kennzahl des Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex der gewählten Vertriebsorganisation, gezeigt, wie sich ein solches Polari-tätenprofil darstellen lässt.

Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex												
6	5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	x											Systemdeterminanten
x												Weltbild
	x											Kausalität
x												Kybernetik
	x											Rolle der Person
x												Organisationsgestaltung
x												Kommunikation
x												Machtverhältnisse
x												Entscheidungsmuster

Abbildung 2: Polaritätenprofil Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex (eigene Darstellung)

Um ein entsprechendes Polaritätenprofil durch die Anwendung des Kategoriensystems zu erhalten, muss die Kennzahl in den einzelnen Kategorien bewertet werden. Entsprechend wurde dies auch für den Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex umgesetzt. Die hierfür gebildeten Kategorien können der obigen Abbildung entnommen werden, für welche jeweils Gegensatzpaare auf Basis des einleitend dargestellten Kategoriensystems erarbeitet wurden. In der Folge kann aus dem Polaritätenprofil abgelesen werden, dass sich diese Kennzahl respektive deren **Interpretation und Informationsgehalt** eher an mechanistische Strukturen anlehnt. Daraus können in weiterer Folge spezifische Aktivitäten zur Erreichung der mit der Kennzahl verknüpften Ergebnisse anhand der gebildeten Gegensatzpaare abgeleitet werden. Ebenso wird ersichtlich, dass eine Kennzahl, auch wenn diese einem mechanistisch oder systemtheoretisch geprägten Polaritätenprofil entspricht, Ansätze aus beiden Bereichen in sich vereint und – je nach Vertriebsorganisation – unterschiedlich interpretiert werden kann.

Werden mehrere Vertriebskennzahlen zu einer Kennzahlensystematik zusammengeführt, lässt sich eine gesamte Vertriebsorganisation beschreiben. Dies wurde unter Zuhilfenahme der **Kennzahlen** einer Balanced Scorecard auch für die gewählte Vertriebsorganisation umgesetzt.

Zu diesem Zweck kann aus den einzelnen Bewertungen der Vertriebskennzahlen eine Gesamtsystematik und ebenso ein Gesamtprofil einer Vertriebsorganisation erarbeitet werden. Für die gewählte Vertriebsorganisation wurde jede Kennzahl mit Hilfe des Kategoriensystems hinsichtlich der Gegensatzpaare beschrieben und bewertet. Im Anschluss an die **individuellen Bewertungen** der Kennzahlen wurden Mittelwerte gebildet, aus welchen sich wiederum ein Gesamtprofil der Vertriebsorganisation zeichnen lässt.

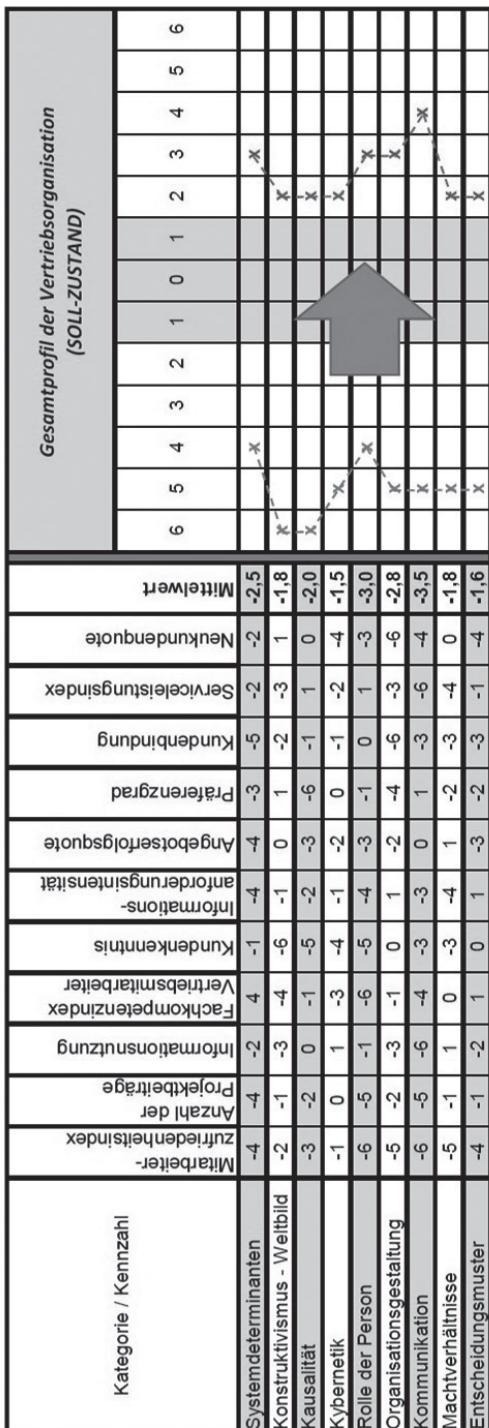
Kategorie / Kennzahl	Gesamtprofil der Vertriebsorganisation (IST-ZUSTAND)											
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Systemdeterminanten	5	6	-2	4	4	-2	6	6	6	4	6	3,9
Konstruktivismus - Weltbild	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6,0
Kausalität	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5,8
Kybernetik	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	4	6	5	6	5,5
Rolle der Person	5	5	0	6	4	0	6	4	4	4	4	3,8
Organisationsgestaltung	6	6	6	0	5	6	6	6	5	5	5	5,2
Kommunikation	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	-1	6	5,2	x
Machtverhältnisse	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	5,3
Entscheidungsmuster	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	-1	6	5,2	x

Legende: Negative Werte deuten in Richtung systemtheoretischer Ansätze in der Vertriebsorganisation.

Abbildung 3: Gesamtprofil einer Vertriebsorganisation (IST-Zustand) (eigene Darstellung)

Es zeigt sich, dass die Vertriebsorganisation aufgrund der individuellen Bewertung von Kennzahlen und der damit gewonnenen Möglichkeit einer Unterscheidung nicht eindeutig einem mechanistischen oder systemtheoretisch geprägten Ansatz, im Sinne einer extremen Ausprägung, zugewiesen werden kann. Vielmehr sollte in Betracht gezogen werden, dass beide Zugänge in ein- und derselben Vertriebsorganisation, im Sinne einer Sowohl-als-auch-Haltung anstatt einer Entweder-oder-Haltung, wirkungsvoll auftreten können. Durch diese Sichtweise und das hier aufgezeigte Konzept einer Kategorisierung und Bewertung von Kennzahlen zur Beschreibung einer Vertriebsorganisation wird es ermöglicht, eine Vertriebsorganisation in der Folge als Entität zu betrachten, die Relationen und Verknüpfungen innerhalb dieser zu verstehen und daraus resultierend eine Reduktion an Komplexität zu erreichen.

Die **Komplexitätsreduktion** erfolgt dabei durch einen Selektionsprozess, in dem gewünschte Systemzustände einer Vertriebsorganisation gefördert und nicht erwünschte Zustände ausselektiert werden. Dies bedeutet, dass durch die (Neu-)Interpretation von Kennzahlen ein **individuelles Polaritätenprofil** vorgezeichnet werden kann, welches eine Unterscheidung zwischen einem SOLL-Zustand in der Zukunft und dem derzeitigen IST-Zustand beschreiben kann. Dies zu dem Zweck, die Komplexität einer Vertriebsorganisation fassbar zu machen und zu reduzieren, in dem mögliche Ausprägungsformen der erfassten **Vertriebskennzahlen** und in weiterer Folge der Gesamtsystematik beschreibbar gemacht werden. Nicht erwünschte Zustände können nun verändert und gewünschte Zustände in der Zukunft mit Hilfe eines komplexitätsreduzierenden Kategoriensystems gestaltet werden. Folglich kann – exemplarisch für die gewählte Vertriebsorganisation – ein Polaritätenprofil vorgezeichnet werden, welches sich an Erklärungsmodellen ausrichtet, die systemtheoretische Zugänge bevorzugen.



Legende: Negative Werte deuten in Richtung systemtheoretischer Ansätze in der Vertriebsorganisation.

Abbildung 4: Gesamtprofil einer Vertriebsorganisation (SOLL-ZUSTAND) (eigene Darstellung)

Vorschlag für eine erste Implementierung

Wie sich ein solcher Wandel vollziehen lassen kann, soll das nachfolgende konzeptionelle **Stufenmodell** aufzeigen. Es schlägt eine schrittweise Veränderung von Systemzuständen durch die Neuinterpretation von Kennzahlen vor. Dies kann dadurch begründet werden, dass eine radikale Änderung in der Vertriebsorganisation zu stark verstören könnte und somit nicht angenommen werden würde. Durch eine **schrittweise Überführung** eines IST-Zustandes in einen angepeilten SOLL-Zustand können die Vorteile beider Ansätze in einer Vertriebsorganisation mitgedacht bzw. genutzt werden ohne a priori eine zu favorisieren, um folglich die notwendige Freiheit zu erlangen, je nach angepeiltem (System-)Zustand angemessen entscheiden zu können (vgl. Hörzer, 2014, S. 98). Das hier gezeigte Stufenmodell erhebt dabei keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit. Dies wäre aufgrund einer individuellen Interpretation von Kennzahlen auch nicht möglich. Vielmehr soll es ein Anstoß sein, wie eine schrittweise Veränderung eines derzeitigen Gesamtprofiles einer Vertriebsorganisation in Richtung eines angepeilten **SOLL-Zustandes** bewerkstelligt werden könnte und zwar situationsabhängig in beide Richtungen.

Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex			
Mechanistische Überlegungen		Systemtheoretische Zugänge	
Der Mitarbeiter und dessen Zufriedenheit werden durch extrinsische Motivationsfaktoren (z.B. monetäre Anreizsysteme) bewusst gesteuert.	Der Mitarbeiter kann eigene Ziele verfolgen und diese mit den Vertriebszielen kombinieren. Es werden Freiräume als Anreize geboten um Zufriedenheit zu fördern.	Der Mitarbeiter ist ein Träger von Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen und wird somit zum Wissensarbeiter. Es werden in der Folge Selbstorganisationsphänomene ermöglicht.	Der Mitarbeiter steht in interrelationaler Beziehung. Er kann als absichtsvolles, intrinsisch motiviertes System betrachtet werden und aufgrund seiner Fähigkeiten die Vertriebsorganisation aktiv mitgestalten.

Abbildung 5: Stufenmodell – Schrittweise Veränderung des Mitarbeiterzufriedenheitsindex (eigene Darstellung)

Erkenntnisse und Nutzen der Arbeit

Die Beschäftigung mit der Materie hat gezeigt, dass eine einmalige Definition von Kennzahlen nur bedingt in die Zukunft fortgeschrieben werden sollte. Dabei wurde deutlich, dass durch eine Interpretation von Vertriebskennzahlen unterschiedliche Systemzustände einer Vertriebsorganisation in einem sich veränderten Marktumfeld beschreibbar werden. Durch diese Interpretationen gelingt es, aus scheinbar unendlich vielen Systemzuständen jene herauszufiltern und zu beschreiben, welche in der Zukunft für den Erfolg einer Vertriebsorganisation angepeilt werden sollen

und somit maßgeblich sind. Mit Hilfe des Kategoriensystems kann folglich eine Selektion und somit **Komplexitätsreduktion** erreicht werden. Ebenso konnte gezeigt werden, dass eine Vertriebskennzahl nicht einem einzelnen Bereich (mechanistisch oder systemtheoretisch) zugeordnet werden soll. Vielmehr besteht die Möglichkeit, die Vorteile mechanistischer Überlegungen und systemtheoretischer Zugänge in einer **Vertriebskennzahl** zusammenzuführen und diese erfolgreich zu nutzen. Für das Vertriebsmanagement bedeutet dies nun, dass bei gleichzeitiger Komplexitätsreduktion sowohl individuelle Handlungs- und Entscheidungsfreiraume als auch -alternativen eröffnet werden. Demnach kann es einer Vertriebsorganisation durch die Anwendung des gezeigten Kategoriensystems und die **Neuinterpretation von Kennzahlen** gelingen, die jeweiligen dynamischen Veränderungen am Marktfeld zu beschreiben und sich diesen anzunähern, wodurch Vertriebskennzahlen und der damit verbundene Informationsgehalt zu einem gestaltenden Element im Vertriebsmanagement erwachsen können. Somit kann die vorliegende Arbeit als Intervention verstanden werden, welche die Akteure dazu anregen soll, über die derzeitige Sichtweise auf Vertriebskennzahlen sowie deren Informationsgehalt und Aussagekraft und in weiterer Folge über deren Anwendung, Einsatz und Funktion zu reflektieren.

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Corporate Social Responsibility in family-owned Hidden Champions from Austria

Abstract

The phenomenon of Hidden Champions illustrates that medium-sized companies can also be successful world and European market leaders. This paper has the objective of analysing the significance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Austrian Hidden Champions. This was done by a quantitative and descriptive empirical research that was carried out with the managing directors of 72 international market leaders from Austria. This presents the result of this study show that CSR is of high significance to and a success factor for Austrian Hidden Champions. The paper also demonstrates the various activities in the field of CSR that these companies conduct and illustrates which benefits they gain from these policies. Apart from that it becomes apparent that the manifestation of CSR in family-owned Hidden Champions vastly differs from how non-family-owned Hidden Champions practice CSR.

Introduction

The Austrian economy is composed of 99.8% small and medium-sized companies. Businesses of this size are the so-called backbone of the Austrian economy, and their success is critical for overall economic stability. If small and medium-sized unknown companies are at the top of their industry, they are called Hidden Champions (Jungwirth/Kraus 2011).

Hermann Simon, a former professor for marketing now working as a consultant, pioneered the research field of Hidden Champions. His research addresses the reasons for the success of small and medium-sized businesses, and not necessarily known enterprises, that are world market leaders within their business fields. His investigation is devoted mostly to German companies. The critical aspects of his research are the success factors of the Hidden Champions. Gaining findings within this research field sets benchmarks for the business of small and medium-sized enterprises (Simon 2009). Simon's identification criteria for Hidden Champions are specific to his

research, meaning that they are specific to the German economy. Therefore, separate criteria had to be determined to fit to the Austrian economy. This research has identified seven critical success factors for Austrian Hidden Champions (Jungwirth/Kraus 2011). The research in this field continues under the consideration of possible management action fields as success factors. CSR is one possible management field due to its importance to society (Rommelspacher 2012).

Recent developments show that sustainability has become an important topic for many businesses nowadays and that CSR is one approach to face the challenges of globalisation (Jonker et al. 2011). Whereas large corporations have to justify their actions to stakeholders, the research on CSR among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is often based on the currently popular concept of social capital (Perini 2006). Therefore, the social and ecological impact of business activities has more and more become integral to companies of all sizes (Waßmann 2013). However, CSR has only been well researched in large corporations, while SMEs have received less attention in this area (Jenkins 2006).

Therefore, it is one of the research questions of this paper if CSR has any significance for very successful medium-sized companies, like the Austrian Hidden Champions. Do the managers of these companies consider CSR a success factor?

Finally, it has to be emphasized that most of the Hidden Champions are family-owned businesses (Simon 2012; Jungwirth 2017). This paper will also raise the question if there is a difference between the manifestation of CSR in family-owned and in non-family-owned Hidden Champions.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The following section will discuss the topic of CSR. To determine whether this is significant or a success factor for Austrian Hidden Champions, it first has to be analysed. As a starting point for this section the term Corporate Social Responsibility will be determined and delimited.

Definition and systemisation of CSR

The European Commission has proposed the following definition of CSR: '*The responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society. Respect for applicable legislation, and for collective agreements between social partners, is a prerequisite for meeting that responsibility. To fully meet their CSR, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders...*' (European Commission 2011).

Regarding the impact on society noted in this definition, several conclusions can be drawn. First, CSR goes beyond legal compliance. Moreover, the impact of CSR on society includes ethical and moral actions. Consequently, this also includes actions that might minimise profit. In other words, profit orientation is indifferent to ethics and responsibility (Hentze/Thies 2012).

Lastly, CSR is limited to the economic section of the umbrella term sustainability. As already stated, sustainability includes dimensions that comprise all societal aspects (Hentze/Thies 2012).

Conducting active stakeholder dialogue should be considered an underlying principle when it comes to delimit the term. Within the framework of CSR, stakeholder dialogue signifies the importance not only of gathering information, but also of actively entering into continuous dialogue with stakeholders to address concerns, criticism, or other topics (Braun/Lotter 2011).

To systemise, categorise, and analyse CSR, a variety of models can be used. Most commonly the triple bottom line model is used to describe the scope of CSR. This categorisation is used in the Green Paper of the European Commission to measure CSR in businesses (European Commission 2001). Likewise, the Austrian business council for sustainable development, respACT, which is the leading platform for CSR in Austria, uses this categorisation in its guiding principles (respACT 2013). The triple bottom line model provides a comprehensive categorisation of all aspects of CSR. In contrast to Carroll's pyramid (Carroll 1991) and the three-domain approach (Carroll/Schwartz 2003), the triple bottom line model specifically defines an ecological dimension. However, the legal dimension is not considered. Instead, legal compliance is a precondition and is seen from the point of view of the other dimensions, such as the economic dimension. Due to the widespread use of the model and its clear categorisation, this model will be used for further elaborations in this paper.

CSR dimensions and action fields

The triple bottom line model categorises CSR into three main pillars. The pillars are the economic, ecological, and social dimensions. Other terms in this context are people, planet, and profit. These two categorisations can be understood synonymously (Herchen 2007).

Firstly, the economic dimension addresses profit orientation. In the context of CSR, generating profits is seen from a sustainability perspective. This is in contrast to most stock-listed companies where the publication of the quarterly results often promotes short-term profit orientation. In addition, profit is seen as a means to maintain equity in CSR (Herchen 2007). Furthermore, this dimension also includes organisational policy and governance of the company (Bitar/Jamali/Mezher 2006).

Secondly, the social dimension takes into account the impact that a corporation has on society, and in particular the society in which the business operates. This incorporates the subjects of public health, workplace safety, education, and equal opportunity (Bitar/Jamali/Mezher 2006).

Lastly, the ecological dimension addresses the issue of the preservation of natural resources, which are limited. Sustainable economic activities within the framework of the limitation of resources and the survival of humans in general are the main focuses of this dimension (Herchen 2007). This includes compliance with governmental regulations, recycling, energy efficiency, and more (Bitar/Jamali/Mezher 2006).

Actions which are undertaken within the framework of CSR can be allocated to these three dimensions. The figure below provides a comprehensive overview of the action fields.

Economic Dimension	Social Dimension	Ecological Dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate governance • Product management • Risk management • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charitable foundation • Stakeholder dialogue and cooperation • Corporate volunteering • Human resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological policies (incl. energy, resource, consumption, climate protection etc.) • Training

Figure 1: CSR dimensions and action fields (original presentation)

Note that the action fields need to be understood within the framework of CSR. In general product management, human resources (HR), risk management, corporate governance etc. include activities that go beyond CSR. However, in this context only the activities which are targeted towards social responsibility are taken into account, e.g. HR activities that incentivise voluntary work or CSR reports for communication.

Economic dimension

This dimension includes all activities around CSR management. In other words, action fields like corporate governance, product management and risk management are

designed and executed with social responsibility in mind. Communication addresses the need to be transparent by using external and internal communication channels. One important tool is the CSR report based on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards (Global Reporting Initiative 2017).

Social dimension

Overall, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 26000 family of standards is a tool for organisations to support socially responsible actions. These standards should be understood as guidance. Unlike other ISO standards, organisations cannot be certified with ISO 26000. The aim of these standards is to clarify the social responsibility of organisations (International Organization for Standardization 2010). Action fields within the dimension can be found in Figure 1.

Ecological dimension

The ISO 14001 standard provides a detailed explanation of what is required to implement an ecological management system. This standard supports the company in achieving its intended environmental performance and objectives. ISO 14001 can be implemented by all organisations, regardless of size, type, or nature. The entire ISO 14000 family of standards focuses on supporting organisations to manage their environmental responsibilities (International Organization for Standardization 2015).

CSR benefits and criticism

Having discussed the dimensions of CSR and its significant action fields, the benefits of such policies and actions now need to be illustrated. Furthermore, potential negative aspects of CSR will be analysed.

CSR benefits

This section answers the question of why a business should engage in CSR actions besides for ethical and moral motivations.

Loew and Clausen conducted a study for the German national CSR forum to provide a foundation for the working group ‘promotion and distribution of Corporate Social Responsibility particularly to small and medium-sized companies’. The objective of this research was to analyse studies on the benefits of CSR to determine the relevant benefits especially for small and medium-sized businesses. The relevance was determined due to the amount of publications elaborating on benefits with restricted or no economic value to companies (Loew/Clausen 2010). The study identified the following relevant benefits of CSR:

- Cost efficiency
- Risk reduction
- High motivation of employees
- Attraction and retention of talent

- Fostering innovation
- Business development due to new markets and products
- Strengthening of customer relationships
- Creation and protection of reputation
- Enhancing investor relations (Loew/Clausen 2010)

In the book *Corporate Social Responsibility as an International Strategy*, Keinert proposes seven major benefits of CSR that are empirically proven (Keinert 2008). These benefits are:

- Achievement of competitive advantage
- Added value to offering
- Opportunities for alliances
- Improvement of labour relations and organisational commitment
- Equal opportunity and diversity
- Enhanced financial results
- Limiting losses after business crisis (Keinert 2008)

In their 2014 contribution to the journal *Business Ethics*, Story and Neves elaborate on the positive influence of CSR on employee performance: employees are aware of the CSR practices of their organisations, they understand the motivations for CSR policies, and they are engaged (Neves/Story 2015).

In addition, Mishra and Nigam identify a positive influence of CSR on the long-term business performance. This is achieved as a result of the company's positive relationship with stakeholders and society. Mishra and Nigam argue that the society is the place where companies sell their offering. Therefore, CSR activities in society enhance the performance of the overall business (Mishra/Nigam 2015).

Criticism of CSR

A typical example of greenwashing is that companies claim to be environmentally friendly when, in reality, they are not. Means are used to advertise this environmental friendliness instead of truly implementing processes or offering products that could indeed be deemed to support such a claim. This is a problem because it deceives customers, which is a contradiction of CSR. Moreover, it may also backfire on the business (EnviroMedia Social Marketing 2016).

