

The mediating role of organizational identification on the relationship between family firms status and affective commitment

In January 2018 Niels Engelberts graduated from the Tilburg School of Economics and Management at Tilburg University. Niels followed the MSc Strategic Management and wrote his master thesis in the area of family firms. The following text is a summary of the MSc thesis.

It is critical to understand the relationship between the employee and employer since both parties have different goals and boundaries, while mutual reliance and the development of a good relationship is key to business success. Most of the time the binding factor between human and organization is the missing factor when establishing commitment. Without this binding factor, a lack of organizational commitment of employees is possible. The social identity theory assumes that group membership enhances self-esteem and intergroup behavior. Although the growing body of organizational behavior of employees in family business literature, there is still little known about the effect of employee identification in family firms on affective commitment. This thesis examines the mediating effect of organizational identification of employees on the relationship between family firm status and affective commitment.

Based on a sample of 179 employees within 32 small and medium sized family and non-family firms, this study found evidence that having a family firm status positively impacts the affective commitment of employees. Moreover, this effect is partially explained by the group identity an employee has with family firms, as this study finds a significant partial mediating effect of organizational identification on this relationship. Although the findings bring valuable contribution to the family business and organizational behavior literature, further research on this complex relationship is suggested to get a deeper understanding of which variables (besides organizational identification) explain higher levels of affective commitment in family firms.

If you are interested in the master thesis you can contact the Tilburg Institute of Family Business via tifb@tilburguniversity.edu and request a pdf file.