

Title: Understanding the consideration set of potential successors during the ground-rules phase of the family-firm succession process: A family social capital and goal systems theory approach.

Abstract: This dissertation seeks to further the current understanding of the development of a consideration set of potential successors in the ground-rules phase of family-firm succession. To do so, this dissertation uses goal systems theory and family social capital to consider goal prioritization as a mechanism through which the family influences the identification of potential successors. Goal systems theory emphasizes the prioritization of multiple goals and the corresponding means-ends relationships. Family social capital provides a more nuanced understanding of the influence of the family on the strategic prioritization of goals in the family firm. This dissertation explores the influence of family social capital on the prioritization of the goals of financial growth, transgenerational succession, and the development of a consideration set of potential successors. To test this conceptual model, primary data were collected via an experimental vignette methodology regarding structural family social capital, succession-related goal prioritization, and consideration of potential successors from a sample of business owners within the United States.