A common argument for why large companies have adopted CSR into their business is that they are trying to work against the establishment of laws that would enforce social or environmental policies. Corporations argue that a majority have also implemented CSR policies in their business, and therefore there is no need for laws in this regard. Again, these corporations use CSR solely as a marketing tool, claiming to support critical social issues when, in fact, there is no evidence that this is the case.

The aim is not to recognise the company's responsibility to society, but to avoid law enforcement (Werner-Lobo 2009).

The association of CSR with tax avoidance was comprehensively proven within the framework of Hoi, Wu, and Zhang's 2013 empirical research: companies with irresponsible CSR activities (CSR activities damaging for one group of stakeholders) were engaged in tax avoidance, whereas businesses that conducted activities regarded as positive were not associated with this behaviour (Hoi/Wu/Zhang 2013).

It should be noted here that CSR policies should include standards for taxation, such as publishing all required accounting information. All CSR activities should be disclosed in regular reports to ensure transparency (Christensen/Murphy 2004).

CSR and SMEs

CSR has traditionally been associated with large corporations, but researchers are more and more recognising the importance of business ethics and social responsibility to small and medium-sized companies (Quinn 1997; Spence 1999; Spence/Rutherford 2003; Jenkins 2006).

For example, Kusyk and Lozano (2007) identified in their extensive literature review of more than 30 years a total of 80 drivers and 96 barriers for the social performance of SMEs. They even clustered these drivers and barriers along key stakeholders and developed a four-cell typology of social issues.

Other researchers pointed out the peculiar strengths and special relational attributes of SMEs in the context of CSR and highlighted the differences in CSR orientations compared with multinational corporations (Jamali/Zanhour/Keshishian 2009).

Building on the work of Porter and Kramer (2006) who drew particular attention to the link between competitive advantage and CSR, Jenkins (2009) demonstrated how SMEs can achieve added value and competitive advantage through realising and maximising the opportunities of CSR. She also developed a "business opportunity" model of CSR for SMEs.

But interestingly there seems to be a literature gap regarding the CSR activities of very successful SMEs. There is only evidence how medium-sized Hidden Champions from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) respond to questions of sustainability (Zhexembayeva 2013). This is why a comprehensive research was designed to analyse how medium-sized world market leaders from Austria practice CSR.

Research Methodology

Characteristics of Hidden Champions

Hermann Simon initiated the research on Hidden Champions around 30 years ago.

Companies that are considered to be Hidden Champions are those that are not necessarily known or large, but are in an excellent market position (Simon 2014). Simon defined the following three criteria to identify a Hidden Champion:

1. The company is among the top three market leaders worldwide, or the first leader on its continent
2. Its revenue has to be lower than 5 billion euros¹
3. There is a low degree of familiarity of the company to the public (Simon 2012)

To fit the Austrian situation, criteria have been defined within the framework of the Hidden Champions research at the University of Applied Sciences CAMPUS 02 in Graz, Austria. These criteria are based on Simon's definition, but the latter's maximum revenue is considered as too high for the Austrian business landscape. The following lists the criteria for Austrian Hidden Champions:

1. The company is first, second, or third worldwide, or the first in Europe (market share according to company or press)
2. Its revenue has to be lower than 200 million euros
3. The company's headquarters have to be in Austria (Jungwirth 2010)

According to this definition, 189 Hidden Champions have been identified in Austria by February 2017. On average they show an annual turnover of 53 million Euros and they employ about 400 people (Jungwirth 2017).

Since 61% of the medium-sized world market leaders from Austria are family-owned, it is also a target of this paper to compare the manifestation of Corporate Social Responsibility in family-owned and non-family-owned Hidden Champions.

Research Design

The findings of this study are based on quantitative empirical research. The chosen method was a computer-assisted telephone interview (survey tool "umfrageonline.com") using a standardised questionnaire that was especially designed for this research. The interviewees for this research were individuals who were responsible for CSR in their company. In most cases, this was the business executive. In some cases, however, there might be a designated responsible person for CSR in a company. In those cases, that person was interviewed.

The descriptive approach of this research was chosen in order to describe the characteristics and behaviour of internationally very successful medium-sized companies regarding the phenomenon of CSR. In a further step it is planned to carry out explanatory research that aims at determining the reasons why the Austrian Hidden Champions practice CSR like this.

¹ Initially this limit was at 1.5 billion German marks which equals about 766 million euros (Simon 1996).

The following table groups all the identified Hidden Champions based on the criteria of revenue and whether or not the company is family-owned. In addition, the ultimately obtained subjects within the categories are also illustrated. Overall, 70 subjects were required to make statistical analysis verifiable.

Criteria	Required subjects	Actual subjects	Overall population
Family-owned	35	38	115
Non-family-owned	35	34	74
Total	70	72	189
Revenue: € 51-200 million	33	29	90
Revenue: € 0-50 million	37	43	99
Total	70	72	189

Table 1: Sample composition

Table 1 explains how the interviewees were selected. The quota for the criterion of revenue was directly driven from the overall population, meaning that the composition of all identified Hidden Champions regarding the revenue was applied to the 70 required. Moreover, about half of the subjects were required to be non-family-owned companies. After all, 72 medium-sized world market leaders from Austria agreed to take part in this study.

The field work for this empirical research was conducted in February 2017.

CSR in Austrian Hidden Champions

Based on the empirical research, this chapter presents the importance of CSR in Austrian Hidden Champions. Furthermore, it addresses the question of the differences between family-owned, non-family-owned, smaller and bigger Hidden Champions.

General significance of CSR in Austrian Hidden Champions

The following section illustrates the overall significance, the importance of each CSR dimension and its action fields.

CSR implementation and significance as success factor

First, the respondents were asked whether CSR is implemented in their company and if so, since when. The following chart presents the results in this regard.

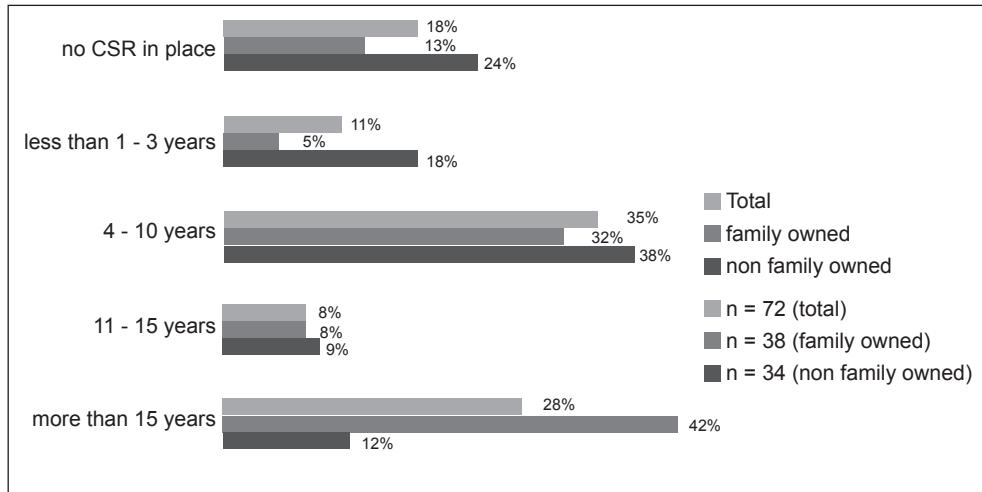


Figure 2: Implementation of CSR – ownership (own presentation)

The analysis reveals that over 80% of the Austrian Hidden Champions in the sample have implemented CSR in their business. Over 70% of the Austrian Hidden Champions have implemented related actions for at least four years.

CSR tends to have been implemented for longer in family-owned than in non-family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions. Almost half of the family-owned Hidden Champions have engaged in CSR for longer than 15 years. On the other hand, the same is only true for just over 10% of the non-family-owned Hidden Champions.

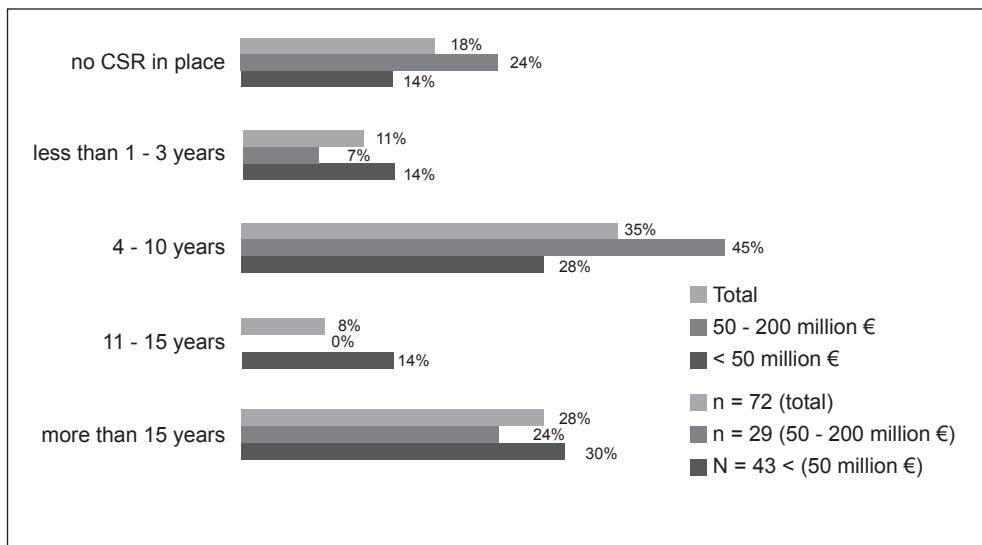


Figure 3: Implementation of CSR – revenue (own presentation)

The figure 3 illustrates the analysis regarding the revenue. Overall, 44% of the smaller Hidden Champions have had CSR in place longer than ten years compared to only less than a quarter of the bigger Hidden Champions. Furthermore, almost a quarter of the bigger Hidden Champions have no CSR in place compared to slightly less than one out of seven smaller Hidden Campions.

The following figure provides insights into the overall significance of CSR. The question corresponding to this analysis was: 'Is CSR an essential success factor in your company?'

It has to be stressed that neither success nor success factor were defined objectively in this context. That is why the answers to this question correspond to the subjective evaluation of the interviewed managers.

However, every analysed Hidden Champion from Austria is objectively a very successful company because all of them are ranked among the TOP 3 companies worldwide in their respective industry. Moreover, we have evidence from former studies that the Austrian Hidden Champions show outstanding key performance indicators regarding profit or growth rates (Jungwirth 2011).

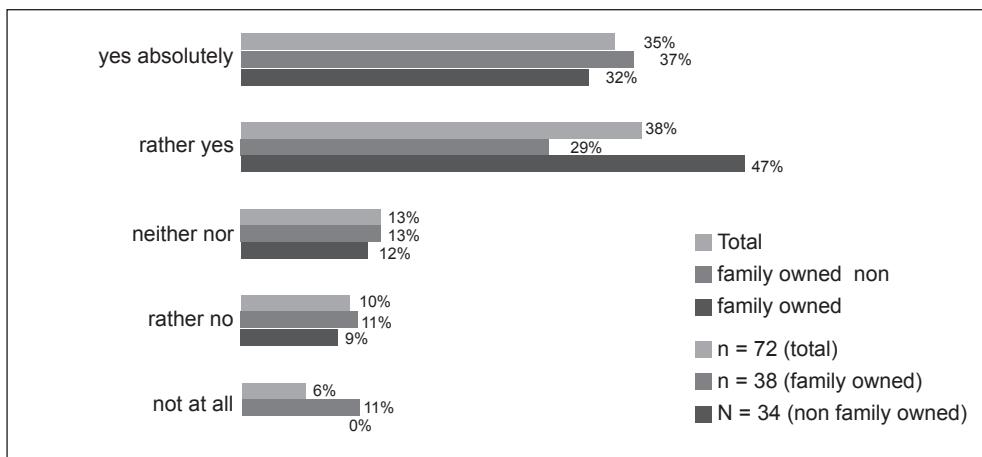


Figure 4: CSR as a success factor - ownership (own presentation)

Overall, CSR is seen as a success factor in Austrian Hidden Champions, with over 70% of the interviewees indicating that this is the case.

Not a single interviewee from a non-family-owned Hidden Champion considered CSR not to be a success factor at all. Moreover, almost 80% of the interviewees from non-family-owned companies saw CSR as a success factor, compared to 66% of those from family-owned Hidden Champions.

The upcoming illustration displays the same analysis is segmented according to revenue. In other words, the following analysis elaborates on the difference in the

significance of CSR as success factor between Hidden Champions which have a revenue of less than 50 million euros and Hidden Champions with a revenue between 50 and 200 million euros.

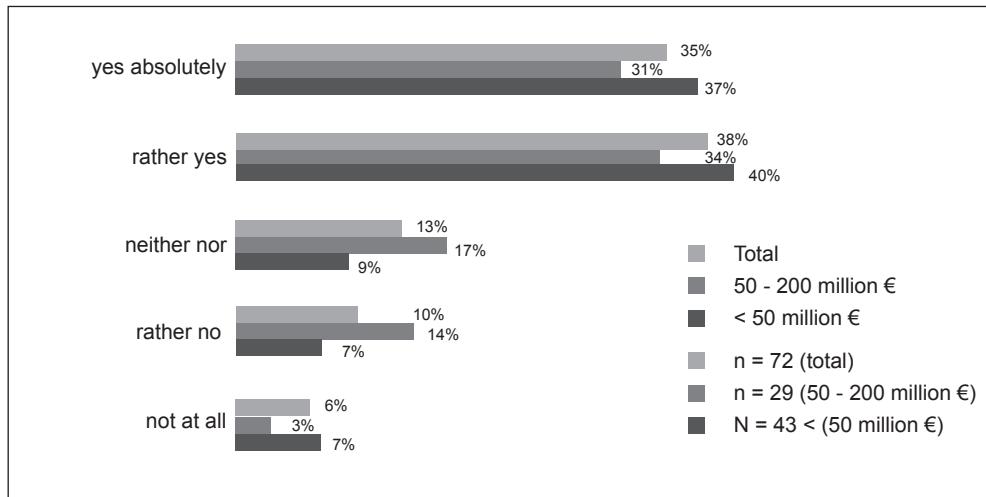


Figure 5: CSR as a success factor - revenue (own presentation)

The results reveal that 77% of the Hidden Champions with a revenue of less than 50 million euros consider CSR as success factor compared to 65% of the Hidden Champions with a revenue between 50 and 200 million euros. On the other hand, 17% of the bigger Hidden Champions view CSR rather not or not at all as significant success factor compared to 14% of the smaller Hidden Champions.

Significance of the CSR dimensions and action fields

In one of the last sections the triple bottom line approach and its three dimensions were introduced. The interviewees were asked to rank the three dimensions according to their significance in the company. The scale for the ranking was between 1 and 3, whereas 1 was given to the most important dimension and 3 to the least important dimension. The following average values are the calculated results (the closer the value is to 1, the more significant is the dimension):

- Economic dimension: 1.31
- Social dimension: 2.11
- Ecological dimension: 2.58

The analysis reveals that the economic dimension is the most significant one for Austrian Hidden Champions, whereas the ecological dimension is the least significant one.

Overall there is no vast difference between family-owned and non-family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions in this regard.

The following numbers illustrate the significance of the CSR dimension for family-owned and non-family-owned Hidden Champions:

- Economic dimension: 1.37 (family-owned)
 1.26 (non-family-owned)
- Social dimension: 2.18 (family-owned)
 2.09 (non-family-owned)
- Ecological dimension: 2.55 (family-owned)
 2.65 (non-family-owned)

In general, the ranking does not differ from the overall result. However, non-family-owned Hidden Champions tend to value the economic dimension as even more important than their family-owned counterparts do.

The next outcomes illustrate the significance of the CSR dimension for smaller and bigger Hidden Champions:

- Economic dimension: 1.33 (<50 million €)
 1.31 (50-200 million €)
- Social dimension: 2.11 (<50 million €)
 2.11 (50-200 million €)
- Ecological dimension: 2.67 (<50 million €)
 2.53 (50-200 million €)

In this case, the results for the ecological dimension vary vastly. Bigger Hidden Champions tend to view this dimension as more significant than smaller Hidden Champions.

When it comes to the significance of the action fields the following can be stated for Austrian Hidden Champions: The action fields of sustainable HR, sustainable product management, ecological actions, and cooperation are used by four out of five Austrian Hidden Champions. Moreover, two thirds of the Hidden Champions engage in corporate governance; over half engage in communication and risk management; and approximately 50% offer training regarding Corporate Social Responsibility. On average, the companies in the sample engage in six different action fields.

The results for family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions do not differ from the overall execution of the action fields. Regarding non-family-owned Hidden Champions, fewer of these tend to engage in sustainable product management, ecological actions, and cooperation. Still, over 70% of the non-family-owned Hidden Champions do use these activities.

CSR benefits and disadvantages for Austrian Hidden Champions

This section elaborates on CSR advantages and disadvantages for Austrian Hidden Champions.

CSR benefits

The following graph demonstrates the general benefits of CSR as seen by the Austrian Hidden Champions in the sample.

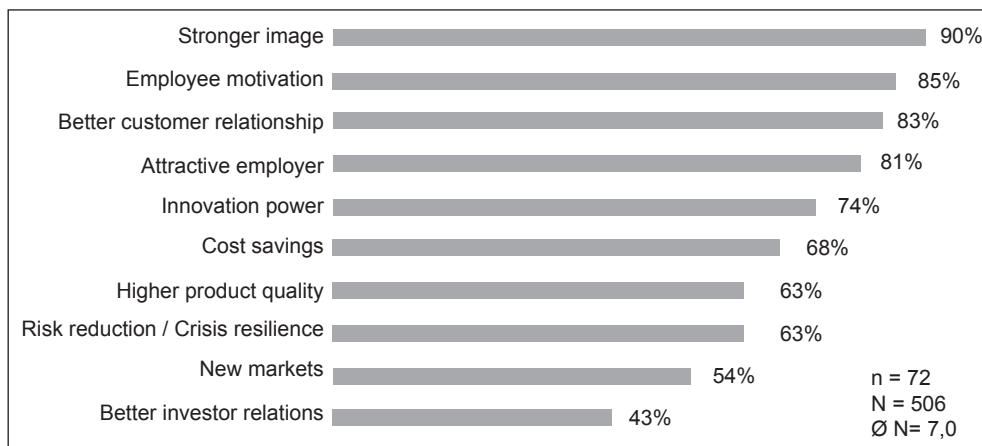


Figure 6: CSR benefits – total (own presentation)

In general, four out of five Hidden Champions considered stronger image, employee motivation, better customer relationships, and being an attractive employer as benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility, with stronger image being the most cited benefit. On the other hand, better investor relations was named the least frequently out of all benefits. Nevertheless, almost half of the respondents saw this benefit. Furthermore, they tended to see numerous benefits arising from Corporate Social Responsibility. This is substantiated by the high number of total answers (N=506).

Family-owned		Non-family-owned	
1	Stronger image	1	Stronger image
2	Employee motivation	2	Better customer relationship
3	Attractive employer	3	Employee motivation
4	Innovation power	4	Attractive employer
5	Better customer relationship	5	Innovation power

Table 2: CSR benefits – ownership (own presentation)

The analysis for family-owned Hidden Champions reveals minor differences compared to the overall distribution: better customer relationship was named less often compared to the overall sample and the non-family-owned Hidden Champions. Specifically, this means 15% fewer mentions compared to non-family-owned Hidden Champions.

The benefits of innovation power and being an attractive employer were named less often by respondents from non-family-owned Hidden Champions than by those from family-owned Hidden Champions. Specifically, each of the two benefits received approximately 10% fewer mentions. Furthermore, stronger image was named as a benefit by almost all respondents from non-family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions, which is 13% more than the respondents from the family-owned Hidden Champions.

<50 million €		50-200 million €	
1	Stronger image	1	Stronger image
2	Attractive employer	2	Better customer relationship
3	Innovation power	3	Attractive employer
4	Better customer relationship	4	Innovation power
5	Higher product quality	5	Employee motivation

Table 3: CSR benefits - revenue (own presentation)

The comparison between smaller and bigger Hidden Champions reveals that stronger image is seen by both groups as the most common benefit. Over 90% of the bigger Hidden Champions see better customer relationship (same amount as for stronger image) as benefit. Only four out of five of the smaller Hidden Champions, on the other hand, see better customer relationship as benefit.

CSR disadvantages

To this end, the respondents were asked an open question (meaning that there were no defined answers) about CSR disadvantages. The answers were collected and clustered to provide a clearer understanding of the findings. The results are provided in the table below.

Negative aspect	N
Additional costs	10
Additional resources	5
Less flexible, slower working	2
More work	1
Higher prices	1
Image problems due to lesser profit orientation	1
Complex communication	1
Longer lasting processes	1
Negative impact on profit	1
Total	23

Table 4: Negative aspects of CSR for Austrian Hidden Champions (own presentation)

The results show that the interviewees saw less than ten different negative aspects to conducting CSR. More than ten answers concerned the issue that additional costs occur when engaging in activities around CSR. Furthermore, five answers addressed the need for additional resources as a negative aspect. It should be noted that every respondent provided one answer to this question. All in all, almost one third of the interviewed Hidden Champions saw negative aspects in CSR.

In a section before there were discussed the aspects greenwashing, CSR as public relations tool an avoiding the establishment of laws and tax avoidance. These aspects were not mentioned by the respondents. Instead, they mentioned internal aspects, which can be found in the table above. Another aspect in this regard can be found in the last chapter, in which the benefits seen by Austrian Hidden Champions were illustrated. A total of 90% of the respondents saw the improvement of their company's image as a benefit of CSR. This could indicate that negative aspects such as greenwashing or the use of CSR as a public relations tool can be found in Austrian Hidden Champions. However, solely based on the results of this study, this interpretation cannot be made. To analyse these aspects, the authors recommend that an additional qualitative study should be conducted.

Integration of CSR into Austrian Hidden Champions

This section addresses the issue of how CSR is integrated into Austrian Hidden Champions which includes an analysis of the organisational implementation. This is illustrated in the graph below.

