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Nonfamily employee commitment in family firms:

The role of perceived transgenerational intentions, shared vision and organizational identification

Lidia Tseitlin

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Vorsitzende: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Nicola Breugst

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2. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Nadine Kammerlander

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Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

List of appendices

List of abbreviations

CEO	Chief executive officer
CFI	Comparative fit index
ERI	Entrepreneurship Research Institute
FCNE	Family-centered, non-economic
MLE	Maximum likelihood estimation
NNFI	Non-normed fit index
OCB	Organizational citizenship behavior
OCQ	Organizational commitment questionnaire
PLS	Partial least squares
RBV	Resource-based view
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
SEM	Structural equation modeling
SEW	Socioemotional wealth
SRMR	Standardized root mean square residual
TI	Transgenerational intentions
TLI	Tucker and Lewis index
TUM	Technical University Munich

Abstract

The importance of employees' commitment for organizations is well recognized in the management literature. However, there are only few studies examining the commitment of employees who work in family firms, but do not belong to the owner-manager family. These face specific challenges in family firms with regard to compensations and career chances. In this study I examine the impact of employees' perceptions of central and most distinct family firm characteristics – the transgenerational intentions – on their affective commitment. Despite the potential disadvantages associated with family involvement and intra-family succession, I propose a mechanism of how perceived transgenerational intentions (expressed through intentions for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion) affect employees' commitment through the perception of shared vision and through the organizational identification. I test the hypothesized relationships on a sample of 389 employees of German family firms with a structural equation model. The results of the empirical testing provide evidence for the positive impact of all three perceived transgenerational intentions on the affective commitment of nonfamily employees and the mediation effect of perceived shared vision. However, the proposed mediation via organizational identification was only partially confirmed, as only the significance of the mediated effect of the perceived family cohesion could be shown. I discuss the results and their theoretical and practical implications. Further, I outline limitations of the study and potential directions for future research.

Keywords:

Family business; nonfamily employees; transgenerational intentions; cohesion; succession; commitment; identification; identity; organizational cognition; shared vision; uncertainty; SEM; mediation

Zusammenfassung

Der Stellenwert von Mitarbeiter-Commitment in Unternehmen ist in der Managementliteratur unumstritten. Dabei gibt es nur wenige Studien, die das Commitment derjenigen Mitarbeiter untersuchen, welche in Familienunternehmen tätig sind, aber nicht zur Familie gehören, obwohl sie vor besonderen Herausforderungen hinsichtlich der Vergütung und ihrer Karriere-Möglichkeiten stehen. In der vorliegenden Dissertation untersuche ich den Einfluss der Mitarbeiterwahrnehmung der zentralen Charakteristika der Familienunternehmen – der Absicht der Familie, das Unternehmen an Familien-Nachfolger weiterzugeben – auf das Commitment dieser Mitarbeiter. Ich unterstelle, dass diese wahrgenommenen Absichten trotz der potenziellen Nachteile für die Mitarbeiter einen positiven Einfluss auf das Commitment ausüben, und zwar durch eine gemeinsame Vision und eine verstärkte Identifikation der Mitarbeiter mit dem Familienunternehmen. Ich teste meine Hypothesen an einer Stichprobe von 389 Mitarbeitern in familiengeführten Unternehmen in Deutschland mit Hilfe eines Strukturgleichungsmodells. Das Ergebnis belegt den positiven Einfluss der wahrgenommenen Nachfolge-Absichten und stützt die Mediation des Effektes durch die gemeinsame Vision. Die Mediation des Effektes durch eine gestärkte Identifikation mit dem Unternehmen konnte hingegen nur teilweise bestätigt werden. Nach der Erläuterung der Ergebnisse diskutiere ich diese hinsichtlich der Implikationen für die Forschung und die Praxis, und zeichne Einschränkungen der Studie sowie potenzielle Richtungen für die Forschung in der Zukunft.

Schlagwörter:

Familienunternehmen; Nichtfamilien-Mitarbeiter; transgenerationale Absichten; Zusammenhalt; Unternehmensnachfolge; Nachfolgeregelung; Einsatzbereitschaft; Commitment; Identifikation; Identität; Kognition; gemeinsame Vision; Unsicherheit; Strukturgleichungsmodell; Mediation

1. Introduction

1.1. Research motivation

Family firm is one of the most prevalent enterprise forms in world's economies (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003; Klein, 2000). Thereby, the family character of a business is associated with various company characteristics which lead to a competitive advantage, such as longevity (Astrachan & Kolenko, 1994) and resilience in times of crisis (Lee, 2006a), fast decision-making (Morris, Williams, Allen, & Avila, 1997) and adaptability (Björnberg & Nicholson, 2007). In the growing body of research on family enterprises, these have been mainly linked to their central distinction – the impact of family on the firm (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). However, family firms can only achieve the competitive advantages, when all organizational members add value to their attainment (Hillman & Keim, 2001). Employees working for family firms, but not belonging to the owner-manager family, form the majority of members of the firms (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). They contribute significantly to the competitiveness and success of family firms (Chrisman, Chua, & Litz, 2003). In both stable and turbulent times for companies, employees' commitment, i.e. their emotional attachment towards the organization, is one of the main sources of employees' long tenure, positive organizational attitudes and of the willingness to perform in the best interest of the company (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002).

Employee turnover is one of the major challenges of the modern labor market in industrial countries (Lam & Liu, 2014; Park & Shaw, 2013; Solnet, Kralj, & Kandampully, 2012). Employees are searching for meaningful, challenging and fulfilling jobs with an employer with which they can identify themselves (Gruber, Leon, George, & Thompson, 2015; Hsu & Elsbach, 2013). In the intense competition among companies for qualified and capable employees, family firms can face various disadvantages. First, family owned and managed firms are characterized by family-internal succession (Lubatkin, Schulze, Ling, & Dino, 2005), i.e. the top executive position in the company is reserved for family descendants. Hence, the choice of future company leader is not made purely based on a candidate's abilities and know-how, but also under consideration of his or her family belonging. This preference towards family members can lead to ineffectiveness and lack of competitiveness (Dyer, 2003). Further, it can be perceived as an unfair Human Resources practice demonstrating limited career opportunities for employees (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006).

Second, family firms tend to pursue goals which are not solely oriented towards business and economic benefits, but also towards noneconomic family interests (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson, & Barnett, 2012; Gomez-Mejia, Haynes, Nunez-Nickel, Jacobson, Kathyrn J. L., & Moyano-Fuentes, 2007; Sharma, Chrisman, & Chua, 1997). This can lead to business decisions which are not contributing to company's success, but primarily aim to benefit the family. For employees, these decisions can signal idiosyncratic company strategies and company performance drawbacks, making family firms less attractive as employers (Chrisman, Memili, & Misra, 2014). Further, due to the ownership structure, family firms often cannot offer competitive incentives such as ownership shares (Chrisman et al., 2014; Poza, Alfred, & Maheshwari, 1997). Hence, they are less attractive for capable employees seeking for worthy compensation (Chrisman et al., 2014). Finally, family firms can have a reputation of inflexible and conservative companies with a tendency for nepotism (Hauswald, Hack, Kellermanns, & Patzelt, 2015; Schulze, Lubatkin, & Dino, 2003). These aspects underline the challenges family firms face when recruiting and retaining employees. In this light, the importance of maintaining employees attached to the family firms seems even more critical (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002).

Although family business scholars have recognized the importance of employee' commitment within family firms, relatively little is known about how commitment can be sustained and enhanced under the impact of a family on the business (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Bernhard & O'Driscoll, 2011; Sieger, Bernhard, & Frey, 2011). A few notable articles examine how family business-specific recruiting and leadership practices affect employees' attitudes (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Hauswald et al., 2015). However, the role of the family firms' essence – consisting of a company's vision determined by the dominant family and of this family's intention to continue shaping the vision and to make it sustainable across generations (Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 1999a) – for nonfamily employees of the firm remains unexamined.

The intention of this research is to understand how the perceptions of nonfamily employees with regard to transgenerational intentions of the leading family affect their commitment to the organization. For this purpose, I set out the expressions of transgenerational intentions and draw on two theoretical approaches to explore potential mechanisms which explain the impact of transgenerational intentions on affective commitment. First, I look at perceived transgenerational intention from the organizational cognition perspective, drawing on the creation of shared vision. Second, I take the social identity theory perspective, drawing on identification and self-categorization mechanisms. With my study I aim to contribute to the existing knowledge in several ways.

First, I aim to contribute to the family business literature. I address the call for research on nonfamily employee perspective in family firms (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Chua, Chrisman, & Steier, 2003). Specifically, I intend to add to the essence approach literature which examines particularities of family firms based on their specific behaviors and intentions related to transgenerational sustainability, instead of the pure family influence (Chua et al., 1999a; Zellweger, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2010). I expand this research by adding the perspective of nonfamily employees. For the most part, the present literature on transgenerational intentions has focused on its impact on organizational outcomes such as firm value evaluation (Chirico & Nordqvist, 2010; Zellweger, Kellermanns, Chrisman, & Chua, 2012), performance (Cruz, 2011; Habbershon, Williams, & MacMillan, 2003) and succession chances (Eddleston, Kellermanns, Floyd, Crittenden, & Crittenden, 2013). With my study I respond to the call for research on employees' perspective in family firms by Barnett and Kellermanns (2006) and Memili and Barnett (2008), and focus on nonfamily employees' perceptions of transgenerational intentions and show a positive impact on their affective commitment to the organization. Further, I propose and empirically test two mechanisms of how the perceptions of three expressions of transgenerational intentions influence employees' commitment. I show that employees' perception of existing intentions for transgenerational control, succession planning, and family cohesion positively affects their sense that all organizational members share the same vision. Moreover, I propose, but find no empirical evidence for the effect of perceived intention for transgenerational control and succession planning on organizational identification of nonfamily employees. However, the image of family itself can have an effect on identification formation, as I find some evidence for the positive impact of perceived family cohesion on organizational identification. To sum up, I contribute to family business literature by complementing the nonfamily employees' perspective in family firms and showing mechanisms of how employees' perceptions of family's transgenerational intentions affect their commitment to the firm.

Second, I intend to contribute to the literature on organizational commitment. In the present study I propose and test two possible nonexclusive mechanisms of how the perceptions of the three aspects of transgenerational intent impact the affective commitment of nonfamily employees. Earlier studies have shown particularly high levels of commitment of family firms employees – explained by pronounced transformational leadership (Vallejo, 2009b) – and high importance of employees' well-being to family managers (Tagiuri & Davis, 1992). This reflects the antecedents which employees' affective commitment is mainly associated with – their instant work experience such as leadership and organizational support (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). Hence, the emotional attachment of employees is largely linked to the advantageous attributes and behaviors of the employers towards them. However, I aim to examine, how the central attribute of family firms – the transgenerational intentions which are not primarily directed towards employees – impact the affective commitment of employees. With the results I strengthen the cognitive mechanisms of commitment creation, as I find that perceived transgenerational intentions affect commitment through the cognitive path by creating a shared vision rather than the affective path by having weaker impact on organizational identification. Moreover, I provide further evidence for distinction between organizational identification and affective commitment in organizations (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008).

Third, I aim to contribute to the organizational vision literature by adding on to the research by Pearce and Ensley (2004) on the relationship between company goals and shared organizational vision. The focus on perceived transgenerational intentions enables examination of the long-term oriented and uncertainty reducing company goals. Moreover, my study contributes to research by O'Connell, Hickerson, and Pillutla (2011) and shows the effect of company leaders on the creation of a shared vision among employees.

Further, I intend to contribute to the research in organizational identification. By proposing a mechanism of identification based on perceptions of transgenerational intentions, I suggest that a non-situational, uncertainty-reducing goal setting in the organization (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008) can enhance the identification of employees based on its subjective meaningfulness and distinctiveness (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Finally, my findings will carry important practical contributions for the management of family firms. I provide evidence that nonfamily employees perceive the existence of transgenerational intentions not as an unfair family influence, an injustice with regard to staffing of top management positions or a reprehensive preferential treatment of family members, but rather as a comprehensive, clear and meaningful purpose of the company to outlast generations. This creates a shared vision for all organizational members, and through this enhances employees desire to maintain their affiliation with the company. This outcome is particularly important with regard to the perceived succession planning, showing that staffing of top management positions based on family belonging can have a positive effect on the commitment of employees, despite the possible appeal as an act of favoritism. These results can encourage family firms to build a company vision and climate based on its transgenerational character and to use it as a brand feature towards the employees.

1.2. Dissertation focus and structure

Dissertation focus

The aim of the present study is to examine how the perceptions of transgenerational intentions of the family owning and running the company affect the commitment of nonfamily employees. This defines the focus of this work in several ways. First, the focus lies on the perception side of family intentions, looking at them from the perspective of employees who do not belong to the family. According to Poza et al. (1997), the perception of family firm by organizational members not belonging to the family can differ significantly from the perceptions of family members. Hence, as I am interested in the attitudes and behaviors of employees, I consider their view of the firm.

Further, I demonstrate two directions from which I achieve the research goal. First I look at how the perception of transgenerational intentions by employees affects their sense of a vision which is shared by all organizational members through the evolvement of joint cognition. For this purpose, I refer to the existing organizational cognition research and draw connections between aspects of perceived transgenerational intentions and a creation of a joint cognition within the company, which relates to the shared vision. Further, I examine the effect of the transgenerational intent perceptions on the identification of nonfamily employees through the lens of social identity theory. I propose three aspects of transgenerational intentions which impact the social identity of nonfamily employees as members of the family firm and contribute to their organizational identification.

Dissertation structure

The present dissertation is structured as followed. The current Chapter 1 with the introduction is followed by Chapter 2, where I lay theoretical foundations and derive hypotheses. First, in Chapter 2.1, I outline the status quo of the family business research. I clarify the definitional complexity and summarize the existing theoretical perspectives on family firms. Further, I conclude on gaps in the existing literature with regard to the theoretical contribution and the perspective of nonfamily employees.

In the subsequent Chapter 2.2, I draw on the large research literature with regard to commitment, and particularly to commitment of organizational members towards the enterprise. I depict the different types of commitment and identify affective commitment as the most crucial and powerful desire of employees to remain associated with the current organization. Then, I combine the importance of affective organizational commitment with the particular role of nonfamily employees in family firms. I derive challenges which they can face in the setting of family owned and managed companies and present a literature overview on the existing body of research. With that, I identify a research gap with regard to the understanding of the affective commitment of nonfamily employees to family firms.

After proposing that commitment of nonfamily employees is affected by certain distinctive features of family firms, in the following Chapter 2.3 I describe central characteristics of family owned and managed companies with regard to their transgenerational character. I draw on the existing literature regarding the goal settings in family firms, identifying the orientation towards transgenerational sustainability as one of the most central and unique features defining family enterprises. Based on the essence approach to family firms (Chua et al., 1999a), I detect three expressions of transgenerational intentions: family's intention for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion. As the focus of this research work lies on the perceptional side of family firms, I examine these three aspects as they are perceived by nonfamily employees.

In the next step, in Chapter 2.4 I examine the effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on nonfamily employees through the lens of organizational cognition. I propose mechanisms of how the nonfamily employees perception that all organizational members share same vision evolves, pointing out aspects such as goal clarity, long-term orientation and content, which contribute to the creation of a shared vision. Thereafter, I develop hypotheses about the impact of perceived transgenerational intentions on shared vision. I suggest mechanisms that explain how an absence of nonfamily employee's awareness for transgenerational intentions can affect their perception that all organizational members share the same vision.

In the subsequent Chapter 2.5 I look at the second proposed mechanism of how perceived transgenerational intentions affect nonfamily employees, using the lens of social identity theory. I outline the foundations and status quo of social identity and self-categorization theories. Furthermore, I propose mechanisms of identification evolvement which are relevant for family firm employees not belonging to the family. I suggest mechanisms that explain how nonfamily employee’s awareness for transgenerational intentions can impact their identification with the company.

Concluding the theory and hypotheses development, in Chapter 2.6 I suggest how the affective commitment of employees is affected by their sense of transgenerational intentions in the company through the two proposed mechanisms: their perception that all organizational members share the same vision and their identification with the organization.

After deriving the hypotheses based on the theoretical considerations, in Chapter 3 I describe the methodological part of the present research. As the main constructs in the study reflect personal attitudes and perceptions, they cannot be assessed with secondary data. Hence, I collected primary data to test the hypotheses. A detailed description of the research project of data collection will be provided in Chapter 1.3. In Chapter 3.1 I provide a detailed description of the sample selection. Subsequently, in Chapter 3.2 I describe the measures which were used to operationalize the constructs of the research. Thereafter, in Chapter 3.3, I describe the conducted pre-analysis of the sample containing the examination of missing data, descriptive sample statistics, as well as tests of common method and non-response bias. Then, in Chapter 3.4 I introduce the applied method structural equation modelling (SEM) with which I tested simultaneously both mediation effects, and provide methodological assumptions and procedures to assure valid and reliable results.

Subsequently, in Chapter 4 I report the results of the empirical testing. I provide outcomes of the reliability and validity examination in Chapter 4.1, while in Chapters 4.2 and 4.3 I describe the SEM model results. Finally, in Chapter 4.4 I provide robustness checks for the results, testing the mediation methods separately and using different versions of the measurement scales.

I conclude the study by discussing the results in Chapter 5, including their contribution to theory and practice as well as outlook at future research in the light of my findings. Furthermore, I outline limitations of the present study and provide several suggestions for the further research directions as well as my conclusions for the study.

1.3. Research project "Innovation in Family Firms"

The data used in the present study were collected within a large-scale empirical project, conducted by the author and Christian Röhm, likewise a doctoral student of Entrepreneurship

Research Institute of the Technical University Munich (TUM ERI) under supervision of Professor Dr. Dr. Holger Patzelt and Dr. Judith Behrens. The project was conducted in German, targeting family owned and managed companies in Germany. The aim was to collect primary data on the designed questionnaire from family CEOs and nonfamily employees. The selection of the sample and the scales relevant for this study are described in detail in chapters 3.1 and 3.2. The name of the project was “Innovation in family firms”.

The family internal CEOs of selected family firms were contacted via mail and asked to fill out the first part of the CEO questionnaire as well as a list of employees who have a direct contact with them. In case of participation, the CEO was asked to fill in the second part of the questionnaire and we directly contacted employees and asked them to fill in two parts of the corresponding employees’ questionnaire, with a time frame of about two weeks in between. In order to have a wider information base on the participating companies and to be able to control for company and industry attributes with higher validity data (Bagozzi, Youjae, & Phillips, 1991), we collected additional secondary data from accessible sources such as company homepage, commercial register, and private firm data bases like Hoppenstedt. The data collection was supported by several students who wrote their bachelor’s and master’s theses at TUM ERI. Hence, parts of the secondary data were used for the theses by Fuchs (2014), Jordan (2014), Keller (2014), Kraus (2014), Niemann (2014) and Strassmeier (2014).

To increase the attractiveness of participation in the study, CEOs of the targeted companies were promised a feedback report containing benchmark results of the overall study. We prepared the reports with support of five bachelor students (Moritz Bayrle, Janis Juppe, Frederick Meiners, Matthias Mittelmeier und Valentin Rogg) who accomplished it in the course of two project studies. The report presented descriptive statistics about several management-relevant topics, such as innovativeness, culture, leadership and employee satisfaction, complemented by descriptions of the topic and displayed as a comparison of company results with the results of the all companies in the study and those in the corresponding industry. The reports contained no personified information about companies or employees who participated in the study.

The data collected within the empirical research project contained CEO and employee answers to the corresponding questionnaires. The present research study uses employee data to test the derived hypotheses, while a study by the second doctoral student Christian Röhm uses the data of family CEOs of the firms. The goal of his research was an investigation of strategic behavior regarding exploration and exploitation on firm level. He chose the key informant approach using data from family CEO. The final sample used in Christain Röhm's study contained 109 firms (i.e. answers of 109 family CEOs).

To sum up, after introducing the motivation of the present research and the aimed contributions as well as presenting the data collection project, the following chapter contains theoretical foundations of the study and development of the corresponding hypotheses.

2. Theoretical foundation and development of hypotheses

2.1. Family business research

2.1.1. Distinction of family business research field

Family firm is the predominant type of enterprise in most industrial countries (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003; Klein, 2000; La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, & Shleifer, 1999; Morck & Yeung, 2003). For example, according to the latest report of Stiftung Familienunternehmen, 91 percent of German companies are family controlled, while 88 percent are family owned and managed, covering 44 percent of the total revenues generated in Germany (Stiftung Familienunternehmen, Oktober 2015). In the United States, around 60 percent of public companies are under family control (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2005), covering over 35 percent of S&P 500 companies (Anderson & Reeb, 2003a). Many family firms today have been operating for several generations, although, according to the Family Business Institute, only around one third of all family firms persist through the transition to the second generation and less than half to the third generation (Family Business Institute, 2007). Similar numbers can be found in other industrial countries (Le Breton-Miller, Miller, & Steier, 2004). The success and continuance of family firms depend not only on family members, but also on employees who are not members of the leading family (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). They form the majority of organizational members of family firms, but do not share the family members' advantages (Chrisman et al., 2003). These three facts – the predominance of family firms, the frequency of failed successions and the challenging position of nonfamily employees – demonstrate the crucial significance of this organizational form and the major challenges it is facing.

Emergence of the research field

Despite its importance for most economies, the research interest in the field of family businesses was low, until the Family Firm Institute in Boston, MA was established in the 1980s (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Sharma, Chrisman, & Gersick, 2012). Since then, family business research has been constantly gaining scholars' attention and has become an established part of organizational and management sciences (Zahra & Sharma, 2004). Along with research published in aspiring journals solely dedicated to family businesses like Family Business Review and Journal of Family Business Strategy, an increasing number of publications reach top-tier management (e.g., Gedajlovic, Carney, Chrisman, & Kellermanns, 2012; Miller, Le Breton-Miller, & Lester, 2010; Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino, & Buchholtz, 2001) and entrepreneurship (e.g., Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Chrisman et al., 2003; Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Eddleston et al., 2013) journals. An EBSCO enquiry on “family business” in peer-reviewed journals results in 379 articles in the time period 2000–2004, 863 articles in 2005–2009 and 1,265 articles in 2010–2014, indicating a strong increase in research interest. Several special issues in the high-ranked journals in entrepreneurship, which have been dedicated to the family business research field, confirm this trend (e.g., Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice Volume 27 Issue 4, Volume 37 Issue 1 and Volume 38, Issue 6; Journal of Business Venturing Volume 18 Issue 4 and Volume 18 Issue 5).

Having gained initial attention based on the dominance of the family business as enterprise form, the research field has been going through an emergence of a common understanding how and why the family business is distinct and deserves “special research attention” (Sharma, 2004, p. 3). The first and most obvious distinction is that a family business is necessarily linked to a family (Bird, Welsch, Astrachan, & Pistrui, 2002; Moores, 2009). Another widely accepted description of the family business field is the three-circle model with circles “family”, “business” and “ownership”, the overlap of which marks the family business domain (Tagiuri & Davis, 1992; Yu, Lumpkin, Sorenson, & Brigham, 2012). The initial distinctiveness of family firms has been shown by substantial research directed towards comparison of family firms to nonfamily firms (e.g., Anderson & Reeb, 2003b; Chrisman, Chua, & Litz, 2004; Zahra, Hayton, & Salvato, 2004). Family business researchers claim that family and nonfamily firms differ from each other significantly with regard to their internal processes (Tsang, 2002), relationships (Chrisman, Chua, & Steier, 2005), strategies (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003) and employee attitudes (Vallejo, 2009b).

Definition of family firm

In light of the above, it seems essential to understand the source of family business distinctiveness, which starts with the definition of the research object, the *family firm* (Sharma et al., 2012). However, the variety of definitions applied in family business research is large and there is no generally accepted concept of what is a family firm (Anderson, Jack, & Dodd, 2005; Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Sharma, 2004). Many scholars apply a practical, operational definition based on quantifiable aspects of family involvement into company’s ownership and management (Anderson et al., 2005; Chua et al., 1999a). The widest operational definition of a family firm is based on company ownership held by the family members. For example Sciascia, Mazzola, and Chirico (2013) determine family firms by at least two family members holding majority of firm equity. Other studies which refer to family firms based on family ownership include, Miller, Le Breton-Miller, Lester, and Cannella (2007), Miller et al. (2010), Sciascia et al. (2013). A more narrow ownership based definition relates to family firms as owned by the founding family, for example in the study by Anderson and Reeb (2003a). A large amount of studies define family firms by a combination of ownership and management by family members (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). Examples of studies defining family firms by the involvement of family members in company management are Sciascia and Mazzola (2008) and Villalonga and Amit (2006). Overall, this operational, company structure based approach of defining family firms by the degree of family involvement is referred to as *components of involvement* approach (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Chua et al., 1999a).

Astrachan, Klein, and Smyrnios (2002) complemented the thus far existing family involvement operationalization instruments and suggested an approach for determining the actual influence and involvement of the family in the firms. They propose three dimensions defining a family character of a firm. The first suggested dimension is power, determined by ownership, management and governance. The second dimension is experience, which describes whether the company is led by the first, second, third or higher generation, counted from the company foundation. The third dimension is culture, defined by the significance of family values in the firm (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). This definition was operationalized and validated by Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005) and Holt, Rutherford, and Kuratko (2010), providing a continuous measurement scale.

As noted by Litz (1995), the operational, structure-based approach is not able to differentiate family firms according to the claim and aspiration of companies towards family firm relatedness. Inconsistent results of studies using operational definitions and basing family firm distinction on family ownership or management involvement (for example Villalonga & Amit, 2006 and Anderson & Reeb, 2003a) support this proposition, suggesting that the involvement of a dominating family expressed by its ownership and management might be necessary, but not sufficient for classification of family firms (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Gedajlovic et al., 2012). Thus, a lack of theoretical foundation of an involvement-based definition and the "observation that firms with the same extent of family involvement may or may not consider themselves family firms" (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005, p. 556) has led to a development of family firm definitions based on its less tangible essence, considering family-specific objectives, behaviors, and resources. For example, Litz (1995) suggests defining family firms based on the intentions of family members to attain and keep family-based control. Habbershon et al. (2003) define the familiness of the firm as a combination of its specific resources and capabilities arising from interactions between the business unit, the family unit and the single family members. A similar approach is proposed by Dyer (2006). Somewhat summarizing the theoretical definition approaches, Chua et al. (1999a) suggest defining family firms based on their behavior directed towards a vision of cross-generational firm sustainability and describe it as their essence. Thus, definitions related to family intentions, vision, familiness and behavior are referred to as *essence approach* (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). The essence approach covers theory-based rather than operational concepts of defining a family firm and considers both the degree of family involvement and family aspirations leading to consequences with regard to firm behavior and performance (Sharma et al., 2012).

Concluding on my review of the ongoing scholarly discussion about the distinctions and definitions of family business, a general summary can be drawn that the core uniqueness of family businesses lies in the family's involvement in ownership and management as well as in the transgenerational intentions of the family (Chrisman et al., 2003). Henceforth, for the course of this work, I apply both components of involvement and essence approach to distinguish family firms. In order to avoid ambiguity, I use the term family firm for companies in which one or several families hold controlling ownership stake and family members are part of the management board (consistent with Schulze et al. 2003). For the development of my hypotheses I will use a definition suggested by Zellweger, Nason, Nordqvist, and Brush (2013), referring to *family firms as firms controlled by a family through involvement in management and ownership, coupled with a transgenerational vision for the firm* (Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013, p. 231).