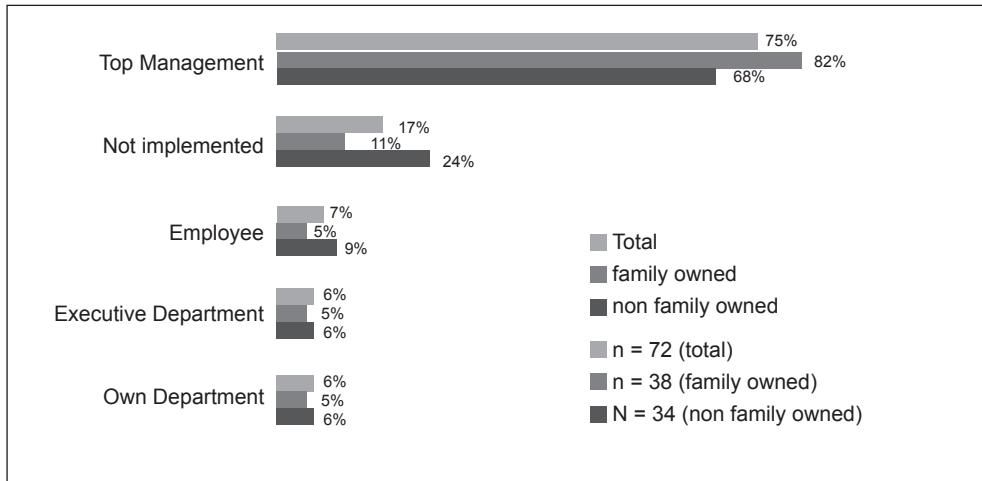


Figure 7: Organisational layer of CSR – ownership (own presentation)

Overall, Austrian Hidden Champions integrate and organise CSR in top management. Three out of four have integrated it in this way. In contrast, less than a fifth of the Austrian Hidden Champions have not implemented CSR at all.

The analysis regarding family-owned Hidden Champions reveals that more of them have integrated CSR into top management compared to the total sample and to the non-family-owned Hidden Champions. Four out of five family-owned Hidden Champions have CSR integrated in this way. In contrast, 14% fewer non-family-owned Hidden Champions have integrated CSR into top management. Moreover, one out of four of these companies has not implemented CSR at all. This is 13% more compared to the family-owned Hidden Champions.

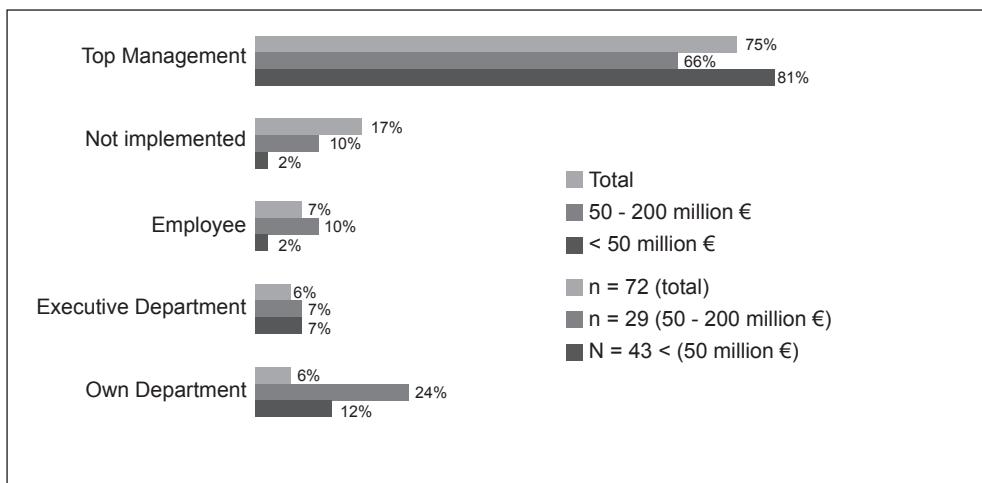


Figure 8: Organisational layer of CSR – revenue (own presentation)

The analysis regarding Hidden Champions with a revenue of less than 50 million euros reveals that more than 80% of these companies implement CSR on a top management level compared to two-thirds of the bigger Hidden Champions. Bigger Hidden Champions tend to organise CSR into an own department. One quarter of these Hidden Champions implement it in this way compared to slightly more than 10% of the smaller Hidden Champions.

CSR communication and budget

The following section provides the results of the analysis of the CSR-related communication behaviour in Austrian Hidden Champions. This includes external as well as internal communication.

External communication

Overall, 60% of the Austrian Hidden Champions communicate their CSR activities externally. The percentage of family-owned Hidden Champions that communicate these activities is slightly higher (63%) compared to that of non-family-owned Hidden Champions (56%).

The sustainability report or CSR report is a significant tool for external communication. 15% of the Austrian Hidden Champions in the sample use a CSR report for external communication. However, 21% of the non-family-owned Hidden Champions do, compared to only 11% of their family-owned counterparts.

47% of the Austrian Hidden Champions in the sample use their homepage for external communication of CSR activities. Furthermore, public relations (42%) and flyers (44%) are significant means of communication. Videos (21%), customer magazines (18%), and business reports (14%) are less frequently chosen for external CSR communication by Austrian Hidden Champions. On average, the Austrian Hidden Champions that do communicate externally use approximately five to six different communication channels.

Compared to the overall distribution and to non-family-owned Hidden Champions, flyers and mail or newsletters are used to an equally high degree as the homepage by family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions (all 47%). On the other hand, 37% of the family-owned Hidden Champions use public relations for external CSR communication, compared to 47% of the non-family-owned companies.

As already stated, non-family-owned Hidden Champions tend to use public relations instead of flyers or newsletters (35%). Overall, the homepage (47%) remains a significant tool of external communication for all Austrian Hidden Champions.

Internal Communication

Compared to the number of Austrian Hidden Champions that communicate externally, the number of those that communicate internally is higher. Overall, 72% of the

Austrian Hidden Champions in this sample communicate activities around CSR or sustainability internally.

Differences cannot be identified between family-owned and non-family-owned businesses in this regard.

In general, the Austrian Hidden Champions in this sample use newsletters or mail to a high degree, with 53% using this method of communication. Furthermore, 44% use the intranet. Of lesser importance for internal communication are public relations (1%) and the homepage (4%).

Overall, family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions use the same means of communication as already described. However, all means (except for mail or newsletters) are used by less than 40% of the family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions.

Compared to family-owned Hidden Champions, non-family-owned Hidden Champions use the intranet to a higher degree (53%). Furthermore, they also use events (41% compared to 34%) and employee magazines (35% compared to 26%) more than family-owned Hidden Champions. This is also reflected in the number of average means of communication used. Non-family-owned Hidden Champions engaging in internal communication use four channels on average, whereas their family-owned counterparts only use three.

CSR budget

The following section provides the results of the analysis regarding the Austrian Hidden Champions' budget for social commitment and ecological activities.

The result regarding the question whether Hidden Champions have a budget for social commitment demonstrates that 43% of the analysed Austrian Hidden Champions have such a budget. On the other hand, almost 55% family-owned Hidden Champions have a budget, compared to 41% non-family-owned Hidden Champions.

The analysis regarding the budget size reveals that the average yearly spending of the Austrian Hidden Champions in the sample amounts to 0.4% of their annual revenue. All in all, the budget of family-owned Hidden Champions tends to be higher on average than the budget of their non-family-owned counterparts (0.5% compared to 0.1%). However, the low number of responses also has to be taken into account for these analyses.

The results regarding the question whether Hidden Champions have a budget for ecological activities show that 35% of the Austrian Hidden Champions have a such a budget.

However, 42% of the family-owned Hidden Champions do, compared to 26% of the non-family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions.

The detailed analysis reveals that the overall budget for ecological activities tends

to be as high as the budget for social commitment. However, the low number of respondents has to be taken into account again in this regard. Furthermore, large differences cannot be identified between family-owned and non-family-owned Hidden Champions based on this analysis.

Ecological activities and certification

The analysis of this section addresses the ecological activities conducted by the Austrian Hidden Champions and ecological certification.

The results regarding the ecological activities of Austrian Hidden Champions are

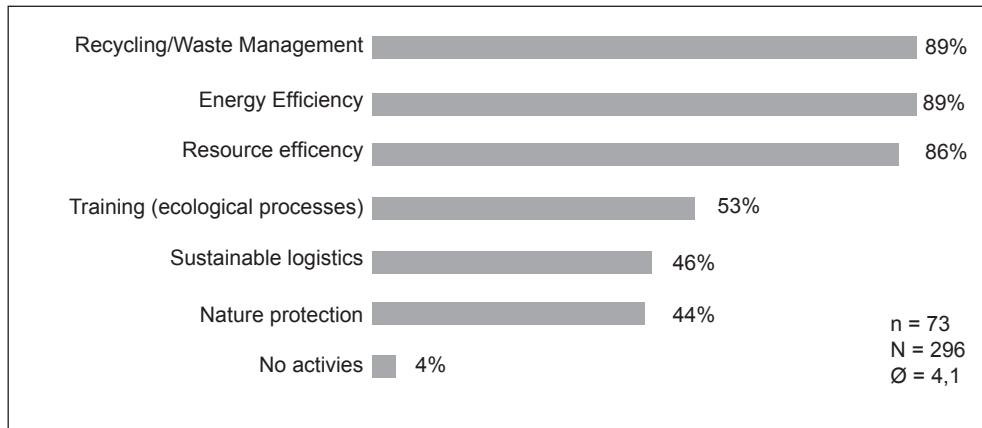


Figure 9: Ecological activities of Hidden Champions – total (own presentation)

Overall, almost nine out of ten Austrian Hidden Champions engage in waste management and activities to improve their energy efficiency. Furthermore, more than four out of five work on improving resource efficiency. In addition, the analysed Hidden Champions engage in approximately four out of six possible activities on average. Sustainable logistics and nature protection are the least frequently chosen activities; however, both are still conducted by approximately 45%. No activities are only conducted by 4% of the Austrian Hidden Champions.

The ecological activities of family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions tend to be spread similarly to the overall distribution. Again, almost 90% engage in waste management and the improvement of energy efficiency. Approximately half of the family-owned Hidden Champions conduct sustainable logistics and nature protection, which are again the activities that are the least employed.

The most common ecological activity among the non-family-owned Austrian Hidden Champions is the improvement of resource efficiency. This is done by over 90% of these companies. Moreover, almost 90% also engage in waste management.

Overall, almost half of the Austrian Hidden Champions are certified in ecological sustainability – more specifically, 60% of the family-owned and only 35% of the non-family-owned companies are certified.

Discussion of the results

This paper shows that most medium-sized world market leaders from Austria regard CSR as success factor. About 73% of the analysed Hidden Champions absolutely or rather agree to this statement, while only 16% absolutely or rather disagree to it. This corresponds to the results of a study that was conducted with 165 Hidden Champions in the CEE countries and Turkey. About 14% of them showed little or no interest in sustainable business (Zhexembayeva 2013).

Interestingly 79% of the non-family-owned Hidden Champions from Austria define CSR as success factor compared to just 66% of the family-owned Hidden Champions. A recent study that investigated the CSR performances of top businesses in the USA showed similar results: There the non-family businesses significantly outperformed the family businesses on CSR (Yazici/Mcwilliams/Ercan 2018).

Therefore, it is rather surprising that family-owned Hidden Champions from Austria have clearly had CSR in place for longer than their non-family-owned counterparts. Whereas 42% of the analysed family-owned Hidden Champions from Austria implemented CSR more than 15 years ago, only 12% of the non-family-owned Hidden Champions had CSR in place for such a long time. Incidentally, the same question showed no significant difference between smaller and larger Hidden Champions.

The paper also shows the most important benefits of CSR seen by the Austrian Hidden Champions. The Top 5 benefits are stronger image, higher employee motivation, better customer relationships, being an attractive employer and innovation power. On the whole, this corresponds to the results of several studies that focused on the advantages and benefits of CSR (Baldarelli/Gigli 2014; Battaglia/Frey 2014; Ciasullo/Troisi 2013; Coppa/Sriramesh 2013; Lorenz/Gentile/Wehner 2016).

From the point of view of the Austrian Hidden Champions the main disadvantages of CSR are the additional costs and resources. The added cost is also the essential disadvantage for the Hidden Champions in Central and Eastern Europe (Zhexembayeva 2013).

Recommendations for further research

This paper was based on a quantitative study to gain a comprehensive picture of CSR in Austrian Hidden Champions. A subsequent qualitative investigation is highly recommended to determine the reasons behind companies' execution of CSR. Fur-

thermore, qualitative research would be better suited to examining the connection between CSR benefits and the success factors of Hidden Champions, as this requires an in-depth review. In addition, the negative aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility could also be examined in such a format. It is highly recommended that such a study is again based on the distinction between family-owned and non-family-owned Hidden Champions.

In addition, future research should focus more deeply on certain dimensions of CSR. Aspects beyond the scope of this paper, such as detailed reviews of the social or ecological dimension, should also be considered in the future. For example, this could be a study on the social dimension with a focus on sustainable HR, or further research solely on the ecological sustainability of Austrian Hidden Champions.

Furthermore, a similarly structured study on non-Hidden Champions could bring new insights into the differences between them and Hidden Champions. Target companies for such a study could be small and medium-sized companies to identify differences between the companies that are world market leaders and those that are not. In addition, a study of CSR in large Austrian world market leaders that are not Hidden Champions anymore could also reveal differences.

Lastly, a study on how to implement CSR to efficiently gain its benefits is recommended. Since Hidden Champions are best practise examples, a guideline on how to implement CSR could be an objective of a future study on the topic.

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Corporate Culture in Family-Owned World Market Leaders from Austria

Abstract

The present paper aims at revealing to what extent corporate culture is perceived as success factor throughout family-owned and widely held public world market leaders from Austria and which instruments managers and owners use to leverage corporate culture in order to support superior performance and world market leadership. The research findings are based on 20 qualitative interviews with top managers from Austria's world market leaders, an accompanying culture type test and documentary research. The results indicate that world market leaders from Austria consider corporate culture as decisive factor for success and suggest that the importance of corporate culture will continue to rise in future. Regardless of the ownership structure, it is considered as promising to create a corporate culture that embodies openness and encourages employees to think outside the box and to develop a positive attitude towards change. In the process, a major role is assigned to the top management which is in charge of developing the strategic direction of the company and is responsible for actively managing corporate culture.

The paper provides a first insight into the particularities of the corporate culture of world market leaders from Austria and broadly reveals its importance for success. Further research is required to deepen and enlarge the knowledge of cultural characteristics and dimensions that promote world market leadership while revealing instruments to foster the positive effects of corporate culture.

Introduction

Corporate culture gained attention as an influencing factor on corporate success in the 1970s, and to date numerous conceptions about how to define, measure and relate culture to an organisation have been developed (Macharzina/Wolf 2010, pp. 236-237). Corporate culture can broadly be described as the sum of all norms and values, which represent the spirit and personality of a company (Doppler/Lauterburg 2008, p. 472). Corporate culture originates from a company's history and is determined by its environment. In the initial development stages of a firm, particularly the owners characterise the company's specific culture. However, managers might influence corporate culture to a certain degree as well (Macharzina/Wolf 2010, pp. 238, 249). In fact, the proactive management of culture and the anticipation and adaptation to changes in the business environment is seen as a necessity for achieving a sustainable performance (Kotter/Heskett 1992, p. 44). A Europe-wide study lasting four years about strategies of long-term top performing companies reveals that corporate culture is an increasingly important success factor and key differentiator in comparison to less successful companies (Bailom/Matzler/Tschernjak 2006, pp. 16, 164-166).

Existing international studies on corporate culture show that a highly developed culture strongly favours economic success, which leads to the assumption that world market leaders from Austria possibly have success-promoting corporate cultures. As superior economic success and market leadership depend on various influencing factors, it is difficult to support this claim. To date, hardly any research has been done and there is hardly any literature to be found on the importance of corporate culture as success factor of world market leaders from Austria. For achieving a comprehensive picture of the specific corporate cultures of world market leaders from Austria, a distinction between different ownership structures could be of great value, as owners give direction to the evolution of a company's culture and are said to be a responsible influencing factor for the distinguishing cultural characteristics of corporations.

Since no comparable study results have been published for Austrian firms yet, the present paper aims at answering the following questions:

- To what extent does the top management perceive corporate culture as success factor throughout Austria's world market leaders and which cultural characteristics are regarded as particularly decisive for success?
- What influence does the factor 'leadership and management practices' have on the formation and development of corporate culture and which instruments do managers and owners use to leverage corporate culture in order to support superior performance and world market leadership?

Corporate culture

This section briefly introduces the concept of corporate culture and deals with perspectives on organisational development. In addition, it gives an overview of various measurement approaches to assess and categorise culture.

Defining corporate culture

Kroeber and Kluckhohn have already collected and reviewed 165 distinctive definitions of culture in 1952. They demonstrated the complexity and diversity of cultural concepts. They summarise culture as being a historical product that consists of selective ideas, patterns and values which are learned and reflected in behaviour and symbols (Kroeber/Kluckhohn/Untereiner 1952, pp. 307-308). Culture was increasingly related to organisational studies in the 1970s and 1980s, and the terms corporate culture and organisational culture are basically equivalently used. However, there is disagreement over a common definition of corporate culture and its practical application (Smircich 1998, p. 339). The following table introduces selected definitions by well-respected researchers in this field.

Hofstede	Culture is “ <i>the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from others.</i> ” (Hofstede/Hofstede/Minkov 2010, p. 344)
Schein	“ <i>Culture is a pattern of shared tacit assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.</i> ” (Schein 2009, p. 27)
Kotter and Heskett	“ <i>At the deeper and less visible level, culture refers to values that are shared by the people in a group and that tend to persist over time even when group membership changes. (...) At the more visible level, culture represents the behavior patterns or style of an organization that new employees are automatically encouraged to follow by their fellow employees.</i> ” (Kotter/Heskett 1992, p. 4)
Flamholtz and Randle	“ <i>Corporate culture consists of values, beliefs and norms that influence the thoughts and actions (behavior) of people in organizations. (...) Corporate culture is, in essence, a guide to behavior as well as mechanism for creating expectations with respect to rewards and action.</i> ” (Flamholtz/Randle 2011, p. 27)

Table 1: Selected definitions of corporate culture

In addition, the state of literature provides less formal definitions of corporate culture, such as: “An organization’s culture encompasses everything it does and everything it makes” (Field, p. 1). Marvin Bower, a former managing director of McKinsey and

Company sketches the culture in an organisation as “the way we do things around here” (quoted in Deal/Kennedy 2000, p. 4). Schein criticises the oversimplification of cultures and considers it as dangerous and misleading (Schein 2009, p. 21). According to Schein, the observable behaviour and **corporate climate** are manifestations of a culture and do not allow drawing conclusions regarding the underlying truth of culture without a careful interpretation and deeper analysis (Schein 2009, p. 24).

Perspectives on corporate culture and organisational development

There broadly exist three perspectives of corporate culture that underlie different assumptions and affect the field of action for management (Sackmann 1990, p. 122).

Culture as...	...variable	...metaphor	...dynamic construct
Assumptions	corporate culture is a variable that can be manipulated	corporate culture is a metaphor for understanding life in companies; organisational reality is socially and symbolically constructed	corporate culture is a dynamic construct, organisational reality is socially constructed AND organisations produce culture
Paradigm	social factist/functional	interpretative	pluralistic
Predominant interest in culture	manipulation, (e.g., managing, controlling and changing the relevant culture variable for best performance)	deep and rich understanding of a particular cultural setting with a focus on organisational symbolism	understanding of the cultural context of an organisation for effective culture-aware management
Assessment	quantitative	qualitative	multiple methods

Table 2: Three perspectives of corporate culture (based on Sackmann 2007, pp. 23-24)

Culture as variable regards organisations as socio-cultural systems in which corporate culture is perceived as a relevant variable next to others, such as leadership or structure. Companies have cultures which under certain conditions can be systematically shaped and managed (Neubauer 2003, pp. 19-20). Within the perspective of **culture as metaphor**, companies are considered as cultures that represent lifeworlds for employees and can only be understood by them. According to this perspective, corporate culture developed spontaneously and is not observable by outsiders. It is necessary to view culture in its entirety and conduct in-depth interviews with members of the organisation (Neubauer 2003, p. 20). The use of **corporate culture as a dynamic construct** argues that reality in an organisation develops over time. Corporate culture at the same time emerges from shared, company-internal learning

processes and from imported cultural knowledge by its members. In this perspective, companies have cultures and are cultures. Proponents of this perspective include Schein, Hofstede and Sackmann who also laid the foundation for the emergence of this conception (Sackmann 1990, pp. 130-131). The author of this paper endorses this perception and claims that culture-aware management is an important responsibility of today's top management.

Operationalisation and measurement of corporate culture

Corporate culture assessment methods include quantitative and qualitative approaches from which some are highly structured and others completely unstructured. In the following an overview of measurement approaches to assess corporate culture is provided.

Overview of research approaches

Depending on the underlying definition and perspective of corporate culture as well as the overall aims, qualitative or quantitative research procedures may be applied (Sackmann 2007, p. 30).

Qualitative research focuses on a holistic approach in order to depict the individual particularities of a company's culture and receive specific insights (Neubauer 2003, pp. 73-74). As an example, ethnography represents a method for gaining in-depth knowledge about the particular cultural scene of a social group and requires vast efforts and time to gather data. Ethnographers strive to describe culture as a whole, including its history, symbols, policies and environment from an insider perspective (Fetterman 2010, pp. 18-19). Qualitative results are usually rather specific and do not allow drawing general conclusions. A major disadvantage is that comparing different companies is restricted and that the research process proves to be very time-consuming (Denison/Spreitzer 1991, p. 8).

Within the scope of **quantitative methods**, researchers attempt to capture relevant variables of corporate culture with standardised instruments in order to enable comparisons within organisations and across different companies (Neubauer 2003, p. 76). The corporate culture types by Cameron and Freeman, which are elaborated in the next subsection can be accounted to this category as well as several further instruments such as the Denison Organisational Culture Survey, the OASIS Culture Questionnaire by the University of Michigan and the Malik Management Zentrum in St. Gallen, and the Organisational Culture Inventory by Cook and Lafferty (Sackmann 2007, pp. 31-33). In the course of quantitative methods, value orientation of group members, practices and behaviours, among others, are collected. In order to

ensure comparability, response categories are predefined and evaluated by the interviewees. The analysis and interpretation is based on statistical procedures which allow an exact depiction of the investigated items and benchmark possibilities (Neubauer 2003, pp. 76-77). By using quantitative instruments, researchers sacrifice deep and detailed insights into a company's culture in favour of rather broad and superficial but comparable results (Cameron/Freeman 1991, p. 31). A further limitation of standardised instruments is the uncertainty of how sampled variables are able to properly depict corporate cultures. In addition, it is questionable whether the formulated items and categories are relevant to understand the research problem and to receive valid results (Neubauer 2003, p. 77).

Corporate culture types by Cameron/Quinn

Typologies of corporate culture are helpful as they simplify thinking and provide categorisations, and therefore supply a useful tool for dealing with the complexity of culture in companies. However, as they only focus on a few dimensions and ideal typical clusters, they only illustrate a narrow view and should only be used as a supporting tool when observing corporate cultures (Schein 2010, p. 175). Based on the **Competing Value Framework**, Cameron/Freemann and Cameron/Quinn developed a methodology that helps managers to assess corporate culture and reveal areas for cultural change (Cameron/Quinn 2006, p. 2). Initially, the Competing Value Framework served as a tool for measuring the effectiveness of an organisation by investigating aspects such as strategy, culture and leadership (Cameron 2006, pp. 5-6). Two dimensions, “flexibility vs. stability” and “internal vs. external orientation”, emerged from a statistical analysis and served as the basis for clustering four culture types: **clan, adhocracy, hierarchy and market culture**. Each culture type is characterised by different dominating attributes, leadership styles and strategic emphases, as illustrated in the following figure.

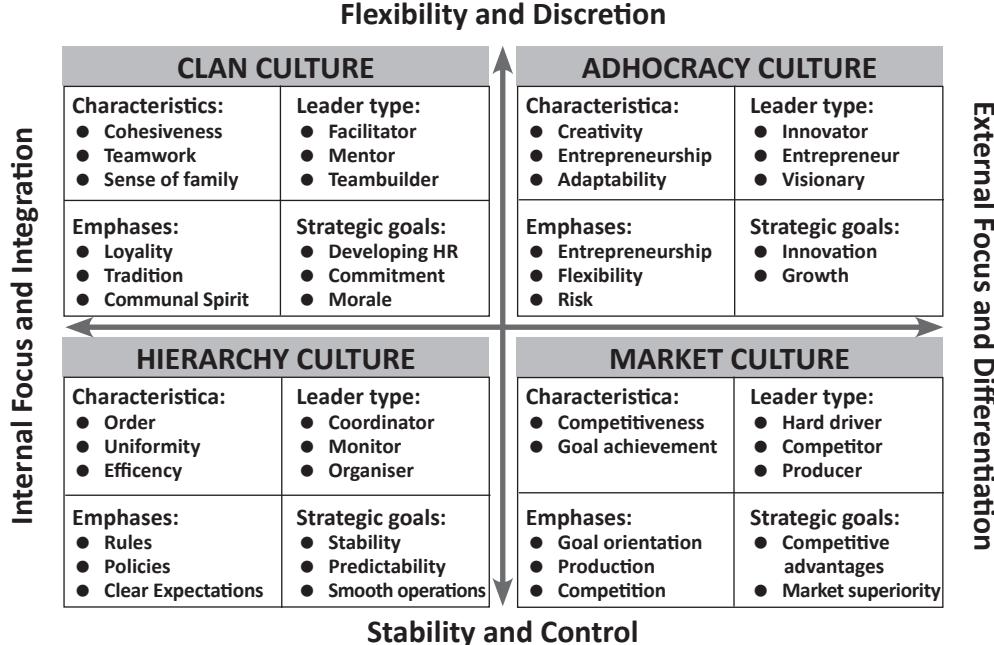


Figure 1: Corporate culture types based on the Competing Values Framework (Cameron/Quinn 2006, p. 46; Cameron/Freeman 1991, p. 29)

Clan cultures are characterised by teamwork, corporate commitment to employees, and a family-atmosphere and are led by mentors and ‘father figures’. **Adhocracy cultures**, led by entrepreneurs and visionaries, further the power of the individual, emphasise on risk taking to be flexible, and promote innovation. The **hierarchy culture** is led by good coordinators and is determined by formalisation and structure in order to provide stability and efficiency. In market cultures, leaders stress result-orientation and are rather demanding about outpacing the competition and being the best in their markets (Cameron/Quinn 2006, pp. 37-44). Building on this empirically validated framework, Cameron and Quinn designed the **Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)**, an instrument that records key dimensions of culture and that can be easily applied to any company (Cameron/Quinn 2006, pp. 19, 23-24). The OCAI indicates which culture type a company belongs to and furthermore helps to diagnose the cultural strength and congruence of an organisation (Cameron/Quinn 2006, p. 37). The instrument was translated and adopted to German-speaking areas, where it is abbreviated as D-OCAI, and has proved to be a beneficial assessment tool in business practice (Strack 2012, p. 30).

Limitations and suggested methods

There is no consensus about the one right tool to assess culture. According to Schein, basic assumptions are vital to understand a company's culture, whereas Hofstede argues that values form the core of culture. Some authors try to avoid these conflicts and base their assessment on different levels (Sackmann 2007, p. 130). On the one hand, qualitative instruments are useful because they provide a holistic assessment of a specific culture. On the other hand, quantitative instruments are beneficial due to contributing to the comparability of different cultures and the support of benchmark possibilities (Cameron/Freeman 1991, pp. 7-8). In general, it is advised to use a multiple-method approach where data are collected from different sources and by using different instruments. A combination of individual interviews, analyses of available documents, observation and questionnaires is considered particularly suitable for assessing corporate culture (Sackmann 2009, p. 18). In the course of the research process, the interpretation of in-depth structures received from interviews and observations is considered as the main challenge researchers have to face (Alvesson/Berg 1992, p. 51).

Before ultimately committing to a research method, it is important to consider the research purposes and research questions. Instruments should be chosen according to the intention and desired outcome of the corporate culture assessment. Hence, it might be desirable to combine elements both of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Punch 2005, p. 240).

Research Methodology

According to the database of the University of Applied Sciences CAMPUS 02, Austria's corporate landscape features 271 world leading firms (as per April 2013).

In accordance with the definition by Simon (2009, p. 15), an Austrian company is considered as being **world market leader**, if it is **number 1, 2 or 3 in the global market, or number 1 in Europe**. In addition, a firm fulfils the criteria, if **one part of the business** (e.g. a division) represents the world or Europe market leader (Jungwirth 2010, p. 182).

In the course of the research, the author relies on publicly available information and figures provided by the companies on their market position to qualify them as world market leaders.

A world market leading company counts as **Austrian world market leader** if the **majority of shares (i.e. > 50%) are in Austrian ownership** and/or the **company's headquarters are based in Austria**.

The delimitation of family-owned and widely held public world market leaders from Austria proves to be challenging as the literature does not provide a final definition of when a company is considered family-owned. The author decides on the following criteria for determining whether an Austrian world market leader is family-owned or widely held public:

A world market leader is considered **family-owned** if more than **50% of share capital** and/or **decision-making rights** are directly or indirectly held by one or more family members, or by the natural person, who has acquired the share capital of the firm, or their descendants. In addition, at least one member of the family has to be formally involved in the governance (or control) of the firm (European Commission 2012). A **publicly listed company** is classified as **family-owned** if the family of the founder or the natural person(s), who has/have acquired the company, (directly or indirectly) own more than 25% of the company shares or decision-making rights. Furthermore, at least one member or descendant of the founding family has to be formally involved in the governance (or control) of the firm (Stiftung Familienunternehmen/Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.) 2007; European Commission 2012). A **widely held public world market leader** is a firm that is publicly listed on a stock exchange and is not classified as family-owned. Furthermore, a subsidiary of a publicly listed non-family firm counts as widely held public.

If the criteria mentioned above are assigned to Austria's corporate landscape, the population for the analytical analysis can be identified as illustrated in the following table. In order to get a better overview of the structure of Austria's family-owned and widely held public world market leaders, the two groups were further segmented according to their size based on the SME definition provided by the European Commission.

World market leader from Austria	Family-owned <i>Publicly listed</i>	Widely held public
SME • < 250 employees and • $\leq \text{€ } 50 \text{ m turnover}$	75	1
Large companies • > 251 employees and • $\geq \text{€ } 51 \text{ m turnover}$	97	8
		15

Table 3: Research population

In order to exclude differences in research outcome that are associated with different company sizes, the authors decided to **focus on large companies only** as no widely held public world market leader from Austria is classified as SME. Over a span of eight weeks, **20 qualitative interviews** with the help of a **semi-structured**

discussion guide were conducted on top management level. The interviews were accompanied by **documentary research** and the **Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument** which was translated and adopted to German-speaking areas by Strack (2012, p. 30). In order to detect potential differences between family-owned and widely held public world market leaders, companies of both groups were interviewed. Since Austria's corporate landscape features a couple of world market leaders with mixed ownership structures, six additional interviews with publicly listed family firms were conducted. The following table gives an overview about the sample structure of the 20 world market leaders from Austria that were interviewed in the course of this study.

World market leaders from Austria $\Sigma = 20$	Family-owned		Widely held public
	<i>Publicly listed</i>		
	8	6	6

Table 4: Sample size

For reasons of anonymity in market research corporate names are not mentioned within this paper and all findings were evaluated anonymously and group-based.

Corporate culture of world market leaders from Austria

Based on the empirical research, this section presents the importance of corporate culture as a success factor for world market leaders from Austria. Furthermore, it addresses the question of which culture types are characteristic of Austria's leading companies and which instruments are used to actively manage corporate culture.

The importance of corporate culture as success factor

There is a strong consensus among the interviewed top managers on the great importance of corporate culture for the economic success of their companies. One interview partner even claimed that “possessing and being aware of one's corporate culture is the essential criterion which distinguishes a top performing company from an average one”.



Figure 2: Importance of corporate culture for economic success

Corporate culture is perceived as one critical endogenous success factor that is likely to increasingly gain importance in the future (today: 8.7; future: 9.3). Consequently, it is the executive management that particularly recognises the role of corporate culture as a success factor and strategic management topic. No significant deviations in answer have been noticed between different ownership structures, which implies that the importance of corporate culture for the success of world market leaders is equally recognised across all company types.

The contribution of corporate culture to success was enquired in an open question which revealed several areas where culture has a favourable effect on a firm's performance. The **scope of influence of corporate culture** on economic success is multifaceted: In total, four of the interviewed managers argued that one of the primary functions of corporate culture is to **give orientation** and to show where the company is heading to. It is essential that employees know the expectations of the top management and are clear about the expected behaviour. Each of the interviewed world market leaders associated the sphere of influence of corporate culture with **inward looking topics** such as **employee conduct**, **high performance orientation** and **commitment**, **high motivation** and **sense of responsibility** of employees, among others, are mentioned as key success drivers. One CEO claimed that "*corporate culture is indeed a very important success factor because it encloses the overall behaviour towards all company stakeholders, from the raw material supplier to the final customer*". There was a consensus among the interview partners that corporate culture positively impacts the establishment of **long-term customer** (mentioned nine times) and **supplier relationships** (5 namings). In addition, a good corporate culture may help create a favourable **corporate image** and a **positive public attitude** (3 namings), which in turn strengthen the relations to internal and external

stakeholders. Concrete examples were possibilities to charge higher prices, better negotiation positions with creditors, higher customer loyalty, better and more qualified personnel and applicants.

Cultural characteristics of world market leaders from Austria

The following section provides an overview of the key cultural characteristics and values on which world market leaders from Austria base their daily behaviour. In addition, the culture profiles of the interviewed world market leaders are presented and a comparison of characteristics is drawn between different ownership structures.

Key cultural characteristics that are decisive for success

Due to the challenges that world market leaders named to face in future, such as increasing market volatility or a feared shortage of skilled workers, corporate culture may **be able to constitute a crucial competitive advantage**. In answer to the question of which attributes a corporate culture has to possess in order to meet the future challenges, one characteristic stands out and is explicitly mentioned by 14 interviewees: **openness**.

According to the majority of Austria's world market leading firms, it is essential to have an open culture in which **opinions are allowed to be expressed freely, employees are motivated to think outside the box and a positive attitude towards change is adopted**. Openness is reflected in the behaviour of all members of the organisation; on the one hand, towards each other, and on the other hand, towards the whole external environment. While **openness** is suggested to form the core of a success-promoting corporate culture, the author aggregated further attributes mentioned by the interview partners in answer to the questions of current **cultural strengths, scope of influence of corporate culture** and decisive factors to overcome **future challenges**. As a result, the figure below presents potential cultural characteristics that are primarily perceived as relevant for business success.



Figure 3: Criteria for a success-promoting corporate culture

Adaptability and flexibility:

A success-promoting corporate culture has to make it easier for a company and its members to act flexibly and to be willing to break old patterns of behaviour. **Adaptability** is recognised as **key driver** to respond to future challenges by 13 interview partners. One interview partner stated that "*the corporate culture itself does not have to be adaptable but it has to achieve that we constantly think about what we could do better or what we could do differently*". This means that the specific corporate culture should not change regularly. In fact, the core values should be permanent. However, if necessary, the characteristics of corporate culture have to **encourage continuous improvement considerations** and possible adaptations of structures and behaviour.

Entrepreneurial thinking:

Five of the interviewed world market leaders explicitly expect every employee **to accept responsibility and to work independently** in his particular scope of duties. Three of the interviewed firms have incorporated **entrepreneurship** into their corporate values. They claim that superior companies have to teach their employees to comprehend the organisational context and to **develop a sense of entrepreneurial responsibility**. Furthermore, it is important to convey that every member of the company is responsible for the success of the business (mentioned three times). In this regard, the top management increasingly discloses strategies and financial figures to employees in order to demonstrate their important contribution to the firm's per-

formance. In addition, it is considered important to create a **culture of trust** and a culture where **failures are constructively dealt with** (4 namings). This implies that employees are not penalised for mistakes which arose from increased responsibilities or attempts to go new ways. However, it is essential that errors are addressed openly and a learning process takes place.

Spirit of innovation:

The fast pace of change and advances in technology is met by the companies' efforts to inspire innovative thinking. To quote one manager: "*There are plenty of ways to find new innovations, and for that reason, the most important thing is to create space for thinking outside the box and to allocate resources accordingly*". 10 of the interviewed world market leaders explicitly mentioned that they wish their staff to **develop a desire for innovation** and for creating new solutions that are of high value to customers or the company. It is perceived essential in today's dynamic markets to increase the pace of innovation and consequently anchor an innovative spirit in the company culture.

Participative leadership:

Along with encouraging entrepreneurial thinking, **leadership** is perceived to considerably affect corporate culture (9 namings). It is seen as important to **engage employees in goal setting** and **decision-making processes** (3 namings). In doing so, it is regarded necessary to **involve those people who have to execute decisions** (2 namings) or grant a specified area of responsibility. Consequently, it is expected that employee engagement and motivation will rise and people are willing to bring in higher efforts.

Diversity, respect and appreciation:

Certain values build the frame of a firm that aims at occupying a leading position in the world market. One interviewed manager said that "*if you want to be an internationally leading company, you have to promote diversity and build an international mindset among all company members.*" Every individual in the organisation and every external stakeholder **has to be treated with respect** (7 namings) and **held in high esteem** (6 namings), regardless of their nationality or gender. Two world market leaders explicitly mentioned that they encourage international exchange programmes and they wish that all employees internalise global thinking. In the recruitment of personnel, one company pays particular attention to **promoting heterogeneity** with the objective of building a workforce which contributes to a high diversity of experiences and new ideas.

Clear identity and vision:

One interview partner pointed out that it is a prerequisite for a company to develop a **clear identity** which is transparent to all members of the organisation and which they can identify with. This perception accompanies the opinion of four interview

partners who consider **giving orientation** as primary function of corporate culture. Furthermore, it is necessary that the **corporate vision and objectives are clear** and that employees know how to achieve superior goals. This may ultimately lead to the stimulation of joint efforts to the benefit of the whole company and promotes a sense of community.

Culture types of world market leaders from Austria

By the use of the D-OCAI, a validated culture assessment tool developed by Cameron/Quinn and adapted to the German-speaking areas by Strack (2012, p. 30), the culture types of world market leaders from Austria have been examined. To begin with, it must be noted that the small sample size does not allow deducing statistically validated answers. The D-OCAI is only used as a supportive instrument to accompany the results received from qualitative interviews. The questionnaire is structured into four parts, each containing four statements, which are rated on a scale from 1 (does not apply) to 5 (does strongly apply).

The following figure depicts the **general aggregated culture profile** of the interviewed world market leaders from Austria. The dark grey area pictures the current culture type, whereas the grey dotted line represents the desired culture².

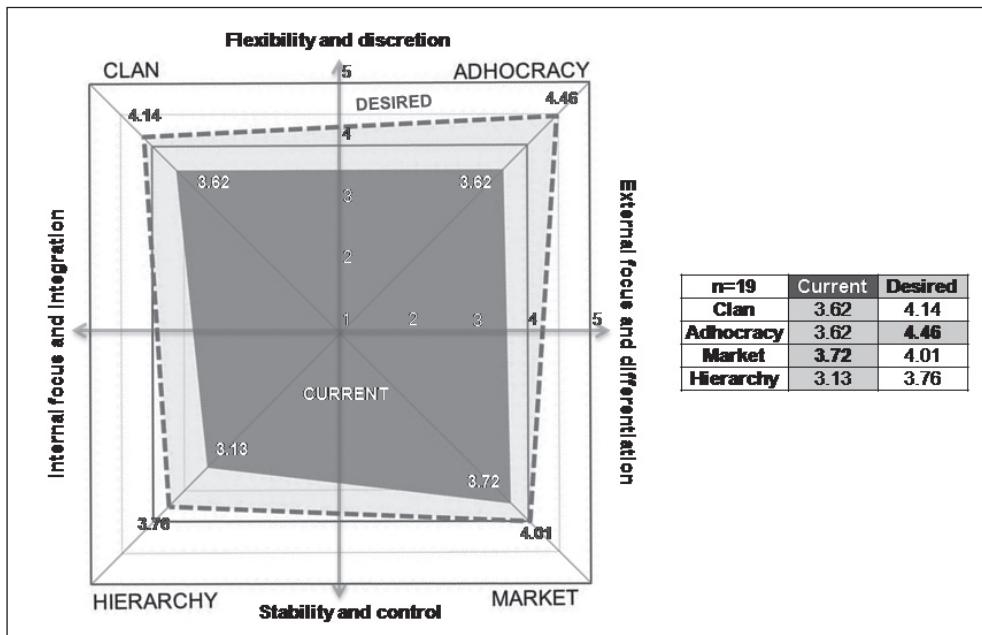


Figure 4: Overview current and desired culture type of Austria's world market leaders

² Please note that one publicly listed family firm did not complete the test, which is why n = 19.

The results showed that **world market leaders from Austria do not exhibit a clear, dominant culture type**. In total, the **market culture** scored slightly higher than the **clan** and **adhocracy** culture and is followed by the **hierarchy** culture. In future, the largest desired change is to **increase the adhocracy culture** but development should also take place in the other quadrants.

Summarised, an **adhocracy culture** describes an organisation that is largely externally oriented and focuses on innovation and flexibility. Employees are willing to take risks and accept responsibilities with the aim to ensure the firm's leading position in products or services. Companies that feature a **market culture** are characterised by a strong result orientation and external focus. Employees are very competitive and the top management is tough and demanding. The **hierarchy culture** describes an organisation where formally defined processes and structures are essential in order to increase efficiency. The company is well-coordinated and emphasises internal maintenance and stability. The **clan culture** is typical for companies with a strong concern for people, a focus on internal maintenance, flexibility and customer relations. Interactions between members of the organisation are characterised by mutual appreciation and teamwork. The firm serves as a surrogate family and is bound together by loyalty (Cameron/Quinn 2006, pp. 66-67).

The balanced culture profile indicates that for the particular market situations of the interviewed world market leaders, **no dominant culture type may be decisive for success** but a mixture of the various culture traits is preferred. Currently, the performance-oriented market culture scores highest. In future, however, greater emphasis should be put on flexibility and individuality (adhocracy culture).

When comparing the current culture profiles of family-owned, publicly listed family and widely held public world market leaders, **minor differences among different ownership structures** can be revealed (see figure 5 below). The interviewed family-owned and publicly listed family companies displayed fairly similar culture profiles. The most pronounced culture types among the 13 firms in this group were the **adhocracy** and **clan culture**, which indicates that family firms increasingly focus on **flexibility** and **adaptability**. In contrast, widely held public world market leaders awarded more points to the **market** and **hierarchy culture type**, which implies that these six firms put emphasis on **stability** and **control**.

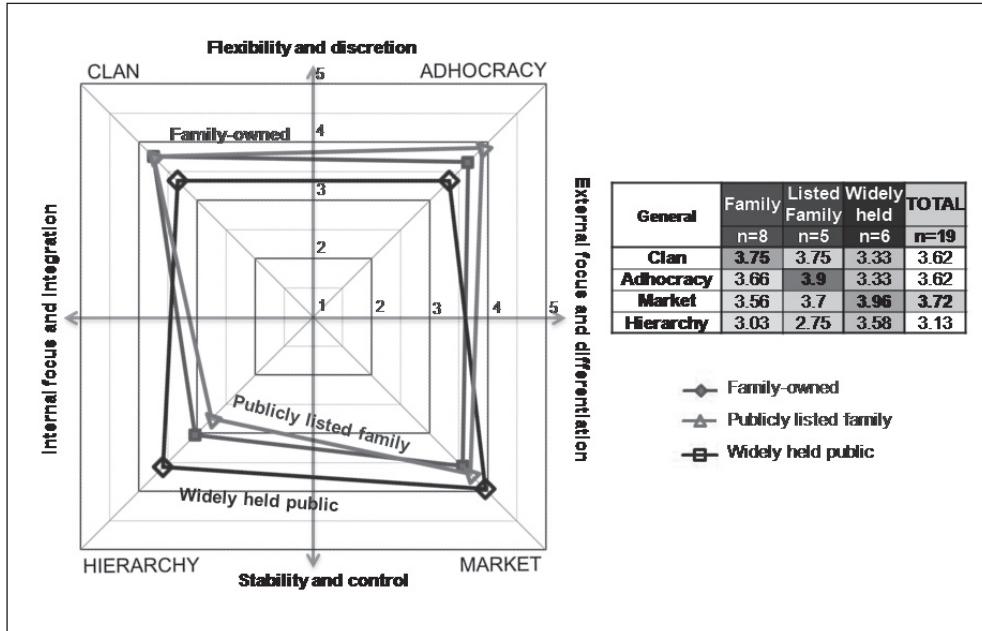


Figure 5: Comparison of culture types

The results of the qualitative interviews indicate that adaptability and flexible reactions to changing environments will become increasingly important for the performance of leading companies in future. However, it is also mentioned that for a firm to be successful it has to achieve a **balance between flexibility and the necessary maintenance of stability** in order to convey a sense of security. Eventually, the effectiveness of a certain culture type depends on the environment a firm operates in. Hence, it is not clear which culture profile is more advisable (Cameron/Quinn 2006, p. 71).