2.1.2. Family business research outcomes and theoretical perspectives

After providing an overview of the emergence of family business research field and reviewing the scientific discussion upon the research object definition, in the following chapter I outline the central characteristics of the research field and summarize the main scientific discussions.

Theoretical perspectives in family business research

Family business research can be characterized by a broad variety of theoretical perspectives applied to explain particularities of family firms (Sharma et al., 2012). Most of these theories are borrowed from associated disciplines, whereas attempts have been undertaken to construct family business-specific theories (Reay & Whetten, 2011; Sharma et al., 2012). However, the two central theoretical lenses in the family business research are still the *resource-based view (RBV)* and *agency theory* (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Chrisman, Chua, & Zahra, 2003; Chua et al., 2003; Sharma et al., 2012).

According to *RBV*, under the assumption of heterogeneous and immobile resources, firm resources can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage when they are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and hard to substitute (Barney, 1991). In the family business research field, specific resources which arise with family involvement are considered to be unique and lead to family firm-specific competitive advantages (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Habbershon & Williams, 1999). Thus, studies applying RBV primarily aim to explain business related outcomes. In particular, they indicate that the connection between family and business is advantageous with regard to accumulation of unique resources (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). According to Sirmon and Hitt (2003), five resources which provide family firms competitive advantage, can be identified: *social capital* due to diverse social structures and additional family relationships, *human capital* due to duality of family member relations in both family and business environment, *patient financial capital* due to long investment time horizon, *survivability capital* due to high personal resources family members are ready to invest into the firm, and last but not least *governance structure and costs* due to trust and strong bonds between family members involved in the firm. Furthermore, the aspired long-term relationships with both internal and external stakeholders contribute to the accumulation of social capital within family firms (Carney, 2005). According to Zahra, Hayton, and Salvato (2004), another hard-to-imitate resource is the family firm-specific organizational culture, which is claimed to be positively associated with company's entrepreneurial activities. However, family firm-specific resources can also have a negative impact on the company's competitiveness depending on the community structure the family is imbedded in, for example by slowing down decision making processes in the company (Sharma & Manikutty, 2005).

In addition to being helpful in explaining advantages and disadvantages arising from the resource uniqueness of family firms, RBV is applied to explain family-related outcomes. It is particularly helpful in recognizing resources and capabilities which are necessary to make family firm succession a success (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). On the one hand, there seems to be a set of successor's characteristics which are essential for the success of the transition. For example, successor's attitudes towards the family firm such as commitment and integrity, seem to be crucial in ensuring a successful transition (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 1998). Also the level of successor preparation and his or her abilities are highly relevant factors (Morris et al., 1997). Furthermore, the relationship between predecessor and successor impacts the succession, creates varying succession frameworks and requires different strategies to make the transition successful (Handler, 1990; Miller, Steier, & Le Breton-Miller, 2003). On the other hand, researchers the identify transfer of tacit knowledge between generations to be crucial for accomplishment of a successful succession (Cabrera-Suárez, Saa-Perez, & Garcia-Almeida, 2001; Steier, 2001b).

As mentioned above, the second dominant theoretical perspective within family business research is *agency theory* (Sharma et al., 2012). According to a citation-based evaluation of the most influential articles within the family business research field, agency theory is being used most to explain the uniqueness of family firms, specifically with regard to governance related outcomes (Chrisman, Kellermanns, Chan, & Liano, 2010). Agency theory suggests the existence of agency costs which arise from a presence of conflicting decision-making preferences between principals and agents under the assumption of information asymmetries and incomplete contracts (Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976). In the corporate context, these two contract parties are usually the owners and the managers, or the employers and the employees.

In family firms, where owners are often managers and company stocks holders work as employees, agency costs are often considered to be lower than in nonfamily firms, thus creating a competitive advantage for family firms (Ang, Cole, & Lin, 2000; Chrisman, Chua, & Litz, 2004). However, researchers found two divergent effects linked to the family firm-specific structures, which affect agency relationships – altruism and entrenchment (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005). *Altruism* can be described as a utility which positively relates the individual welfare with the welfare of others (Bergstrom, 1989). Being present in intra-family and parent-child relationships, altruism affects agency relationships in family firms (Karra, Tracey, & Phillips, 2006). On the one hand, it can lead to free riding and biased performance perceptions (Schulze et al., 2003), and is difficult to regulate by means of common management tools and incentives, thus, leading to high agency costs (Chrisman, Chua, & Litz, 2004). On the other hand, altruism can make family firms more effective due to the willingness of family members to accept short-term financial disadvantages for the sake of long-term survival of the firm (Carney, 2005). The second effect, *managerial entrenchment*, is defined as self-beneficial behavior of managers which is associated with high ownership concentration (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Morck, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1988). Research studies by Morck and colleagues show that family firm-specific agency relationships can lead to entrenchment of ineffective managers and to nepotism, having a negative effect on company performance and on minority shareholders (Morck et al., 1988; Morck & Yeung, 2003).

Another conclusive perspective, which is linked to the agency theory and is often applied to explain the advantageous and disadvantageous outcomes in family businesses is *stewardship theory* (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2006). As opposed to the agency theory, stewardship theory postulates that organizational members act as stewards and are driven not necessarily by self-interests, but by higher purpose of their job, thus acting according to the cooperative interests and for the good of the organization (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997). Some researchers believe that these attitudes are specifically prevailing among family firms and are both characteristics for executives who are family members, and for nonfamily managers, who are deeply committed to the business vision (Davis, Allen, & Hayes, H. David, 2010; Memili & Barnett, 2008; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2005).

A further theoretical approach which has been developed recently and solely related to the context of family firms is the model of *socioemotional wealth* (SEW). The SEW construct was initially suggested by Gomez-Mejia, et al. (2007) and defined as the emotional value gained by family members within family firms through the pursuance of particular, family-related, non-financial goals (Berrone, Cruz, & Gomez-Mejia, 2012; Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012). This theoretical perspective has its roots in the agency theory and aims to explain both business and family-related outcomes. Applying risk preference principles from prospect and behavioral theories, family firms are proposed to be loss averse with regard to socioemotional wealth and are willing to accept higher financial risks in order to preserve socioemotional endowment (Gomez-Mejia, Cruz, Berrone, & Castro, 2011; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). The socioemotional wealth perspective allows an explanation for family business-specific strategic decisions in various areas, particularly processes relating to succession (Cruz, Justo, & De Castro, Julio O., 2012; Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012), professionalization (Gomez-Mejia, Makri, & Kintana, 2010), and human resources management (Cruz, Gomez-Mejia, & Becerra, 2010), as well as strategic choices (Gomez-Mejia, Haynes et al., 2007; Jones, Makri, & Gomez-Mejia, 2008) and organizational governance (Gomez-Mejia, Cruz et al., 2011).

I complete the overview of the predominant theoretical perspectives within the family business research with a theoretical perspective which has been only recently gaining scholarly attention within this research field: Following the suggestion by Zellweger, et al. (2010) , *organizational identity* can be considered as the third dimension of familiness, along with components of family involvement and essence approaches. Building upon the social identity theory which will be described in detail in the chapter 2.5, they propose that familiness is a multi-dimensional construct which has the power to explain how particular families "can be assets to their firms" by creating a competitive advantage, while "other families could be characterized more as liabilities" (Zellweger, Eddleston et al., 2010, p. 55). The particularity of organizational identity of family firms originates from the fact that it is shaped by a close interrelation between the owner-manager family and the organization. Thus, there is an overlap between the firm identity and the family identitiy (Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013; Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013). The resulting organizational identity is unique and hard to imitate (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008) and has been proposed to be familial, collective and supportive (Chrisman, Chua, & Steier, 2005).

Outcome variables in family business research

Along with a variety of theoretical perspectives applied in family business research, its second particularity is a large variety research outcomes (Sharma et al., 2012). As outlined above, the distinctive characteristics of family businesses are primarily related to the company involvement of a dominant family and to specific resources, visions and behaviors which emerge with this involvement. Hence, studies within family business research field have been focusing on few independent variables referring to components of family involvement and family firm essence, and a wide array of their outcomes (Yu et al., 2012). Therefore, for a comprehensive description of the family business research and its boundaries, it is important to look at the dependent variables examined in this field (Chua et al., 2003).

The outcome variables in family business studies can be classified into family and business related groups (Yu et al., 2012). The *business related* group includes mainly strategy and performance related results, but also results with regard to economic and social influence (Yu et al., 2012). Taking a closer look at studies referring to performance outcomes of family businesses can be a good approach to gain more understanding about the research field. These include, for example, a study by Anderson and Reeb (2003a) which shows that founding-family owned firms outperform nonfamily firms, with family-internal CEO adding up on performance advantages. These findings are confirmed by Andres (2008) who's study stresses the importance of family ownership as opposed to an overall large shareholder effect. Other studies suggesting positive performance outcomes of specific family involvement are for example Miller, Minichilli, and Corbetta (2013) and Chirico and Bau' (2014). However, results of a study by Sciascia and Mazzola (2008) demonstrate a negative nonlinear relationship between management involvement of family members and performance and no performance effect of family ownership. A study by Chrisman, Chua, and Litz (2004) provides no evidence for significant performance differences between family and nonfamily firms. A study by Rutherford, Kuratko, and Holt (2008) tries to untangle inconsistent results of studies on family involvement and performance and finds evidence for performance effects of family power, management and experience which are significant, but both positive and negative. Another frequent business related outcome in family business research refers to the organizational strategy. Family business studies with regard to strategic outcomes are mainly concerned with internationalization and investment behavior, with focus on the social and economic aspects of family firms as dependent variables, as well as on the social capital and the knowledge transfer (Yu et al., 2012).

According to Yu et al. (2012), a second large group of family business studies focusses on *family-related* outcomes. These studies include dependent variables with regard to family characteristics of companies, i.e. family dynamics, family business roles and above all, family-internal succession. A study by Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (2003b) shows that succession is a top priority concern in family firms, thus justifying the noticeable succession focus of family business research. For example, in their study Davis and Harveston (1998a) show that along with personal traits of family members, family relationships and family's influence have a positive effect on the succession planning processes. Williams, Zorn, Crook, and Combs (2013) demonstrate that all three family business subsystems, i.e. business, ownership and family, have impact on the family intention for family-internal succession. Sharma and Irving (2005) propose mechanisms how successors' commitment evolves and how different types of commitment affect successors' decision to stay and contribute to the family business. Furthermore, a study by Shepherd and Zacharakis (2000) provides evidence that successors' keep-or-sell decision depends not only on monetary value, but also on behavioral sunk costs, i.e. their time and energy invested in the company. Further family-related outcome variables of family business studies refer to inter- and intragroup conflict, interactions, attitudes and values of family members (Yu et al., 2012, e.g., Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012; Ensley & Pearson, 2005; Gomez-Mejia, Haynes et al., 2007; Ensley & Pearson, 2005; Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013).

The third major category of family business research focuses on outcome variables with regard to governance which can be assigned to both business and family-related outcomes (Yu et al., 2012). A study by Corbetta and Montemerlo (1999) shows that most family members take multiple roles within companies, where ownership, management and control related responsibilities often overlap, explaining the prevalence of family business studies relating to governance outcomes. Various family business studies suggest advantages of specific family business governance; for example, Carney (2005) proposes a family firm governance which unites ownership and management, and is characterized by parsimonious or careful resource allocation, personalization of authority and particularism of decisions, which are specifically beneficial in scarce resources environments. However, other studies point out agency problems related to family business governance. Morck and Yeung (2003) suggest that family owned and managed firms' governance structures lead to various agency problems and result in predominance of family interests over company interests and "creative self-destruction". Nordqvist, Sharma, and Chirico (2014) try to untangle the contradicting results and propose that appropriate family business governance can be reached by specific configuration of family involvement in company's ownership and management and suggest most efficient governance mechanisms for nine different types of family firms.

Summarizing the family business research review chapter, the uniqueness of family firms has been studied researched various theoretical perspectives and with regard to a range of dependent variables (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005; Yu et al., 2012). Despite the dominance of the agency theory and RBV, some family business researchers suggest that the organizational identity theory can be highly useful in explaining the uniqueness of family firms and their outcomes, but still remains underexposed (Zellweger, Eddleston et al., 2010). This theory can help to untangle the dynamics related to conflicting family and business identities, and to explain the differences in the organizational outcomes within family firms (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). The provided overview of research outcomes and theoretical lenses demonstrates the central theories and underexposed perspectives within the research field. It becomes clear that family firms are characterized by a unique organizational composition, challenging for both family members involved in the firm, and for the remaining organizational members, not belonging to the owner-manager family. Hence, in the next chapter I provide an overview of family firm-specific stakeholders and their objectives, leading to gaps in understanding the effects of the specific setting on employees' work attitudes.

2.1.3. Role of nonfamily employees in family firms

The idea that organizations involve various stakeholders with different interests and significance has been accepted throughout management and social sciences literature (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In a broad sense, organizational stakeholders are defined as "any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). In a more narrow sense, primary stakeholders are those who bear voluntarily risks due to financial, human or other form of capital, invested into the organization or who are involuntarily set at risk resulting from the organization's activities (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

In a company, these stakeholders usually include shareholders or owners, employees, customers, suppliers, communities and environment (Hillman & Keim, 2001). The persistence and profitability of organizations depend on retaining of primary stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995), thus an organization can be seen as a set of interactions and interdependences between them (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Based on the definition derived in chapter 2.1.1, the involvement of family members in organizations is the basic distinction between family and nonfamily firms and is regarded as the origin of their behavioral and performance differences (Mitchell, Agle, Chrisman, & Spence, 2011). The given dominating family exerts influence on the firm and bears associated financial and social risks. Thus, looking at family firms from the stakeholder theory point of view, family firms are characterized by an additional central stakeholder group, the family (Zellweger & Nason, 2008).

The family as a company stakeholder is special due to several reasons. First, the overlap of equity and management control provides the family with disproportionate power and, thus, influence possibilities when compared with power distribution in nonfamily firms (Mitchell et al., 2011). At the same time, the involved family is exposed to disproportionate risks associated with the company activities, concerning not only financial wellbeing, but also social status and reputation (Gomez-Mejia, Haynes et al., 2007). Another particularity, the overlap of family and business institutions, generates a unique situation of stakeholder salience within family firms (Mitchell et al., 2011; Mitchell, Morse, & Sharma, 2003).

Stakeholder salience is the prioritization level of competing stakeholder claims for managerial attention (Mitchell et al., 1997). Hence, a family involved in ownership, management and governance of a company has the power and the legitimacy to affect company behavior and objectives, which will be distinct from those of nonfamily firms (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2005).

However, another large group of internal stakeholders plays a similarly crucial role for family firms – employees not belonging to the owning family (Vallejo, 2009b). Family businesses rely strongly on nonfamily employees, as the majority of employees in family firms are not family members (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). Accordingly, family business researchers suggest that a development of positive attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of potential and actual nonfamily employees are critical for family firm performance and competitiveness (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Hauswald et al., 2015). Retaining capable nonfamily employees in the organization is considered a crucial factor for success or failure of family firms (Chrisman et al., 2003). Furthermore, nonfamily employees increase heterogeneity and thus, reduce potential deficits in human capital of family firms (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). Therefore, attracting and retaining nonfamily members is a top priority concerns of the owners of family businesses (Chua et al., 2003b).

Based on existing studies, attracting and binding nonfamily employees to a family firm can be challenging for several reasons (Carney, 2005; Memili, Zellweger, & Fang, 2013). First, insufficient incentives (Chrisman et al., 2014) as well as salary and additional compensations can be disadvantageous and uncompetitive in comparison to nonfamily firms (Poza et al., 1997). Further, preferential promotion of family members in management positions and nepotism (Lubatkin et al., 2005; Schulze et al., 2003) can make family firms less attractive for capable nonfamily employees (Kets de Vries, 1993). Impression of favored treatment of family relatives with regard to distribution of tasks or vacation policies are further disadvantageous impression family firms have been reported to make (Memili & Welsh, 2012; Poza et al., 1997). Hence, limitations in career advancement possibilities and the lack of professionalism can be dominant characteristics in the perceptions of nonfamily employees (Memili & Welsh, 2012; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

Furthermore, studies have shown that family firms are often afflicted by relationship conflicts between family members which can reduce the real and perceived effectiveness of the firm (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). With it, conflicting interests of family and business and the desire to avoid family quarrel can effect human resources practices and likewise, lead to the assignment of unsuitable candidates to organizational positions based on their family relation (the so-called Fredo effect), hence with a negative effect on career opportunities and aspirations of nonfamily employees (Kidwell, Kellermanns, & Eddleston, 2012).

However, based on the insights by Kahneman and Tversky (1977) and following empirical studies (for example, Camerer & Weber, 1992; Gomez-Mejia et al., 2010), family business researchers propose that due to risk adversity of individuals, the family involvement and influence in an organization can be positively related to employee continuance (Hauswald et al., 2015). Based on their aspiration to maintain the socioemotional wealth, family firms are considered to engage less in downsizing activities (Block, 2010) and provide commitment and trust to their managers and employees (Chrisman, Chua, & Kellermanns, 2009). Furthermore, according to Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006), empirical observations support the notion that family firms provide employees with better treatment than nonfamily firms, specifically with regard to long-term benefits like pensions and professional training.

To sum up, nonfamily employees play a special role within family firms, while being confronted with unique challenges. However, nonfamily employees have not received large attention within family business research (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2003; Vallejo, 2009b). Furthermore, as outlined above, the existing scientific literature provides partly contradictory results with regard to behavior and attitudes of employees in family firms, particularly related to the effect of family internal succession. Hence, the goal of this study is to respond to this shortcoming and investigate how nonfamily employees' attitudes are affected by family firm-specific attributes. For this purpose, in the following chapter I will introduce the concept of organizational commitment as a central desirable behavioral attitude of employees and review the existing literature on commitment within family firms. Thereafter, I will draw on transgenerational characteristics of family firms from the perception of employees, leading over to the mechanisms regarding their effect on the commitment of nonfamily employees.

2.2. Organizational commitment in family firms

Growing challenges for organizations associated with employee turnover indicate the role of human resources for competitiveness of enterprises (Lam & Liu, 2014). Consequently, employee attachment is a dominant topic in management sciences (Am Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). Particularly for family firms which are often small or mid-size companies

(Anderson & Reeb, 2004; Bertrand & Schoar, 2006) with less professional recruitment processes and weaker employee branding compared to big corporations (Williamson, 2000), retaining of valuable employees is a top priority (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). Hence, an important concern in the context of family firms is to understand employees' individual attitudes which are associated with a lower turnover. In the present chapter, I introduce the concept of organizational commitment, summarize the existing literature on commitment in family firms and identify interesting and relevant gaps in the existing research.

2.2.1. Definition and foundations

Commitment of employees towards the organization is one of the central and most relevant individual attitudes associated with organizational attachment, and has received considerable research attention throughout the last fifty years (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002; WeiBo, Kaur, & Jun, 2010). At the same time, the notion of organizational commitment is considered highly challenging within management, organizational behavior and human resources management research fields (Cohen, 2007). In general, commitment can be defined as *a state of being in which freedom of action is bounded to sustaining the existing line of activities* (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Numerous further definitions of commitment have been developed; however, most of them contain common features such as binding force, direction towards a target and maintaining activity (for an overview of definitions, see Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Another important aspect is that commitment is regarded as clearly distinct from related constructs within organizational sciences such as motivations or general positive attitudes such as job satisfaction (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002).

In organizational contexts, commitment has been studied with regard to various objects (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), for example commitment towards a job (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983), a career (Carson & Bedeian, 1994), or a goal (Locke, Latham, & Erez, 1988). Hence, it becomes clear that individuals can be committed both towards entities, such as an organization, towards activities, for example defined by a profession, and towards desired future results, such as a goal. As the focal attention of this study lies within family businesses, I will focus on the most relevant form of commitment – commitment towards organizations. Reflecting the complex and multidimensional character of the concept of commitment and the various ways of its conceptualization and operationalization, there is a number of definitions of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer, Allen et al., 1993; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). However, they can be summarized into one common denominator:

Organizational commitment is the power that binds a person to an organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Similarly undisputed is the importance of organizational commitment, being confirmed as one of the central antecedents of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002), defined as constructive and supportive employee behavior not included in the official job description (Organ, 1990), as well as an important determinant of employees' turnover intention and job satisfaction (Lam & Liu, 2014).

The concept, distinction and operationalization of commitment have been evolving and changing over time, dividable into three distinct periods (Cohen, 2007). The first period was based on the publication by Becker (1960) who provided one of the first approaches to conceptualization and operationalization of organizational commitment. In this approach, commitment is based on individual "side-bets", i.e. investments which individuals make in an organization. These investments would be lost in case of leaving this particular organization. Thus, according to the *side-bet theory*, the danger of losing the investments and the perceived lack of replacement alternatives make individuals committed to the organization. This approach is therefore closely linked to turnover behavior and has been used to operationalize commitment to the organization and/or to occupation by evaluating the causes of individuals for changing their current company (or occupation), e.g. in Ritzer and Trice (1969).

The second key approach to commitment was suggested by Porter (1974) and moved the focus from material "side-bets" to intangible *psychological attachment* of individuals to the organization. According to Porter, organizational commitment is thus defined as the degree "of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Porter, 1974, p. 604). It is associated with support of the organization's goals, readiness to show effort and aspiration to remain a member of the organization. The operationalization of this approach was undertaken by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) by designing the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). This tool evaluates primarily turnover and performance intentions of individuals and has been criticized for focusing more on behavioral intentions, rather than attitudes and for the ambiguity of dimensionality of the construct (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

Finally, two multi-dimensional conceptualization approaches evolved, developed by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Meyer and Allen (1984). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) aimed to resolve the lacking differentiation between antecedents and outcomes of commitment and the missing focus on attachment. They defined organizational commitment as a psychological attachment perceived by an individual towards the given organization which displays the individual internalization and adaptation of characteristics of the organization. Thus, the approach distinguished between the *instrumental exchange* operationalized with the compliance dimension and the *psychological attachment* operationalized with internalization and identification dimensions (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). As opposed to previous approaches linking commitment mainly with turnover behavior, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) suggested organizational citizenship behavior as a central consequence of commitment (Cohen, 2007). The operationalization has been criticized for blurred distinction between identification and internalization constructs and for insufficient relation between compliance and psychological attachment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

The approach suggested by Meyer and Allen (1984) aimed to resolve the deficits of previous conceptualizations and suggested initially two dimensions of organizational commitment: *affective commitment* reflecting the emotional attachment of a person to the organization and improving the OCQ approach, and *continuance commitment* reflecting perceived costs linked to leaving the organization and improving the "side-bet" approach. Allen and Meyer (1990) added a third dimension – *normative commitment*, reflecting a perceived duty of a person to maintain organizational affiliation. Since then, the three-dimensional approach has been dominant in the management research, with numerous studies conducted on properties and validity of the scales, as well as on antecedents and outcomes of the concept (e.g. Dawley, Stephens, & Stephens, 2005; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). Also this work applies the theoretical and operationalization approach suggested by Allen and Meyer (1990).

2.2.2. Types, antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment

In order to understand the differentiation between the three components of organizational commitment and the reason of my focus on affective commitment, in the following I provide an overview of their characteristics as well as antecedents and outcomes. *Continuance organizational commitment* describes the need of an individual to retain association with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is related to perceived costs resulting from termination of the association and perceived profits resulting from its continuation (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Thus, a person with continuance commitment to an organization is willing to remain with it due to disadvantages or costs related to leaving the organization which can be of financial or personal nature (Irving, Coleman, & Cooper, 1997). With regard to antecedents of continuance commitment, the main influencing factors are considered to be for example personal characteristics such as age and tenure, transferability of skills and education, organization-linked pension claims as well as perceived options of alternative employment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). As opposed to affective commitment, researchers find no relationship between continuance commitment and work experience or job characteristics (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994). On the outcome side, continuance commitment is negatively associated with turnover intention and turnover behavior – however, it is also negatively associated with desirable organization-related behaviors such as OCB and attendance (see meta-analysis by Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002).

Normative commitment describes the perceived duty of an individual to retain association with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is associated with a feeling that it is morally right to stay in the organization, resulting from an internal normative pressure to do so (Hackett et al., 1994; Meyer & Allen, 1984). Thus, a person with normative commitment to the organization is committed due to a feeling that he or she should maintain the association with it (Irving et al., 1997). As antecedents of normative commitment, on the individual level researchers name mainly the feeling of being expected to stay, also referred to as the loyalty norm which arises from certain socialization experiences (Meyer, Allen et al., 1993). On the organizational level, studies find organizational support as an important antecedent which results in a perceived need for reciprocity (Bergman, 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). On the outcome side, normative commitment is also negatively associated with turnover intention and turnover behavior, but positively associated with OCB, while studies do not show sufficient relationship to job performance and attendance (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002).

Affective commitment is considered to be the highest order form of commitment (Cohen, 2007) and the one with the strongest positive effect on desirable organization- and employee-relevant outcomes (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). It describes the *affective orientation of individuals towards an organization and their emotional attachment to it* (Meyer & Allen, 1991). "The mind-set characterizing affective commitment is desire – individuals with strong affective commitment *want* to pursue a course of actions of relevance to a target" (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 316), i.e. related to an organization, its members wish to remain associated with it. Affective commitment is associated with feelings of identification, involvement, and joyfulness of members towards an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mowday et al., 1979). According to Meyer, and Allen et al. (1993), this form of commitment develops when an individual gathers satisfying experience with an organization – thus, a person with affective commitment to the organization stays affiliated with it because this person wants to. Empirical studies support this relationship, confirming a strong connection between affective commitment and job satisfaction, hence stressing the importance of affective commitment for research of employee behavior (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Due to the important role of affective commitment in organizational context, numerous studies have examined its antecedents. Among individual-level ones, researchers found task self-efficacy as a positive predictor of affective commitment, while external locus of control is found to be strongly negatively related to affective commitment (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). Furthermore, personal ability, benevolence, and integrity were shown to predict affective commitment significantly (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). A study by Dvir, Kass, and Shamir (2004) shows that formulation of company vision, its social-related content and the degree of assimilation among organizational members are positively related to affective commitment of employees. Based on the meta-analysis conducted by Meyer, and Stanley et al. (2002), on the organizational level, work experience factors such as organizational support and fairness, as well as the transformational form of leadership are strongly positively related to affective commitment.

With regard to outcomes, studies show that affective commitment is strongly positively linked with work-related outcomes fostering desirable behaviors such as OCB, attendance and job performance (Meyer, Allen et al., 1993; Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). Furthermore, it is shown to be negatively related to self-reported stress and work-family conflict as well as positively related to well-being, confirming that it is the most beneficial type of commitment both for organizations and employees. Besides, a meta-analysis by Riketta (2002) showed that affective organizational commitment fosters employees' discretionary contributions to the organization and its goals even without a strong supervision or rules. As opposed to normative and continuance types of commitment, affective commitment is not rooted in the feeling of obligation towards the company, lack of alternatives or high costs of changing – which are mostly company-external factors, but in a voluntary, emotional attachment to the company (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). Hence, in the further course of this work when referring to commitment, I draw on the concept of affective commitment (consistent for example with Breugst, Domurath, Patzelt, & Klaukien, 2012 and Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000).