In order to get more specific results, the firms should be differentiated according to different economic sectors, which was not possible in the course of this research due to the small sample size. Furthermore, the results were influenced by the particular view and hierarchy level of the interview partner. In order to get reliable and validated information about the culture profiles, it is necessary to integrate every hierarchy level and collect data from a representative cross section of the companies.

Differences between family-owned and widely held public world market leaders

In general, the research findings **do not reveal large differences** between family-owned and widely held public world market leaders. Every individual firm names different perceived cultural strengths and values. However, some distinctions can broadly be assigned to the different ownership structures, particularly regarding the

answer to the question of improvement potentials. The following table provides an overview of **an attempted classification of cultural characteristics** of the three ownership groups based on the relative number of mentions.

	Family-owned	Publicly listed family-owned	Widely held public
Culture type	Balanced profiles (no dominant culture types)		
Tendency	Clan culture	Adhocracy culture	Market culture
Core values	Teamwork Sustainability	Performance Responsibility	Integrity Openness
Perceived cultural strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long-term trusting relationships ▪ Sustainability ▪ Technological leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance orientation ▪ Adaptability and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainability ▪ Employee involvement ▪ Long-term supplier relationships
Improvement potentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professionalism ▪ Structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transparency ▪ Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordination ▪ Communication

Table 5: Overview of differences in cultural characteristics

Relatively speaking, the corporate cultures of family-owned world market leaders are largely built on the values of **teamwork and sustainability**. Contrary to this, publicly listed family firms encourage **performance and responsibility** and widely held public companies attach the utmost importance to **integrity and openness**.

One family-owned company regards the **close connection of the family to the business as one major source of success**. To cite an executive of a family-owned world market leader: “In times of volatile markets and scepticism towards stock market topics, I believe that *our company is appropriately positioned because there is an increasing demand of values such as family, sustainable investments and quality.*” Apart from **sustainable investments and long-term orientation**, family-owned firms consider the establishment of **long-term, open and trusting partnerships** with suppliers, customers and employees as their growing strength. **High value retention and a sense of tradition** convey security among stakeholders. Need for improvement is seen in the implementation of a **professional approach** to manage corporate culture. The examined family firms have partly experienced exceptional growth but have neglected to adapt their structures accordingly. With the increasing size, the direct contact between staff and owners and top management has diminished. Hence, it is no longer possible for the management to exemplify the values. They rather have to ensure that also new employees promptly get to know the corporate values and are informed about the desired behaviour. This requires preparing a conscious compilation of the content of corporate culture and making it transparent to all employees.

Publicly listed family-owned world market leaders partly face the same challenges. **Clear and open communication** of the company values is considered as being one **potential for improvement**. The personnel should be clear about how decisions are reached, how to participate in company change projects and which behaviour is expected by the top management. Apart from that, the strength of **publicly listed family firms lies in the distinct performance orientation** in the long term. In addition, adaptability and flexibility engagement are mentioned as further cultural strengths.

Widely held public companies outlined that they have room for improvement with regard to the **coordination** of decentralised divisions. One interview partner exemplified that “*sometimes, colleagues from different countries simultaneously work on the same projects without knowing from each other or exchanging information, which causes inefficiencies. The greatest challenge for our structure is to facilitate a better coordination of business units and divisions*”. In this respect, widely held public world market leaders face the same challenge as their family-related counterparts, namely to **alter communication networks and behaviour**. The relative strengths of widely held public world market leaders are seen in their effort to **involve employees and provide freedom for action**.

To sum up, the corporate cultures of Austria’s world market leaders are built upon stable and diverse values which serve as a binding framework for the individual’s actions. The organisational structure and leadership style are designed in a way that employee involvement is encouraged and flexible decision-making processes are enabled. Despite the different ownership structures, no large differences can be identified regarding cultural characteristics.

Evolution of a world market leader’s corporate culture

Corporate culture evolution, as its name implies, is perceived as a **slow, constant process that never ends** (mentioned eight times). The continuous development of corporate culture takes place even when nobody consciously **exerts influence** as culture is nothing fixed or static. To quote one interview partner: “*Most commonly, corporate culture does not have to be adapted to a large extent but it rather develops in small nuances. It is similar to a strategy of a company; hence, it has to be valid in the long term*”. In answer to the question of which are the most important factors that influence the formation and development of corporate culture, the interview partners’ responses are similiar to what literature suggests: Corporate culture is not only a **multilayered system**, but at the same time the evolution of a firm’s culture arises from changes in **various, intertwined influencing factors** (see also Wilson 2001, p. 362). In the following, the author made use of a figure about the factors influencing

culture in an organisation published by Lauer (2010, p. 207) and adapted it to the statements of the interviewed world market leaders. The **owners** who are considered to determine culture to a large degree (mentioned 13 times) were added and the influential factors were split according to whether they can be assigned to the **firm's internal or external environment**.

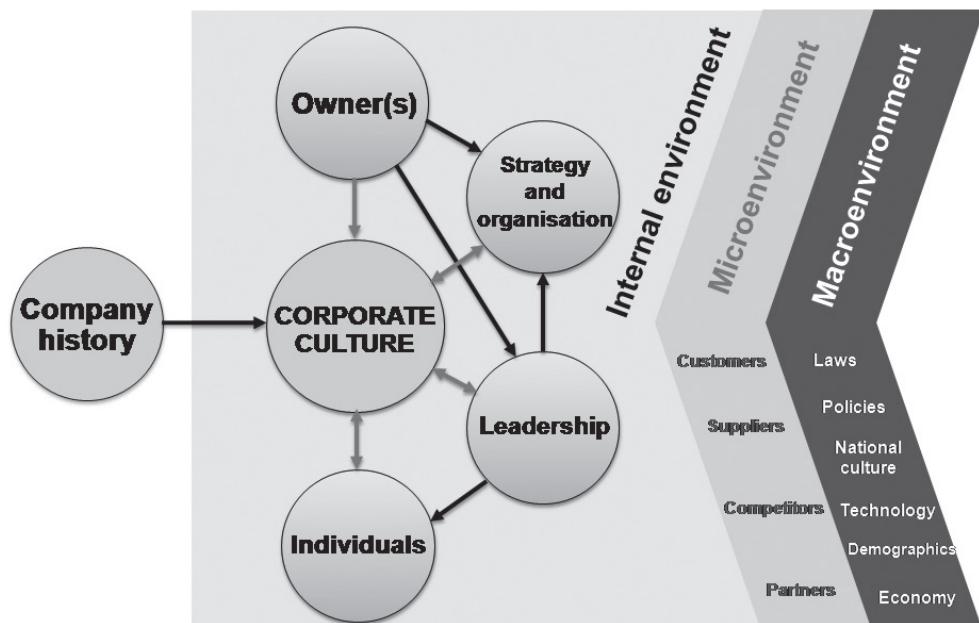


Figure 6: Factors influencing corporate cultures of world market leaders (based on Lauer 2010, p. 207) Since corporate culture is characterised by persistence and long-term validity, the **company history** has a considerable influence on today's cultural characteristics. In five of the interviewed firms, the values are still profoundly marked by the **company founder** and the succeeding generation. In several other companies, the corporate culture has transformed substantially after a **generation and/or management change**.

According to 13 interview partners, the **owners** constitute another important factor influencing culture. Among family related world market leaders, the **owner families** or **majority shareholders** partially have a large impact on the content of corporate culture and the continuity of values. In some cases, family members occupy a leading function in the company or have a seat in the supervisory board, which implies that they are able to exert power and determine strategic decisions. Across the publicly listed companies, the **stock exchange listing** affects organisational structures and strategies as well, and in a wider context corporate culture. A company's listing on the stock market is linked to increasing external requirements on corporate transparency and governance, which correspondingly influences cultural characteristics.

In addition, **strategies and organisational factors** play a role in determining corporate culture, particularly with regard to the definition of future objectives, the designing of decision-making processes and channels of communication, and the integration of newly acquired companies, among others. World market leaders from Austria are to a large extent marked by past **growth and internationalisation** and by the associated increasing size of the organisation. Subsequently, corporate policies and structures have been adapted to the new conditions and, partly, new strategies and leadership approaches had to be applied. As a result, new processes were established and patterns of behaviours evolved to meet the new requirements.

Furthermore, all **individuals** play a role in corporate culture evolution and have the possibility to shape corporate culture to a certain extent. One interview partner referred to employees as a “**quantitative” influential factor**, relating to the great number of personnel that daily practises and determines the corporate culture. Another interview partner from a family-owned firm stated that “*in the past, the top management had a much stronger influence. However, our business today is shaped by mutual decisions and characterised by a growing number of people carrying responsibility*”. The more companies promote and incorporate entrepreneurship into their leadership principles and the more employee initiatives are promoted, the more employee contribution will grow. In this connection, the staff’s impact on corporate culture is likely to rise in the long run.

Instruments to manage corporate culture

In the course of actively shaping corporate culture the top management of world market leaders from Austria selects from an abundance of instruments of which the most important and commonly mentioned ones are presented in the following.

Formal statements

As part of active culture management, the majority of world market leaders from Austria try to **transparently formalise and document corporate culture**. The approaches differ in terms of formalisation and comprehensiveness between family-owned and all publicly listed companies. In particular, the relatively smaller family-owned companies only begin to formally write down the corporate philosophy or values, whereas publicly listed firms already publish their mission statements, corporate social responsibilities reports and codes of conduct, among others. Note, however, that the stock market listing requires the disclosure of information to some extent, and formalisation processes of corporate culture are growingly demanded by customers or investors. On the whole, most world market leaders make use of **struc-**

tured instruments to manage corporate culture, frequently including the formulation of **visions, mission and value statements, leadership principles and codes of conduct**. All these instruments aim at creating a meaningful vision of the future that serves as orientation and provides a long-term strategic direction for the company. The **top management** which is responsible for elaborating the future visions and roadmaps while taking into account the interests of all company stakeholders plays the primary role in this process. Nevertheless, the sole formulation of principles does not sustainably shape corporate culture. It rather must be ensured that they are integrated into existing management and target-setting systems and are comprehended and lived by all members of the organisation.

Corporate communication

Regular **two-way communication** is considered as essential for detecting whether the current corporate culture is perceived as suitable for mastering all required tasks or whether adaptations might be necessary. World market leaders from Austria **attempt to continuously meet and talk and to promote the exchange of information across all hierarchy levels**. In this connection, the principle "**management by walking around**" is again mentioned by two interview partners, which implies that every person occupying a leading position constantly pays attention to how employees feel or which ideas for improvement they might have. Furthermore, world market leaders largely communicate that employee opinions are important and that it is possible to directly express their views to superiors or in some instances even to the executive board. Another important communication issue is to provide **transparency of information from top to bottom**. Corresponding measures include extraordinary top management meetings or so-called '*town hall-meetings or executive talks*'. The prime objective of this approach is to provide current information about business results and strategic directions to employees and answer related questions. Further communication measures include **regular management meetings** in the course of which heads of departments meet and exchange information about current projects, which implies that know-how is unlocked to other company divisions. In addition, corporate culture is partly communicated via **traditional communication channels**, including brochures, posters or information sheets. By means of **company reports, online downloads and public relations activities**, among others, companies equally aim at **reaching external stakeholders** and explain to the public what the company stands for. Employees may find all relevant information on the **intranet** where collaborative elements such as wikis or blogs are increasingly integrated to encourage communication across all divisions.

Personnel selection and development

Applicants are already screened in the course of the recruitment process whether they **fit to the corporate culture** and whether they are able to **integrate and live corporate values** in their daily actions. After an applicant has been selected, **introductory programmes** play a similarly important role in conveying corporate culture. Some of the interviewed world market leaders organise specific corporate culture **information events or training** with the objective of sensitising new employees in culture-targeted working. Other companies are convinced that the corporate culture can only be fully apprehended in the course of time and when experiencing it directly. In addition, corporate culture management of world market leaders from Austria involves to a considerable extent **both personnel and leadership development activities**. The companies recognise the need for **lifelong learning** and offer extended training and development programmes, particularly with regard to personality development, intercultural training and further education in technology. Throughout all HRD activities, it is attempted not only to develop professional competencies but also to sensitise staff members for the specific corporate culture and teach them how behaviour shall be adapted to the corporate values. In addition, three interviewed firms implemented **advanced talent management** systems in order to early identify and support employees who exhibit leadership potential. In general, great importance was attached to promoting internal recruitment and providing career prospects for every staff member. Moreover, individual firms have established **co-operations** with universities or schools and offer international job rotation programmes. One basic requirement for promoting employee development is to **grant freedom** for initiating new ideas and projects. In addition, development measures will be more effective if **compensation and reward systems** reflect the employee's level of performance and recognise the employee's efforts to incorporate corporate values into the daily working life.

Corporate events, programmes and competitions

Corporate events represent a good opportunity to **communicate and underpin** corporate culture and **strengthen the solidarity** among all members of the company. The 'celebratory cultures' of the interviewed world market leaders distinguish themselves with reference to the frequency and size of events and gatherings. Four companies mentioned that they organise at least one annual company-wide festivity in the form of **Christmas or summer celebrations** to which usually all employees and their families are invited. Furthermore, individual departments frequently arrange little excursions or celebrate employees's birthdays, anniversaries and other events. All corporate events aim at developing a **sense of belonging** among the employees

and also **serve as a reward** for each employee's contribution to the business success. Corporate culture is also reflected in events that promote the **exchange of information** between all hierarchy levels and where employees are able to directly discuss with the top management. In connection with the active development of corporate culture, one world market leader initiated **competitions** that promote employees to contribute ideas on how culture can be expressed or communicated. Another company chose one **value as theme for the year** and centred contests and activities around this value. Further corporate measures contain **exercise and sport programmes** for employees, the promotion of **healthy lifestyles and eco-friendly mobility behaviour**. For example, the activities of one firm that is trying to set a good example include the provision of the necessary infrastructure, such as a canteen offering healthy dishes, in-house bicycle rental services and corporate sports grounds or a cooperation with fitness centres.

Value process

By means of a **systematic value process**, companies aim at depicting the current corporate values and define guidelines for the future which subsequently will be translated into everyday work activities. Eight of the 20 interviewed world market leaders reported that they have recently conducted a value process or are currently implementing one. The following figure illustrates the basic process sequences that were described by the interviewed firms. While the first two steps, **formulation and implementation**, are entirely based on the responses of the interview partners, the third step **review and control** is partly substantiated on the grounds of existing literature.

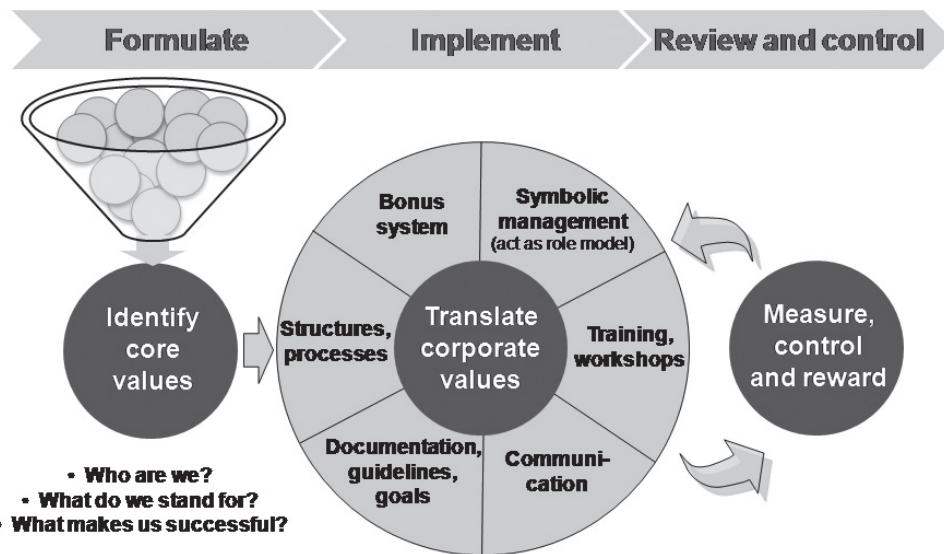


Figure 7: Value process

(1) Formulate: The value process starts with the top management meeting and questioning: *Who are we? What does the company stand for? Which values and ways of behaviour made us successful in the past? Which values do we want to keep and which will we additionally need to master future challenges?* The participants of the **first meeting** or workshop mainly consist of the **board members who are the owners or majority shareholders**, and a member of the HR or business development department or an external consultant who acts as a **moderator**. The first meeting is followed by several feedback loops which include **internal and external perspectives**. In four of the mentioned firms, the most important customers were asked for their opinion and/or a large number of employees across the world and from all hierarchy levels got involved. In general, this process sequence **can take up to six months** until the top management eventually decides on certain values and elaborates a corresponding detailed description of their implications.

(2) Implement: Formulated corporate values can only be fully effective when they are **translated into everyday work** and provide **clear orientation of actions** for managers and employees. Each member of the organisation should understand which behaviour towards internal and external stakeholders is desired and which is not. Subsequently, the **top management** accepts responsibility for acting as a **role model** and sets an example for how to adapt behavioural patterns to the corporate values. In order to ensure that the management and employees internalise the content of the values and comprehend the implications for behaviour, firms introduce a **major package of training and communication measures**. Two companies made use of **workshops** in order to elaborate, together with management, employees or business partners, the meaning and consequences of the corporate values for daily behaviour. One company instructed 160 **value ambassadors** that are responsible for promoting the value implementation throughout the world. The process is complemented by a wide range of communication measures, including posters, books, websites, brochures and other print or digital media. Furthermore, in the course of the implementation process, both **target agreements and reward systems** may be adapted to the corporate values as well as **structures and processes**.

The last process sequence, **(3) review and control** was added by the authors to complete the process. As some of the value processes of the interviewed world market leaders are relatively young, they have **not developed systematic cultural monitoring measures yet**. However, Sackmann (2011, pp. 174-176) suggests that in order to ensure that the corporate values are preserved and provide long-term validity, it is necessary to **regularly examine whether the values are actually lived** and if the guidelines of behaviour are observed. In addition, it has to be reviewed whether the corporate actions match future challenges or if small modifications of processes etc. might be necessary. Along with the monitoring of corporate values and employee

actions, exceptional employee efforts towards joint goals must be recognised and awarded accordingly.

In the end, even though a value process is time consuming and requires thorough preparation, it constitutes a suitable tool to pick up existing corporate values and expand or adapt them if necessary. The incorporation of values conveys orientation and stability and serves as a comprehensible guideline for actions.

Research implications and limitations

The research findings suggest that large world market leaders from Austria **rate corporate culture as an increasingly important success factor** that determines the actions of every member of the organisation. Since **no two corporate cultures were discovered to be identical** regarding their specific core values and strengths, **no general recipe for a corporate culture that promotes world market leadership** may be deducted. Each company faces different challenges, depending on its external environment and internal conditions. However, based on the research findings, **key cultural attributes** can be determined **that are perceived to considerably contribute to the future viability** of world market leaders and companies-to-be. Accordingly, recommendations for action are listed hereinafter:

- *The top management has to become aware of visionary and authentic leadership representing the prerequisite for creating a success-promoting corporate culture.*

A company's top management is suggested to have the greatest scope of influence on corporate culture and shapes a firm's culture through each of its actions and decisions. Visionary leadership is the first thing to be approached when initiating cultural development in times of corporate crises. In order to be authentic and credible, top managers are required to live and stand for what they praise. Successful culture-aware leadership includes constantly sensing and listening to the concerns and opinions of all members of the organisation and ensuring that the corporate values are incorporated into every day work.

- *Every member of the organisation is capable of making a valuable contribution to the company's success which should be promoted and rewarded appropriately by the management.*

A superior company should convey the feeling that each employee is responsible for the success of the business and should encourage entrepreneurial thinking of its personnel. In this context, it is considered important to develop a culture of trust and an atmosphere where employees are not penalised for mistakes which arose from increased responsibilities or the attempt to go new ways. Failures have to be dealt with constructively in order to ensure learning.

- ***In order to meet the future business challenges, a corporate culture should, above all, incorporate one characteristic: openness.***

Because of increasing market volatility, globalisation and fast pace of life, it is regarded particularly important that a firm's culture is open to change, new cultures, people and developments. Openness shall be reflected in the behaviour of all employees and the company and all individuals should be encouraged to break old patterns of behaviour and respond flexibly to new demands.

- ***Times of transition or accelerated growth should be accompanied accordingly by corporate culture management.***

Changes of generations, economic problems and insufficient structures due to accelerated growth are potential examples which necessitate a shift of strategies and also demand active corporate culture development. Times of transitions cause companies to re-examine prevailing corporate values, strategies and objectives and implement processes that ensure that the organisation develop in the desired direction. In order for change projects to be successful, adapting corporate culture and tying up a comprehensive package of measures is required.

- ***In order to make the contents of corporate culture transparent up to the last employee in larger organisations, it requires formal statements and open communication.***

Every member of a company should be aware of the corporate culture and be informed about how decisions are reached, what behaviour is expected and how to contribute new ideas. With increasing size, it is necessary for companies to implement systematic corporate culture management activities because it may not be sufficient for managers to only act as a role model. Firms rather have to become aware of which values they want to represent and formulate associated implications for action. By means of the implementation of open communication channels, the free flow of knowledge across all hierarchy levels should be supported and potential room for corporate culture improvement may be detected.

- ***Corporate culture should be consciously monitored at regular intervals in order to ensure that culture develops in the desired direction.***

Even though corporate culture is considered as stable and long-term oriented, it should be consciously reflected at regular intervals regarding its suitability for mastering future challenges. In addition, existing patterns of thinking and behaviour should be reviewed in terms of their correspondence to the desired way of acting and modifications should be developed when it seems necessary.

These recommendations not only correspond to large world market leaders but may also be applied to all businesses regardless of size or ownership structure. As a starting point, each company has to become aware of what it specifically stands for and manage corporate culture accordingly.