Distinction from organizational identification

As outlined above, affective commitment towards an organization is associated with identification of the individual with the given organization. However, there is frequently confusion between the concept of affective commitment and organizational identification (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008). As organizational commitment becomes important for the following course of this work, it is essential to clarify the distinction of the two concepts. Organizational identification describes the degree to which individuals define themselves based on their membership in the organization, i.e. it is the perceived oneness with the given organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Thus, organizational identification reflects how much an individual self is psychologically merged with the particular organization (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006) and refers to self-definition through membership in that organization (Hsu & Elsbach, 2013; Mael & Ashforth, 1995). In contrast, however, affective commitment conception is not rooted in the relationship between self-definition and organization. It reflects a positive emotional attitude towards the organization, while the actual self and the organization stay detached units (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006).

Hence, despite both constructs involving a sense of attachment to the organization and usually showing strong positive correlation (Riketta, 2005), they are distinct and discriminable (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). Based on the described above idea that identity and identification have a fundamental character, organizational identification is regarded to be an antecedent of affective commitment (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004).

2.2.3. Nonfamily employees' commitment in family firms

The presence of high commitment levels of all organizational members is often considered as one of the key advantages of family firms (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003; Tagiuri & Davis, 1996; Vallejo, 2009b). Within the family business research field, commitment has been studied for example with regard to goal setting (Kotlar & Massis, 2013), succession (Sharma & Irving, 2005) and performance (van Auken & Werbel, 2006). Most research work on commitment in family firms focuses on the family members, as family member commitment is "positively associated with the quality, intensity, and duration of effort directed towards supporting the organization's mission and goals" (Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum, Dibrell, & Craig, 2008, p. 1038).

Generally, family executives are assumed to be extraordinarily committed to their businesses for numerous reasons, such as their multiple concurrent roles, common identity, lifelong joint history and emotional involvement (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). A study by Memili, Zellweger, and Fang (2013) investigated antecedents of family member commitment and showed that affective commitment of family owners-managers to their business was affected by family business harmony and relationship conflict both directly and indirectly through their ownership attachment. Kotlar and Massis (2013) suggest that affective commitment of family executives to family-centered goals is positively related to familial and social interactions within the company. These interactions are triggered by the goal diversity within the company, which is particularly high in close proximity of a succession event.

Along with family executives' commitment, commitment of other family members has been in focus of family firm researchers. For example, van Auken and Werbel (2006) found that specifically for young family firms, spousal commitment plays an important role by positively influencing financial performance, while being dependent on the person-role conflict and the degree of involvement in the initial family business decision. Also the commitment of the successor and the later-generation family members' is crucial for the survival and the long-term success of family firms. Sharma and Irving (2005) suggest that successors' affective commitment to the family firm is positively influenced by the degree of identity alignment with the family firm and by the perceived fit of their career desires and opportunities (Sharma & Irving, 2005). A study by Dawson, Sharma, Irving, Marcus, and Chirico (2015) reveals that these factors are also relevant for later-generation family members. They show that deriving identity from the business and having opportunities which are aligned with their career interests enhance later-generation family members' sense of affective attachment with the family firm and thus increase their intention to stay with the family firm.

Along with the importance of family members' commitment to their business, scholars have recognized the critical role of commitment of nonfamily employees, whose perspective is scarcely treated in family business research (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). Nonfamily employee commitment is essential for long-term success of family firms (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002) and is positively associated to their strategic flexibility (Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum et al., 2008). Generally, employees of family firms are considered extraordinarily committed to their organizations (Horton, 1986; Kets de Vries, 1993; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). However, various researchers suggest that managers and employees who are not members of the owner-manager family might perceive inequality based on limited or discriminating incentives and thus, will not provide committed work for the company (Bennedsen, Nielsen, Perez-Gonzalez, & Wolfenzon, 2007; Gedajlovic et al., 2012). Moreover, since commitment is associated with monetary incentives, financial constraints can lead to difficulties in retaining high-potential employees in the company (Chrisman et al., 2014; Hauswald et al., 2015; Kuvaas, 2006; Schulze et al., 2001).

Despite the significance of the topic and the partly contradictory research findings, there is only limited scientific work on nonfamily employee commitment in family firms (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Memili & Barnett, 2008; Vallejo, 2009b). To my knowledge, only 15 research studies with focus on employees' commitment in family firms have been published in academic journals since 1990. An overview of these studies is presented in Table 1. With regard to understanding the difference in attitudes between family and nonfamily members, Davis et al. (2010) demonstrate that the commitment of nonfamily employees is significantly lower than of family employees, however pointing out that both show notably high levels of commitment. This finding is supported by comparative studies by Vallejo (2008a; 2010) and Vallejo and Langa (2010), who show that family firm employees have higher levels of commitment than employees of nonfamily firms.

Most studies on nonfamily employees' commitment examine its antecedents, while focusing largely on family business culture. Kets de Vries (1993) proposes that family members create values in the firm which transfer a common sense of purpose to nonfamily employees and thus, establish their commitment. However, he points out that this commitment might be damaged by not giving them credit for their work, for example by a biased incentive system which promotes incompetent family members solely due to their family affiliation. According to a qualitative study by Jones (2006), employee commitment in family firms arises from cultural congruence, when company culture confirms and authenticates employees' beliefs (with regard to for example religion, traditions and values), thus, fostering their strong identification with the firm. Similarly, Vallejo (2008a) explains the high levels of nonfamily employee commitment with general cultural differences between family and nonfamily firms. Zahra, Hayton, and Neubaum et al. (2008) suggest that family firms are characterized by a commitment culture which origins in the family's affective commitment to the firm and is contagious within the organization, therefore being transferred to the employees.

Several studies find organizational identification and psychological ownership of nonfamily employees to be a reason for their high commitment levels. Vallejo (2009b) studies affective commitment of employees in family firms through the level of their identification and finds strong positive relationships with both survival and profitability of the firm. The study suggests steward relationships between owner family and employees to be a necessary condition of emergence of nonfamily employees' affective commitment. However, a study by Davis et al. (2010) finds no empirical support for the proposed relationship between perceived stewardship and commitment of nonfamily employees. Memili and Welsh (2012) associate nonfamily employees' commitment with their organizational identification, which is enhanced by participative and/or professional culture as well as moderate levels of Laissez-faire culture in family firms. Vallejo and Langa (2010) suggest a special, family firm-specific kind of socialization which fosters a noneconomic connection between nonfamily employees and family firms, thus, leading to higher levels of commitment.

In the course of the previous chapters 2.1.3 and 2.2, I have outlined the importance of nonfamily employees as family firm stakeholders as well as of their affective organizational commitment which expresses the desire to remain associated with the firm. The goal of my study is to understand how this commitment of nonfamily employees is affected by the transgenerational intentions of the leading family, the most central and unique attributes of family firms. Hence, in the next chapter I will describe the role of transgenerational intentions in family firms, outline their components and introduce the perceptional perspective on employees with regard to the transgenerational intentions.

Table 1: Summary of studies on nonfamily employees' commitment in family firms

Study	Type	Sample	Key finding
Kets de Vries (1993)	Conceptual	-	Common sense of purpose created by family values enhances employee commitment. Discriminating incentive system in favor of family members can damage their commitment.
Barnett and Kellermanns (2006)	Conceptual	-	The level of family involvement has an impact on justice perception by nonfamily employees through HR practices. Moderate levels of family involvement lead to more unbiased HR practices which directly influence perceived justice by nonfamily employees and increase their commitment to the organization. High and low levels of family involvement decrease the fairness of HR practices.
Jones (2006)	Empirical	Executives and employees of one family firm	Employee commitment in family firms arises from cultural congruence, when company culture confirms and authenticates employees' beliefs.
Welsh and Raven (2006)	Empirical	178 employees from family owned firms in Middle East	High fatalism values (i.e. feeling of little control over life affecting events) of employees are associated with high affective commitment to their organizations. Commitment is positively related with the perceived service quality provided by employees.
Vallejo (2008a)	Empirical	410 executives and employees from 126 family and nonfamily firms	Nonfamily employees in family firm show higher levels of commitment than employees in nonfamily firms due to cultural differences between family and nonfamily firms.
Zahra, Hayton, and Neubaum et al. (2008)	Empirical	248 family and nonfamily managers of 104 family firms	Commitment culture is characteristic for family firms. It originates in the family's affective commitment to the firm and is contagious within the organization, therefore being transferred to the employees.
Vallejo (2009b)	Empirical	410 executives and employees from 126 family and nonfamily firms	Identification as an element of affective commitment of nonfamily employees is positively related to survival and profitability family firms. The study suggests steward relationship between owner family and employees to be a necessary condition of emergence of nonfamily employees' affective commitment.

Study	Type	Sample	Key finding
Carmon, Miller, Raile, and Roers (2010)	Empirical	118 family and nonfamily employees working in family firms	The proposed positive effect of perceived informational and interpersonal justice and attitude homophily on organizational identification of nonfamily employees was not supported. No significant difference in the commitment of family and nonfamily employees was found.
Davis et al. (2010)	Empirical	366 family and nonfamily employees working in family firms	No significant relationship between perceived stewardship and value commitment of nonfamily employees can be detected. Nonfamily employees have a high level of value commitment, which is however significantly lower than the commitment of family members.
Vallejo and Langa (2010)	Empirical	410 executives and employees from family and nonfamily firms 126	Family firm employees show higher levels of commitment than nonfamily firm employees. A family firm-specific kind of socialization fosters noneconomic connection between employees and the firm, leading to higher levels of commitment
Bernhard and O'Driscoll (2011)	Empirical	229 nonfamily employees from 52 family firms	Transformational and transactional leadership have a positive impact on nonfamily employees' affective commitment and this relationship is mediated by their psychological ownership of the organization.
Sieger et al. (2011)	Empirical	310 nonfamily employees from family firms	Psychological ownership partially mediates the positive relationship between perceived distributive justice and nonfamily employees' affective commitment in family firms.
Memili and Welsh (2012)	Conceptual	-	In family businesses, the power and experience of family employees as well as a paternalistic culture are negatively related to the organizational identification of nonfamily employees, while participative and/or professional firm culture, as well as moderate levels of Laissez-faire leadership show positive relationship. The attachment and turnover intentions of the nonfamily employees are also strongly related to their identification.
Savolainen and Kansikas (2013)	Empirical	3 small family business firms	Nonfamily employees' psychological ownership increases during succession. This can have both positive and negative effects on the organizational commitment, depending on the perception of succession as a chance of improvement or a threat.
Farrington, Venter, and Sharp (2014)	Empirical	280 nonfamily employees from family firms	Compensation and job security have a positive impact on nonfamily employees' job satisfaction and commitment. No significant effect of promotion opportunities can be found.

2.3. Transgenerational goalsetting in family firms

Goals and objectives in organizations tend to reflect values and attitudes of their dominant coalitions (Cyert & March, 1963). Hence, in family firms, the goals are largely impacted by members of the dominant family (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012). At the same time, organizational goals affect all organizational members, i.e. both employees and managers belonging to the owner-manager family and those who are not affiliated with it. Hence, according to Kotlar and Massis (2013), family firm goals can be classified by the recipient in *family and nonfamily member relevant goals*. A further classification can be made according to goal content. Based on this aspect, authors suggest a distinction in *economic and noneconomic goals*. Having in mind the dominant role of family members in the determination of company goals, it is not surprising that family firms are characterized by a strong presence of both economic and noneconomic goals, the recipient of which is mainly the owner-manager family (Chrisman et al., 2014). Thereby, specifically family-related noneconomic goals have been found to be a strong distinctive attribute of family firms (Chrisman, Chua, & Steier, 2005). Hence, after identifying nonfamily employees as crucial members of family firms, the focus of this work lies in the question how the central noneconomic goals of family members, such as transgenerational sustainability and succession, impact employees who are not part of the owner-manager family.

Before outlining the family-centered goals directed towards maintaining the transgenerational family influence on the company, I draw upon general distinctive goals in family firms and their potential impact on members of the firms.

2.3.1. Goals in family firms

Common economic goals such as firm profitability, efficiency and growth are regarded to benefit the organization in general, and with it both family and nonfamily members of family businesses (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008). These goals are common for both family and nonfamily enterprises. However, there are specific economic goals which are characteristic for family firms, the primary recipient of which is the owner-manager family (Westhead & Howorth, 2006). Such goals are, for example, continuity of family control and family wealth, endurance of independent ownership by the family, preservation of family fortune and passing it on to the next generation (Holt, 2012; Westhead & Howorth, 2006).

Furthermore, due to the salience of the family as organizational stakeholder, family firms pursue noneconomic objectives which serve primarily family interests and are unique for family firms (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). Family-centered noneconomic goals can be described as objectives benefiting the family and not directly linked to monetary value (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012). They include identity link between family and firm (Gomez-Mejia, Haynes et al., 2007), employment for family members (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012), reputation and social status (Dyer & Whetten, 2006) and family harmony (Astrachan & Jaskiewicz, 2008).

Though family-centered noneconomic goals are typical for family firms, and despite their importance varying with the extent of family influence (Achleitner, Bock, Braun, Schraml, & Welter, 2009), these goals have a strong influence on decisions and behaviors in family firms (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012) and can lead to goal related conflicts (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008). Accordingly, the family-related noneconomic goals, when pursued by a dominant family in the firm, usually do not directly address nonfamily members of the organization as central goal recipients (Kotlar & Massis, 2013). Thereby, there are noneconomic goals within family firms which are not directly family-related, such as internal serenity of the firm and relations with external stakeholders, such as loyalty to suppliers and customers (Kotlar & Massis, 2013). Furthermore, researchers note that some family firms place high priority on the creation of a good place to work for employees – making employees happy, productive and proud (Tagiuri & Davis, 1992).

Family firm goals, disregarding their primary recipient and gainer and hence including family-related noneconomic goals, have impact on all organizational stakeholders (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). Thereby, the way how family firms respond to claims of family and nonfamily stakeholders can vary (Melin & Nordqvist, 2007). In any case, solely family-related objectives can lead to decisions or outcomes which are not ideal when judged by business performance or nonfamily stakeholder interests (Lee & Rogoff, 1996). Hence, taken that family members holding both ownership and management positions within the company have enough power to influence company objectives and thus, decisions and actions, various challenges for nonfamily stakeholders, i.e. employees, arise (Schulze et al., 2001). On the one hand, Cennamo, Berrone, Cruz, and Gomez-Mejia (2012) suggest that family-centered noneconomic goals are beneficial not only for the family, but also for nonfamily employees. On the other hand, Memili and Barnett (2008) note that not explicitly defined noneconomic goals can harm nonfamily employees' stewardship orientation.

To sum up, family firm-specific goal settings are influenced by an additional stakeholder, the family. Therefore, scholars have acknowledged that nonfamily employees face complex surroundings in family firms (Mitchell et al., 2003) and require research attention (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). Nonetheless, only little research has been conducted with regards to the effects of family firm-specific goal setting and resulting behaviors on nonfamily employees (Memili & Welsh, 2012). Among the negative effects, family-centered goals are often related to arising of inflexibility and change resistance (Hauswald et al., 2015). Furthermore, scholars find that nonfamily employees can be negatively affected by family-centered noneconomic goalsetting both on monetary level through lower salaries (Chrisman et al., 2014) and on perceptional level through unfair treatment (Carney, 2005; Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). Also unequal salary distribution might be a reason for high-potential employees to prefer nonfamily firms (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003). However, family-centered company goals can also be associated with stability and trustworthiness (Hauswald et al., 2015). The feeling of belonging to an "extended" family, loyalty, protection and support from the family can create strong bonds between employees and family firms (Karra et al., 2006).

For the purpose of understanding the impact of family-centered goals in family firms on nonfamily employees, one aspect of goal setting which is considered central and defining for family firms, is the transgenerational continuance of family involvement (Chua et al., 2003b). Complying with the goal of this study to evaluate the effect of family-specific transgenerational goal settings on nonfamily employees within family firms, I am first aiming to understand the central family firm objective: transgenerational intentions in family firms. The literature review in the next chapter aims to provide this an overview of this topic.

2.3.2. Transgenerational intentions as essence of family firm

According to Chua et al. (1999a), the intention to sustain the firm within family influence is the vision which constitutes the essence of a family firm:

> *"The family business is a business governed and/or managed with the intention to shape and pursue the vision of the business held by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family or a small number of families in a manner that is potentially sustainable across generations of the family or families" (Chua et al., 1999a, p. 25).*

Thus, the family character of the firm is expressed by the explicit goal to pass the firm to the next family generation. Succession, the process of passing the control and management of the family firm to the next generation, is a dominating topic within family business research (Massis, Chua, & Chrisman, 2008; Sharma, Chrisman, Pablo, & Chua, 2001). As only around thirty percent of family businesses successfully overcome the transition to the second generation, and just fifteen percent to the third (Le Breton-Miller et al., 2004), researchers are striving for a better understanding of factors ensuring successful transitions (Jaskiewicz, Combs, & Rau, 2015). As subsumed by Le Breton-Miller et al. (2004), the crucial components are characteristics and attitudes of incumbent and successor, relevant successor's education, cohesive family relationship and vision as well as an existing board of directors with strong nonfamily members on it. Massis et al. (2008) come to a similar conclusion in their study on factors preventing successful intra-family transition.

Despite the large body of literature focusing on factors referring directly to the succession event (Eddleston et al., 2013), researchers have only recently began to recognize the importance of *transgenerational intentions* (TI) as goal setting for family firm behavior and performance (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2012). Transgenerational intentions differ from the actual succession, as they describe the continuous aspiration for a long-term continuation of the family as an integer part of the firm and of the firm as an integer part of the family (Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011; Wright & Kellermanns, 2011). Since the drivers of intentions are both desirability and practicability of the outcome (Ajzen, 1991), I consider transgenerational intentions in family firms to be characteristic for firms where the intrafamily transition is feasible, i.e. where the leading family does not only wish, but also has the opportunity to pass the firm to the next generation (Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012). Furthermore, I refer to transgenerational intentions as a predecessor of transgenerational wealth creation, which is not its sufficient (due to the impact of strategic methods and ownership mind-set), but necessary precondition (Habbershon & Pistrui, 2002).

Table 2: Summary of studies on transgenerational intentions

Study	Type	Sample	Expression of TI	Key finding
Chua et al. (1999a)	Conceptual and empirical	453 family owned and managed firms from Canada	Vision to sustain family firm across family generations	Conceptual part: Essence and source of family firms' uniqueness lies in the family-specific objective of sustainability across generations. Empirical part: Family firm definition based on components of involvement can be used only limited as prediction of company intentions. The sole consideration of family involvement is not a reliable indicator of family firm distinctiveness.
Chua et al. (2003b)	Empirical	272 family owned and managed firms from Canada	Succession concern	Intrafamily succession concerns are dominating the agenda of family firm owner-managers.
Chua, Chrisman, and Chang (2004)	Empirical	2,116 new ventures and 3,724 operating firms from the U.S.	Succession expectation	"Born" family firms differ from "made" ones by their self-image as family firm. Most family firms are born and have the transgenerational intention from the start.
Holt et al. (2010)	Empirical	831 family managed firms in the U.S.	Intention to maintain family involvement and to keep the firm in the family	Higher transgenerational intentions in family firms are positively related to family characteristics in dimensions power, experience and culture.
Long and Mathews (2011)	Conceptual	n.a.	Intentions for transgenerational sustainability	Transgenerational sustainability intentions are positively related to reciprocity and exchange among members of the dominant coalition.
Lumpkin and Brigham (2011)	Conceptual	n.a.	Succession planning	Transgenerational intentions in family firms represent an expression of future orientation, thus, contributing to the long-term orientation of the firm.
Chrisman, Chua, and Pearson et al. (2012)	Empirical	1,060 small businesses in the U.S.	Transgenerational family control intentions (TFCI)	The family firm essence is defined by family's transgenerational control intentions and commitment to the firm. This essence mediates the positive relationship between family involvement and the importance of family-centered, non-economic goals.

Study	Type	Sample	Expression of TI	Key finding
Zellweger, and Kellermanns et al. (2012)	Empirical	179 family firms from Switzerland and 326 family firms from Germany	Intentions for transgenerational control	Family business CEO's stronger intention for transgenerational control is positively related to his perceived firm's value.
Eddleston et al. (2013)	Empirical	107 family firms from the U.S.	Succession planning	Succession planning is positively related to family firm growth when the firm is under first-generation management, but not in the second or higher generation.
Williams et al. (2013)	Empirical	716 family firms in the U.S.	The plan to pass management of the business to future generations	All three family firm subsystems affect the current leaders' intention to pass the leadership of the family-managed business to future generations, with the strongest effect of family subsystem. Time until succession is positively related to the intention to pass the firm to the next generation.
Zellweger, and Nason et al. (2013)	Conceptual	n.a.	Transgenerational sustainability intentions	Transgenerational sustainability intentions positively influence the importance of identity fit between family and firm as well as the family's concern for corporate reputation. The latter is positively related to nonfamily-centered nonfinancial goals, which benefit nonfamily firm stakeholders.
Delmas and Gergaud (2014)	Empirical	281 wineries in the U.S.	Intention of transgenerational succession	Ties to future generations, measured as the intention of the winery owner to pass down the winery to their children, are associated with the adoption of sustainable practices.
Memili, Welsh, and Kaciak (2014)	Empirical	32 firms from International Franchise Association	Transgenerational succession intentions	Leader-member exchange has a positive impact on organizational psychological capital, which effects positively firm innovativeness. Both relationships are positively moderated by transgenerational succession intentions.
Gilding, Gregory, and Cosson (2015)	Conceptual	n.a.	Succession planning	Proposition of four possible results of succession planning: institutionalization, implosion, imposition and individualization, depending on the distinction of family harmony and family business continuity motives for succession.

Transgenerational intentions in family firms are relevant for several reasons. Family business researchers propose that transgenerational sustainability considerations have a critical impact on managers' decision making by expanding their horizon beyond their own tenure (James, 1999). Furthermore, they impact the perceived financial value of the firm due to increased socio-emotional wealth associated with them (Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012). Additionally, the experience and information exchange among involved family members is positively influenced by transgenerational sustainability intentions (Long & Mathews, 2011). To my knowledge, fourteen studies focusing on transgenerational intentions have been published in peer-reviewed journals within family business research since 1990. An overview of studies focusing on transgenerational intentions within family firms since 1990 is provided in Table 2.

Led by the articles by Chua et al. (1999a) and the Chua et al. (2003b) which identify the importance and significance of transgenerational intentions for family firms, Chua, Chrisman, and Chang (2004) suggest that even though some family firms develop transgenerational sustainability vision over time, most family firms are characterized by an existing transgenerational intention of the leading family from the moment of firm foundation. The emergence of family's transgenerational intentions are driven by all three family firm subsystems: family, ownership and business – however, researchers suggest the family subsystem to have the strongest effect (Williams et al., 2013). As a result, researchers associate transgenerational intentions with future orientation of the firm as well as family commitment and reciprocity (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012; Long & Mathews, 2011; Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011). Furthermore, the extent of transgenerational intentions is positively associated with socioemotional wealth of the leading family (Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012) as well as with the significance of family-centered noneconomic goals (Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013)

Examination of research literature on transgenerational intentions reveals that the scholars' image and concept of transgenerational intentions varies, covering different aspects with regard to vision, sustainability, planning and family relationships. Thus, there is a need for a coherent concept of elements constituting transgenerational intentions within family firms. "Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181). For this purpose it is important to understand motives behind family internal succession. Family business researchers agree that the aspiration for business continuity across generations and harmony between family members are the main motives for succession

(Chua et al., 1999a; Gilding et al., 2015). While the family harmony motive has a clear behavioral translation in form of cohesiveness and low level of conflict, business continuity across generations implies continuity of both control and management by the family. Hence, these three elements reflect transgenerational intentions. The aspects of succession concern identified by Chua et al. (1999a) confirm the elements: The aspiration of maintaining family ownership and control can be subsumed under *control intention*. The process of successor selection, concerns about salaries of family members and finding a place for incompetent family members can be compiled as *succession planning*. Resolving conflicts among family members refers to family relationships and can be condensed to the term *family cohesion*.

In the following chapter I will elaborate these three building blocks of transgenerational intentions. I provide a literature review on the elements of transgenerational intentions and the corresponding antecedents and outcomes. Particularly, I draw on perceptions of these intentions by nonfamily employees of family firms. It is notable that as I view intention for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesions as elements of transgenerational intentions of the owner-manager family, it is likely that they are positively related to each other, being apparent in family firms with high levels of familiness (Chrisman, Chua, & Steier, 2005; Chua et al., 1999a).

2.3.3. Expression of transgenerational intentions

2.3.3.1. Intention for transgenerational control

Following Chua et al. (1999a), intentions of the owner-manager family to maintain the family character of the firm can be represented and expressed towards organizational members by means of their declared intent to not give away the control of the firm. *The intention of the dominant family to maintain company control over generations* is an integral part of transgenerational intentions and is usually reflected in the goalsetting of the family firm. In this chapter I outline motives and outcomes of family intention for transgenerational control over the firm and its perceptions by employees of the company.

In general, the motive behind control is a wish for assurance of certain aspired organizational outcomes (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996). Researchers have identified two main dimensions of organizational control: information and reinforcement (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996). Provision of information includes activities like goal setting, monitoring and feedback, whereas securing of reinforcement includes incentives, rewards and punishment (Anderson &

Oliver, 1987). In the classical agency theory, establishment and enforcement of control are linked to the general assumption of divergent goals between principal and agent, i.e. owners and managers/employees (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Consequently, the organizational control literature suggests that exercising of company control is dependent upon the mechanisms of control enforcement (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996). Thus, family control of the organization depends on the possibility of the family to determine the control-relevant information, such as goals, and to assert target achievement. Thereby, the degree of company control by the family depends on the family ownership shares and its effective control involvement in the supervisory board of the company, as it allows to set goals and enforce their achievement (Sacristán-Navarro, Gómez-Ansón, & Cabeza-García, 2011). Thus, maintaining family control means keeping both equity interests and supervision power within the family.

The family control intention represents a goal with regard to the business strategy, but driven by family motives such as assurance of support, development and nurture for family members (Dyer, 2003). A study by Tagiuri and Davis (1992) shows that a large number of family goals within family firms refer to the objective of ensuring owners' current and future financial security and independence. Financially, the aiming of families for transgenerational control presumes anticipation of transgenerational wealth creation for the family, i.e. achieving not less than normal market returns on their assets over several generations (Habbershon & Pistrui, 2002; Habbershon et al., 2003). Besides financial aspects, owner-manager family members pursue goals referring to socioemotional value obtained from firm ownership and control (Gomez-Mejia, Cruz et al., 2011). Thus, the intention for transgenerational control aims to satisfy both the financial and emotional needs associated with the firm.

Control intentions arise from the fact that family goals within firms have the primary purpose to serve the owner-family und thus, can be contradicting with goals of other coalitions within the firm (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012; Cyert & March, 1963). Family-centered goals play an important role in the development of family firm theory (Kotlar & Massis, 2013). They are considered to be one of the major sources of family firm heterogeneity (Chrisman & Patel, 2012). According to Jensen and Meckling (1976), under dispersed ownership and management, managers can pursue objectives not related to company welfare such as financial performance, market shares and firm size. Instead, they can strive for personal objectives serving their self-interests, such as power, status and job security. In this situation, the task of the owner-supervision is to create mechanisms enabling prevention of these actions.