Research limitations

Due to the **numerous definitions**, conceptions and methods to operationalise **corporate culture** and even corporate **success**, researchers face the problem of the **limited comparability** of various study results. In the course of this paper, the importance of corporate culture as success factor was investigated by means of 20 qualitative interviews on top management level. The major topics were mainly covered through open questions, resulting in revealing a broad number of different statements and opinions. However, it **restricts the generalisability** of findings and does not allow conclusions to the research population. Which correlations actually exist between culture and performance indicators was not part of the examination but may be investigated in an additional quantitative research project. A further restriction represents the focus of the study on the top management level only. On the one hand, one problem is posed by the different definitions within companies about when somebody is considered as top manager. On the other hand, what is even more decisive, in order to adequately depict the global corporate culture of a firm, interview partners from all hierarchy levels and from across all countries have to be included into the investigation. Regarding the application of the culture type test, the number of cases is insufficient to statistically substantiate the test results, which is why the instrument was only used as supporting tool, as explained earlier.

Conclusion

Similar to what literature suggests the research findings demonstrate **the major importance of corporate culture as “soft” success factor** for Austria’s world market leaders. This applies to both family-owned and widely held public world market leaders.

The results reveal that a **success-promoting** corporate culture has, above all, to **incorporate openness**. This implies that members of the organisation are allowed to freely express their opinions, employees are motivated to think outside the box, and a positive attitude towards change is adopted. In addition, the characteristics of a decisive corporate culture should encourage **continuous improvement** considerations and **adaptability** while taking demands of the internal and external environment into account. Besides, a major role is assigned to the **top management** which is in charge of **developing the long-term strategic direction** of the company and is responsible for actively managing corporate culture. In particular, they are requested to **embodify the corporate values** and act as a **role model**. Furthermore, their tasks include **constantly sensing and listening** to the concerns and opinions of all members of the organisation and ensuring that the corporate values are incorporated into every

day work. There is still room for improvement regarding the awareness of the top management's actions and regular monitoring processes.

The interviewed world market leaders, whether they are family-owned or widely held public, **are not marked by a dominant culture type**, which implies that a balanced orientation towards multiple dimensions may be preferable in these particular cases.

The present paper provides **a first insight** into the particularities of the corporate culture of world market leaders from Austria and broadly reveals its importance for success. The author was only able to **cover a limited number of perspectives** on the vast subject of corporate culture, including the role of leadership on corporate culture development, decisive cultural characteristics for success and instruments to manage corporate culture. Further research is required to deepen and enlarge the knowledge of cultural characteristics and dimensions that promote world market leadership while revealing systematic instruments to promote the positive effects of corporate culture.

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Leading Family Businesses

Initial Situation

As per the definition of the European Union, 90% of companies in Austria are Family Businesses (FBs). If sole proprietors are not considered, this number decreases to 30%. However, FBs are the core of the Austrian economy as they provide about 82% of all jobs, generate about 86% of revenues and create 88% of gross value added (cf. FU Forschung Austria/Duque 22.09.2017).

Herein, the leadership of an organization plays an important role in any company's or organisation's success (cf. Harvard Business Review 2014, p.1). Leadership of FBs clearly differentiates from leadership of non-FBs (cf. Klein 2004, p. 234), as in the majority of FBs, ownership and leadership are identical (cf. LeMar 2014, p. 6). In FBs in the first generation, the style of authoritarian leadership is predominant, the generations following after should strive for a cooperative leadership (cf. LeMar 2014, p. 175).

This paper focuses on the different leadership styles in FBs, and especially on cooperative leadership and its exogenous influencing factors, as it has been shown that cooperative leadership is best equipped to overcome the challenges of a changing market.

Leadership in Family Businesses

FBs are fascinating creations within the business world. And not only that - with a turnover of around 616 billion euros and more than 2.92 million employees, FBs are by close definition (without sole proprietors) extremely important for the Austrian economy (cf. FU Forschung Austria/Duque 22.09.2017). Due to the tight correlation of business and private structures, FBs show specific particularities in comparison to non-FBs (cf. Halder 2016, p. 34; Zellweger 2017, p. 36). Important characteristics are the strong interrelation between the family and the business, the knowledge continuity, the longevity as well as the associated social norms of harmony, benevolence and support (cf. Zellweger 2017, p. 37f.; Mandl 2008, p. 54 - 67).

Furthermore, leadership of FBs clearly differentiates from leadership of non-FBs (cf. Klein 2004, p. 234), as family member leaders represent the interests of the three different subsystems of FBs: the business, the family and the ownership. The three subsystems are interrelated and interdependent and each system requires its own leadership (cf. Aronoff/Baskin 2011, p. 1). The following figure represents the three subsystems of FBs, whereby the red circle outlines the place in which leadership is focused in this paper.

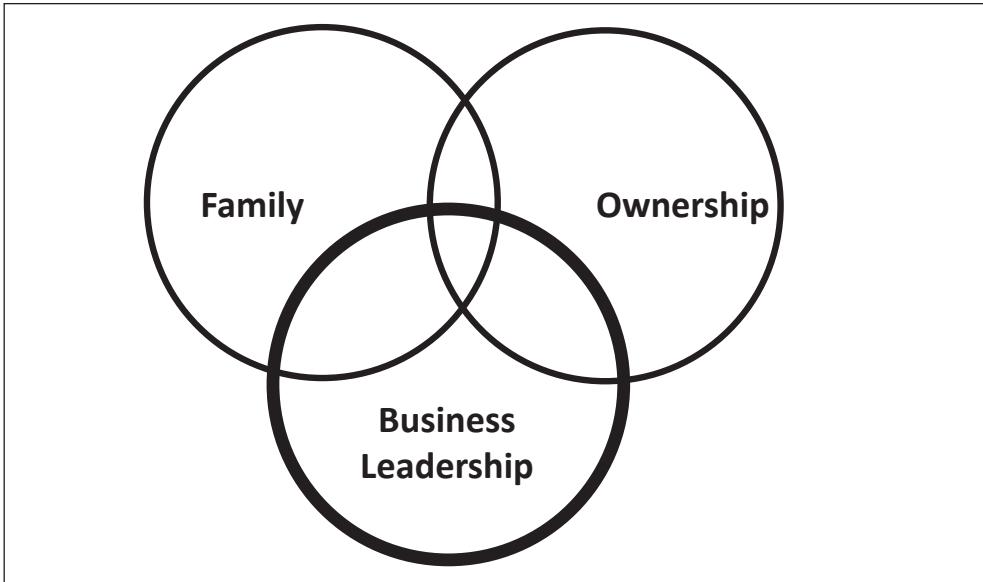


Figure 1: Leadership in FBs (based on Duque M. 22.09.2017)

In most FBs, the leader represents the ownership and the leadership - the motivation and interest to diligently and conscientiously deal with the invested capital is much higher, as it represents their own capital. The personal life situation is another difference between FBs and non-FBs, as leaders within non-FBs can mainly separate private and professional life (cf. Meyer 2007, p. 30f.). Another characteristic of leadership within FBs is the increasing challenges for succeeding generations, as the family and the business become larger and more complex and the number of related owners may grow as well (cf. Aronoff/Baskin 2011, p. 2).

What is more, emotions are an important factor in FBs, as family members tend to have strong positive and negative emotions about the business. Additionally, leaders of FBs always have two goals in mind: (a) increasing shareholder value and (b) securing wealth and status for the family (cf. Aronoff/Baskin 2011, p. 13f.). In contrast to non-FBs, it is much harder for employees of FBs to achieve a top management position if they are not members of the family – this could lead to less motivation among employees (cf. Mittelsten Scheid 1997, p. 52).

Moreover, leadership within FBs is especially characterized by continuity and stability, as leaders of FBs put in more hours at the office than leaders of non-FBs (cf. Roland Berger Strategy Consultants 2014, p. 4f.). This may lead to more commitment, motivation, personal emotional engagement and long-term thinking (cf. Meyer 2007, p. 31). Furthermore, leadership within FBs may include family and non-family employees. Therefore, family (e.g. guaranteed income and security for family members) and economic (e.g. remuneration) factors must be achieved. This dual relationship creates complex structures in terms of labour relationships and causes a unique positive or negative context within FBs (cf. Mazagatos 2017, p. 2).

Leadership Styles

Leadership can be described with many different approaches like trait, skills, behavioural, situational, transformational or styles approaches (cf. Yukl 2013, p. 15). The approach leadership style started in the 1930s, based on the recognition that leadership success does not mainly depend on the personality of the leader, but on the behaviour towards subordinates (cf. Hungenberg/Wulf 2011, p. 364). Therefore, this approach focuses on the behaviour of leading persons and concentrates on what leaders do and how they act, including their actions towards followers. In the context of leadership style, leadership is a compound of two general kinds of behaviour: relationship and task behaviour. Whereas task behaviours focus on the goal accomplishment, relationship behaviour helps followers to feel comfortable within the business (cf. Northouse 2013, p. 75). The research on leadership styles goes back to Lewin (1939), when he classified the styles as authoritarian, cooperative and Laissez-Faire (cf. Kaehler 2014, p. 24).

Authoritarian (Patriarchal) Leadership Style

Authoritarian leadership is characterized by the concentration of the decision-making authority on one person within the business. Therefore, the leading persons make any decision without involvement of the followers (cf. Zepf 1972, p. 26). According to Howard and Wellins (1994), there are five types of authoritarian leader behaviour: (a) the controller, who drives based on numbers, (b) the commander, who orders the tasks and expects obedience, (c) the ruler, who sees making decisions as a privilege of management, (d) the judge, who assesses the performance of the followers and distributes rewards and punishments and (e) the guard, who protects the resources (cf. Bass 2008, p. 441).

What is more, the authoritarian leaders can be classified by defining strict goals and instructions for the followers (cf. Peters 2015, p. 52), which are communicated

with clear commands and without any further explanation (cf. Zepf 1972, p. 26; Macharzina/Wolf 2015, p. 587). The leaders also stress obedience, loyalty and strict adherence to roles, which may result in respect, appreciation and fondness from the followers (cf. Bass 2008, p. 440). However, the subordinates are also limited in their scope of action and are not flexible in their working methods. This also affects the integral view on the business of the subordinates, as they do not have to fulfil interrelated working processes. Consequently, the employees are less motivated (cf. Peters 2015, p. 52). Besides, within the authoritarian leadership style the followers are rather seen as factors of production than as humans. This leads to social distance and to missing personal appreciation (cf. Hungenberg/Wulf 2011, p. 365f.).

However, authoritarian leadership is also seen as an effective approach during difficult times, as conflicts could be resolved more quickly with strict instructions and a clear direction reduces fear and insecurity in employees (cf. Peters 2015, p. 52). Authoritarian leadership also might support productivity and work performance, as a greater distance between followers and leading persons leads to fewer communicative problems (cf. Bass 2008, p. 446).

In cases of higher regard towards the subordinates, the leading style is classified as patriarchal leadership, which can mainly be found in FBs (cf. Hungenberg/Wulf 2011, p. 365). Patriarchal leadership can be defined as the patriarch being at the top of the management. His personality forms the centre of this leadership. The decision-making principle is shouldered by one person (or by a group of closely related persons), who takes the ultimate responsibility and does not delegate any tasks to the employees (cf. Von Schlippe 2014, p. 99; KMU Forschung Austria 2013, p. 94).

Cooperative Leadership Style

Cooperative leadership, also called participative or democratic leadership, is classified as the opposite of authoritarian leadership. Cooperation is a fundamental philosophy of humans and includes sharing visions, coordinating tasks or creating a common future. Therefore, the leading person motivates the subordinates to participate in discussions and decision-making processes. The leaders do not issue instructions but give advice to the followers and provide effort to support the followers and their individual goals (cf. Macharzina/Wolf 2015, p. 587; Sprenger 2012, p. 52).

The cooperative leadership style intends to inspire agreement between the leading person and the subordinates regarding decision-making. In general, this occurs through meetings, which are an important leadership instrument within cooperative leadership (cf. Peters 2015, p. 51). As studies show, cooperative leadership is promoted by working in proximity, as, therefore, the employees push each other to better performances (cf. Sprenger 2012, p. 83). Cooperative leadership is also considerate,

consensual, sets the employee at the centre and is concerned with the preservation of good working relations. Generally, cooperative leaders demonstrate the following principles according to Gill (1996): (a) personal responsibility, (b) encouraging subordinates to become leaders, (c) enclosure, (d) equalization, and (e) full consultation. A cooperative leader depends on the skills of the subordinates but believes that they are motivated and search for the opportunity to prove their value (cf. Bass 2008, p. 441).

It can be said that cooperative leadership places the same requirements on leaders and subordinates, as it is the own responsibility of employees to actively design the relationship with their leaders. Therefore, a mutual dependency between leading persons and employees exists. However, even when individuals share a vision, they stay individuals and only share the common vision. Every individual contributes to the shared vision, but only if the others in the team do the same. It is also important to mention that cooperation is not the addition of individual performances, but the result of simultaneous engagement of all individuals (cf. Meyer 2007, p. 83; Sprenger 2012, p. 52 - 54).

Advantages of Cooperative Leadership Style

As studies show, meeting the individual needs of the subordinates, integrating them into the decision-making process and delegating responsibility is especially nowadays of high importance, as the complexity of tasks require the involvement of employees from different sectors with different competences and experiences (cf. Hollmann 2013, p. 153). The involvement of subordinates in the decision-making process also improves the quality of decisions, as individual persons with different qualifications and strengths work together. However, hereby it is crucial for the participants to trust the leading person and see the decision-making process as beneficial and legitimate, otherwise cooperation is unlikely (cf. Yukl 2013, p. 135; Sprenger 2012, p. 54). Moreover, time constraints, the number of attendees, formal policies, the level of education of the subordinates, skills of the leading persons to perform meetings with the employees are influencing factors that might affect cooperative leadership (cf. Yukl 2013, p. 136; Bass 2008, p. 447).

Another benefit of cooperative decision-making is the higher acceptance of the decision, as subordinates can identify themselves with it and even perceive it as their own decision. Consequently, the subordinates feel treated with dignity and respect, the motivation to introduce the decision increases successfully and fear as well as anxieties about changes that decisions might entail are reduced (cf. Yukl 2013, p. 136). Besides, cooperative leadership and the employee's perceived impact and control positively influence the well-being of subordinates and the observed fairness (cf.

Hollmann 2013, p. 153f.). The empowerment gives subordinates the perception of being able to determine their own work roles, to fulfil important tasks and to influence crucial events (cf. Yukl 2013, p. 133). Another positive outcome of cooperative leadership is a pleasant working atmosphere, higher productivity, reduced employee fluctuation and reduced absences as well as whether the leading person is present or not (cf. Hernandez Bark/Van Quaquebeke/Van Dick 2017, p. 95; Bass 2008, p. 447). Furthermore, it can be stated that cooperative leadership leads to higher satisfaction, motivation, morale, loyalty, commitment and willingness to comply with the leader's initiatives (cf. Bass 2008, p. 448).

Challenges of Cooperative Leadership Style

Cooperative leadership can be negatively influenced by psychological and demographic factors of individuals, as attitudes, values, expectation and personal characteristics of leading persons and followers can constitute barriers in cooperative leadership. A risky attitude, low social competence, low commitment to the company or general mistrust can negatively influence the willingness to cooperate. Another aspect that negatively influences cooperative leadership are a higher age and a low level of education. Social pressure and diffusion of responsibility are further disadvantages in cooperative leadership. Within the organization, departmental thinking, silo structures or individualization of service attribution constitute more challenges of cooperative leadership. What is more, a high number of participants may negatively influence cooperation, as the influence of more self-confident people and the competition among the employees due to social comparison increases. In addition, this leadership style requires mutual consideration and more time in the decision-making process than non-cooperative leadership styles (cf. Wunderer/Grunwald 1980, p. 115 - 277; Sprenger 2012, p. 55). Additionally, it can be mentioned that the transformation from an individual worker to a team worker is a learning process that can only be performed in an appropriate surrounding. Therefore, the most important task for leading persons is to create an environment that invites cooperation. Besides, cooperation is the result of a problem that cannot be solved individually and therefore the individual participants need each other mutually. However, if no essential problem exists, cooperation cannot be achieved, as no mutual dependency exists. Hereby, it is a challenge for leading persons to present individual problems as common problems, as most of the time problems or goals are broken down to sub-goals for different departments of a company. As everybody is only interested in their own goals and loses track of the common goal, egoism might come up (cf. Sprenger 2012, p. 56 - 72).

Another big challenge of cooperative leadership is the perceived negative difference between individuals, as everyone looks and acts differently and has an individual

history and background. If someone is very anxious, these differences may appear as a threat and the result is that power towards the other people develops (cf. Sprenger 2012, p. 93f.).

Laissez-Faire

Laissez-Faire is classified by a high freedom of action for the subordinates due to a minimum of interpersonal influence behaviour by the leading person. The information flow is also reduced to a minimum, as information is only shared when desired (cf. Macharzina/Wolf 2015, p. 587). In order to exercise Laissez-Faire leadership, reliance and confidence in the subordinates is of high importance as the leading person consciously dispenses with regulations, limitations or instructions (cf. Peters 2015, p. 134). Laissez-Faire leaders have a hands-off approach towards the work of the subordinates, ignore their needs and do not monitor their performance. What is more, leading persons with this leadership style fail to make decisions, refuse to take actions and are not available when they are needed (cf. Marturano/Gosling 2008, p. 168), which leads to low productivity in the subordinates (cf. Hernandez Bark/Van Quaquebeke/Van Dick 2017, p. 95).

On top of it, Laissez-Faire leading persons can be classified by their missing confidence in their ability to supervise and by their avoidance of taking a stand on various issues. However, the passivity of the leading person can also result in higher motivation of the subordinates towards self-set goals of achievement, independence and power (cf. Bass 2008, p. 143). Nevertheless, it is questionable if Laissez-Faire can even be designated as a form of leadership (cf. Macharzina/Wolf 2015, p. 587), as the leader does not take a leading role but leaves the employees alone when solving problems (cf. Hernandez Bark/Van Quaquebeke/Van Dick 2017, p. 95).

Differences in Communication Style

Communication styles are defined as “the characteristic way a person sends verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal signals in social interactions denoting (a) who he or she is or wants to (appear to) be, (b) how he or she tends to relate to people with whom he or she interacts, and (c) in what way his or her messages should usually be interpreted” (de Vries et al. 2009, p. 179). According to studies, there are mainly seven different communication styles: reflectiveness, supportiveness, precision, expressiveness, aggressiveness, niceness and emotionality (cf. de Vries et al. 2009, p. 198). According to these communication styles, it can be said that authoritarian leadership mainly make use of expressiveness, precision and aggressiveness. In reality, however, supportiveness, reflectiveness, niceness and emotionality can mainly be found

within cooperative leading persons (cf. de Vries/Bakker-Pieger/Oostenveld 2009, p. 377).

Authoritarian leaders want to prove their power by showing that their foundations are firm. They mostly do it with direct and loud communication (cf. Schedler/Hoffmann 2015, p. 94). Interesting is also the fact that these leading persons often do not need to command, as their unspoken commands are also followed. The authority of the leading persons consists of the communication of decision premises, which are accepted by system fellowship (cf. Luhmann 1976, p. 99f.). It can also be stated that authoritarian leaders are passive leaders, communicate one-way and do not allow feedback from their subordinates (cf. Allahverdyan/Galastyan 2016, p. 18).

In contrast to this, cooperative leading persons make use of motivating communication, which increases employee performance, job satisfaction, team creativity as well as the perception of the effectiveness of the leading person. In addition, motivating communication has a positive effect on the quality of decision-making processes (cf. Mayfield/Mayfield 2016, p. 467 - 475). Cooperative leaders are communicative leaders, who can be defined as someone “who engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, practices participative decision-making, and is perceived as open and involved” (Johansson/Miller/Hamrin 2013, p. 155).

Leadership Styles in Family Businesses

A telephone survey with 251 leading persons of Styrian FBs with 7 to 20 employees, independent of generation or sector was conducted (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 64 - 66). The interviewees were asked to rate several statements about their leading behaviour on a five-point rating scale. With an accuracy of 98.8% it can be said that 59.4% and therefore the majority indicated to lead cooperatively. Only 13.1% are observed to lead in an authoritarian way, whereby 27.5% are indicated to have a Laissez-Faire leadership style. By having a closer look at the single statements, it can be observed that with an accuracy of 99.0%, 218 leaders associate clear decision guidelines with the cooperative leadership style. What is more, the statement clear hierarchical structures shows an arithmetic average of 2.48 with a standard derivation of 1.591. Therefore, it can be observed that cooperative leadership in FBs is indeed associated with collective working and engagement, but also with collective decision-makings and clear hierarchical structures, which entails that still the leaders need to make the decisions. This rather implicates a direct-cooperative leadership style than a cooperative leadership style. As a consequence, a further evaluation of the determined 149 respondents, who stated to lead cooperatively, was done. Hereby, the answers to the statements that indicate a rather cooperative leadership style were further observed and differentiated in more detail. This revealed that 59% follow a

rather direct-cooperative leadership and 41% a cooperative leadership style. This leads to the following distribution of leadership styles in FBs.

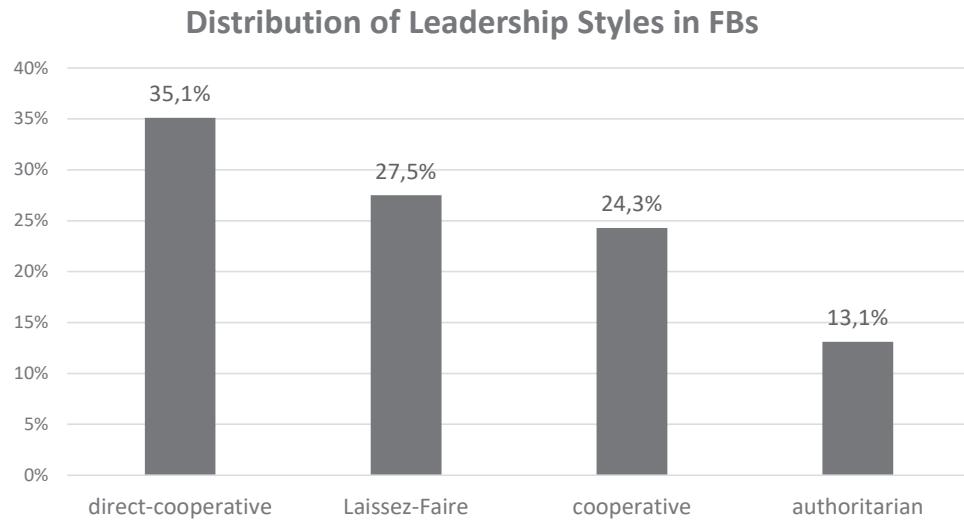


Figure 2: Collectively Visualization of Leadership Styles in FBs (Güttersberger 2018, p. 103)

The result indicates that within FBs the direct-cooperative leadership is the most frequent leadership style. This implies that employees are involved within the decision-making process, but it is still the leading person making the final decision and that a clear cooperative leadership is hard to realize, as still only 24.3% leaders in Styrian FBs apply this leadership style.