Under concentrated control over ownership and involvement in management, the controlling coalition has a greater power to aim for its own benefits (Villalonga & Amit, 2006). These benefits are often derived from nonfamily-related goals and are of noneconomic nature, for example referring to family harmony, wealth, social status and reputation (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012; Zellweger & Nason, 2008). However, due to the concerns about family reputation, these goals can often include social responsibility objectives related to environment and employees (Dyer, 2006). Thus, in order to guarantee the possibility to pursue family-related goals of the company throughout generations, families strive for maintaining and transferring company control to the next generations.

Transgenerational control intentions of the leading family have far-reaching implications on organizations, including communication, strategic decisions and behavior towards stakeholders (Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012). Especially for private family firms, i.e. firms not listed on public stock markets, family control allows a large spectrum of family influence on strategic choices and thus, performance outcomes (Carney, Van Essen, Gedajlovic, & Heugens, 2015). Researchers propose that under these conditions, family control can lead to disproportionate altruistic behavior of incumbents towards their children, causing inefficiency and agent-agent issues (Schulze et al., 2001). Also the desire to perpetuate socioemotional wealth can result in loss aversion and subsequent suboptimal decisions, thus, triggering performance disadvantages (Gomez-Mejia, Cruz et al., 2011).

However, by signaling their intentions for transgenerational control, the owner-manager family can also achieve positive outcomes. For example, as family control goes along with financial returns, the intention to stay in power can display motivation of the family to monitor performance and enhance profitability (Carney et al., 2015). Furthermore, the perspective of transferring the company control to future generations can lead to a reduction of short-term performance pressure due to capital market insulation; and this leads to a long-term orientation of the firm (Lumpkin & Brigham, 2011). Hence, for external stakeholders such as suppliers, and particularly for internal stakeholders such as employees, the perception of control intentions by the family can reduce perceived uncertainty with regard to company future and sustainability (Hauswald et al., 2015). To sum up, there is a need for clarification about the nature of the effect of perceived intentions for transgenerational control on nonfamily employees.

2.3.3.2. Succession planning

Family intention to maintain control and transfer it to the next generation is the first element of transgenerational intentions, ensuring power and legitimacy of the family to exert influence on the firm (Chrisman et al., 2010). The second element of transgenerational intentions is planning of management succession, which is crucial for achievement of business continuity and implies time and effort invested into planning of the aspired succession outcome (Gilding et al., 2015; Lee, Lim, & Lim, 2003). While family aspiration to exercise control throughout generations enhances actual and perceived family control over the company's transgenerational sustainability, succession planning is the behavioral expression of transgenerational intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Skinner, 1997). In general, planning activities can be described as involvement in a cognitive task of creating an effective way to achieve a future goal (Scholnick & Friedman, 1993). Applied to family firms, I define succession planning as *family engagement in the development of a family-internal succession plan and its communication among family and nonfamily stakeholders* (Eddleston et al., 2013).

According to Kleiman and Peacock (1996), succession planning involves consideration of all aspects of succession which are crucial for a successful transition, i.e. with regard to finance, governance, knowledge and network. The process of planning should ensure a transfer of assets and financial capital, contracts and legacy, knowledge and skills from the senior generation to the next generation. More importantly, the transition between generations has to guarantee a transfer of family firms' social capital. It is an important source of family firms' competitive advantage and is not easy to gain or transmit (Steier, 2001b). Social capital describes a network of relationships between persons and organizations (Coleman, 1989), which provides a basis for trust and cooperation within the organization and constitutes a valuable organizational resource (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Due to the long-term character of social capital, succession planning involves also a long-lasting process of preparation of social capital transfer from predecessor to successor generation (Steier, 2001b).

Family-internal succession planning implies that contrary to the rational business practices, particularistic criteria of family relation to the founder play a role in selection of successors (Perrow, 1972). Due to its preoccupation character, it is considered to signal inefficiency and lead to a lack of competitiveness on the market (Dyer, 2003). Furthermore, it can be a sign of unfair treatment towards nonfamily employees and managers and display their limited promotion perspectives (Chua et al., 2003b; Schulze et al., 2001).

However, research shows that succession planning signals intentions to develop a potential successor and provide him or her with adequate skills and abilities to take on family firm leadership, und thereby to improve the chances of a successful succession (Williams et al., 2013). Moreover, Verbeke and Kano (2012) argue that through family members' long-term socialization within the company, the exchange of tacit knowledge and social capital provide the family firm with a stable and loyal successor. Besides abilities, an early planning of succession increases the successor's leadership desire and commitment to the family firm (McMullen & Warnick, 2015). Further, the satisfaction of involved stakeholders and acceptance of the successor by employees and managers can depend largely on the process of succession planning (Sharma, Chrisman, & Chua, 2003). Furthermore, succession planning enables transfer of social capital and introduction of successor to social networks of the company, thus contributing to the preservation of tacit knowledge within the organization (Steier, 2001b). Finally, Davis and Harveston (1998a) propose that family businesses that stress succession planning tend to have higher levels of future orientation.

To sum up, succession planning is considered an indispensable aspect reflecting transgenerational intentions, important in securing long-term oriented sustainability goals and achieving the desirable succession outcome (Gilding et al., 2015). The perception of succession planning by employees has a crucial effect on their attitudes and behaviors within family firms. However, current research does not provide a conclusive answer regarding the nature of this effect.

2.3.3.3. Family members' cohesion

The third and last element associated with transgenerational intentions in family firms is cohesion between family members involved in the company (Lansberg & Astrachan, 1994). *Family cohesion describes the degree of emotional bonding and closeness between family members* (Olson, 2000). In order to understand the characteristics and effects of family member cohesion in family firms, I first investigate the antecedents and the consequences of group cohesion in organizations.

Cohesion between members of a specific group (for example, top managers in nonfamily corporations or family members in family firms as examples of groups with a strong influence within organizations) has been described as the extent of group members' attraction to each other (Ensley & Pearson, 2005; Shaw, 1971). Group cohesion can be characterized by two dimensions: group integration, i.e. common attributes of a group as a whole, and individual attraction, i.e. degree of personal attraction of members to the group (Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985; Chang & Bordia, 2001). Both the group level cohesion and the individual attitude towards it can be captured on the one hand as an objective feature, and on the other hand as a subjective perception of organizational members belonging to the group or interacting with the group, but not belonging to it (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). Specifically the cohesion as a perceived feature has important consequences for attitudes and behavior of organizational members (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990; Lee, 2006b).

Due to the importance and relevance of cohesion in an organizational context, researchers have studied the factors contributing to its emergence in organizations (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). As influencing factors regarding team characteristics, researchers suggest that team demography attributes, such as long common tenure and team homogeneity have a strong positive influence on the development of cohesion, while a large team size is associated with lower levels of cohesion (Smith et al., 1994). Consequently, based on these factors, members of one family with life-long common tenure, rich common experience and limited number of members will have pronounced levels of cohesion between them (Ensley & Pearson, 2005). Furthermore, family cohesion is positively related to the family members' mutual support and involvement, common activities and events, and shared residence of several generations under the same roof (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015). Also strong family ties and loyalty are associated with higher family cohesion (Ensley, Pearson, & Sardeshmukh, 2007). In addition, closure and trustworthiness among family members are proposed to be positively related to family members' cohesion (Salvato & Melin, 2008). However, pay dispersion between family members involved in a family firm has a strong negative influence on cohesion between them due to the violation of the" principles of exchange in the family" (Ensley et al., 2007, p. 1042).

As all families differ with regard to their mutual relationship, the levels of family cohesion and specifically of cohesion between family members involved in a family firm can vary significantly, both from objective and subjective perspectives (Zahra, 2012). Analogous to group cohesion, cohesion between family members can be viewed both from objective and perceived viewpoints. Family cohesion from the perception of its members can be described as the degree to which they feel closeness and solidarity of the family and a wish to hold together (Zahra, 2012). The perception of family outsiders usually depends on demonstration of mutual support and solidarity, representation of common values, expression of care and carrying out of common activities (Barber & Buehler, 1996).

The importance and relevance of cohesion have been shown by numerous theoretical and empirical studies associating management team cohesion with company and team performance (e.g. Chang & Bordia, 2001, for a meta-analysis see Mullen & Copper, 1994). However, possible negative implications of high cohesion levels between involved family members have been suggested. Specifically with an existence of one dominant family in the firm, high levels of cohesiveness between its members can lead to exclusion of outsiders from information flows, reduction of learning sources for family members and obligation to conformity within the family (Zahra, 2012). Furthermore, individual effort to maintain group unity can also lead to a lack of critical discussions with regard to company decisions (Janis, 1972) as well as intragroup pressure for uniformity (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). Correspondingly, studies have shown that while team cohesion is associated with higher perceived team performance (Breugst, Patzelt, & Rathgeber, 2015), highly cohesive teams are also less objective in evaluating their performance (Breugst, Patzelt, Shepherd, & Aguinis, 2012).

Nevertheless, most studies suggest positive effects of cohesion between family members; for example, high speed of decision making as well as group productivity and efficiency have been proposed to be positively associated with cohesion (Smith et al., 1994). With regard to family firms, researchers have also found a number of positive organizational and individual consequences of family member cohesiveness. First, perceived cohesion among family members is associated with a *trustful relationship* between them, and is connected to longevity of family firms (Jiménez, Martos, & Jiménez, 2015). Trust characterizes behavior driven mostly by non-calculative elements, expressed in a belief in impossibility of failure by others, even in presence of opportunities or incentives for it (Janowicz-Panjaitan & Noorderhaven, 2009). Specifically, affect-based trust arises from emotional bonds and fosters an atmosphere of mutual care (Fryxell, Dooley, & Vryza, 2002).

Moreover, researchers propose low levels of relationship *conflict* between family members in the presence of high levels of cohesion (Ensley & Pearson, 2005). Relationship conflict in teams has disadvantageous consequences such as poor decision quality and low team members' satisfaction (Breugst et al., 2015; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Davis and Harveston (2001b) suggest that homogeneous family member teams with low familial distance have less conflicts. As conflict is considered to be a characteristic feature of familial relationships (Dyer, 2003), reduction of conflict levels is desirable for families involved in family firms. Furthermore, family harmony and cohesion are associated with higher levels of family members' commitment to the firm (Memili et al., 2013). Familial social interactions are considered to be more effective than professional interactions in creation of joint commitment to family-centered goals in family companies (Kotlar & Massis, 2013). Thus, cohesion contributes to the successor's firm and goal commitment which are proposed to be crucial for a successful transgenerational transition (Chrisman et al., 1998; Sharma & Irving, 2005). Hence, family members' cohesion is a critical factor for transgenerational characteristics of family firms (for example transgenerational entrepreneurship in Jaskiewicz et al., 2015).

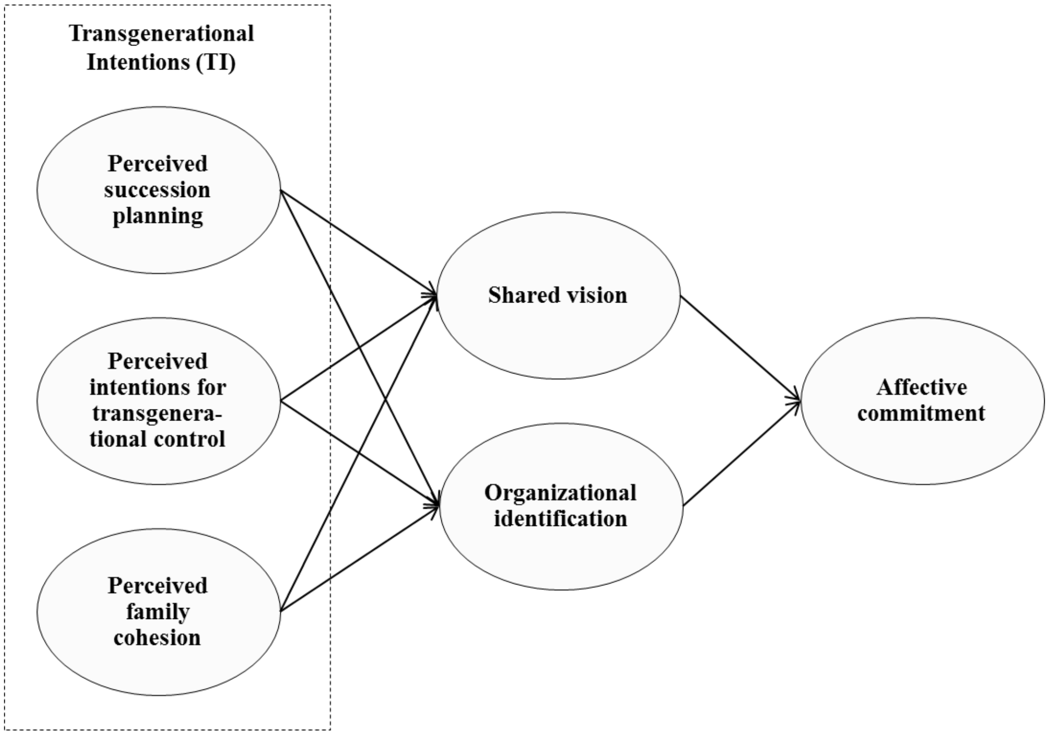
Another aspect of family members' cohesion which is crucial for a successful handover of a family business is its contribution to the transfer of *tacit knowledge* (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001). In cohesive families, the children are deeply involved in the firm from their childhood on (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015). Hence, members of a cohesive family adopt connections and networks of each other, share experience, common attitudes and, thus, transfer experience and knowledge and accumulate it throughout generations (Zahra, 2012; Zahra, Neubaum, & Larrañeta, 2007). Tacit knowledge is defined as situational knowledge which is accumulated through specific experience and activities (Grant, 1996). Researchers suggest that preservation and transfer of tacit knowledge contribute to maintenance of family firm competitive advantage since the firm's success often emerges from the unique experience of predecessor (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001). Communication, trust and early interconnection between cohesive family members enhance their ability to generate and transfer tacit knowledge (Gedajlovic et al., 2012; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

Summing up, within the family business domain, family members' cohesion is viewed as part of the familiness which provides competitive advantage for family firms (Ensley et al., 2007; Habbershon & Williams, 1999) by contributing substantially to their transgenerational sustainability and survivability (Ensley & Pearson, 2005). Due to its cognitive element (cohesion as objective characteristic of family members in terms of their common attributes) and affective elements (cohesion as perceived characteristic in terms of emotional bonds between family members), cohesion provides a basis of family's transgenerational intentions for the firm (Lansberg & Astrachan, 1994). The perception of cohesion between family members as members of the dominant management coalition is crucial for organizational members' attitudes towards the firm (Mael & Alderks, 1993). However, unlike transgenerational control intentions and succession planning, family cohesion relates neither directly to the process of maintaining family control and management in the hand of the family, nor to the future of the family firm. At the same time, analogous to the first two aspects of transgenerational intentions, there is also a gap in understanding the effect of perceived family cohesion on organizational members of family firms who are not part of the owner-manager family.

2.4. Shared vision and transgenerational intentions in family firms

Though suggested as central and defining characteristics of family firms (Chua et al., 1999a), the impact of the display of transgenerational intentions on nonfamily employees is still not examined. In this study I investigate the effects of perceived transgenerational intentions of family executives on nonfamily employees in family firms, drawing on two theoretical concepts. First, the concept of organizational cognition explains how displays of executives' meaningful goal setting can impact a creation of a vision shared by all members of an organization (Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 2001; Resnick, 1991). Second, social identity theory suggests that a salience of meaningful and long-term oriented goals of family executives which represent distinctive organizational values enhances the identification of employees with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). At the same time, individual perception of shared vision within an organization and identification with it are known to be positively associated with affective commitment of employees (Dvir et al., 2004; Meyer, Becker, & van Dick, 2006). Thus, I suggest two ways of how perceived transgenerational intentions of family executives can impact nonfamily employees' affective commitment: through shared vision and organizational identification. In the following chapters I will outline the rationale of the suggested relationships. The overall research model of my study is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research model: affective commitment of nonfamily employees



2.4.1. Shared vision in family firms

Vision in organizations

In organizations, a cognitive image of the future is represented by a vision, which serves as fundament of motivation and actions of organizational members (Pearce & Ensley, 2004; Thoms & Greenberger, 1995). "*A vision is a cognitive image of the future which is positive enough to members so as to be motivating and elaborate enough to provide direction for future planning and goal setting*" (Thoms & Greenberger, 1995, p. 212). According to Dvir et al. (2004), vision can be composed of three dimensions. The first dimension is called vision formulation and represents the extent to which company leaders are clearly stating an organizational vision (Larwood, Falbe, Kriger, & Miesing, 1995). From the perspective of employees, vision formulation is their perception that the top management of the company has a clear organizational vision. The second dimension is the content of the vision. For desirable organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment, researchers propose that organizational visions should contain value-oriented content (Dvir et al., 2004). From the perspective of employees, vision content is their perception of organizational vision to be meaningful. The third and for this work central dimension of vision is the *vision assimilation*. It is proposed that a vision is powerful only when it is institutionalized and shared among organizational members (Larwood et al., 1995). From the perspective of employees, vision assimilation is their *perception that all organizational members share the same vision*. It describes collective goals and objectives of organizational members (Chang & Huang, 2012).

While the importance of vision in organizations is undisputable (Cole, Harris, & Bernerth, 2006; Dvir et al., 2004; Hays & Hill, 2001; Larwood et al., 1995), it is vision which is shared between organizational members that provides purpose to work and generates organizational commitment for all members of the organization (Boyatzis, 2006; Miller, 2014). According to Pearce and Ensley (2004, p. 260), shared vision can be defined as "a common mental model of the future state" of organizations. Hence, within organizations shared vision emerges from shared cognitive structures of the organization.

Cognition theory and emergence of shared vision

As proposed by Argyris and Schon (1978), organizations are characterized by accumulation of cognitive structures. According to Lyles and Schwenk (1992), these cognitive structures can be divided into core characteristics which remain stable for a long time, or peripheral features which are variable and underlie adaptations. The "core set of knowledge structures" makes the fundamental objective and philosophy of the organization comprehensible for its members, while the peripheral structures determine understanding of the means to achieve this objective (Lyles & Schwenk, 1992, p. 160). Furthermore, researchers distinguish between two levels of organizational cognitive structures: the implicit ones which build up automatically on a subconscious level (X-system), and explicit or reflective ones which are based on conscious, aware level (C-system) (Healey, Vuori, & Hodgkinson, 2015).

Cognition within organizations can be shared among organizational members. It is based on shared mental models, i.e. joint "implicit beliefs that shape inferences, predictions, and decisions about what actions to take" (Cannon & Edmondson, 2001, p. 162). These shared mental models contain collective knowledge of organizational members and contribute to their individual determination of expectations and behaviors as well as to formation of their objectives, cognitive causal relationships and beliefs (Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994). Following the approach of Rentsch and Klimoski (2001), in my study I refer to *joint cognition as conscious informational frames in the way as they are perceived by individual organizational members and are common between them.* In particular, I focus on the agreement aspect of the concept which describes the extent of similarity of individual organizational members' perception and the content provided by the organization.

In the last decades, the concept of cognition within organizations has been gaining recognition and, hence, significant research interest (Cannon & Edmondson, 2001; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Meindl, Stubbart, & Porac, 1994; Thompson & Fine, 1999). This has been reflected in a large number of academic publications and several special issues (Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 2001; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008).[1] Specifically, the relevance and importance of joint cognition structures have been shown on organizational level with regard to its effect on organizational strategy, decision making and performance (Ensley & Pearce, 2001; Waller, Gupta, & Giambatista, 2004; Walsh, 1995) and on individual level with regard to the impact on individual attitudes such as intrinsic motivation (Walsh, 1995).

As the joint cognition within organizations is associated with shared mental models, employees of companies which are characterized by pronounced joint cognition are likely to share the same organizational vision (Ensley & Pearce, 2001; Pearce & Ensley, 2004): A vision shared by all organizational members creates a bond between organizational members of all levels as it provides them with unique shared language and narratives, and enables comprehensible communication and exchange of ideas (Pearson, Carr, & Shaw, 2008; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998).

Factors influencing shared vision in family firms

Shared vision plays a crucial role for long-term sustainability of family firms: According to Ward (1997), one of the most severe threats for the transgenerational persistence of family businesses is absence of shared vision. With expansion and growth of the family, personal goals and values of family members can diverge – hence, making it more difficult to find consent for business related objectives and decisions. This is particularly relevant in family firms, as members of the owner-manager family feel unequally treated if the business does not represent their convictions. A lack of consensus regarding the vision of the company among family members makes the company less likely to sustain over several generations as it reduces engagement and leadership effectiveness of the family firm successor-leaders (Miller, 2014). For nonfamily members of family firms, a lack of perceived shared vision can lead to lower commitment to the firm (Dvir et al., 2004) and higher turnover (Sawyer, 1992). Hence, it is important to identify factors which can promote or hinder the development of a vision shared by all organizational members within family firms.

[1] Journal of Organizational Behavior, Vol. 22, No. 2, Mar., 2001, special issue: Shared Cognition

As organizational vision relates to the aspired future of the company, one central aspect of family firms is particularly relevant for vision of family firms – the transgenerational succession (Barnett, Long, & Marler, 2012; Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012). As the family character of the company is considered to be a central attribute of family firms, the family intentions regarding its retention are an essential part of family firm goal setting (Chua et al., 1999a). Hence, when analyzing shared vision evolvement in family firms, we consider the crucial role of transgenerational character of family involvement in family firms and its role for the perceptions of organizational vision by employees.

First, researchers suggest, that if organizational vision is perceived as visible and consistent, it can offer a clear, believable and reliable picture of the organization's future and can be shared by all organizational members (Farmer, Slater, & Wright, 1998). That is, clearly formulated directions and goals are largely associated with reduced uncertainties (Cannon & Edmondson, 2001). Specifically in family firms, where goals are largely determined by the owner-manager family, a clear vision of retaining family control and management can increase trust in the goals of organization and increase certainty about the future of the company. Thus, particularly the clarity about company directions and goals which relate to crucial organizational events in the future – such as succession for family firms – can reduce employees' insecurities about company's future and increase its reliability. Further, it demonstrates the leaders' concern for informing the employees about company's future. When employees feel that they are well-informed about company goals, and perceive reduced uncertainty associated with it, they tend to agree with the organizational vision (Farmer et al., 1998). Also a study by O'Connell et al. (2011) suggests that sharing of knowledge about the future image of the organization affects the similarity of vision held by organizational members (O'Connell et al., 2011).

Another antecedent of shared visions and beliefs in organizations are frequent interactions between individuals (Habbershon & Astrachan, 1997; Mustakallio, Autio, & Zahra, 2002). Moreover, the emergence and formation of the shared vision among employees in organizations is largely affected by their leaders and key decision makers (Dvir et al., 2004; Larwood et al., 1995). This occurs usually through communication of their view of the future of the organization in relevant speeches and statements (Lyles & Schwenk, 1992). As members of the owner-manager family are considered central figures within family firms, Mustakallio et al. (2002) suggest that the vision of the firm reflects these members' collective image of its future. Thus, the expressed goals and intentions of family members leading the firm are relevant for family firm employees and their perception of organizational vision.

On the contrary, according to Miller (2014), a communication which is not open and transparent has a negative impact on the existence of a vision shared by all organizational members including employees (Miller, 2014). Thus, an insufficient communication between the dominant group of managers, i.e. family executives, and other organizational members, i.e. employees, with regard to their objectives, can lead to a sense of ambiguity (Kotlar & Massis, 2013). In organizational context, ambiguity is considered to be linked to dissatisfaction of employees and higher levels of conflicts among them (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983) – while clear communication and clarity of organizational purpose are related to a vision shared among management and employees (Pearce & Ensley, 2004).

Furthermore, over-concentrated authority which can be displayed by excessive power of the senior generation is associated with lower levels of shared vision (Miller, 2014). In addition, Reese (2014) suggests that besides a lack of clear communication of the vision in form of a compelling message, also the absence of actions or behaviors displaying the vision is a factor which has a negative impact on the extent of how much the vision is shared by organizational members. Another factor influencing shared vision is the character of relationships between individuals, with short-term oriented interactions based on self-interest and contractual arrangements having a negative impact, as opposed to relationships based on reciprocity and trust (Long & Mathews, 2011).

To sum up, setting a clear direction by organizational leaders is associated with reduced uncertainties and contributes to establishment of shared vision among employees (Cannon & Edmondson, 2001). Particularly in family firms, where a danger of management turnover can represent a threat to the central company directions and can cause uncertainties regarding company’s future, family members can exert a significant influence upon how organizational vision is shared by all organizational members through communication and manifestation of their intentions with regard to company’s future. In the following chapter, I suggest the mechanisms of this influence.

2.4.2. The impact of perceived intention for transgenerational control on shared vision of nonfamily employees

As outlined in chapter 2.3, the intention for transgenerational sustainability of the family firm by owner-manager family is one of the central objectives within family firms (Chua et al., 1999a). Furthermore, it expresses company's long-term vision and goals, and, thus, creates clarity with regard to company future for other organizational members including nonfamily employees. Transgenerational intentions show family members' effort to maintain the company under their control and management, thus signaling that a change in control and management from a family to a nonfamily character is not part of the company's future. Transgenerational intentions also provide meaning to organizational goals which goes beyond financial performance, which is proposed to be highly relevant for employees in modern labor market (Gruber et al., 2015). Consequently, I expect an impact of employees' perceptions of transgenerational intentions on their sense that the organizational vision is shared by all organizational members.

Taking into account the crucial role of nonfamily employees for family firms and their perception of shared vision as outlined above, the goal of this chapter is to examine the effect of transgenerational intentions in family firms on shared vision as perceived by nonfamily employees. In order to understand the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and shared vision of nonfamily employees, I reflect on cognitive aspects of expression of these intentions. In this chapter I develop the hypothesis regarding the relationship between perceived intention of family members to maintain transgenerational control and shared vision from nonfamily employees' perspective.

First, the nature of the goals plays an important role for creation of a shared vision. According to Larwood et al. (1995), not fulfillment of the three requirements with regard to goal characteristics can be critical for the shared vision in organizations. First, the time frame of the goals is a relevant aspect. A lack of long-term oriented goals displays low sustainability intentions and hinders the assimilation of company objectives among organizational members. Second, a comprehensive, easy to describe goal content increases the likelihood of the goal to be shared. Finally, a goal should be purposeful as value-based goals which are easily shared among organizational members. These three requirements can be applied to the perceived transgenerational intentions in family firms. Family members' objective to exercise control over the company and maintain it throughout generations can be described as long-term oriented and comprehensive (Chua et al., 1999a). Furthermore, transgenerational control intentions are a signal of sustainability and durability (Krappe, Goutas, & Schlippe, 2011) and stand for an image of trustworthiness and security (Hauswald et al., 2015; Steier, 2001a) outlasting generations and reducing the sense of uncertainty. Hence, under clearly expressed family members' transgenerational control intentions, employees perceive long-term oriented, comprehensive and purposeful company goal and therefore sense a company vision which is shared by all members of the company.

Further, according to Pearce and Ensley (2004), the organizational cognition perspective suggests that a general lack of clarity with regard to organizational goals and directions creates disadvantages for organizational vision: An absence of clear and consistent goal setting in an organization makes it unlikely that an organizational vision will be shared by all organizational members. In particular, the transgenerational character of control over the family firm is considered a major part of its vision (Chua et al., 1999a). Hence, a shift of the company control from a family for example to private or institutional investors who lack the family character can undermine the company directions and vision. Family firm goals and organizational values differ significantly from those in nonfamily firm (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012, see chapter 2.3.1). Hence, a stable family control over the company ensures realization of the stated goals, signals future security and reduces the perceived threat of a turnover. This security relates to a prospect of family internal succession disregarding the proximity of the actual succession event, since the threat of a control loss by the family is not linked to the age or the life cycle phase of the company. Hence, a lack of expressed intention of family members to maintain control over the company throughout generations can make it difficult to signal a long-term company orientation and make company goals appear feasible. Thus, with absent transgenerational control intentions, the long-term oriented company vision can hardly be credible und is not likely to be perceived as shared by employees.

Finally, the perceptions of transgenerational control intentions are positively related to employees' shared vision due to its indication of a cognition-based trust. Trust can be described as confidence in goodwill of others (Chen, Chen, & Meindl, 1998). From the cognitive perspective, trust is based on rational, capability-related cognitions, for example responsibility, dependability, and reliability (McAllister, 1995). It is associated with organizational members' willingness for the cooperation sharing within organization (Holste & Fields, 2005; La Porta, 1997; McAllister, 1995). A lack of trust can be associated with lower levels of knowledge exchange and can have a negative impact on personal relationships throughout the organization (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). La Porta (1997) suggests that cooperation and exchange can be supported by the existing trust even when individuals are rarely directly interacting with each other. Accordingly, employees' trust in family control and influence over the company is crucial for an atmosphere of general knowledge exchange and organizational purpose and vision sharing, as family members bear a large portion responsibility over the company and its employees – and the employees depend to a large extend on decisions of the family members. Hence, in absence of perceived transgenerational intentions of family members, employees cannot perceive trust in continuing family control and therefore, cannot share the vision of the organization.

Summarizing the arguments, I hypothesize the following for the relationship between perceived transgenerational control intentions and shared vision:

> **Hypothesis 1a**: Perceived intention for transgenerational control is positively related to nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision.

2.4.3. The impact of perceived succession planning on shared vision of nonfamily employees

After formulation of the hypothesis on the positive relationship between employees' perceived intention for transgenerational control and the perception of shared vision in family firms, in the present chapter I examine how it is affected by perceived succession planning.

First, planning behavior can be considered as a particular expression of target pursuit (Claessens, van Eerde, Rutte, & Roe, 2004). A formulated intention of the management is not perceived as reliable by employees when no activities directed towards the achievement of the objective are performed in a way visible for them (Farmer et al., 1998). Further, an atmosphere lacking an open communication and information sharing with regard to implementation of central company goals can have a negative impact on evolvement of shared mental models between organizational members (Stout, Cannon-Bowers, Salas, & Milanovich, 1999). Hence, the creation of shared vision can be impeded by a lack of open communication (Miller, 2014). As the transgenerational character of family management of the company is central for family owned and managed businesses (Chua et al., 1999a), the visible planning activities of the owning-managing family directed towards transgenerational family management stability are perceived as communication and information sharing with regard to an essential family firm goal (Eddleston, Kellermanns, & Sarathy, 2008). These communication and information sharing enable employees to share the essential organizational vision. As pronounced succession planning signals certainty about an intended family management continuation and tangible family activities directed towards the realization of the interfamily management transfer, employees perceiving succession planning are more likely to share the organizational vision of family firms.

Further, O'Connell et al. (2011) claim that there are certain circumstances which particularly trigger formation and dissemination of organizational vision. Along with events like company foundation and disruptive changes, it is specifically purposeful planning that supports emergence of vision. Thereby, planning can be described as purposeful when it refers to essential changes in organizations and is related to development and realization of the vision. Handing over company leadership from one generation to another can be considered as a major change for the firm (Gilding et al., 2015). With that, a potential management turnover from family to nonfamily would be an even more substantial change for a family firm. Notwithstanding the time proximity of the actual planned succession, a potential transfer of family firm management to the next family generations versus to an external player makes a significant difference with regard to the perceived vision of the family firm. Nonfamily employees can not feel like taking part in the realization of the organizational vision when they do not perceive planning activities directed towards the inevitable and major company event of management succession. Hence, employees not perceiving succession planning are also not likely to perceive that the organizational vision is shared within the company.

Finally, according to Ensley and Pearce (2001), for the development of a shared vision within organizations, the processes which lead to the goal creation and realization are more important than the outcome of these processes like the goal content. Hence, the perceived involvement of employees in the goal creation and realization process is crucial for them to share the organizational vision. The lack of succession planning perceptions by nonfamily employees means little interaction between family members and nonfamily employees with regard to management succession. This can make employees feel excluded and not involved in the realization of the management transfer. Further, a study by Gutiérrez, Lloréns-Montes, and Sánchez (2009) shows that interactions between team members have a positive impact on the development of a shared vision between them. Hence, a lack of employees' perceptions of planning processes with regard to the family firms' crucial organizational objective of succession signals that employees do not feel informed and involved in the succession process – and therefore they do not perceive the organizational vision as shared.

To sum up the arguments above, I hypothesize the following about the relationship between perceived succession planning and shared vision:

> **Hypothesis 1b**: Perceived succession planning is positively related to nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision.

2.4.4. The impact of perceived family cohesion on shared vision of nonfamily employees

As outlined in the chapter 2.3.3.3, family cohesion contains cognitive and affective aspects, with cognitive ones relating to the extent of family members sharing common values and norms, and affective ones relating to the emotional bond between family members (Björnberg & Nicholson, 2007). Leaning on the theory of cognition in organizations, I refer particularly to the cognitive aspects of family cohesion which influence the perception of shared vision among employees.

First, cohesion within groups of individuals, including management teams, has been long associated with harmony as well as shared beliefs and opinions – for example in the early works by Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1950) and Janis (1982). This association has been also supported in later studies, such as Carron et al. (2003). However, cohesion between family members in family businesses does not only imply harmony, shared ideas and beliefs among them, but – following the study by Jiménez et al. (2015) – it also means a more harmonious relationship among all organizational members including nonfamily employees. As family firms are characterized by a strong influence of the involved family at firm's vision and objectives, the expression of unity between family members has an impact on all organizational members including nonfamily employees (Habbershon et al., 2003; Hauswald et al., 2015). In family firms managed by a cohesive family, employees can feel like part of the family and are characterized by high levels of harmony. Thus, the family cohesion is being transferred from family members to employees. Miller (2014) proposes that family members' cohesion can be associated with the presence of a shared vision of family members for their business. Cohesive family members tend to be less involved in egoistic or opportunistic behaviors, hence, demonstrating mutuality and cooperation (Ensley & Pearce, 2001). Consequently, when employees perceive cohesion between family members involved in the organization, they recognize common purpose and vision among them and tend to share this vision.

Further, cohesiveness in organizations is positively associated with generalized knowledge exchange. A generalized exchange can be described by interactions and communication between organizational members which are based on common interests, trust and cooperation, and are not dominated by self-serving motives (Long & Mathews, 2011). Long and Mathews (2011) suggest that cohesiveness in family firms is directly related to transgenerational sustainability and strong family ties and these are examples of an existence of a generalized exchange. Furthermore, according to Barnett et al. (2012), there is a strong relationship between generalized exchange and shared vision within family firms. Frequent communication and interaction between family members demonstrate their shared opinion about company's purpose and vision (Mustakallio et al., 2002). Correspondingly, visible cohesion between family members can lead to a more generalized exchange between all members of family firms and make it easier for employees to share organizational goals and visions.

Moreover, Ensley, Pearson, and Amason (2002) suggest that cohesion within the management team is negatively associated with the level of both affective and cognitive conflict within it. Accordingly, cohesion between family members is related to lower level of conflicts between family members (Ensley & Pearson, 2005). According to Simons and Peterson (2000), cognitive conflict (or task conflict) refers to the level of disagreement between individuals with regard to content, ideas or opinions, while affective conflict (or relationship conflict) refers to emotional tension and interpersonal incompatibility. Specifically relationship conflict, being based on emotional interpersonal dissent, is harmful for effectiveness and performance of groups and organizations (Jehn, 1997). Furthermore, Cronin and Weingart (2007) suggest that high levels of conflict are negatively related to an evolvement shared organizational cognition. Furthermore, according to Ensley and Pearce (2001), particularly the level of relationship conflict has a strong impact on the development of joint cognitions within a group of individuals (Ensley & Pearce, 2001). With the high degree of influence of the family in family firms, conflict between its members affects the company climate with a tendency to hostility, which employees can't be isolated from (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004; Memili & Barnett, 2008). This is particularly crucial for family firms as they are often characterized by high levels of conflict due to overlap of private and business relationships between family members (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2007; Lee & Rogoff, 1996). Hence, employees' perception of conflict between family members will negatively affect the evolvement of a shared vision among them. The perceptions of cohesion have a more constant character over a longer period of time than the perceptions of conflict (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). Thus, a lack of perceived cohesion between family members by nonfamily employees signals constantly high levels of conflict between family members, and with it, a lack of common purpose. In the absence of perceived family cohesion, it is difficult for employees to perceive that family members share the same vision – hence, it is less likely for employees to perceive a shared vision throughout the organization.

Summarizing, I hypothesize the following for the relationship between perceived family cohesion and shared vision in family firms:

> **Hypothesis 1c**: Perceived family cohesion is positively related to nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision.

2.5. Organizational identification and transgenerational intentions in family firms

2.5.1. Organizational identification and social identity theory

When drawing on factors impacting commitment of nonfamily employees in family firms, one cannot evade the concept of *organizational identification* (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Foreman & Whetten, 2002). The urge of individuals to seek identification with the organization they belong to has been central in management science for a long time. However, today it gains even more significance with the weakening relationship between the employees and the employers, and a concurrent search for meaning of employees in their occupations (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000; Ashforth, Rogers, & Corley, 2011; Gruber et al., 2015). Particularly in family firms being on the intersection between business and family identities, organizational identification plays a central role both for family and nonfamily members (Cannella, Jones, & Withers, 2015; Carmon et al., 2010; Memili & Welsh, 2012). In the following chapter I outline the foundations of identity and identification research, building up on the powerful social identity theory (He & Brown, 2013).

Foundations of identity research in management sciences

Identity and identification are considered to be fundamental concepts in organizational studies, based on the idea that individuals and groups have an awareness of who or what they are (Albert et al., 2000; Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008). Generally, identity can be described as the essence of a certain entity (Foreman & Whetten, 2002). With regard to individuals, *identity is a self-related, context-dependent characterization of a person, answering the* *question "who am I?"* (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Corley et al., 2006). Organizational and social sciences have early discovered the notion of a certain unification between individuals and groups they belong to (a group can be for example a team, a department within an organization or an organization, see Hogg and Terry 2000) termed as identification (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Foreman & Whetten, 2002). In the context of family firms, I am particularly interested in this type of connection between employees, and the respective family owned and managed organizations they are employed by. For this purpose, I will first develop an understanding of the underlying concept of identity, its theoretical embedding and the nature of the link between organizational and personal identities (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008).

Researchers have long been mentioning the existing core essence of individuals and entities, however, the concept of identity gained significance only with the publication of Albert and Whetten (1985). In this article, authors suggest a fundamental definition of *identity as a bundle of entity characteristics which fulfills three criteria: "central character", "distinctiveness" and "temporal continuity"* (p. 265). With regard to organizations, *organizational identity describes a bundle of central and lasting attributes of an organization based on which it is distinguishable from other organizations* (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006). In the large body of following scientific literature, the concept of identity has been examined from several perspectives (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Stryker & Burke, 2000). The first one among the three most noteworthy approaches refers to identity in terms of characteristics underlying a self-image of a nation, thus looking at it from cultural and political perspectives (see paper set in Calhoun, 1994). However, this approach has been criticized for a lack of a clear distinction from ethnicity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The second notable conceptualization, termed *identity theory,* refers to identity as "to parts of a self, composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 284). Finally, the third conceptualization, named *social identity theory,* refers to identity in social terms, defining it as a component of the individual self-concept which is linked to belonging to a social group and characterized by the emotional value associated with this belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). With their seminal paper, Ashforth and Mael (1989) embedded organizational identification into this concept, making the social identity theory one of the dominating approaches in management and social sciences (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008).

Social Identity Theory

According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), the part of an individual identity which refers to the awareness of a membership in a certain social group and the emotional importance of this membership can be described as the *social identity* of an individual. The social identity is characterized by both being personal and relative, as, based on a belonging to the social group, it provides a qualitative meaning of who an individual is and a comparative meaning of how an individual is compared to another salient social group he or she does not belong to (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Furthermore, individuals usually possess several social identities based on social categories they classify themselves into (for example based on family connection, cultural belonging or organizational membership). In a way, social identity is a mark of social structures on self-concepts of individuals belonging to them (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Whetten, Felin, & King, 2009).

Drawing on social identity theory, it is important to include its central, often left-out aspect, the *self-categorization* (Hogg & Deborah, 2001). Building on Turner (1975a), social identity is suggested to be based on individual comparisons between social groups with the aim to build up a preferable and appreciative uniqueness and legibility of the own group in comparison to other groups. Furthermore, these comparisons are proposed to be mainly motivated by an individual need of a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. The individual convictions concerning relations between the groups with regard to their characteristics like status, stability, and legitimacy have an impact on the pursuit of a positive social identity (Tajfel, 1974). Based on these observations, Turner (1985b) developed the self-categorization theory, explaining how social identity evolves from the social categorization processes. In that, individuals classify themselves and others in social categories emphasizing similarities to a certain in-group or out-group prototypes. Hence, self-categorization theory is a part of social identity theory which focuses on the link between self-concept and group features and explains the cognitive formation of social identities (Hogg & Terry, 2000). This process constitutes a cognitive image demonstrating and prescribing the predominant characteristics of a group. During this process, individuals are no longer seen as distinct personalities, but rather as personifications of the respective prototype. This can lead to alignment of self-perception with relevant in-group prototype (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000).

Social identity theory assumes *self-enhancement* as main motive behind social identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Glynn, 2000; Hogg & Terry, 2000). That is, the individual need for self-esteem motivates pursuit of perceived affirmative social identity which is based on positive attributes differentiating it from outgroups (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). In fact, ingroup-favouring behavior, i.e. preferable treatment and assessment of members of the own group, and outgroup discrimination are rooted within the group affiliation itself and have been shown in studies both with and without meaningful group classification (Hsu & Elsbach, 2013; Tajfel, 1974). Hence, the favoring of the group an individual belongs to starts with the sole categorization of oneself to this group (Hsu & Elsbach, 2013).

The self-categorization theory adds another basic motivation for social identity: *the uncertainty reduction*. The development of social identity is induced by a desire to decrease perceived uncertainty about individual attitudes, goals, behaviors, and after all, self-concept, by positioning it within the social space. Taken that individuals tend to seek prototypes for self-categorization which reduce their uncertainty, specific characteristics of the categories can be identified that support the uncertainty reduction motivation. These categories are the ones providing their members clarity, simplicity and perceptions of a strong social identity (Hogg & Terry, 2000), and which are focused (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Sherman, Hamilton, & Lewis, 1999) and cohesive (Hogg, 1992).

Besides the self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction motivations behind social identity, scholars suggest that there is another mechanism which is unmotivated, i.e. spontaneous (Hsu & Elsbach, 2013). Individuals tend to select categorizations which are easily accessible to define themselves, i.e. the relative accessibility of a certain category has an impact on its chances to become salient for the perceiver (Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998; Medin, Lynch, Coley, & Atran, 1997). Hence, everyday experience leads to *chronical accessibility* of categories which is related to identification of individuals (Hsu & Elsbach, 2013; Medin et al., 1997). On the contrary to the self-enhancement mechanism, identity categorization based on accessibility can be negative if the corresponding category is involved in daily experience. Upon reversion, this means that categories with lower chronical accessibility are less likely to become selected to define an individual (Bargh & Pratto, 1986).

According to Kreiner and Ashforth (2004), the power of the organizational identity depends on the degree it is expressed and shared among the members. With regard to its features, Haslam and Ellemers (2005) suggest that due to the strong comparative character, the salience of features of the organizational identity can vary dependent on the comparison group (Haslam & Ellemers, 2005). Furthermore, organizational identity usually consists of a mix of perceived organizational characteristics and perceived characteristics of its members

(Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008). More importantly, researchers suggest that if the self-conception of a person is endangered by a disadvantageous categorization of the organization they are associated with, they are capable of a recategorization of the organization in order to preserve their self-esteem (Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2000).

Organizational Identification

Comprehension of the basic aspects of social identity theory represents the first step to approach the concept of organizational identification, which is one of the central application of the theory relates to (He & Brown, 2013). A social identity of a person is the "knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of his membership" (Tajfel, 1974, p. 72). In that, organizations can represent social categories with which individuals can identify themselves (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Thus, *identification of an individual with an organization describes the degree of the perceived overlay between the individual's identity and the identity of the organization* (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Besharov, 2014). *Organizational identification* is hence a picture of oneself with regard to the belongingness to an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Organizational belonging and the attributes of the organization become part of individual self-definition and gain high perceived value (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Thus, organizational identification describes the degree to which organizational identity becomes self-defining for members of an organization (Pratt, 1998).

The concept of organizational identification has been early addressed by researchers, with Simon (1957) as one of the first management scholars providing the notion of identification a theoretical foundation by describing it as an emotional tie between individual and a group with the consequence of consideration of group interests for individual acting. In their seminal publication, Ashforth and Mael (1989) suggest four main principles underlying the concept of identification. The first one refers to the character of identification, stating that it is entirely perceptual and cognitive. Solely its antecedents and consequences can be behavioral or affective. Secondly, identification can make organizational success or failure to a personal experience of its members. The third principle suggests that even though identification means recognition of the social category "organizational belonging" as part of the individual identity, it does not necessarily mean internalization of organizational values and beliefs. Drawing on O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), they suggest that although attitudes and principles are usually representative for a social category, a person categorizing him or herself in this group can lack internalization of its values as own guidelines. Fourthly and finally, identification with an organization can be compared to the identification with a person. The latter is based on a desire to gain or imitate certain characteristics of the other. Its commonality to a self-definition in terms of organizational belonging is the aspiration to define oneself based on a social reference.

The importance of identification in organizational context has been shown in numerous studies with regard to favorable individual and organizational level outcomes (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Besharov, 2014; He & Brown, 2013). Among organizational level effects, both job and task performance are suggested to be positively related to organizational identification (He & Brown, 2013; Riketta, 2005). Further studies propose a positive impact of organizational identification on employees' creativity and creative performance as well as performance in routine work (Hirst, van Dick, & Van Knippenberg, 2009; Madjar, Greenberg, & Chen, 2011). Other researchers suggest cooperation and assistance (Bartel, 2001; Dutton et al., 1994; Kramer, 2006), as well as favorable information sharing (Grice, Gallois, Jones, Paulsen, & Callan, 2006). Finally, several studies suggest a positive effect of organizational identification of employees and managers on financial performance of the firms (Homburg, Wieseke, & Hoyer, 2009; Wieseke, Ahearne, Lam, & van Dick, 2009; Zhong, Gong, & Shenkar, 2013).

A considerable number of studies have shown advantageous individual level outcomes of organizational identification which are highly favorable in organizational context (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008). Among others, job satisfaction and job involvement have been shown to be positively related to organizational identification, while turnover intentions are negatively associated with organizational identification (Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007; Mael & Ashforth, 1995; van Dick, Grojean, Christ, & Wieseke, 2006; for meta-analysis see Riketta, 2005). Furthermore, organizational citizenship behavior (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), motivation (Van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000) and commitment (Foreman & Whetten, 2002) are positively associated with organizational identification.

However, despite the prevailing positive outcomes resulting from high levels of organizational identification, they have been also associated with a few unfavorable implications (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008). For example, several studies has shown a relationship between organizational identification and ongoing commitment to projects which are likely to fail (Haslam et al., 2006), change resistance (Bouchikhi & Kimberly, 2003) and antisocial behavior (Aquino & Douglas, 2003).

Due to the large amount of positive effects of organizational identification on individual and organizational levels, numerous studies were conducted in order to better understand the mechanisms of evolvement of organizational identification (Van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). The motives of self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction, as well as the desire for self-categorization and a sense of belonging are considered to be the main powers behind these mechanisms (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Haslam & Ellemers, 2005; He & Brown, 2013; Smidts, Pruyn, & Van Riel, 2001). That is, according to Ashforth and Johnson (2001), central psychological motives for identification include individual aspiration for locating oneself within the organization, integrating oneself and own behavior and a positive perception of oneself through a sense of enhancement and distinction from others.

When approaching antecedents of organizational identification, I refer to Tajfel (1982) who proposes that two components are needed to achieve identification: a cognitive component which includes comprehension of a membership in a social category, and an evaluative component, associating this membership with certain values. "Identification is associated with groups that are distinctive, prestigious, and in competition with, or at least aware of, other groups" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 34). Hence, according to social identity theory, reputation and status of an organization has a positive impact on organizational identification (Fuller et al., 2006; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Smidts et al., 2001). Furthermore, distinctiveness and uniqueness of the organizational image is positively associated with organizational identification of its members (Dutton et al., 1994). Salience and consistence of values and beliefs which an organization represents have a positive impact on the internalization of the membership by organizational members and are thus associated with higher levels of identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). However, when approaching organizational identity from social identity theory perspective, self-categorization offers explanation for possible observation of organizational identification despite disadvantageous personal interrelations or even managerial misconduct (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Organizational identification in family firms

Reflecting the outlined numerous advantageous outcomes related to organizational identification, identification of nonfamily employees is a crucial concern in family firms (Memili & Welsh, 2012). Interestingly, family firms seem to have the ability to facilitate evolvement of a particularly strong identification of organizational members with the company, which is often reflected in their tenures (Cannella et al., 2015; Dutton et al., 1994). With regard to family members, it seems apparent that they often deeply identify with their family businesses (Sharma et al., 2012). Many of them grow up in a home where business and family lives and topics are overlapping, with goals of their families linked to the goals of the companies (Sharma & Irving, 2005). Senior family members attempt to raise later generations providing them a sense of pride, fulfillment and satisfaction towards the family company (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2006). Furthermore, the connection is enhanced by the frequently match of family name and the name of the company (Dyer & Whetten, 2006). Hence, through a close interrelation between organization and family in family firms, their organizational identity is shaped by family members and hence has overlaps with their family identity (Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013). As family identity is associated with behavioral expectations linked to the family role, such as caregiving, loyalty and protection, they can be projected to the firm (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009).

As outlined above, the identification of owner-manager family members with the family often means identification with the business, making their organizational identification extraordinary high (Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013). The importance of the strong identification of family members finds reflection in central theories within family business research, such as socioemotional wealth (Gomez-Mejia, Haynes et al., 2007) and resource-based view on familiness (Zellweger, Eddleston et al., 2010), as "family identity is unique and therefore impossible to completely copy" (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008, p. 416). Accordingly, most research articles published on the topic of identification in family firms are referring to identification of family members (for an overview, see Table 3).

In family businesses, family owner and manager is considered the central identity reference figure for the company and its members (Dawson et al., 2015; Milton, 2008). The essence of the personification of organizational identity has been proposed by Hogg and Terry (2000), suggesting that one of the central vehicles within the scope of self-categorization and social identity theories are prototypes. They are blurry sets of group characteristics typical for an organization such as attitudes, goals and behaviors, and are usually represented by an exemplary member of it. The member is associated with these features and embodies them from other organizational members' view point. Social interactions and communication which members of an organization are exposed to, impact their prototype characteristics, and have a potential to creating a common prototype. Hence, the person of the family firm owner-manager is likely to become prototypes for members of the family firm.

Table 3: Summary of studies on identification in family firms

Study	**Sample**	**Who's identification**	**Relevant key finding**
Guzzo and Abbott (1990)	-	Family and nonfamily employees	By comparing family businesses with utopian societies, the social identity of family firms are a product of both family and organization, making it stronger than a nonfamily firm social identity, hence contributing to identification of organizational members including nonfamily employees.
Barnett and Kellermanns (2006)	-	Nonfamily employees	Interactional justice perceptions of nonfamily employees are related to family influence within the firm and have a positive impact on their organizational identification.
Dyer (2006)	S&P 500 companies	Family members of organization	Families concerned about the image of the firm and identifying themselves with the firms can be more willing to encourage corporate social performance.
Gomez-Mejia, and Haynes et al. (2007)	1,237 family firms	Family members of organization	A family firm-specific organizational identification of family members creates an emotional value termed "socioemotional wealth". Family firms agree to take substantial risks to avoid losses of socioemotional wealth.
Craig, Dibrell, and Davis (2008)	218 family firms	Family and nonfamily managers	Family firm brand identity has a positive effect on firm performance via competitive orientation. Family name identification is suggested to be the reason motivating to provide competitive customer solutions.
Sundaramurthy and Kreiner (2008)	-	Family and nonfamily employees	Family firms can develop an advantageous culture of identification due to integration of family and business identities.
Vallejo (2008a)	410 members of 126 family and nonfamily firms	Nonfamily employees	Family firm culture differs from culture of nonfamily firms, among others in stronger manifestation of aspects involvement, identification, loyalty and harmony.
Vallejo (2009b)	410 members of 126 family and non-family firms	Nonfamily employees	Organizational identification of nonfamily employees is positively related to profitability and continuity of family firms.
Carmon et al. (2010)	118 family and non-family employees	Family and nonfamily employees	Proposed model of organizational identification mediating the relationship between perceived organizational justice, homophily, and commitment of employees was not consistent with the data.

Study	**Sample**	**Who's identification**	**Relevant key finding**
Vallejo and Langa (2010)	410 members of 126 family and nonfamily firms	Nonfamily employees	Employees of family firms have higher levels of organizational identification than employees of nonfamily firms due to particular socialization taking place in family firms.
Gomez-Mejia, and Cruz et al. (2011)	-	Family members of organization	The wish of family members to preserve their socio-emotional wealth created by their strong identification with the firm has significant influence on major decisions and contributes to re-prioritization of objectives beyond profit maximization.
Matherne, Ring, and McKee (2011)	-	Family members of organization	Identification of family members with the family contributes stronger to their stewardship orientation than their organizational identification. Dual identification is associated with higher levels of stewardship orientation when family and business identities resemble with regard to their goals and values.
Björnberg and Nicholson (2012)	8 family firms	Family members, successors	Family members' attachment to and identification with the firm contribute more to psychological ownership than the real ownership of the firm.
Memili and Welsh (2012)	-	Nonfamily employees	Power and experience of family members as well as paternalistic family firm culture are negatively related to the organizational identification of nonfamily employees. Participative and/or professional family firm culture is positively related to it, while Laissez-faire culture impact has an inverted u-shape.
Deephouse and Jaskiewicz (2013)	194 firms (including 61 family firms)	Family members of organization	Family firms have more favorable corporate reputation than nonfamily firms due to extraordinary high identification of family members with the firm and hence their effort to maintain the reputation.
Zellweger, and Nason et al. (2013)	-	Family members of organization	Transgenerational sustainability intentions are positively related to family members' concerns about firm's reputation and correspondingly to their identification with the firm.
Cannella et al. (2015)	145 family controlled, 70 lone-founder controlled and 527 public firms	Family external directors	Family firms prefer selecting external directors for management board positions who have previous experience in family firms. Previous work experience in family firms is positively related to tenure as board member. The reason behind both hypotheses is organizational identification of directors with family firms.
Dawson et al. (2015)	199 family firms	Late generation family members	Identification of later-generation members is positively connected to their organizational commitment and intention to stay.