Furthermore, it can be highlighted that 63.3% of leading persons of Styrian FBs are sole owners and consequently, only 36.7% share the ownership with one family member, like father, mother or most frequently with the spouse.

Exogenous Influencing Factors

The number of cooperative leading persons in Styrian FBs is with 24.3% still very low. The reason for this can be traced back to various exogenous and endogenous factors influencing cooperative leadership.

Exogenous factors can be classified into global and competitive environments. The global environment consists of sociocultural, technological, political and economic environments (cf. Meffert/Burmann/Kirchgeorg 2015, p. 45). A change within these environments is called a megatrend. Megatrends are defined as long-term and overarching transformation processes. In contrast to trends like consumer trends or fashion trends, megatrends last for about 30 to 50 years, have a comprehensive in-

fluence worldwide, lead to profound transformation in all areas of life and can be projected with high probability for over 15 years. However, a megatrend can also be seen as a risk, as it leads to fast and disruptive changes, if the company is not prepared to face these trends. On the other hand, a megatrend could lead to new fields of growth or might also inspire innovation processes (cf. Z-Punkt 2017, p. 2; Eberhardt/Majkovic 2016, p. 1f.).

The following table shows the ranking of the 19 megatrends based on their strength of influence on cooperative leadership. This ranking was conducted by eight leading persons of FBs (practitioners) and eight experts in the field of leadership in FBs (theorists) in the course of a qualitative market research (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 61 - 64). However, it must be stated that the rating of the exogenous influencing factors was very challenging for the experts, as they were of the opinion that almost all of these factors are interconnected with each other and therefore a clear separation can hardly be made. Consequently, it can be said that leaders of FBs need to be aware of all exogenous influencing factors within their leadership style. It can also be stated that a cooperative leadership style best helps to cope with these influencing factors. It can be assumed that digitalization and demography are the changes with which the FBs must deal most often at the moment. Within the megatrend demography the focus needs to be set on the Generation Z and its wish for flexibility at work as well as the demographical change and the resulting multigenerational workforce. Within digitalization the digital communication and the resulting increase in written communication needs to be considered (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 117 - 119). These factors represent main challenges of cooperative leadership, which have been defined within a theoretical research and verified within 16 expert interviews and 251 telephone interviews.

n = 16	Strength of Influence on Cooperative Leadership					
Exogenous Factors	very strong	rather strong	neutral	rather not strong	not strong	Rating
Digitalization	7	7	1	1	-	20
Demography	8	3	-	5	-	14
Work/Company	5	3	5	3	-	10
Globalization	4	5	3	4	-	9
Connectivity	-	11	2	3	-	8
Knowledge Culture	1	9	1	4	1	5
Human & Engine	2	5	4	5	-	4
Mobility	1	2	8	4	1	-2
Security	-	5	4	7	-	-2
Gender-Shift	-	3	7	6	-	-3
Urbanization	1	1	4	9	1	-8
Politics/Economy	-	2	5	7	2	-9
Health	-	3	2	8	3	-11

Table 1: Strength of Influence of Exogenous Factors on Cooperative Leadership
(Güttersberger 2018, p. 74)

Increase in Written Communication as Challenge of Cooperative Leadership

63.7% of the leading persons and in total twelve experts and especially all eight theorists confirmed that the disappearance of verbal and non-verbal communication and consequently, the increased use of written forms of communication constitutes a challenge for cooperative leadership. Hereby, the digital means of communication like email, Skype, WhatsApp or messenger have been mentioned frequently by the experts. One practitioner, who claimed that they did not have that problem, declared that they are a very small FB and consequently, they have very short communication channels, which are primarily verbal. As reasons for why it constitutes a challenge, the experts regularly stated leadership in absentia, increased conflict dynamics, increased misunderstandings and decrease in interpersonal relations. “*Written communication is not suitable for tense and conflict of interest characterized processes of negotiation. Hereby, the dynamic of conflicts is even heated up*”, stated one expert. Another interviewee mentioned: “*Mostly the shortest and easiest way of*

communication is chosen. However, this is not always the most emphatic way. The personal communication allows more personality and more enforcement, whereas within the written communication tasks are more easily delegated, or at least you think you delegate them. It is the more complicated way, as it might differently reach the receiver of the message." Moreover, one expert mentioned that "the flow of information has to be managed differently and this is getting more and more demanding" (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 78f.).

As approach to overcome or cope with this challenge of cooperative leadership the experts regularly suggested using a proper balance of the various means of communication and setting clear communication guidelines. In order to get fast answers, come to an agreement or exchange opinions, the written communication is a good option. However, to get a feeling for your counterpart, to improve the interpersonal relations or to solve conflicts, the personal communication is the safest and best way, the experts usually stated. Furthermore, one expert said that "*written communication can be helpful in many ways, however, personal contact creates attractiveness. This means that social contacts still have to be cultivated, as you cannot e-mail a handshake*" (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 79).

The clear statement of the experts and the leaders of FBs with reference to digital communication allows to draw the conclusion that within FBs the verbal and personal communication is still of high importance and seen as essential for cooperation. As in FBs especially the interpersonal relationship plays an important role, the digital communication is observed negatively by the respondents. Nevertheless, a quantitative research has shown that the increased written communication is seen less as a challenge than it is experienced, as the use of digital communication might also be an advantage for cooperative leadership - it might speed-up the cooperative decision-making processes.

Multigenerational Workforce as Challenge of Cooperative Leadership

The question whether the experts experience the demographic change and the resulting multigenerational workforce with different values in their company was confirmed by seven experts and denied by one expert, respectively of both expert groups and by 62.2% of leading persons. One expert, who denied that demographic change is taking place in his/her company, stated: "*The multigenerational workforce is given by nature in FBs due to the succession process and therefore do not constitute a new challenge.*" However, another expert mentioned that "*the younger generation does not have the same appreciation for a fixed working place or a fixed income as the older generation. They do not share the same approach to work*" (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 75).

The interviews showed that in total eleven experts and 55.8% of the leading persons confirmed that a multigenerational workforce constitutes a challenge for the cooperative leadership style. It is interesting that opinions of the practitioners to this question are divided. This may lead to the assumption that within FBs, a multigenerational workforce is a given fact or can be handled easier as this phenomenon is already given due to the cooperation of different generations within the family. The statements confirming it were that different employees have different claims, needs and requirements for the leaders and therefore the leaders must show even more interest in the individual employees. Another expert stated that "*it is difficult as young person to lead older employees, as the sentence 'we have always done it in this way' is mentioned very often. It is a challenge to break through this deep-rooted behavior.*" Another important factor, which was mentioned several times by the experts in relation to demographic change was the war of talent: "*Employer Branding is getting more and more important, as I have to represent my company as qualitative employer to the young generation*" (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 75f.).

As approaches or methods to cope with this challenge, the experts regularly stated employee retention, strict selection within apprentice training or making no differences between the generations regarding speed of work. One expert answered: "*In our company, the old and young generations have to work together, so we give every old employee at least one young employee on purpose in order to guarantee transfer of knowledge*" (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 76).

Wish for more Flexibility at Work as Challenge of Cooperative Leadership

With reference to the wish for more flexibility at work by the Generation Z, the youngest group of employees in comparison to older generations, who wish stable working conditions, eleven experts but only 41.1% of the leading persons of Styrian FBs confirmed that they experience this phenomenon. However, 81.7% of the leading persons confirmed that it constitutes a challenge for the cooperative leadership style. The experts, who claimed to not be confronted with wish stated that the part of the youngest generation within their workforce is not so strong yet, that they do not experience this within their work of consultation or that it is not possible due to their opening hours of their business. The eleven experts, who confirmed that it is a challenge, stated that it means leadership in absentia. One expert said that "*it accompanies lack of transparency and less possibility of control. Therefore, I have to work more output-oriented.*" Another interviewee stated that "*it might create a gap of performance within a team and therefore lead to inharmoniousness in already entrenched structures.*" One expert, who denied this problems, declared that he/she would see it the other way around: "*I would say that a cooperative leadership is the*

precondition for satisfying the wishes of more flexibility of the youngest generation." It can be observed that although most of the leaders do not experience this phenomenon in their company, they are, like the experts, very clearly of the opinion that it constitutes a challenge for cooperative leadership. This may lead to the assumption that within FBs the values are clearly communicated and therefore the wish for flexible working arrangements does not appear and that within FBs cooperative leadership is understood to only function if the team also works physically together (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 76f.).

As approaches to fulfil this wish for more flexibility at work, the majority of the experts mentioned that they offer flexible working times, as their work is based on deadlines and therefore the employees are responsible for their own work and how and when they get it done. For the leaders it is only important that the work and the projects are done in time. Besides, the aspect of communication played an important role in the answers of the experts. One expert stated: "It is essential to communicate to the employees what is possible and what is not. This already starts at the job interview, as therefore no misunderstandings can arise." A different interviewee declared that "in order to grant individuality, every employee can decide on their own when and where they want to work, as long as they stick to the deadlines" (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 77f.).

Further Influencing Factors on Cooperative Leadership

In addition to exogenous factors, especially in FBs also endogenous factors may have an influence on cooperative leadership, as the combination of family and business might constitute a threat. Major endogenous influencing factors are:

- the personality of the leading person
- succession conflicts
- generational conflicts
- inertia by employees
- interrelation of subsystems
- nepotism
- sibling rivalry (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 82)

Further information about endogenous influencing factors can be found in the article "Transforming Leadership in Family Businesses" within this publication series.

Conclusion and Further Research

This paper focuses the leadership styles in FBs and especially on cooperative leadership, as shown within a theoretical and practical research, this leadership style best overcomes the challenges of a changing market. Nevertheless, a practical research showed that still only 24.3% of leaders in Styrian FBs apply a pure cooperative leadership style. This leads to the assumption that there still exists uncertainty about this leadership style and how to best implement it in one's own company, especially as various exogenous and also endogenous factors have an influence on FBs and consequently, on leadership. In order to build awareness and to overcome the challenges of this leadership style and to come towards a more cooperative leadership style, the tool and the model, especially created for leading persons in FBs, can be consulted (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 139). For more information about transformation of the leadership style towards a more cooperative leadership reference is made to the article "Transforming leadership in Family Businesses" within this publication series.

What is more, this paper provides a rating of exogenous influencing factors in FBs. However, a qualitative research only gives tendencies and therefore is not quantitative verified. Consequently, a quantitative study should be used to delve deeper into the relevance and strength of the influencing factors and their effects and consequences on cooperative leadership in FBs.

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Due to the long occupation of Andrea Güttersberger at the family business of her parents and the daily confrontation with the interrelation of family and business, she is best aware of the particularities of family businesses. As a consequence, she introduced a broadened perspective and a high degree of practical orientation to the research field of family businesses at CAMPUS 02.

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Transforming Leadership in Family Businesses

Initial Situation

Leading within any company is challenging. However, leading within a family business (FB) is even more difficult than within non-FBs, as family member leaders represent the interest of the business and the family. Whereas in the first generation the style of authoritarian leadership is predominant, the generations following after should strive for a cooperative leadership (cf. LeMar 2014, p. 175). Hereby, it is of importance to differentiate between cooperative leadership as a leadership style (cf. Wunderer/Grunwald 1980, p. 3) and leading in cooperation, which implicates partners sharing the leadership (cf. Felden/Hack 2014, p. 147). However, a study shows that only 24.3% of FBs in Austria are led in the form of a cooperative leadership style (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 103). For further information about leadership in Styrian FBs reference is made to the article “Leading in Family Businesses” within this series of publication.

The reason for this can be traced back to various factors influencing cooperative leadership, like the ongoing control of the founder of the business (cf. Von Schlippe 2014, p. 110) or the different roles family members assume within the family and the business (cf. Rüsen 2017, p. 24). Other influencing factors on leadership are personality, knowledge, acceptance, social competence or leading ability (cf. Platzer 2017, p. 62). Additionally, exogenous factors can have influence on cooperative leadership, as megatrends, like digitalization, ongoing changes of society’s values or demographic change, lead to a rethinking of leadership (cf. Klaus/Schneider 2016, p. 1; Welk 2015, p. 53). Especially in the second and all future generations of leaders in FBs, the best response to these influencing factors is to turn to cooperative leadership.

This paper builds awareness of the challenges of cooperative leadership by endogenous factors of FBs and shows how to overcome the challenges of these influencing factors.

Endogenous Influencing Factors in Family Businesses

In FBs, a differentiation between endogenous factors in the family and in the business occurs. In the context of business, traditional endogenous factors are outdated technology, managerial mistakes or organizational inefficiency. These factors are a danger to the company's existence. Contrary to non-FBs, the family factor plays an important role in FBs and in combination with the business it might even constitute a threat (cf. Rüsen 2017, p. 44f.; Brühl 2004, p. 6). Business families may create stressor situations within the FB over the course of withdrawals, buyouts or unexpected succession. Critical family situations like death, illness, accidents or psychological suffering may trigger a leadership crisis and evolve to an existential threat. On top of that, conflicts and disputes among family members may cause stressor situations in the business (cf. Rüsen/Von Schlippe 2007, p. 319f.).

Based on 16 expert interviews, the following table shows the ranking of the endogenous influencing factors based on their strength of influence on cooperative leadership.

The most outstanding endogenous influencing factor is the personality of the patriarch, followed by succession conflicts. In the second group, generational conflicts, inertia by employees, interrelation of subsystems, nepotism and sibling rivalry can be found, which the experts rated with the same amount of points. Consequently, within cooperative leadership these influencing factors also need to be considered. However, the influence of the personality of the patriarch and the concentration of power within one person cannot be underestimated. Succession needs to be considered as well, as it is the most important occurrence of every FB.

n = 16	Strength of Influence on Cooperative Leadership					
Endogenous Factors	very strong	rather strong	neutral	rather not strong	not strong	Rating
Personality of Leading Person	10	3	2	-	1	21
Succession Conflicts	8	2	2	1	3	11
Generational Conflicts	5	5	3	-	3	9
Inertia by Employees	5	5	2	2	2	9
Interrelation of Subsystems	3	5	7	-	1	9
Nepotism	5	6	1	1	3	9
Sibling Rivalry	3	9	1	-	3	9
Stressors triggered by an Individual	4	4	2	1	5	1
Conflicts regarding Partner Choice or In-Laws	2	5	3	3	3	0
Gender Conflicts	1	5	3	3	4	-4
Inertia by Leading Person	-	4	5	5	2	-5
Influence of Third Parties	2	1	4	6	3	-7

Table 1: Strength of Influence of Endogenous Factors on Cooperative Leadership (Güttersberger 2018, p. 82)

The following challenges of cooperative leadership by endogenous influencing factors have to be considered: concentration of power by the patriarch, difficulties with behavioural change and strong family influence.

Concentration of Power as Challenge of Cooperative Leadership

Regarding the personality of the patriarch and the resulting concentration of power it can be said that in total eleven experts clearly claimed that this is not a problem. They mainly stated that the authority, obedience, control and strict discipline the patriarchs live or want to live by exclude cooperative leadership. “*Patriarchs take care of their employees, as they are very social. However, they act in the sense of ‘You*

give everything you can and I take care of your well-being'. And that has nothing to do with cooperative leadership." However, one expert, who answered the question in the positive, mentioned that "*it is possible to make a decision in an authoritarian way, but this definitely does not mean that the opinions of the employees are not included.*" The answers may confirm the assumption that cooperative leadership is not understood in the same way by every expert, as some of the experts are of the opinion that within cooperative leadership it still takes someone, who makes the decisions – which implies a direct-cooperative leadership style rather than a cooperative leadership style. Within quantitative market research, the strength of influence of the personality of the patriarch on the cooperative leadership was rated as very strong or rather strong with an arithmetic average of 1.23 (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 83f.). The main answer to the question, what it would take for patriarchs to lead cooperatively, was to build awareness of the leadership style they currently have. Furthermore, to work on the leadership behaviour with the help of a coach was mentioned several times. Moreover, the readiness to change the leadership behaviour and to include the employees was stated by various experts.

Difficulties with Behavioural Change as Challenge of Cooperative Leadership

This paper further focuses on the inertia by employees and the resulting challenge of difficulties with behavioural change. Especially the group of experts and also 69.3% of leading persons of Styrian FBs are of the opinion that it constitutes a challenge for cooperative leadership. As explanations to why inertia of employees influences the cooperative leadership, one expert said that "*a cooperative leadership style needs time and employees who are not keen for change and provide for time delays.*" "*Especially in FBs, the employees belong to the company for a very long time and therefore they are used to successful processes, behaviour patterns and solutions. And if the employees have to start to think on their own on how to improve processes and working patterns, it can constitute a challenge*", answered another expert. "*Within the cooperative leadership exists the strongest interrelation between leading person and lead persons and therefore if there is inertia on one side, it has a big influence*", an expert stated. This leads to the assumption that on the one side, resistance and inertia can be hardly influenced by cooperative leadership and on the other side, cooperative leadership can hardly be reached if resistance and inertia exist. Therefore, inertia or resistance by employees needs to be dissolved with communication, otherwise cooperative leadership cannot occur, as it requires the interrelation between employees and leaders. One expert, who denied this question, declared that "*a cooperative leadership style minimizes the inertia of employees, whereas an authoritarian leadership style would increase the inertia*" (cf. Gütersberger 2018, p. 84f.).

As approaches on how to cope with changes and minimize the inertia by employees, the interviewed experts frequently stated the high importance of communication. *“You need to talk with your employees and address the change in order to make visible what the change will bring, you need to communicate a clear target and you need to communicate why this change is happening. Additionally, it is important to gather feedback from your employees and to include them actively in the process of change. Here, communication is really key.”* Besides, the term high transparency was mentioned several times by the experts (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 85).

Strong Family Influence as Challenge of Cooperative Leadership

With reference to the strong family influence, it can be mentioned that only two experts (one practitioner and one theorist) answered the question in the negative whether the influence of family members on the decision-making process hampers cooperative leadership style. The other fourteen experts agreed that it has an influence on cooperative leadership. One expert, who answered the question negative mentioned that *“the influence of family members strengthens cooperative leadership, as it is part of the value profile of FBs.”* Experts, who confirmed that family members may negatively influence cooperative leadership, frequently stated that the allocation of roles within the business and within the family plays an important part in order to avoid misunderstandings and to clearly allocate the responsibilities. On top of it, one interviewee said that *“every further subjective opinion complicates the decision-making process.”* *“If the family eats together on Sundays and makes decisions, the employees can bluster as they want. This is a family decision and will be implemented, no matter what the employees think about it”* (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 85f.).

Moreover, it must be stated that the expert group of theorists are mainly of the opinion that family members are only occasionally integrated in the decision-making processes, whereby most practitioners and leaders of Styrian FBs stated that they are often (33.1%) and always (27.5%) integrated. Regarding the persons, who are mainly involved in the decision-making processes, the answers within both attempts of market researches varied from spouse and parents to brother-in-law, who own a FB. One expert stated: *“The wife is mainly the anchor point. Without a wife you cannot run a business – the wife is the grey eminence.”* Hereby, it also must be mentioned that most of the family members, who do not hold shares but are taken into account in decisions, are actively working within the FB (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 86f.).

This leads to the assumption that family members are preferred to employees and that decisions might be made at home at the family table instead in the company. Moreover, as the spouse is the main person who is involved in decisions of the sole owners, they exert key influence and may hamper the cooperative leadership style

due to subjective opinions. Moreover, as leaders, who share their ownership with family members, also mainly include these persons, it can be assumed that hereby co-operation also mainly occurs between the owners instead of leaders and employees, which highlights the leading in cooperation at the horizontal level (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 120).

Further Influencing Factors on Cooperative Leadership

In addition to endogenous factors, also exogenous factors like megatrends may have an influence on cooperative leadership, as megatrends lead to a rethinking of leadership. The major megatrends, which need to be considered in relation with cooperative leadership, are:

- Digitalization
- Demography
- Work/Company
- Globalization
- Connectivity
- Knowledge Culture (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 74)

Further information about exogenous influencing factors can be found in the article “Leading Family Businesses” within this publication series.

Protective Shield against Exogenous Influencing Factors

The authors hold the assumption that the social systems family and ownership can work as protective shields by compressing the exogenous influencing factors. Due to the topic’s high complexity in the market research only experts were interviewed. Based on the opinion of the experts, it can be stated that the social systems family and ownership can indeed work as protective shields. However, as this was only evaluated with a qualitative research, it is only a tendency and no quantitatively verified statement can be made.

One expert, who confirmed this assumption, stated that *“family members or owners need to have great know-how and experience about the FBs and the industry.”* Another interviewee admitted that *“if the family and ownership structures perform well, are very harmonic, the bigger the family or ownership circle and the more separated these are with the company, the better it is when dealing with exogenous influencing factors.”* Another factor, which was mentioned several times by the experts, was communication between the family members or owners to minimize the fear of these exogenous factors. What is more, clear role awareness, role flexibility and clearly defined responsibilities have been mentioned as factors, which strengthen these pro-

tective shields. “*I totally can support this assumption, as families with its specific values in relation to their way of leading the business have a formative influence. And therefore a formative and stabilizing influence, which can be a protective shield for the development of the FBs. The business is protected against the unthinking absorption of any trendy impulses. This conservative element can be seen as protective shield. However, this path dependence, which is connected with many traditions, can also lead to the fact that necessary changes are left out. Therefore, this protective shield has to be seen very ambivalently. It can be very helpful and important, but it can also create even greater suffering. In FBs, where the family system is intact and the ownership circle is represented, this function can usually be observed. However, in FBs, where we have a very disunited ownership circle or family system as there are for example tribal conflicts, these two systems are for sure a threat for the business*

” (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 90f.).