Thus, according to Sundaramurthy and Kreiner (2008), the family elements in family firms can enhance organizational identification not only of family members, but of all their members and with that, lead to collaborative and responsible behavior. Due to its interrelation with the family, the distinct organizational identity of family can be often described as familial, collective and supportive (Chrisman, Chua, & Steier, 2005) – attributes which are make it also attractive for nonfamily employees. However, there can be potential disadvantageous consequences of family involvement in firms. Family members can prioritize welfare of the family above welfare of the firm, which can lead to unfavorable behaviors with regard to nonfamily employees and managers, such as adverse selection and nepotisms (Donnelley, 1988; Karra et al., 2006). Family influence can also be related to inflexibility and change resistance (Hauswald et al., 2015). Nevertheless, interactions between family and business systems are proposed to contribute to creation of a strong identification among employees (Carmon et al., 2010; Habbershon et al., 2003). Supporting these considerations, results of several studies indicate that nonfamily members of family firms have higher levels of organizational identification than members of nonfamily firms (Cannella et al., 2015; Vallejo, 2008a; Vallejo & Langa, 2010). However, despite the transgenerational intentions being the central attribute of family firm identity, according to my knowledge, no study examines the effect of nonfamily employees' perceptions of transgenerational intentions on their organizational identification.

In establishing a link between employees perception of transgenerational intentions of family members, I refer to Dutton et al. (1994) who suggest that there are two images of an organization determining its identity in terms of a cognitive connection to its members. The first one is the perceived organizational identity which relates to what organizational members believe is the "distinct, central, and enduring" picture of the organization (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 239). The second one is the interpreted external image which relates to how organizational members believe outsiders perceive the organization (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). I refer to both images and to mechanisms of how they are shaped by family members expressing their intentions to sustain the family character of a firm.

2.5.2. The impact of perceived intention for transgenerational control on organizational identification of nonfamily employees

The aim of the present chapter is to propose mechanisms of how perceptions of family members' intentions for transgenerational control impact the organizational identification of nonfamily employees. I base the argumentation on social identity theory and suggest an impact of organizational identity created by expressed transgenerational intentions on employees' primary motives for a positive social identity of the firm and hence their identification with it.

As described above, family firms are considered to have *positive identities* which are rooted in their familiness, i.e. inter alia in the transgenerational sustainability intentions of the firms (Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013). How does this identity affect employees who do not belong to the owner-manager family? Researchers suggest that this occurs by evolvement of an organizational identity built up on familiness which creates not only a strong sense of identification among family members (Zellweger, Eddleston et al., 2010), but can also "encourage other employees to 'buy into' their vision and values" (Carmon et al., 2010, p. 212). Massis (2012) suggests that social identity theory offers a comprehensive perspective on how family is able to affect perceptions of organizational members. According to Karra et al. (2006), family-specific characteristics such as altruistic behavior of family members can contribute to the sense of togetherness and mutuality between all organizational members, extending the benefits of family firm identity beyond the family members. Further, Hauswald et al. (2015) suggest that family involvement in the firm can be associated with positive characteristics such as reliability, security and durability. Moreover, the authors suggest that specifically the communication of transgenerational intentions can contribute to "shaping beliefs about firm attributes" (Hauswald et al., 2015, p. 1). Hence, the perceived intentions of family members to pursue family control over the company signal to nonfamily employees an aspired long-term stability of the distinct positive characteristics within the firm, thus, enhancing their identification with the firm.

Further, transgenerational control intentions of the owner-manager family are positively associated with family members' concern about company's reputation – which results in a more positive company image and contributes to a stronger employees' identification. Family business researchers have applied social identity theory to explain the often notable positive image of family firms (Dyer & Whetten, 2006; Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013). As identity of family members is tightly connected to the family firm, the image and reputation of the firm impacts the image and reputation of family members (Chen, Chen, Cheng, & Shevlin, 2010; Gomez-Mejia, Cruz et al., 2011). Individuals strive for a self-enhancement through their social identity and corresponding social categories, and family members cannot easily exchange the social category of the company affiliation they belong to, they are particularly concerned about external image and status of the firm (Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013). Hence, family members make strong efforts to ensure favorable reputation for the company (Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013). Correspondingly, Zellweger, and Nason et al. (2013) suggest that transgenerational intentions of family members are positively related to their worry regarding company's reputation. Hence, I draw the conclusion that the reputation of family firms with more pronounced transgenerational control intentions will be more positive, thus, will make them more attractive for nonfamily employees – and will enhance employees' identification with them.

Moreover, the organizational identification of employees is positively related to how much the organizational image provides them with *distinctiveness* (Dutton et al., 1994). According to Ashforth and Mael (1989, p. 24), the likelihood of individuals to identify with a certain group depends on "the distinctiveness of the group's values and practices in relation to those of comparable groups". The belief of organizational members about the distinct treats of the organization are formed by statements and behavior of an exemplary member of the organization who represents and embodies it (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Communication of distinct, prestigious company characteristics can help employees to feel exceptional (Smidts et al., 2001). Hence, employees' perception of central characteristics represented by organizational leaders plays an essential role for their organizational identification. Family firm identity is considered unique due to the family identity which it contains (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008). This uniqueness is reflected in the distinct image which "family" brands have compared to their nonfamily competitors (Craig et al., 2008). Company's identity associated with the family character shapes the brand it represents, which on its part can ensure distinctiveness for organizational members (Kärreman & Rylander, 2008). Communication of the company image which contributes to a distinctiveness of the organization by organizational leaders, such as the intentions for enduring transgenerational control by family members can thus support the identification process. In family companies where employees do not perceive that family members have pronounced intentions for maintaining the control over generations, employees can sense threat for their positive social identity linked to the membership in this organization. Correspondingly, perceived intention for transgenerational control will be positively associated to their organizational identification.

Further, one of the central motives of organizational identification is the need for *self-enhancement*, which explains the desire to belong to an organization which is rewarding for the self-perception with the organization (Dukerich, Golden, & Shortell, 2002; Smidts et al., 2001). This reflects the affective component of organizational identification, which is associated with feeling proud of being part of an organization (Tajfel, 1982). The need for self-enhancement makes it particularly easy for individuals to identify themselves with organizations with a positive image (Hsu & Elsbach, 2013; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). However, as mentioned above, the image of family firms can also be linked to negative characteristics such as inflexibility and change resistance (Hauswald et al., 2015). Yet, the individual striving for a positive social identity has been shown to be particularly powerful in selecting the attributes to identify with (Hsu & Elsbach, 2013), which are positive in employees' perception and thus become relevant for their identification. These selected attributes enable the feeling of self-esteem based on organizational belonging, specifically in comparison to outer-groups, for example to nonfamily firms. The positive family-based image of family firms as reliable, customer-oriented and quality-focused companies has been shown to be easily accessible not only for family internal company members, but also for nonfamily employees (Brickson, 2007; Craig et al., 2008; Zellweger, Eddleston et al., 2010). Accordingly, the perceived transgenerational control intentions which are directed towards the continuity of the family influence on the firm, have a positive impact on employees' organizational identification.

Furthermore, according to Hogg and Terry (2000), organizational identification of employees relates to *salience* of the given social category, i.e. the perceived dominance of the category for the employees. The salience of a social category is a product of the accessibility and, in particular, of the subjective meaningfulness of this category. A social category is accessible, if it is frequently recalled and valued. A social category is subjectively meaningful if it fulfills the sense-giving function (Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013). An identity claim can be considered as sense-giving if it represents an organizational self-definition proposed by organizational leaders, which provides organizational members "with a consistent and legitimate narrative to construct a collective sense of self" (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006, p. 434). Tradition and family name which are unique for family businesses, can provide meaning for organizational stakeholders, including nonfamily employees (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008; Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). Also the outlook on a long-term character of the claim contributes to its sense-giving character (Fiol, 2001). The intention to sustain family control of the company over generations creates a long-term meaning beyond financial profits. The continuance of the tradition and the legacy of a company which linked to a family is part of a family firm identity. The goal of a transgenerational control sustainability contributes to a perception of continuity and corporate purpose (Donnelley, 1988). The absence of perceived meaningful corporate purpose makes a strong social identity difficult to obtain (Ashforth, Rogers et al., 2011). Thus, I suggest that the perception of an intended sustainability of the family control over the company provides a meaning to nonfamily employees, thus enhancing their organizational identification.

Summarizing the arguments stated above, I hypothesize the following about the relationship between perceived intentions for transgenerational control and organizational identification of nonfamily employees:

> **Hypothesis 2a**: Perceived intention for transgenerational control is positively related to nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

2.5.3. The impact of perceived succession planning on organizational identification of nonfamily employees

According to Ashforth, and Rogers et al. (2011), individual identities of organizational members interact with each other through social relationships and structures, believed common purpose and established norms. Hence, the identity of a group forms through exchange of that what is believed to be the essence of who individuals are and who the group is. In this process, the identity of the leader(s) of the group plays a crucial role. For example, Drori, Honig, and Sheaffer (2009) make reference to a case where the identity of a start-up founder which was associated with extraordinary creativity and innovativeness, was transferred to employees joining him, as they spoke about themselves and the firm using the same distinctive properties. The characteristics of the leader created an identity available for organizational members and distinguishable from others (Corley et al., 2006). This process of identity creation shows the crucial impact of powerful individuals within an organization who have a strong upward influence on perception of identity of others (Scott & Lane, 2000). The family owner-manager of the firm is likely to be an identity prototype for the members of the family firm – this identity personification is closely linked to him or her, representing the family which owns the company. In the narrative of family businesses, the identity of the founder figure and his or her descendants leading the business are hard to separate from the identity of the firm (Salvato, Chirico, & Sharma, 2010). Hence, the conclusion can be drawn that the identity of the firm is connected to a family member leading it. Therefore, when employees perceive a prospect of a continuation of management by a family member, expressed by succession planning, they have a stronger identification with the firm.

Another aspect which plays a role in recognizing family leader as a part of the family firm identity and assigning family-internal succession a positive impact on the social identity of family firm is the legitimacy of the successor. The legitimacy of the management is usually associated with the congruence of the manager with norms, beliefs and values associated with the position (Foreman & Whetten, 2002). Hence, the identification of organizational members with a family firm depends also on the level of congruence of expected and actual qualities of the successor.

In family firms, the general belief of passing of the leadership within the family is a deeply rooted norm (Salvato et al., 2010), shared by family and nonfamily members, particularly in a presence of a competent and worthy successor (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008). Donnelley (1988) shows this preference for a continuance of family member leadership on an example of a metal company where external managers were willing to train the family successor in order to avoid an outsider from getting the position.

The timely planning of the succession is considered to be a crucial step in preparing a competent successor in family businesses and his acceptance among stakeholders (Sharma & Smith, 2008; Tan-Artichat & Aiyeku, 2013). For family leaders, acceptance of the successor by employees is one of the central concerns associated with passing the leadership to the next generation (Chrisman et al., 1998). Going further, a study by Sharma and Rao (2000) suggests that the respect of employees for the successor is more important to firm leaders than respect of family members. The acceptance of the follower is linked to the knowledge and experience he or she acquires as well as knowledge of firm-specific idiosyncrasies (Lee et al., 2003). Hence, making the development and career of the successor visible in the organization can contribute to his recognition among employees, earning their support and respect. Early involvement of the successor along with knowledge transfer and mentoring by old generation as well as senior managers and employees is important for earning recognition and enhancing legitimacy of taking over the leadership position (Venter, Boshoff, & Maas, 2005). In that, the perception of employees of an early start of preparing the succession can help the successor gain acceptance by making him fulfill the expectation of being a descendent of the owner-manager family and a competent manager, enhance his or her legitimacy and with this, increase organizational identification of employees with the family firm.

Another aspect associated with the succession planning as perceived by employees is *uncertainty reduction*. The reduction of uncertainty is a strong motive of social identity, closely linked to its continuity attribute (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Nag, Corley, & Gioia, 2007).

Individuals have a clear preference for predictability; the more an organization can fulfill this need, the higher will be the degree of individuals' organizational identification (Memili & Welsh, 2012). One effect of this motive is employees' pronounced resistance to change when it comes to identity relevant organizational characteristics (Ullrich, Wieseke, & van Dick, 2005). Organizational members seek to maintain their existing concept of organizations and themselves, i.e. the preservation of their identity (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Dutton et al., 1994). Hence, a change in central attributes of organizational identity can have negative implications on organizational identification of its members (Nag et al., 2007).

Family firms existing for several generations have a strong sense of tradition and connection to the past, which provides organizational members a sense of continuity (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000; Salvato et al., 2010). A study by Salvato et al. (2010) has shown that based on the tradition, the identity link between a family firm and its founder is strong enough to provide organizational members identity stability in times of strategic change and transformations, such as a shift from traditional steel business to renewable energies, thus maintaining the identification of the members with the firm. This demonstrates the desire of a sense of continuity, endangering of which is associated with a decrease of identification levels (Gioia et al., 2000; Ullrich et al., 2005). Thus, uncertainty about leadership legacy and perceived lack of succession planning in a family firm can represent a disruption of family tradition and constitute threat to company identity, thus decreasing organizational identification of its members.

Summarizing the argumentation above, I hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis 2b**: Perceived succession planning is positively related to nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

2.5.4. The impact of perceived family cohesion on organizational identification of nonfamily employees

As outlined in chapter 2.3.3, the realization of transgenerational plans is closely linked to the relationship between family members, in particular to their cohesion. In family firms, cohesion between family members is considered a desirable feature with regard to the transgenerational sustainability of family impact and leadership within the company (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015; Lansberg & Astrachan, 1994; Seymour, 1993). It is associated with the transfer of knowledge, skills, experience and networks between generations (Cabrera-

Suárez et al., 2001; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003; Zahra, 2012). Moreover, the cohesion between family members is considered to be related to positive family characteristics such as resilience, trust and mutual understanding (Björnberg & Nicholson, 2007) and is one of the central positive features linked to a strong family (Olson, 2000).

According to the social identity theory, an increase of organizational attractiveness can be reached through accenting of this group's desirable attributes (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Moreover, this effect can be strengthened if these attributes create similarities in social identities of the organization and its members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Their visibility, everyday occurrence and, thus, salience can be impacted by means of communication and behavior of company's leaders, i.e. in the case of family businesses, family owner-managers (Hogg & Terry, 2000). According to Vallejo (2009b), "the owning family has a strong influence on virtually all psychological and situational antecedents of organizational behavior" (p. 379). The similarity of the social identity associated with the organization to the desirable social identity can enhance their identification with the social group this organization represents (Massis, 2012). For most individuals, family relationships are a big part of their identity. Due to solely positive associations of cohesion as family characteristics, it is easy to find similarities to social category attributes associated with a positive, resilient family image, such as family cohesion. In a scope of family firm membership, perception of cohesion between members of owner-manager family fulfills desirability and similarity needs for creation of organizational identification.

Moreover, cohesion between family members is associated with trust (Gedajlovic et al., 2012; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003) and reliability in family members' relationship (Salvato & Melin, 2008), as well as their mutual support and involvement (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015). Accordingly, a study by Mael and Alderks (1993) shows a positive effect of perceived leadership team cohesion on organizational identification in subordinated units within a military organization. Within family firms, involved family members do not necessarily represent the top management team and may be also involved in operative work or control body; however, their actions and relationships are perceived to reflect on the image and representation of the company irrespective of their formal management involvement (Donnelley, 1988). Hence, disharmony between family members represents disunity and lack of bonding between central company agents, who can be perceived as unable to pursue common objectives (Mael & Alderks, 1993; Venter et al., 2005). Thereby, perception of harmonious and supportive relationship between family members across generations and company internal roles creates a positive effect on employees' identification with the organization.

In conclusion, I hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis 2c**: Perceived family cohesion is positively related to nonfamily employees' organizational identification.

2.6. Affective commitment and the effect of perceived transgenerational intentions

In the previous chapter I have proposed a positive impact of perceived transgenerational intentions on nonfamily employees' organizational identification and their perception that all organizational members share the same vision. This effect can influence commitment of nonfamily employees to the family firm, as existing studies have already suggested a link between shared vision and affective commitment (Cole et al., 2006; Dvir et al., 2004) as well as organizational identification and affective commitment (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997; Foreman & Whetten, 2002). Consequently, perceived shared vision and organizational identification are likely to mediate the impact of perceived transgenerational intentions on nonfamily employees' affective commitment, as I will outline in the following section.

2.6.1. Indirect effect of transgenerational intentions on affective commitment of nonfamily employees via perceived shared vision

As outlined in chapter 2.2, affective commitment is an emotional attitude of organizational members towards the company: It represents an affect-based connection between employee and an organization and is associated with individual attachment to this organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Among others, perceived organizational support, leader–member exchanges and perceived group cohesion are suggested to predict the levels of affective commitment among employees (Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004). A study by Finegan (2000) suggests that organizational commitment is influenced by perceived organizational values. This relationship was further supported by results of a study by Abbott, White, and Charles (2005). Being defined as "desirable, trans-situational goals" (p. 531), perceived organizational values have been confirmed to be associated with affective commitment of employees. Particularly, shared values are considered one of the crucial bases for evolvement of affective organizational commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Internalization of organizational values and goals is associated with the sharing of organizational vision (McClelland, 1975; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004), building a cognitive connection between values of the company and the individuals and providing organizational members with a sense of direction (Baker & Sinkula, 1999; Wang, 2008). Clarity about the purpose and goals of an organization is reflected in the shared vision of its members (Pearce & Ensley, 2004). Hence, the perception of employees that all organizational members share the same vision demonstrates clarity about organizational goals perceived by organizational members. As ambiguity at work has a negative impact on employees work attitudes such as job satisfaction and turnover (Sawyer, 1992), I assert that the perception of a shared vision in an organization will have a positive effect on the organizational commitment of employees.

Several existing studies provide evidence of a positive effect of perceptions of a clear and shared vision on affective commitment of employees. A study on vision clarity and work attitudes by Cole et al. (2006) proposes a positive relationship between employees' perception of vision clarity and their affective commitment. Based on a sample of 217 managers of a Fortune 500 consumer goods corporation in the United States, the authors provide empirical evidence for a positive, highly significant effect of the perceived vision on affective commitment of followers ($p \leq .001$).

Further, a study by on leadership components by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Bommer (1996) examined the effect of transformational leadership behaviors on the attitudes of followers. Based on the sample of 1539 American white-collar employees, the authors show that the perceived articulation of vision by the leader has a unique, significantly positive effect on affective commitment of employees ($p \leq .05$).

These results were supported by Dvir et al. (2004) who proposed a connection between vision assimilation, defined as the "extent to which the vision is perceived as shared by all of the organization members" (Dvir et al., 2004, p. 127) and affective commitment of employees. With a sample of 183 employees from Israeli high-tech firms, the study provides empirical evidence for a positive significant effect of perceived shared vision and affective commitment of employees ($p \leq .001$), stressing the relevance of vision assimilation for the organizational commitment.

Hence, I propose that when company leaders manage to create a vision, accessible and shared by all organizational members, they create an emotional bond between the organization and its members. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3a: Perceived intention for transgenerational control has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via perceived shared vision.

Hypothesis 3b: Perceived succession planning has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via perceived shared vision.

Hypothesis 3c: Perceived cohesion of the owner family has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via perceived shared vision.

2.6.2. Indirect effect of transgenerational intentions on affective commitment of nonfamily employees via organizational identification

Identification with a company is closely connected to attachment (Memili & Welsh, 2012) and affective aspects of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum et al., 2008). Consequently, numerous studies report a strong positive relationship between both constructs (see meta-analysis by Riketta, 2005). While organizational identification is connected to perceptions of an attractive, distinctive organizational identity making it compelling for organizational member to define themselves in its terms, organizational commitment is linked to attitudes and behavior such as job satisfaction and turnover intention (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Pratt, 1998; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). When membership in an organization becomes self-definitional, the individual self-conception of employees referred to the organization is formulated in terms of "we" instead of "I" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Hence, organizational identification describes a perceptional degree of incorporation of the organization in one's self-concept (Pratt, 1998; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). In this context, employees use organizational membership to define who they are. Consequently, self-consistency of employees would be disrupted if they on the one hand identify themselves with an organization, but simultaneously wish to renounce association with it (Lam & Liu, 2014).

As outlined in chapter 2.2.2, according to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), affective commitment to an organization is related to the mindset of desire, i.e. a wish to stay associated with the given enterprise. One of the central mechanisms involved in creation of desire is derivation of individual identity from its target, i.e. when referred to organizations from association with the given firm. For example, a study by Ellemers et al. (1997) shows that in a situation of endangered group status, employees with higher identification are less likely to consider changing to a different group. Hence, consistent with propositions of

Bergami and Bagozzi (2000), as well as Foreman and Whetten (2002), Lam and Liu (2014) and Meyer, and Becker et al. (2004), identity congruence between oneself and the organization expressed in organizational identification, has a substantial positive impact on the sense of individual attachment of employees to the organization, and the desire to maintain the association with it, expressed with the affective commitment.

Furthermore, identification with an organization means internalizing of its uniqueness and lasting qualities into one's self-image. Hence, an interruption of affiliation with the organization would lead to loss of meaning of that self-image (Dutton et al., 1994; Lam & Liu, 2014; Meyer et al., 2006). Correspondingly, within the context of family businesses, studies on commitment of family members to the company found that identification of successors with the enterprise was positively related to their affective commitment. For example, a study by Sharma and Irving (2005) propose that identity alignment and career alignment are the main antecedents of the affective commitment of family firm successors' as they believe that organizational purpose and its goals converge with their personal goals.

Correspondingly, in a study on later-generation family members' commitment to family firms Dawson et al. (2015) suggest that a higher identification of family members with the family firms is positively associated to their affective commitment due to the stronger sense of fulfillment and pride they associate with the company. Tested on a sample of 78 second or later-generation leaders of Canadian family firms and 121 Swiss family firm leaders, the study confirms a strong significant relationship between identification and affective commitment of family firm leaders ($p < .01$).

Complementing the research on family members, a study by Carmon et al. (2010) examines justice perceptions and attitudes of family and nonfamily employees in family firms. The authors propose that a sense of belonging and identification of both family and nonfamily towards the family business can enhance their affective commitment – for nonfamily members based on their perception that they have been admitted into the family. With a sample of 34 family member and 76 nonfamily member employees the study provides empirical evidence for a positive relationship between identification and affective commitment of nonfamily employees ($p < .005$).

Drawing upon the existing research and summarizing the arguments above, I hypothesize the following:

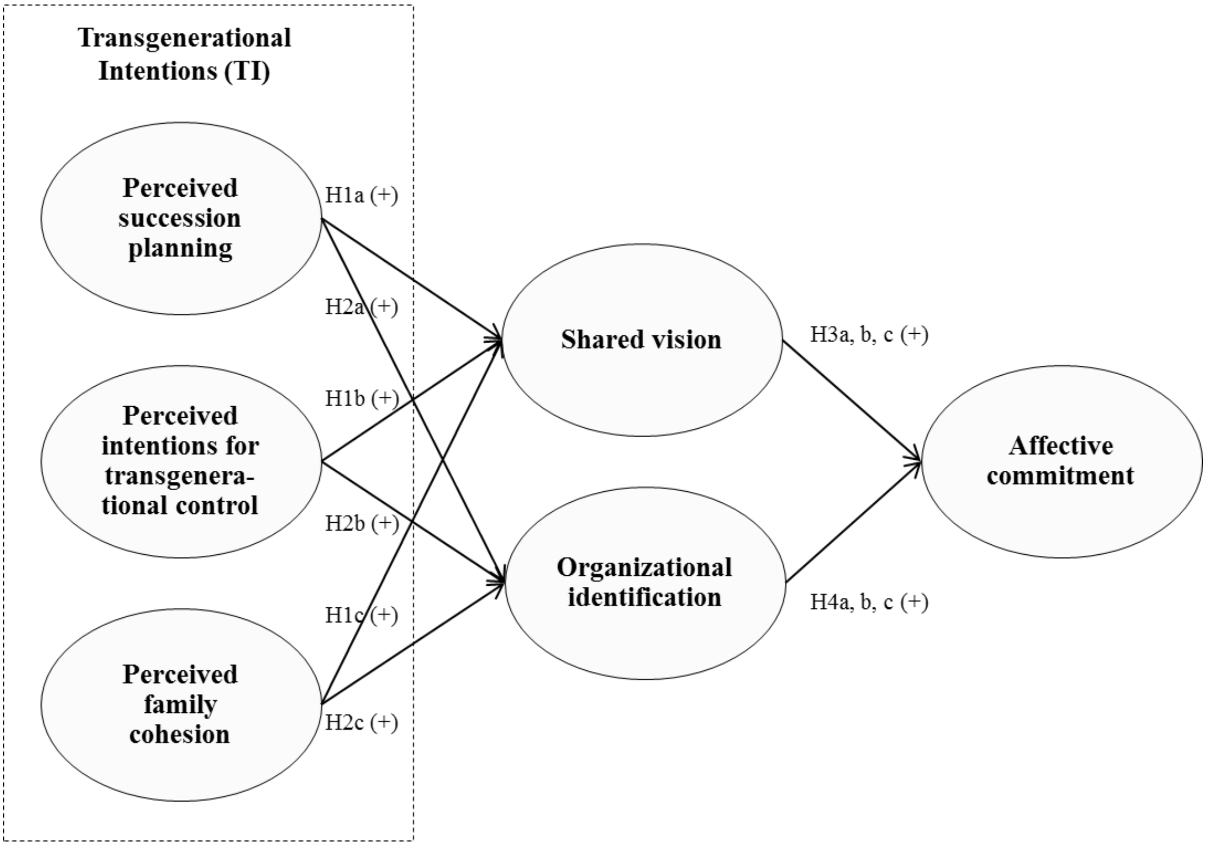
Hypothesis 4a: Perceived intention for transgenerational control has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via organizational identification.

Hypothesis 4b: Perceived succession planning has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via organizational identification.

Hypothesis 4c: Perceived cohesion of the owner family has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via organizational identification.

The proposed research model with the corresponding hypotheses is displayed in the Figure 2.

Figure 2: Proposed model with hypotheses indications



3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

My research question and the derived hypotheses focus on individual perceptions of employees and cannot be extracted from publicly accessible, secondary data. Thus, we collected primary data for testing the hypotheses using a survey as an instrument. The data collection was conducted jointly with Christian Röhm, PhD student at the Entrepreneurship Research Institute of Technische Universität München, who is studying organizational level topics within the family business research field. Thus, with my survey we targeted both family-internal CEOs and employees working and interacting directly with the CEO of German family firms.

For the selection of the firms to be addressed, we used the Amadeus data base which covers nearly all companies registered in Germany as well as researchers' network of firm contacts. We applied four filters to the selection. First, we filtered the companies by size: We excluded micro businesses with less than 10 employees[2]. Second, we filtered by industry, excluding companies from public and financial sectors. This resulted in a list of around 37.000 companies. We randomized this list and applied another two filter criteria with regard to family firm definition based on ownership and management of the firm. There is no consensus concerning the exact defining criteria of a family firm Cruz et al. (2010). Since the focus of my study lies on the perceptions of transgenerational intentions which include control and management succession aspects, both family control and family management are relevant aspects. We applied the minimum family ownership requirement of 20% based on recommendation by (La Porta et al., 1999), who conducted a large scale, worldwide study of ownership and management structures. Additionally, we considered family managed companies only, defined by the presence of at least one member of the owning family in the management board. Various studies of family influence and involvement refer to the parameters of ownership and management (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson et al., 2012).