The experts, who denied this assumption of the protective shields, mainly stated that it is difficult as every employee is unique and brings his own experiences and impressions in the company and therefore is also characterized by exogenous factors. Furthermore, one expert stated that “*if the family and owners shield the business from everything from outside, it would be impossible for the business to grow.*” “*For me, this is a contradiction in cooperative leadership, as within cooperation all participants are supposed to bring in the best possible from inside and outside and consequently find good solutions. Therefore, the family or owners should not be protective shields, but rather bring the exogenous factors into the company in order to discuss these influences*”, one expert mentioned (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 91).

As a result, it can be summarized that the more experienced and educated people are within these social systems (family and ownership), the better it can work, whereby a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities is essential. In FBs, the values and traditions especially foster such a protective shield. However, it is still important to not ignore important changes or influencing factors and to not make essential decisions without employees in order to guarantee the development of the whole company. This newly developed protective shield enables FBs to reveal and monitor their own protective shield by getting awareness of the allocation of roles and thus who and what may work as protective shield for the business (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 120).

Tool for Leading Persons

With the aim to support leaders to build awareness of their current leadership style and to give recommendations of how to apply a cooperative leadership style by considering the challenges of the exogenous and endogenous influencing factors, an Excel-tool for leaders in FBs was developed based on the theoretical and empirical

findings. The focus is set on the cooperative leadership style, because as observed over the course of the theoretical and practical research, this leadership style best overcomes the challenges of a changing market.

In order to find the currently applied leadership style, a questionnaire with twelve questions was adapted and translated from English to German by a psychologist. The reason for the translation is to find the best formulation and to avoid misunderstanding for the target group of this tool, which are the leaders of FBs in Styria. However, it must be indicated that this questionnaire only gives tendencies for the currently applied leadership style, as it is unclear, how reliable and accurate this evaluation is, due to missing criteria for test quality (cf. Duque R. 11.04.2018). When the twelve questions of the questionnaire are done, the leading person gets a point value, which is assigned to one of the three main leadership styles according to Lewin – authoritarian, cooperative or Laissez-Faire. After the tendency for a leadership style is determined, the leading person receives the following question: "*If you want to receive recommendations for a cooperative leadership style, please click yes.*" After clicking yes, the leading person gets suggestions according to his/her actual leadership style, which reflect proposals in the field of behaviour and influencing factors.

Therefore, this created tool enables leading persons of FBs to easily capture the applied leadership style and to receive recommendations on how to come to a cooperative leadership style with only a few clicks. The following chapter only represents a small selection from the recommendations. Further advice can be found in the master thesis (cf. Güttersberger 2018, p. 133 - 137).

Recommendations within the Tool

If the result of 12 - 20 points is achieved, the leading person has a rather authoritarian leadership style and consequently, receives the following recommendations to change towards a cooperative leadership style:

- Give advice to the employees instead of instructions.
- Include employees in the process of decision-makings, from goal definition to the implementation of decisions.
- Listen to and respect the opinions of the employees in order to give them the feeling of dignity and respect.
- Motivate employees to participate in discussions by holding regular meetings with your employees.
- Place trust in your employees by not controlling every step of them.
- Share your responsibilities in order to motivate your employees.
- Actively gather feedback from your employees.
- Support the employees to achieve their individual goals.

- Get support from experts for leadership in FBs, like consulters, coaches or the WKO.
- Consult the model of cooperative leadership in FBs to build awareness of the structures, dynamics and influences on cooperative leadership in FBs.

A total score of the questionnaire done by a leading person between 28 - 36 points indicates a rather Laissez-Faire leadership style and therefore he/she gets the following recommendations:

- Guide the team discussions.
- Place trust in your employees in order to increase the employee's self-responsibility.
- Avoid being remote, but instead actively get in touch with your employees.
- Be sure to stay in touch with your employees.
- Set goals together with your employees.
- If there are different generations with different values in your company, use that for knowledge transfer, avoid the opening of a gap by treating them individually regarding speed of work, communication or working arrangements, try to keep your employees and wisely choose new employees.
- If the wish for more flexible working arrangements arises within your company, clearly communicate the possibilities to everyone to avoid misunderstandings. Make clear what is practicable and what is not practicable. This already starts at the job interviews.
- If employees are unwilling to change and to take responsibilities, clearly communicate the goals, the reasons and the advantages behind the change and actively involve them in the process of change.
- If decisions are made with family members, who are either working in the business or not, make sure that these decisions are further discussed with your employees and make sure that the role allocation within the family members is clearly given in order to avoid misunderstandings.
- If there are conflicts within the family, avoid transmitting these into the company in order to not involve employees and negatively influence the decision-making processes.

If the result of the questionnaire is between 21 - 27 points, the leading person already applies a rather cooperative leadership style. However, as market research has shown, the leadership style in FBs is rather direct-cooperative than cooperative. Consequently, he/she receives also proposals in order to strengthen the leadership style or develop towards a more cooperative one and besides, gets recommendations on how to deal with the challenges of the exogenous and endogenous influencing factors:

- Support the employees further to achieve their individual goals.

- Motivate employees further to participate in discussions.
- Keep on sharing your responsibilities in order to hold the motivation of your employees high.
- Continuously gather feedback from your employees.
- Keep on trusting your employees.
- If there are employees from different countries in your company or if you are a global company, be aware of the different values and cultures. Use the differences of your employees by consciously deploying each of them. Avoid creating a gap between the different cultures by treating them individually regarding speed of work or working arrangements. However, make sure that communication does not constitute a barrier.
- If written communication becomes dominant within your business, find a proper balance between written and personal communication and set clear guidelines to meet the different expectations of the employees and to make the best of both ways of communication.
- If you share the ownership with someone, externally or family-internally, make sure that conflicts within the management are not transmitted to the business and avoid arguing it out in front of your employees. However, if the conflicts are about decisions regarding the company, make sure to involve employees and to discuss these decisions together.

Benefit of the Tool

This Excel-programmed tool is able to support cooperative leadership, as on the one hand, it builds awareness of the applied leadership style of the leading person and on the other hand, it opens one's eyes about the influencing factors on the cooperative leadership style. Based on the use of a questionnaire, which determines the current leadership style, and the theoretical and empirical findings about cooperative leadership, a clear differentiation to a future cooperative leadership style can be made. Additionally, the findings about the challenges of the exogenous and endogenous influencing factors and the recommendations of how to overcome these challenges given by experts support the reaching of a cooperative leadership style.

Consequently, this tool is simple in handling but very efficient, as within a few clicks it demonstrates the current leadership style and the need of a transformation. On top of it, the tool provides support for the transformation to a more cooperative leadership style by giving recommendations, like consulting the model of cooperative leadership, in order to get awareness of the influencing factors on cooperative leadership.

Model of Cooperative Leadership

In this paper a model of cooperative leadership in FBs is presented. As initial model, the three-circle model is chosen, which consists of three different social systems, namely family, business and ownership. Within the social system business cooperative leadership takes place, as it involves the family-internal and family-external employees and the leading person, who can also be family-internal or family-external. As the cooperative leadership style is essential within this model, it is highlighted with a different colour.

Furthermore, based on the findings within qualitative market research the influencing factors are named and a rating is given. The main influencing factors are highlighted in red and the other influencing factors differ in their size according to the rating of their strength of influence on cooperative leadership in FBs. In addition, the protective shield of the social systems family and ownership was verified within qualitative research and therefore is indicated within the model of cooperative leadership.

This newly created model visualizes the strength of influence of the exogenous and endogenous influenceing factors on cooperative leadership. The model is able to vizualise the protective shield and to create awareness of the importance and role of the influencing factors on the cooperative leadership style.

The illustrated model of cooperative leadership is only a depiction of the possible ownership structures. To design it interactively, the size of the social systems can change according to the number of individuals within the social systems. Consequently, the factors influencing cooperative leadership as well as the strength of the protective shield changes (cf. Riedner 2017, p 29).

This model was on the one hand created for shared ownership and on the other hand for sole ownership. Consequently, separate recommendations are given for the different ownership structures visualized in the model. Nevertheless, to visualize and build awareness for the ownership structure, it is recommended to start with the allocation of roles within the three social systems. This helps to get a clear understanding of who is involved in the process of leadership and to get a clear structure of who influences the social system business from the social systems ownership and family. On top of it, this clear structure also helps to get an awareness of who and what may work as protective shield for the business (cf. Riedner 2017, p 96-98).

Leading in Cooperation

Within the following illustration, the social system ownership goes further into the social system family, as observed within quantitative research, if ownership is shared, it is mainly shared with other family members. Hereby, it must be mentioned

that leading in cooperation is performed as the persons, who also hold shares of the company, share the process of decision-making. Therefore the influencing factor of a leader's personality changes to leading in cooperation and the influence of other family members decreases and is therefore left out. Nevertheless, the protective shield is hereby stronger due to the increased number of persons in ownership, which is displayed by a thicker line.

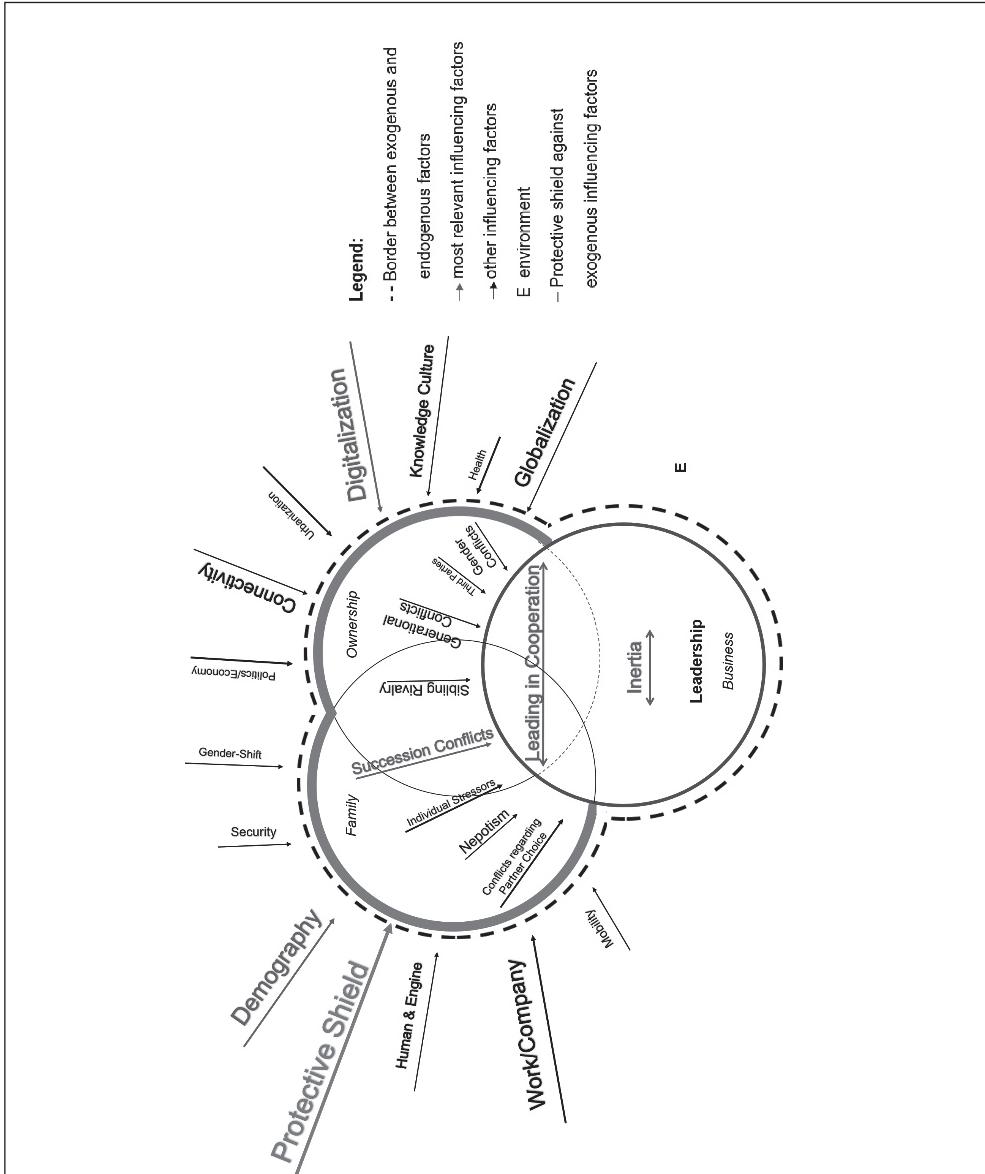


Figure 1: Model of Cooperative Leadership in FBs - Leading in Cooperation (Güttersberger 2018, p. 123)

For the shared ownership, it is recommended to apply this model together with the partner, with whom leadership is shared. In a next step, it is advised to build awareness that there are exogenous and endogenous factors, which influences leadership in the own FB. It is recommended to increasingly concentrate on the exogenous factors of digitalization and demography, as these constitute the strongest influence on leadership. Moreover, it is essential to be aware that conflicts between the leaders as well as conflicts regarding the process of succession have a strong impact on cooperative leadership. Besides, it is advised to be aware of the fact that leading in cooperation may hamper cooperative leadership, as decisions are mainly made within the team of leaders instead of involving the employees. It is also highly recommended to be aware of the family members' and owners' function as protective shield against exogenous influencing factors. The more people, who have profound know-how about the business and the industry, the better the function of the protective shield. Furthermore, it is suggested to be aware of the strong influence of inertia by the employees, as this resistance may have an increasingly negative impact on cooperative leadership.

Sole Ownership

This figure displays the model of cooperative leadership with different ownership structures. As observed in quantitative research, 159 out of 251 (63.3%) leaders are sole owners of the FBs and therefore this illustration shows the social system ownership within the intersection of business and family. Consequently, the endogenous influencing factors generational conflicts, sibling rivalry, gender conflicts and influence of third parties do not have any importance anymore and are therefore left out. However, as observed in research, the influence and involvement of the spouse in decision-making gains importance and therefore these influencing factors are increased in size. On top of it, the protective shield of the social systems family and ownership is weaker, which is visualized by a thinner line.

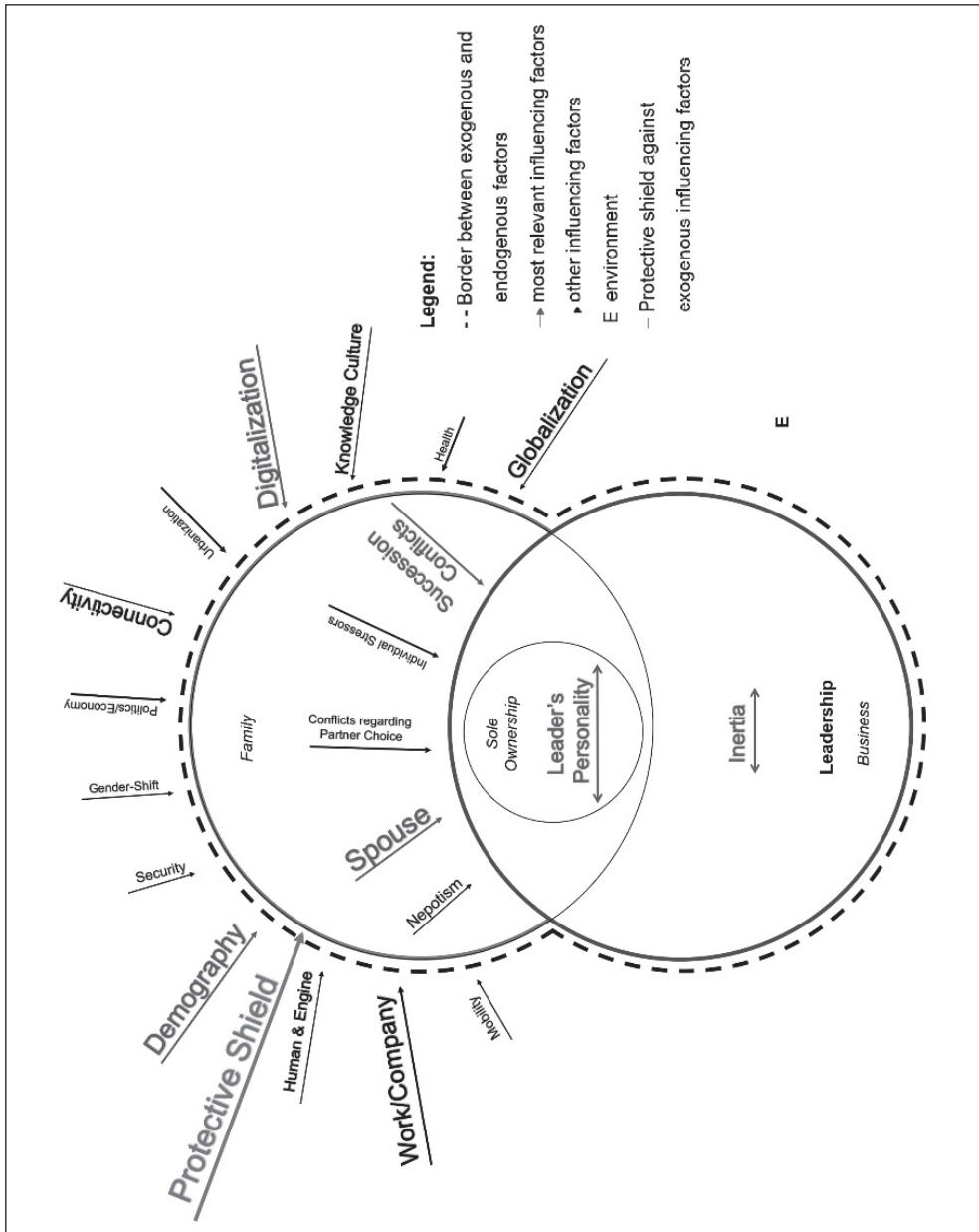


Figure 2: Model of Cooperative Leadership in FBs - Sole Ownership (Güttersberger 2018, p. 123)

If the ownership lies within one person, conflicts within the ownership circle do not exist, but it is recommended to be aware that the spouse might exert strong influence on the decision-making processes and therefore, may hamper cooperative leadership. Additionally, the leader's personality of a patriarch has an essential influence

on cooperative leadership, as decisions and responsibilities lie within the single person. It is also suggested to set the focus on the inertia by employees, as cooperative leadership can hardly be applied with this resistance against change. Within sole ownership it is also suggested to be aware of the process of succession, its resulting changes and possible influences on cooperative leadership. It is also highly proposed to be aware that within sole ownership the function of the protective shield is decreased. Therefore, exogenous factors may have an increased influence on the business, especially the factors digitalization and demography.

Conclusion and Further Research

The main aim of this paper was to develop a model of cooperative leadership in FBs that could visualize the challenges of the cooperative leadership style and to create a tool that supports leaders in FBs to build awareness of their applied leadership style and to give recommendations for how to come to a cooperative leadership style by considering the influencing factors.

This paper provides a rating of endogenous influencing factors in FBs. However, qualitative research only gives tendencies and therefore is not quantitatively verified. Consequently, a quantitative study should be used to delve deeper into the relevance and strength of the influencing factors and their effects and consequences on cooperative leadership.

With reference to the model of cooperative leadership, the authors recommend testing the adapted model empirically to get more insights into the relevant influencing factors. Such an analysis would also serve to determine the practical applicability of the model. It is suggested that this analysis is conducted in different FB generations and with different ownership structures in order to allow further investigations into differences in FBs regarding understanding of cooperative leadership. Moreover, the protective shield of the social systems ownership and family needs to be inquired within quantitative research. Besides, it is recommended to interactively develop the model of cooperative leadership to display the actual sizes of the social systems ownership, business and family of every individual FB.

Within this paper a unique model supported by a simple but very efficient tool was developed in order to:

- support Styrian FBs within the field of leadership
- create awareness of exogenous and endogenous influencing factors on cooperative leadership
- identify the applied leadership style
- play an active role in shaping processes of change
- seize opportunities and chances and react in an appropriate way

- act sustainably and successfully

The developed tool is a technical advancement of the model and is still in an early phase of development and therefore needs additional amendments and empirical testing. Especially, the effects and recommendations for the influencing factors need to be empirically enquired, as currently the tool only represents the main influencing factors, their consequences and possible solutions based on qualitative research. On top of it, the authors suggest conducting the technical implementation of the tool with an IT-company.

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Due to the long occupation of Andrea Güttersberger at the family business of her parents and the daily confrontation with the interrelation of family and business, she is best aware of the particularities of family businesses. As a consequence, she introduced a broadened perspective and a high degree of practical orientation to the research field of family businesses at CAMPUS 02.

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Zitievorschläge

Dietmar Wünschl, Thomas Otto: Familienunternehmen im Umgang mit Technologiesprüngen. In: Familienunternehmen im Fokus. Hrsg. v. FH CAMPUS 02 Fachhochschule der Wirtschaft. Graz: Leykam Verlag 2019. (= Schriftenreihe Wissenschaft und Praxis, Band 12), Seite 9 – 23

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Seit Beginn dieses Jahrhunderts sehen sich Familienunternehmen zunehmend mit komplexen, dynamischen und sich ständig verändernden Herausforderungen in Wirtschaft, Technologie und Gesellschaft konfrontiert. Darunter zählen unter anderen vor allem der Aufstieg der Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien, der Wunsch nachhaltig wirtschaftlich zu handeln, die Zunahme der Komplexität und Volatilität in der Arbeitswelt, die steigenden Erwartungen an die soziale Verantwortung der Wirtschaftstreibern, die Etablierung stabiler Unternehmenskulturen und die Führung im 21. Jahrhundert.

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- **Familienunternehmen im Umgang mit Technologiesprüngen**
- **Unternehmerfamilien: Die Förderung von Unternehmertum über Generationen**
- **Sales Management 2.0: Impulse für ein professionelles Vertriebsmanagement in Familienunternehmen**
- **Corporate Social Responsibility in family-owned Hidden Champions from Austria**
- **Corporate Culture in family-owned World Market Leaders from Austria**
- **Leading Family Businesses**
- **Transforming Leadership in Family Businesses**

Alle wissenschaftlichen Beiträge liefern abgesicherte Ergebnisse, Antworten und Lösungsansätze um die heimischen Familienunternehmen bestmöglich zu unterstützen und Handlungsorientierung zu geben. Damit unsere familiengeführten Unternehmen selbst aktiv werden, Vertrauen in die eigenen Fähigkeiten stärken und die Bereitschaft Neues auszuprobieren behalten, liefern die vorliegenden Arbeiten aus der angewandten Forschung & Entwicklung praxiserprobte Handlungsempfehlungen.

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