Based on these criteria, we subtracted a sample of 949 family firms from the initial database list, including several companies with which our researcher team had established contacts. We

[2] We refer to the EU recommendation 2003/361/EG concerning company size definitions, which has been applied in various scientific studies, e.g. Bammens, Notelaers, and van Gils (2015); Evangelista and Vezzani (2010).

mailed to the CEOs of the firms individual postal packages including letters with the study invitation, first part of the CEO questionnaire and a template to be filled with nonfamily employees whom we could contact for participation. The stated study requirements included a participation of at least 5 employees with a direct contact to the CEO. With a minimum number of employees per company we aimed to ensure employees' anonymity and with a required CEO contact we assured reliability and comparability of employees' perceptions. As an incentive for companies to participate in our study we offered an individualized final report which covered various descriptive results and benchmark studies. Moreover, we offered cooperation with our research institute in conducting project studies with TUM students. In these projects, students learn practical project work by being assigned to a specific company task for a limited period of time. In this time they are closely supervised by a project leader from the company and academically mentored by teaching staff from our TUM chair e.g. the author.

Out of all contacted organizations, 119 participated in the study, resulting in a response rate of 12.5% on the organizational level. This is not unusual for a family firm study, comparable response rates have been reported in studies targeting for primary data with multiple respondents and covering topics which are being considered sensitive and confidential (Schulze et al., 2001; Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012). We were provided by CEOs the contact data of 536 employees, out of those 463 participated in our study, resulting in a response rate of 86.4% on employee level. As the focus of my study lies on the perception of familiness characteristics by nonfamily employees, covering interaction aspects between family members working in the company, my final sample included only respondents who considered the employer company to be a family firm. This resulted in a final sample of 389 employees from 82 companies.

The final sample consisted of employees with an average age of 44.91 years (standard deviation [SD] 9.74 years), who have been working for the current company on average for 12.75 years (SD 10.47 years). In my sample, 297 participants (76.35 percent) were male and 92 participants (23.65 percent) were female. 190 employees in the sample had an academic degree (48.84 percent) and 269 employees (69.15 percent) worked in middle and lower management positions. Various functional departments were covered by the respondents of the survey, with the largest number of 134 participants (34.45 percent) in Marketing and Sales, 106 (27.25 percent) in Operations and Logistics and 102 (26.22 percent) in Research and Development. Study participants worked in companies with average revenues in 2013 of

69.64 million euro (SD 107.36) and average sizes of 372.06 employees (SD 594.69). The average age of the companies in the sample was 101.88 years (SD 64.00). My sample comprised employees working for companies in various industries: 299 (76.86 percent) worked in manufacturing, 53 (13.62 percent) in retail, 23 (5.91 percent) in construction and 14 (3.60 percent) in services companies. A summary of descriptive sample characteristics is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Sample characteristics

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Min.**	**Max.**
Age	44.91	9.74	21	73
Gender (% female)	.24	-	0	1
Firm tenure	12.75	10.47	0	49
Education (% academic degree)	.49	-	0	1
Position (% management)	.69	-	0	1
Department Marketing and Sales (%)*	.34	-	0	1
Department Operations and Logistics (%)*	.27	-	0	1
Department Research and Development (%)*	.26	-	0	1
Department Strategy and Business Development (%)*	.20	-	0	1
Department HR (%)*	.19	-	0	1
Department Finance and Procurement (%)*	.16	-	0	1
Department Services (%)*	.10	-	0	1
Size of employer firm (employees)	372.06	594.69	10	3,400
Revenue of employer firm (million EUR)	69.64	107.36	1.7	558.5
Age of employer firm	101.88	64.00	6	370
Industry of employer firm (% manufacturing)	.77	-	0	1
Industry of employer firm (% retail)	.14	-	0	1
Industry of employer firm (% construction)	.06	-	0	1
Industry of employer firm (% services)	.04	-	0	1

n = 389
* multiple selection possible

3.2. Measures

To measure the variables in my theoretical model I used well established scales, some of which I slightly modified. The original language of the scales was English. Since the survey was conducted with employees of companies based in Germany, I designed the questionnaire in German language. For this purpose, I applied the back-translation approach recommended by Brislin (1970) and Chapman and Carter (1979): The original items were translated into German and then back-translated to English to confirm the consistency of the translation. The initial translation into German was conducted by a bilingual doctoral student, whose native language is German and who is fluent in English. The back-translation was carried out by three university graduates who were fluent in English and had spent a sufficient amount of time in English-speaking countries. The comparison with original items didn't indicate inconsistencies in the translation.

Along with variables measuring constructs from the theoretical model, the questionnaire included various control variables concerning the participants individually and the organizations they were working for. In this way I account for the two relevant areas of analysis in my study. In the following I describe the measures, a full list of which including construct items and the corresponding translations is displayed in Table 5.

3.2.1. Dependent variable

Affective commitment of employees was measured with the established scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and re-validated and refined in Meyer, and Allen et al. (1993) which has been widely used in the literature (e.g. in Cheng and Stockdale (2003), Powell and Meyer (2004) and Sonenshein and Dholakia (2012)). The original scale was created with six items – however, I adapted the scale to family firm context by dropping the item "I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization" since the word "family" has a specific meaning in my setting and goes beyond the metaphoric reference to the company. Therefore, the final scale for affective commitment contained five items. The participants were asked to evaluate statements, such as "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization" and "I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one". For item assessment we used a Likert scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree". A summary of scales including their sources and measurement formats is displayed in Table 7. Reliability measures of the scale, along with other measurement evaluations, will be presented in Chapter 4.1.1.

Table 5: Measurement scales items

Variable	Original items	Items as in questionnaire
Affective Organizational Commitment 5 items scale		
AC1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	Ich wäre sehr glücklich wenn ich den Rest meiner Karriere in dieser Organisation verbringen könnte
AC2	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	Ich fühle mich wirklich so als ob die Probleme der Organisation meine eigenen wären
AC3	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization (reversed)	Ich fühle mich mit dieser Organisation nicht “emotional verbunden” (reversed)
AC4	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	Meine Organisation bedeutet mir persönlich sehr viel
AC5	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (reversed)	Ich verspüre keinen starken Zugehörigkeitssinn in Bezug auf meine Organisation (reversed)
Additional items in Affective Organizational Commitment 8 items scale (robustness check)		
AC6	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization (reversed)	Ich fühle mich nicht “zur Familie gehörig” in meiner Organisation (reversed)
AC7	I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it	Ich mag es, über meine Organisation mit Leuten zu reden, die nicht dazu gehören
AC8	I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (reversed)	Ich denke, dass ich mich mit einer anderen Organisation leicht genauso verbunden fühlen könnte wie mit dieser (reversed)
Perceived Intentions for Transgenerational Control		
ITC1	The family faces the opportunity to pass on the business to future generations	Die Familie hat die Möglichkeit das Unternehmen an die nächste Generation weiterzugeben.
ITC2	Continuing the family legacy and traditions is important to the family	Der Fortbestand des Familienvermächtnisses und der Traditionen ist der Familie wichtig.
Perceived Succession Planning		
SP1	The family firm has successfully developed a succession plan	Es ist bekannt, dass das Familienunternehmen erfolgreich einen Nachfolgeplan entwickelt hat.
SP2	The firm’s succession plan has been clearly communicated within the company	Der Nachfolgeplan des Unternehmens wurde klar innerhalb des Unternehmens kommuniziert.
Perceived Family Cohesion		
	Members of the family…	Die Mitglieder der Familie...
FC1	care deeply about one another	kümmern sich fürsorglich umeinander
FC2	support one another	unterstützen sich gegenseitig
FC3	are proud of being part of the family	sind stolz, Teil der Familie zu sein
FC4	depend on each other	verlassen sich aufeinander

	FC5	work closely together to accomplish family goals	arbeiten eng zusammen um die Ziele der Familie zu erreichen
	FC6	would do almost anything to remain together	legen viel Wert auf Zusammenhalt
	FC7	are always engaged in dysfunctional conflicts (reversed)	sind ständig in destruktive Konflikte verwickelt (reversed)
	FC8	stick together	halten zusammen
Shared Vision			
	SV1	There is a commonality of purpose in my organization	In meiner Organisation gibt es eine einheitliche Zielsetzung
	SV2	There is total agreement on our organizational vision across all levels, functions, and divisions	Wir sind uns bezüglich unserer Unternehmensvision über alle Ebenen, Funktionen und Abteilungen hinweg vollkommen einig
	SV3	All employees are committed to the goals of this organization	Die meisten Mitarbeiter stehen hinter unseren Unternehmenszielen
	SV4	Employees view themselves as partners in charting the direction of the organization	Die meisten Mitarbeiter sehen sich bei der Bestimmung der Unternehmensausrichtung beteiligt
Organizational Identification			
	OI1	When someone criticizes this firm, it feels like a personal insult	Wenn jemand dieses Unternehmen kritisiert, empfinde ich dies als persönliche Beleidigung
	OI2	I am very interested in what others think about this firm	Ich bin sehr daran interessiert, was andere über dieses Unternehmen denken
	OI3	When I talk about this firm, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'	Wenn ich über dieses Unternehmen spreche, sage ich gewöhnlich wir und nicht sie
	OI4	This firm's successes are my successes	Die Erfolge dieses Unternehmens sind meine Erfolge
	OI5	When someone praises this firm it feels like a personal compliment	Wenn jemand dieses Unternehmen lobt, empfinde ich dies als persönliches Kompliment
	OI6	If a story in the media criticized the firm I would feel embarrassed	Wenn ein Beitrag in den Medien dieses Unternehmen kritisieren würde, wäre mir das peinlich

3.2.2. Independent variables

In my theoretical model I hypothesize the effect of transgenerational intentions of the owner-manager family perceived by employees. I demonstrate that these intentions cover three aspects of the family perception: The perceived intention to keep the control over the firm, the perceived active planning of family-internal succession and the perceived cohesion between family members.

To measure *employees' perception of family intentions for transgenerational control*, I adjusted the two item scale introduced by Zellweger, and Kellermanns et al. (2012). I asked employees to evaluate the extent to which they think "The family faces the opportunity to pass on the business to future generations" and "Continuing the family legacy and traditions is important to the family" on a Likert scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree".

To measure the *employees' perception of family-internal succession planning* I adapted the two item scale suggested by Eddleston et al. (2013). I asked the participants to state their evaluation of the items "The family firm has successfully developed a succession plan" and "The firm's succession plan has been clearly communicated within the company". Possible responses ranged from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree".

To assess the *employees' perception of cohesiveness between the family members involved in the family firm* I adapted the eight item family cohesion scale suggested by Zahra (2012), based on Chang and Bordia (2001). For example I asked respondents to evaluate to which extend "members of the family support each other" and "work closely together to accomplish family goals". A 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree" was used to record the perceptions.

3.2.3. Mediator variables

I measured the mediator variable *shared vision* with the four item scale developed by Sinkula, Baker, and Noordewier (1997). Initially used as sub-dimension of learning orientation, it has been used as a separate scale, for example by Li (2013). Exemplary items of the scale are "There is total agreement on our organizational vision across all levels, functions, and divisions" and "There is a commonality of purpose in my organization". The respondents could rate the items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree".

The mediator variable *organizational identification* was measured with the established six item scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992), which has been widely used in the literature (e.g. in Hsu and Elsbach (2013), McDonald and Westphal (2011) and Wieseke, Kraus, Ahearne, and Mikolon (2012)). We asked the respondents to rate statements such as "When someone criticizes this firm, it feels like a personal insult" and "When I talk about this firm, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'" on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree".

3.2.4. Control variables

With regard to individuals, I controlled for *age* and *gender* effects, since both are known to correlate with individual affective commitment (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). For this purpose I asked respondents to state their year of birth and gender, then calculated the age in years and coded the gender dummy with 0 for males and 1 for females. Furthermore, I controlled for *tenure* in the firm (measured in logarithm of years), since the organizational affiliation duration has an impact on employees' commitment (Brimeyer, Perrucci, & Wadsworth, 2010; Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). For the same reason I controlled for *education* based on self-reported highest degree achieved by creating a dummy with 0 value for a non-academic education (no university degree such as Bachelor or Master) and 1 value for an academic degree. I also controlled for the current *position* of employees in the company. Employees in higher and lower positions might experience the effect of family's transgenerational intentions such as family internal succession differently. Family internal succession means that the highest position in the company is reserved for a family member. This fact might occur as a career limitation to employees in higher positions more than to those who are in lower positions and further away from the highest hierarchical level (Chua et al., 2003b). I coded the position dummy with 0 for respondents not in management positions and 1 for manager or executive respondents.

With regard to organizations, I controlled for *company size.* The degree of formalization is dependent on the number of employees in the company, since it affects the establishment of personal bonds with the firm and thus influences employees' commitment (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007; Memili et al., 2013). I calculated the measure as a logarithm of the total number of employees in the company, based on secondary information from firm data bases such as Amadeus and Hoppenstedt as well as companies' home pages. Moreover, I controlled for *company age* as the age of an organization impacts the perceived top management behavior (Davis et al., 2010; Tsui, Zhang, Wang, Xin, & Wu, 2006). The measure was based on secondary data on company foundation extracted from firm data bases and companies' home pages. It was calculated as a logarithm of number of years since the foundation.

3.3. Sample pre-analysis

Missing data

The initial data set contained missing data. We adjusted the settings of the online survey in a way that several questions which we assumed to be possibly sensitive were not obligatory to answer. In that, respondents could continue filling out the survey without completing them. In this way we enabled employees who had doubts regarding the confidentiality of their answers to sensitive questions, to still participate in the study. Nevertheless, only few participants refrained from answering questions. A maximum of 9.7 percent of missing data was generated. A list of items and corresponding missing data is presented in Appendix 1.

In order to assure there is no systematic dependence of missing values on other variables, I tested the interdependences. To test whether the data were missing at random (MAR), I tested if any other variable predicted significantly whether a given variable was missing. No significant interdependences between missing values and other variables could be detected. To test whether the data were missing completely at random (MCAS) I performed Little's MCAR test (Hair, 2010). The test resulted in a significance level of .50, thus, I can assume that patterns of missing data don't contain potential biases and can consider the missing data to be MCAR.

Given the independence assumption is fulfilled, and the proportion of missing data lies below ten percent, mean substitution of missing values is an appropriate, most widely used procedure (Hair, 2010). Hence, I replaced observations containing missing data with respective averages from the available observations. This results in an unchanged final sample size of 389 observations.

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 8 gives an overview of descriptive statistics, correlations and scale reliabilities of the variables used in my analysis. Affective commitment is significantly linked to the predictor variables perceived intentions for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion, as well as to both mediator variables perceived shared vision and organizational identification. Furthermore, there are significant relationships between several control variables and affective commitment, supporting their inclusion into the model. The three measures of perceived transgenerational intentions correlate significantly with each other. This can arouse concerns regarding multicollinearity. Thus, I calculated Variance Inflation

Factors (VIF). VIF is an established measure of multicollinearity and is calculated as the inverse of tolerance value, a value which is defined as the variance of a particular independent variable not explained by the other independent variables (Hair, 2010). The lower the VIF, the less variability the other independent variables explain, and the lower is the likelihood of multicollinearity. VIF values above 10 are considered critical thresholds indicating multicollinearity (Hair, 2010). As presented in Table 6, all VIFs of variables used in my models are below 2, suggesting that multicollinearity is not likely in my models.

Table 6: Variance inflation factors

Variable		**VIF**	**1/VIF**
Predictor variables	Intentions for transgenerational control	1.54	.65
	Succession planning	1.42	.71
	Family cohesion	1.37	.73
Mediator variable	Shared vision	1.36	.74
	Organizational identification	1.14	.88
Controls (individual)	Gender	1.15	.87
	Age	1.36	.74
	Firm tenure	1.37	.73
	Education	1.25	.80
	Position	1.14	.88
Controls (organization)	Firm size	1.24	.81
	Firm age	1.15	.87

n = 389

Table 7: Overview of measures

	Variable	Number of items	Source of item wording in survey	Format scale
Dependent variables	Affective commitment	5	Meyer, and Allen et al. (1993)	7-point Likert scale
Predictor variables	Intentions for transgenerational control	2	Zellweger, and Kellermanns et al. (2012)	7-point Likert scale
	Succession planning	2	Eddleston et al. (2013)	7-point Likert scale
	Family cohesion	8	Zahra (2012)	7-point Likert scale
Mediator	Shared vision	4	Sinkula et al. (1997)	7-point Likert scale
variables	Organizational identification	6	Mael and Ashforth (1992)	7-point Likert scale
Controls	Gender	1	n. a.	Dummy (0 = male; 1 = female)
(individual)	Age	1	n. a.	Continuous
	Firm tenure	1	n. a.	Continuous (logarithm of years)
	Education	1	n. a.	Dummy (0 = no university degree; 1 = university degree)
	Position	1	n. a.	Dummy (0 = not manager; 1 = manager)
Controls (organization)	Firm size	1	Secondary data from databases, annual reports and websites	Continuous (logarithm of last reported number of employees)
	Firm age	1	Secondary data from databases, annual reports and websites	Continuous (logarithm years since the foundation)

Table 8: Descriptive statistics, reliabilities and correlation table

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Intentions for transgenerational control	5.96	.61	(.66)												
2. Succession planning	3.86	1.02	.45***	(.88)											
3. Family cohesion	5.53	.57	.37***	.32***	(.93)										
4. Shared vision	4.31	1.39	.35***	.38***	.39***	(.82)									
5. Affective commitment	5.72	1.05	.25***	.22***	.27***	.35***	(.70)								
6. Organizational identification	5.01	1.07	.15**	.12*	.18***	.21***	.42***	(.74)							
7. Gender (dummy)			.01	-.00	-.00	-.02	*-12*	-.13*	(-)						
8. Hierarchy (dummy)			.08	.11*	.03	.08	.14**	.15**	-.27***	(-)					
9 Education (dummy)			-.07	-.03	-.08	-.05	-.10*	-.04	-.17***	-.02	(-)				
10. Age	44.91	9.74	.06	.09	.03	.02	.31***	.19***	-.11*	.15***	-.15***	(-)			
11. Firm tenure (log)	2.13	1.05	.06	.00	-.02	-.01	.25***	.15**	-.11*	.16**	-.21***	.47***	(-)		
12. Company size (log)	5.13	1.20	.09	-.02	-.06	.02	.12*	.10*	-.17***	.13*	.32***	.12*	.03	(-)	
13. Company age (log)	4.40	0.74	.23***	.14**	-.08	-.01	.05	-.02	-.04	.02	.01	.07	.14*	-.07	(-)

n = 389; * p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001; Internal reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) for overall construct in parentheses on the diagonal

Common method bias

While performing the analysis with the survey data, I needed to make sure that no bias related to the common method occurred. When measures of independent and dependent variables are obtained from the same respondents at the same time, it might lead to various sources of common method variance, i.e. variance assigned to the applied measurement method instead of the constructs represented by the measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Thus, I took several ex-ante measures to minimize the chance of common method bias and to ensure the validity of my analysis. Following the advice of Podsakoff et al. (2003), we assured full data confidentiality for the participants and emphasized that there are no right or wrong answers. In this way we aimed to make sure that the responses were not affected by social desirability. Second, we organized items in the questionnaire randomly, making the hypotheses intended in the study less obvious. Third, we applied a temporal separation of measurements by splitting the questionnaire into two parts, with outcome and moderator variables in the first part and predictor variables in the second part (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We sent out the second part of the questionnaire one week after a respondent had finished the first part. On average, 17.9 days passed between the first part and the second part of the questionnaire was finished by the participants.

Additionally, I conducted a statistical post-hoc test and examined the data for common method bias with Harman's one factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). For this purpose, all measurements (affective commitment, perceived intentions for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion, perceived shared vision and organizational identification) are entered into an unrotated factor analysis. If one single factor emerges or a single factor accounts for the majority of the independent or dependent variable covariance, a common method bias is considered to be likely (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). My analysis identified five factors with eigenvalue larger one, explaining 91.4 percent of the total variance, with the first factor accounting for 47 percent of the total variance. This indicates that common method bias is not a major concern in the study.

Non-response bias

In order to allow generalization of the empirical results, I tested whether the persons who participated in the survey differ substantially from those who didn't. Since it was not possible to gain information about employees in family firms who did not participate in the study, I choose an extrapolation approach. The test for this approach is based on the assumption that late respondents, i.e. respondents who participated less readily, are similar to non-respondents (Armstrong & Overton, 1977; Kanuk & Berenson, 1975; Miller & Smith, 1983; Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2012). As 31 percent of respondents (121 participants) completed the second part of the questionnaire within one day, they build the early respondents group. Thus, I compared these responses with those which were completed by the slowest 30 percent of respondents. These respondents (123 participants) completed the questionnaire within 7 to 77 days, marking the late respondents group. The t-test comparing means of responses of late versus early respondents resulted in insignificant two-tailored p-values at the .05 confidence level. Hence, I conclude that there is no indication of non-response bias in the present study. The results of the test are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Comparison early vs. late responses

Variable	**Mean early respondents**	**Mean late respondents**	**t-value**	**p-value (Δ! = 0)**
Affective commitment	5.71	5.78	-.50	.62
Intentions for transgenerational control	6.01	5.93	.98	.33
Succession planning	3.86	3.90	-.33	.74
Family cohesion	5.56	5.51	.62	.54
Shared vision	4.17	4.33	-.90	.37
Organizational identification	5.14	5.33	-1.56	.12
	n = 121	n = 123		

3.4. Structural equation modeling

3.4.1. Reason for choosing structural equation modeling

I tested the theoretical model using structural equation modeling (SEM). Structural equation modeling is a so-called “second generation of multivariate analysis” method (Fornell, 1982), originating from the seminal works by Jöreskog (Jöreskog, 1967, 1969, 1970) and covering several advantages relevant for testing the model proposed in this work. First, SEM enables to test the overall model, i.e. all hypothesized relationships simultaneously. Furthermore, the concepts in the theoretical model like affective commitment and perceptions of transgenerational intentions are latent, as they evade direct measurement (Bollen, 2002; Chin, 1998). The measurements of these constructs contain measurement errors. SEM considers these errors explicitly in the analysis (Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994; Petrescu, 2013). Due to these advantages, SEM has become an important empirical method and is widely applied in social sciences and management research (Williams, Vandenberg, & Edwards, 2009).

There are two types of SEM approaches: covariance and variance based techniques. (Chin, 1998) The variance based method such as Partial Least Squares (PLS) is a component-based approach. It estimates model parameters by minimizing the residual variance applying the least-squares method (Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009). The method can be applied on a rather small sample size and doesn't have distribution assumptions (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). The variance based approach is most appropriate for prediction and theory development (Reinartz et al., 2009) and does not provide global statistical tests for an overall theoretical fit (Hair, 2010). In contrast, covariance-based technique implies estimation of parameters by minimizing the difference between the theoretical covariance matrix defined by the system of structural equations and the empirical covariance matrix observed within the sample (Chin, 1998). In other words, it maximizes the probability of the observed data for the hypothesized model (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). This approach is more restrictive regarding sample size and variables distribution. For that, it comprises global goodness of fit tests. It is most appropriate for testing of theoretical models (Hair, 2010). Thus, I use the covariance-based SEM approach to test the theoretical model.[3]

3.4.2. Basics of structural equation modeling

The distinctiveness of SEM is the combination of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and multiple regression modeling methods to test the hypothesized theoretical model (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). The non-observable constructs from the theory are represented by latent variables (factors). The indicators, which are real data measures, build the basis estimation of the latent variables as well as the relationships between them (Williams et al., 2009). Analogous to the combination of methods, a structural equation model consists of two parts: measurement model and structural model (Hair, 2010).

[3] For a more detailed comparison of both methods as well as comparison of their advantages and disadvantages, see Chin (1995); Fornell and Bookstein (1982); Reinartz, Haenlein, and Henseler (2009).

Measurement model

The *measurement model* displays the relationships between the indicators (observed variables) and the latent variables (Williams, Edwards, & Vandenberg, 2003). Essentially, it is a confirmatory factor analysis (Schreiber et al., 2006), which is a confirmatory estimation technique: A hypothesized model is used to estimate a population covariance matrix which is then compared to the observed covariance matrix (Schreiber et al., 2006). The relationships between the observed and unobserved variables are theory based, thus the relationships are defined in the process of operationalization of variables used in the theoretical model (see Chapter 3.2 Measures). The specification of the measurement model is the first step in structural equation analysis and allows for construct reliability and validity assessment (Hair, 2010).

Two types of relationships between indicators and the latent variables can be distinguished: reflective and formative (Hair, 2010). A *formative* relationship is chosen when assumed that the indicators influence the latent variable. This means, a value change of an indicator leads to a value change of the latent variable (Williams et al., 2009). Formative indicators (also called causal indicators) are not required to be correlated (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Jarvis, 2005). On the contrary, correlations between indicators might be an issue, since the impact of single indicators cannot be uniquely separated (Bollen & Lennox, 1991).

In management research, measurements are typically treated as *reflective* (Williams et al., 2009). Measures can be considered reflective, when indicators are assumed to be expressions of the latent variable (MacKenzie et al., 2005). A value change of the latent variable leads to a value change of all indicators (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003). Thus, the indicators are supposed to be highly correlated (Bollen & Lennox, 1991).

To operationalize the variables of the theoretical model I relied on established scales only. These have been developed in a way that the indicators are reflecting the construct they are supposed to measure (Williams et al., 2009). They fulfill the criteria for reflective constructs suggested by MacKenzie et al. (2005). First, the items are manifestations of the construct. For example, the extent to which an individual confirms the sentence “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization” depends upon how much he or she is committed to the organization, not vice versa. Second, the items are exchangeable; they share a common topic, such as “Members of the family care deeply about one another” and “Members of the family support one another”. Third, indicators are expected to covary with each other. As shown in the Chapter 3.2, the measures mostly fulfill Cronbach's alpha threshold of.7. Thus, the reflective character of the measures can be confirmed.

An exemplary two-item reflective measurement of an exogenous variable can be formalized as follows (Buch, 2007):

$$x_1 = \lambda_1 \xi_1 + \delta_1$$

$$x_2 = \lambda_2 \xi_1 + \delta_2$$

ξ_1 is the exogenous latent variable vector, x_1 and x_2 the indicators, λ_1 and λ_2 coefficients measuring the impact of the latent variable on the indicators and δ_1 and δ_2 the measurement errors.

An exemplary two-item reflective measurement of an endogenous variable can be formalized as follows (Buch, 2007):

$$y_1 = \lambda_3 \eta_1 + \varepsilon_3$$

$$y_2 = \lambda_4 \eta_1 + \varepsilon_4$$

η_1 is the endogenous latent variable vector, y_1 and y_2 the indicators, λ_3 and λ_4 coefficients measuring the impact of the latent variable on the indicators and ε_3 and ε_4 the measurement errors.

When specifying the overall measurement model, the relationships between the constructs are not constrained, i.e. all possible correlations between the constructs are measured. Thus, all constructs are considered exogenous and correlated (Hair, 2010).

Structural model

Specifying a *structural model* can be viewed as adding constrains to the measurement model (Hair, 2010). Structural paths as proposed by the theoretical model replace the correlations between the constructs (Williams et al., 2009). Apart from possible correlation between the exogenous variables, the only relationships between variables are paths representing hypothesized dependences. Thus, the missing relationships between constructs are constrains of the model and are equal to zero (Hair, 2010).

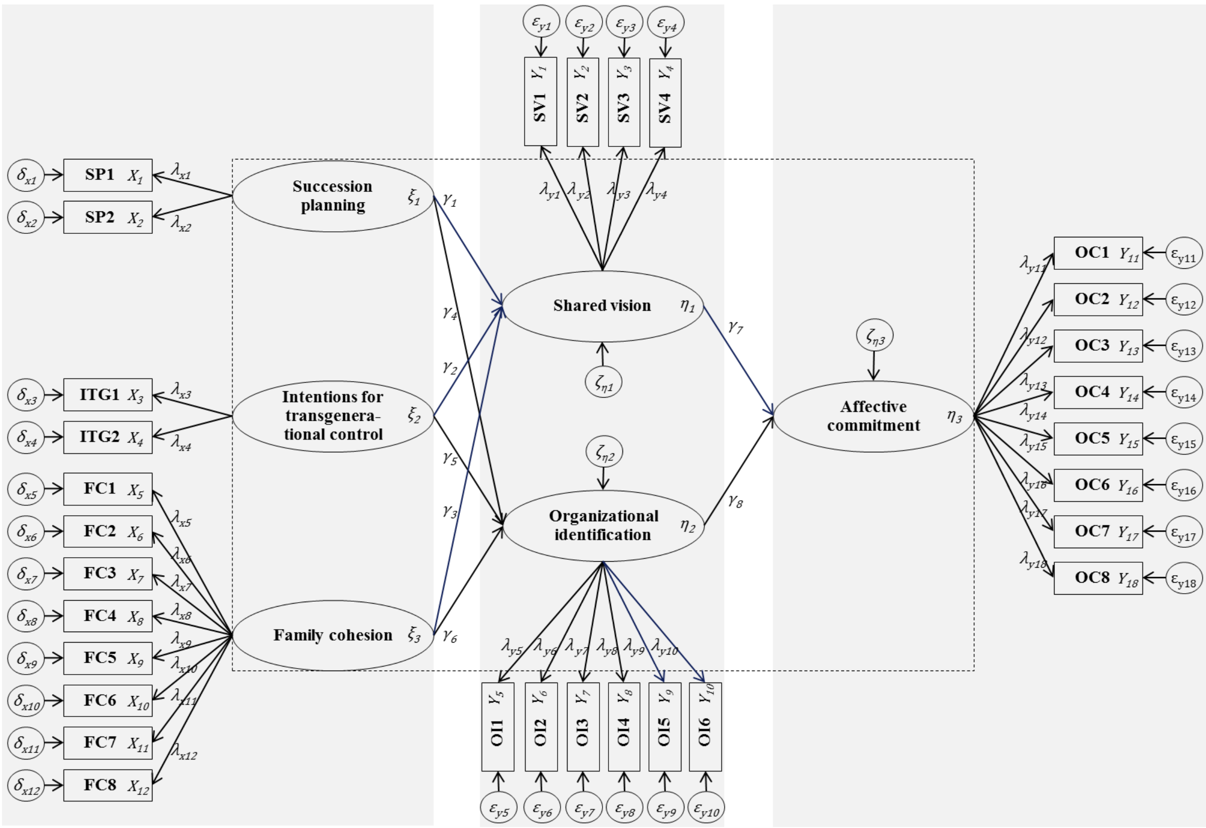
A structural model between the exemplary latent variables can be written mathematically as follows:

$$\eta_1 = \gamma_1 \xi_1 + \zeta_1$$

γ_1 is the structural parameter linking the exogenous and the endogenous latent variable and ζ_1 is the unexplained residual variance of the endogenous latent variable η_1.

Figure 3 shows the main theoretical model as proposed by the author, in a form and notation of a structural equation model. The path model displays two parts. The model parts marked with the grey background represent measurement models of exogenous and endogenous variables. The dotted line box marks the model part which represents the structural model and shows the hypothesized causal relationships between latent variables. In this path model, along with the establish notation of SEM path diagrams, ovals represent the latent variables and rectangles their indicators. Circles represent residuals of indicators and endogenous variables (Hair, 2010). Additionally, consistent with the theory, I consider the possibility that the independent variables are possibly correlated. Hence, the model does not restrict the relationships between the three aspects of perceived transgenerational intentions.

Figure 3: Structural equation model of the hypothesized model



Control variables not displayed. Dotted line – structural model; gray background – measurement model

3.4.3. Estimation technique

I tested the specified structural equation model with *maximum likelihood estimation* (MLE). Beside other estimation procedures such as generalized least squares (GLS), weighted least squares (WLS) and asymptotically distribution free (ADF), the maximum likelihood estimation is most widely used and comprises several advantages (Hair, 2010); (Olsson, Foss, Troye, & Howell, 2000; Williams et al., 2009). First, it is available in the common software programs used to estimate structural equation models, such as LISREL, AMOS, MPlus and Stata. Additionally, the technique provides efficient and unbiased estimators when certain conditions, such as multivariate normality, are fulfilled (Hair, 2010). MLE also provides most robust, least biased parameters and indices of model fit when issues with model specifications or deviations from normal distribution are detected (Olsson et al., 2000). I used the software package Stata 13 to perform the estimations.

The algorithm of the maximum likelihood estimation finds model parameters which have the highest probability to achieve the best model fit (Hair, 2010). It also provides standard errors of parameter estimates, which can be used to test whether they are statistically significant form zero (Williams et al., 2009). To do so, scales for latent variables are set by fixing the value of one indicator per latent variable to 1.0. The estimation process of the software is iterative, delivering a final number of interpretable parameters with optimal asymptotic properties: consistency, efficiency, and normality (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Enders & Bandalos, 2001). Asymptotic consistency implies that the estimates “converge in probability to the true parameter values as the sample size gets larger” (Enders & Bandalos, 2001). This means that the degree of the bias approaches zero when the sample size increases. Asymptotic efficiency of an estimator means that it is approximately efficient, with increasing approximation as the size of the sample increases. Asymptotic normality implies analogically that the distribution is approximately normal, with increasing approximation as the sample size increases (Enders & Bandalos, 2001). In order to obtain correct parameters and unbiased estimators, the condition of multivariate data normality along with further assumptions needs to be fulfilled. I list and examine these in the following Chapter.

3.4.4. Assumptions

SEM with the maximum likelihood estimation technique requires fulfillment of several assumptions. The first one is the multivariate *normality* of the data (Hair, 2010). To verify this assumption, the third and fourth moment measures of data distribution – skewness and kurtosis – are calculated and examined. Table 10 shows the corresponding values for the construct indicators, the level of skewness and kurtosis lie within the acceptable range of -2 till 2 for skewness and 1 till 5 for kurtosis[4]. Several items of endogenous constructs slightly exceed the recommended upper threshold of kurtosis, indicating moderate deviations from normality. While using maximum likelihood estimation, moderate deviations from normality might be an issue in combination with a small sample size (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Savalei, 2008). This is particularly the case when sample size is smaller than 15 respondents for each estimated parameter and missing data accounts for more than 10 percent (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hair, 2010; Savalei, 2008). The final sample consisted of 389 observations with missing data percentage below 10 percent (see Appendix 1), while the model contained 6 constructs, leading to a factor of 64.83 observations per parameter. Thus, the detected deviations from normality do not represent a major concern for this study.

The second assumption is *homoscedasticity*, meaning that the variance of the dependent variable constant at all values of the independent variable (Hair, 2010). A variable is called heteroscedastic if there are sub-groups of the variable that differ significantly in their variance. The presence of heteroscedasticity is an issue when analyzing variances and covariances. It undermines statistical significance tests, as in this case the error terms do not have constant variances (Gujarati, 2004). The most common procedure to test homoscedasticity is the White's test (Gujarati, 2004; Long & Trivedi, 1992; White, 1980). It is based on the null hypothesis of the variance being constant. The White test of the hypothesized model with independent variables perceived succession planning, perceived intentions for transgenerational control, perceived family cohesion, mediator variables perceived shared vision and organizational identification on dependent variable affective commitment resulted in insignificant test statistics ($\chi^2 = 23.28$, $p > .10$). Also the White test of the regression of independent variables perceived succession planning, perceived intentions for transgenerational control, perceived family cohesion on dependent variables perceived shared vision and organizational identification resulted in insignificant test statistics ($\chi^2 = 8.41$, $p > .10$). Thus, there is no indication for heteroscedasticity.

The third assumption is *linearity*. As SEM does not take into account nonlinear associations between variables, their existence would mean omission of relationships and thus their misspecification (Hair, 2010). To detect nonlinear relationships I used the Wald-test to

[4] For normal distribution, the standardized third order element is technically 0 and the standardized fourth order element is 3, compare West, Finch, and Curran (1995).

evaluate relationships between dependent and independent variables with and without nonlinear terms. The tests of polynomial quadratic and cubic relationships between independent variables perceived succession planning, perceived intentions for transgenerational control and perceived family cohesion, and both mediator variable perceived shared vision ($F = 1.76$, $p > .10$) and organizational identification ($F = 1.50$, $p > .10$) were not significant. The test of polynomial quadratic and cubic relationships between mediator variables perceived shared vision and organizational identification and dependent variable affective commitment was only marginally significant ($F = 2.04$, $p \leq .10$). Thus, there is no strong indication for nonlinear relationships.

Table 10: Overview of skewness and kurtosis

Construct items*	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
Threshold	-2 to 2	1 to 5
Controls referring to individual		
Age	-.12	2.42
Firm tenure (log)	-.56	2.32
Controls referring to organization		
Company size (log)	.48	2.63
Company age (log)	-.97	4.39
Exogenous constructs		
Intentions for transgenerational control		
ITC1	-1.47	4.46
ITC2	-1.41	4.47
Succession planning		
SP1	-.07	1.66
SP2	.17	1.58
Family cohesion		
FC1	-.45	2.60
FC2	-.84	3.24
FC3	-1.32	4.57
FC4	-1.00	3.50
FC5	-.67	2.79
FC6	-.94	3.40
FC7	-1.14	3.57
FC8	-1.24	4.40
Endogenous constructs		
Shared vision		
SV1	-.26	2.03
SV2	.23	2.10
SV3	-.27	2.34
SV4	.37	2.49
Organizational identification		
OI1	-.42	2.23

OI2	-.94	3.62
OI3	-2.02	8.33
OI4	-.83	3.38
OI5	-1.01	3.87
OI6	-.68	2.43
Affective commitment		
AC1	-1.20	3.83
AC2	-1.01	3.33
AC3	-1.70	5.14
AC4	-1.41	5.13
AC5	-1.76	5.09

* n = 389; calculated with Stata 13; no dummy and categorical variables displayed

The last assumption I need to account for is the *independence of observations* (Williams et al., 2009). As my sample comprises several employees per company, this assumption may not be true. Thus, I apply the robust estimation option for SEM, clustered by company. This option stands for the generalized Huber/White/sandwich estimator, which is the robust technique relaxing the assumption of independent errors across observations and independence across clusters of observations (Rogers, 1994). In this way I take into account errors within one organization which can be correlated, and assume that the errors between organizations are not correlated (Baum, 2006).

3.4.5. Evaluation criteria of structural equation models

When evaluating a structural equation model, first I examine the reliability and validity of the measurement model (confirmatory factor analysis model), i.e. assess whether the measures fit the data and are consistent and distinct from each other (Schreiber et al., 2006).

Reliability and validity of the measurement model

Reliability measures the degree of agreement between the set of measures (indicators) of a single construct (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). *Individual item reliability* can be assessed by examining the indicators' standardized loadings and the corresponding error variances (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bagozzi et al., 1991; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011; Vallejo, 2009b). Standardized factor loading of an indicator >.7 indicates a satisfactory level of reliability, as at least 50 percent of explained variance is attained in the measure and less than 50 percent in the error term (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As a general rule of thumb, factor loadings above .5 are accepted (Hair, 2010).

The internal consistency of constructs is a measure of the overall *construct reliability*. Analogously to the individual item reliability, construct reliability, also termed *composite reliability,* has a threshold of .7 for reliable constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). For first-order reflective constructs, the construct reliability is also frequently tested with Cronbach’s alpha which measures the degree of items interrelatedness (Cronbach, 1951; MacKenzie et al., 2011). Constructs with a Cronbach’s alpha of at least .7 are considered to be sufficiently reliable (MacKenzie et al., 2011).

After examining construct reliability, I assess *validity* of the constructs, i.e. to which degree they measure what they are supposed to measure (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). When examining validity of measures, I assess their *convergence* and *discrimination*, i.e. the degree of similarity of measures corresponding to one another and of dissimilarity of measures which are differentiated (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). As a measure of convergent validity, I use the average variance extracted (AVE) in the items of the specific constructs (MacKenzie et al., 2011). AVE is the amount of variance accounted to the construct and is calculated as the average of the squared standardized item loadings (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE of at least .5 is recommended, so as the variance due to the measurement error is not larger than the variance captured by the construct (MacKenzie et al., 2011). Moreover, according to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), convergent validity is also shown when path coefficients are statistically significant.

In the next step I test the discriminant validity by proving whether indicators of a construct are clearly distinct from indicators of other constructs (MacKenzie et al., 2011). For reflective constructs discriminant validity can be assessed by comparing the AVE of a construct with the variance shared between this construct and other constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, I use the correlation matrix to assess the discriminant validity. I square the correlations between the constructs and substitute the values on the main diagonal of the matrix with the AVE of the corresponding latent variable. The discriminant validity is provided when the values in the diagonal are greater than any other on the corresponding row and column (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Vallejo, 2009b).

Global goodness of fit of measurement and structural model

After assessing the reliability and validity, also called local criteria of the measurement model, the global fit of the structural equation model (measurement model and structural model) is evaluated (Hair, 2010). *Chi-square test* is the most fundamental and up to date the only statistical test for the overall assessment of structural equation models (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair, 2010). It tests the null hypothesis that the implied and the observed variance-covariance matrix are congruent (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For a good model fit the test provides an insignificant result at a 0.05 significance level (Barrett, 2007). However, the reliance on the results of the Chi-square test is problematic, as it is highly sensitive to the sample size, leading to a rejection of null hypotheses when larger samples are used (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Alternatively, the relative/normed chi-square statistic χ^2/df can be applied, as suggested by Jöreskog (1969). The range 2 to 3 is considered to be most adequate (Schreiber et al., 2006).

Due to the limitations of the Chi-square statistics, a number of global *goodness of fit indices* have been developed, to evaluate the absolute SEM goodness of fit (MacKenzie et al., 2005; MacKenzie et al., 2011). The global fit criteria can be classified into absolute and incremental, and measure the extent to which a model accounts for the variation and covariation in the data (Bollen, 1989; Hu & Bentler, 1998, 1999).

The *absolute goodness of fit* is evaluated by examining how good the model fits the sample data. As opposed to the incremental fit indices, they do not compare the hypothesized model fit to the baseline model, but examine how well the model reproduces the sample data, i.e. by a comparison to a saturated model that exactly reproduces the sample covariance. The generally accepted and recommended indices are the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hu & Bentler, 1998).

RMSEA and SRMR are among the most frequently used measures of goodness-of-model fit (Hair, 2010; Kenny et al., 2014). RMSEA's calculation logic attempts to correct the Chi-square limitations by including model complexity (df) and sample size into calculation (Hair, 2010). RMSEA measures the amount of error of approximation per model degree of freedom under consideration of the sample size (Hair, 2010; Steiger & Lind, 1980). The general recommendation suggests for a model with continuous data to have an acceptable fit with RMSEA value < .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). However, due to its dependence on the degrees of freedom and sample size, the recommendation to use absolute RMSEA cut-off values is debatable (Chen, Curran, Bollen, Kirby, & Paxton, 2008). SRMR calculates the standardized difference between the observed and the predicted correlation, i.e. the average standardized residual (Hair, 2010). For continuous data, SRMR should not exceed a threshold of .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The *incremental goodness of fit indexes* evaluate how much in proportion the fit improves through a comparison of the target model to a nested, more restricted baseline model (typically a null model in which there is no correlation between all observed variables) (Hair, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The two generally accepted and recommended measures are Tucker and Lewis Index (TLI), also called Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012).

TLI is calculated as a ratio of the difference in the Chi-square value for a fitted model and a null model divided by the Chi-square value for the null model (Hair, 2010). TLI values above .95 are associated with a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacKenzie et al., 2011), however, models with TLI above 0.90 are generally accepted (Hair, 2010; Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005). CFI is calculated in a similar way as the TLI, adjusted for the degrees of freedom (Bentler, 1990; Hair, 2010). Similar to TLI, values above .95 are signaling good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacKenzie et al., 2011), however, models with values above .9 are generally accepted (Hair, 2010; Wang et al., 2005).

4. Results

4.1. Evaluation of model measures

4.1.1. Reliability and validity of measures

As described in the previous Chapter 3.4.5, I started the estimation of the model with the evaluation of reliability and validity of the measurements used in it. The standardized loadings of two items measuring *perceived intentions for transgenerational control* lied above the recommended threshold for established scales of .50, indicating good single item reliability (Hair, 2010). The scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .66, which is slightly below the threshold of .7 (Hair, 2010). Thus, I carried out further assessments of the scale to examine its reliability. First, a small number of items can be a reason for lower levels of Cronbach's alpha (Cortina, 1993). Since the measurement of perceived intentions for transgenerational control has two items, this might be the reason for the slightly lower Cronbach's alpha. Moreover, established measures with Cronbach's alpha values between .60 and .70 are accepted as reliable in comparable studies (for example in Wang et al. 2005, Zellweger, Sieger, and Halter 2011).

Nevertheless, to further examine the reliability of the measure, I performed confirmatory factor analysis to investigate the extent to which the measured items reflect the construct. Both items loaded on one factor with significant loadings of > .60, indicating a good fit (Hair, 2010). A further indicator of internal consistency of a scale is the item-test correlation. It shows to which extent the items correlate with the overall measure. In the data set, both items had high correlations with the overall scale (.89 and .85 respectively), indicating good reliability of the measure. Finally, the composite reliability value of the scale was .75, confirming its overall reliability.

As described in Chapter 3.4.5, I calculated AVE of the construct perceived intentions for transgenerational control in order to evaluate its convergent validity. The AVE value was .63 and above the recommended value of .50, confirming convergent validity of the construct. The AVE value was higher than the variance shared with other constructs in the study, suggesting sufficient discriminant validity (see Table 14).

The standardized loadings of two items measuring *perceived succession planning* lied above the recommended threshold of .50, indicating good single item reliability (Hair, 2010). The scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of .88, indication good overall reliability (Hair, 2010). The composite reliability of the construct was .90, confirming its overall reliability (Hair, 2010). The AVE value of the construct perceived succession planning was .81, confirming convergent validity of the construct. The AVE value exceeded the variance shared with other constructs in the study, indicating sufficient discriminant validity.

Seven of eight items measuring *perceived family cohesion* had standardized loadings above the recommended threshold of .50, indicating good single item reliability. The loading of the sixth item was .34 and slightly below the recommended threshold. Since this item measures dysfunctional conflict within the family cohesion scale and has high content value and theoretical importance, I did not remove it from the construct. For established scales, it is common to keep theoretically important items in the scale despite moderate loadings and confirm the reliability of the scale with other available reliability measures (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; example in Wang et al., 2005). The Cronbach's alpha of the perceived family cohesion construct was .93 and its composite reliability was .94, confirming good overall reliability of the construct and indicating that single item reliability is most probably not an issue (Hair, 2010). The AVE value of the construct perceived family cohesion was .67, confirming convergent validity of the construct. The AVE value lied above the variance shared with other constructs in the study, suggesting sufficient discriminant validity.

The standardized loadings of four items measuring the mediator *perceived shared vision* lied above the recommended threshold, indicating good single item reliability (Hair, 2010). The scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of .82, indication good overall reliability (Hair, 2010). The composite reliability of the overall construct was .82, confirming its high reliability. The AVE value of the construct perceived succession planning was .54 and above the recommended threshold, confirming convergent validity of the construct. The AVE value lied above the variance shared with other constructs in the study, indicating sufficient discriminant validity.

Five of six items measuring the mediator *organizational identification* had standardized loadings above the recommended threshold of .50, indicating single item reliability. With a standardized loading of .41, the third item lied slightly below the recommended threshold. Considering that organizational identification is a well-established scale and has been replicated in numerous studies (e.g. in Hsu and Elsbach 2013 and McDonald and Westphal 2011), I made no item adaptation and examined the reliability of the scale with other established indicators (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; example in Wang et al., 2005). The

Cronbach's alpha of the organizational identification construct was .74 and its composite reliability was .75, suggesting that reliability of the construct is most probably not a major issue (Hair, 2010). The AVE value of the construct organizational identification was .34 and below the recommended threshold. Since AVE is a highly conservative measure (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), I carried out further assessments to examine scale's convergent validity. As suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), I looked at an alternative indicator of convergent validity – the significance of indicators' coefficient on its underlying construct. The standardized factor loadings of the indicators measuring organizational identification were significant with $p \leq .001$ (for details, see Table 11). Thus, I conclude that convergent validity of the construct organizational identification is most probably not a major issue in this study.

Table 11: Standardized factor loadings and significances of items measuring organizational identification

Constructs and items	**Individual item reliability** Std factor loadings λ	**P>|z|**	**95% Conf. Interval**	
Threshold	≥ .5*			
Organizational identification				
OI1	.64	.00	.55	.72
OI2	.54	.00	.46	.63
OI3	.41	.00	.31	.51
OI4	.59	.00	.50	.67
OI5	.72	.00	.65	.80
OI6	.53	.00	.44	.62

n=389

Four of five items measuring the dependent variable *affective commitment* had standardized loadings above the recommended threshold of .50, indicating good single item reliability. The standardized loading of the fifth item was .36 and below the recommended threshold. Consistent with the procedure above, I retained the item in the established scale and assessed the reliability of the scale with other established reliability measures (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; example in Wang et al., 2005). The Cronbach's alpha of the affective commitment scale was .70 and its composite reliability was .73, indicating that reliability of the construct is not a major issue. The AVE value of the construct was .36 and slightly below the recommended value. Thus, I ran further evaluations of the scale's convergent validity. Analogue to the procedure above, I followed the suggestion by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and applied alternative indicator of convergent validity – the significance of indicators' coefficient on its underlying construct. All standardized factor loadings of the indicators measuring affective commitment were significant with $p \leq .001$ (for details, see Table 12). Considering that AVE is a highly conservative measure (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the affective commitment scale is a well-established scale replicated in numerous studies (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002), for example in Memili et al. (2013) and Shepherd et al. (2011), I conclude that convergent validity of the construct is most probably not an issue.

Table 12: Standardized factor loadings and significances of items measuring affective commitment

Constructs and items	**Individual item reliability** Std factor loadings λ	**P>|z|**	**95% Conf. Interval**	
Threshold	≥ .5*			
Affective commitment				
AC1	.61	.00	.54	.69
AC2	.53	.00	.44	.61
AC3	.58	.00	.49	.67
AC4	.83	.00	.76	.90
AC5	.36	.00	.26	.46

n=389

An overview of reliability and convergent validity results for constructs used in the study is displayed in Table 13.

Table 13: Overview of constructs' reliability and convergent validity results

Reliability and validity criteria		**Cronbach's alpha**	**Composite reliability**	**AVE**
Construct	Thresholds	≥ .7	≥ .7	≥ .5
Perceived intentions for transgenerational control		.66	.75	.63
Perceived succession planning		.88	.90	.81
Perceived family cohesion		.93	.94	.67
Perceived shared vision		.82	.82	.54
Organizational identification		.74	.75	.34
Affective commitment		.70	.74	.36

n=389

An overview of single items reliabilities is displayed in Appendix 2. The results of discriminant validity evaluation for the constructs used in the study are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14: Overview of constructs' discriminant validity results

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Perceived intentions for transgenerational control	**(.63)**					
2. Perceived succession planning	.20	**(.81)**				
3. Perceived family cohesion	.14	.11	**(.67)**			
4. Perceived shared vision	.12	.15	.16	**(.54)**		
5. Organizational identification	.02	.01	.03	.04	**(.34)**	
6. Affective commitment	.06	.05	.07	.12	.18	**(.36)**

n=389; squared inter-construct correlation; in parentheses on the diagonal: Average Variance Extracted

4.1.2. Validity of perceived measures

As described above, I hypothesized and measured transgenerational intentions in family firms as they were perceived by nonfamily employees. These subjective measures reflect the perspective relevant for the purposes of the study and determine the behavioral outcome for the employees. Nevertheless, in order to affirm the validity of the used measures of transgenerational intentions and to strengthen the implications of the findings, I obtained information about transgenerational intentions additionally from family CEOs of the companies. Then I correlated the results for transgenerational intentions as perceived by nonfamily employees with the perception of corresponding family CEO. All three measures of transgenerational intentions have positive and statistically significant correlations between CEO and employee perceptions (succession planning: $r = .25$, $p \leq .001$; intentions for transgenerational control: $r = .49$, $p \leq .001$; family cohesion: $r = .23$, $p \leq .001$).

These results are slightly below other studies reporting correlations between measures from different sources (for example Douglas and Judge 2001, Schilke 2014). However, those studies compare subjective to archival data, while I match subjective data from two different informant groups: nonfamily employees and family CEOs. This is most probably the reason for slightly lower correlations. I validated the results by looking at the company level. This resulted in higher significant correlation coefficients for all three constructs measuring transgenerational intentions (succession planning: $r = .37$, $p \leq .001$; intentions for transgenerational control: $r = .63$, $p \leq .001$; family cohesion: $r = .43$, $p \leq .001$). Summarizing, these results add validity and credibility to the transgenerational intentions measures used in the study.

4.1.3. Goodness of fit of measures

After confirming reliability and validity of measures used in the study, I evaluated their global goodness of fit of the measures. As described in Chapter 3.4.5, the measures are assessed according to their absolute and incremental fit with the data. The SRMR values of all constructs lie both below the recommended threshold of .08 and the more conservative value of .06, indicating high absolute goodness of fit (MacKenzie et al., 2011). The CFI values of all constructs lie above the recommended threshold of .90, for four constructs also above the more conservative value of .95, indicating high incremental goodness of fit (MacKenzie et al., 2011). The goodness of fit results for measures which I used in the study, are displayed in the Table 15.

Table 15: Measurements fit indexes

	CFI	**SRMR**
Thresholds	>.90	<.08
Perceived intentions for transgenerational control	1.00	.00
Perceived succession planning	1.00	.00
Perceived family cohesion	1.00	.01
Perceived shared vision	1.00	.01
Organizational identification	.90	.05
Affective commitment	.94	.04

n=389

4.2. Measurement model results

Global goodness of fit of measurement model

After confirming the local and global goodness of fit of the measurements used in this study, I assessed the global fit of the measurement model underlying the hypothesized models. In the main hypothesized model I propose that the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment of nonfamily employees is mediated by their perception that all organizational members share the same vision and their organizational identification. As outlined in Chapter 3.4.2, a measurement model is specified in a way that the relationships between all constructs of a model are not constrained, i.e. all possible correlations between the constructs are measured. The measurement model results for the main hypothesized model provide goodness of fit indices within the recommended thresholds (χ^2 [460] = 768.22, p ≤ .001; SRMR =.05, TLI = .93, RMSEA =.04, CFI = .94). As outlined earlier, the chi-square test is known to be sensitive to sample size and may be significant even when the differences between the observed and the implied covariances are small (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hair, 2010). Hence, despite the significance of the chi-square test, I rely on other established indices of global fit and conclude a good global fit of the measurement model.

Table 16: Measurement model results

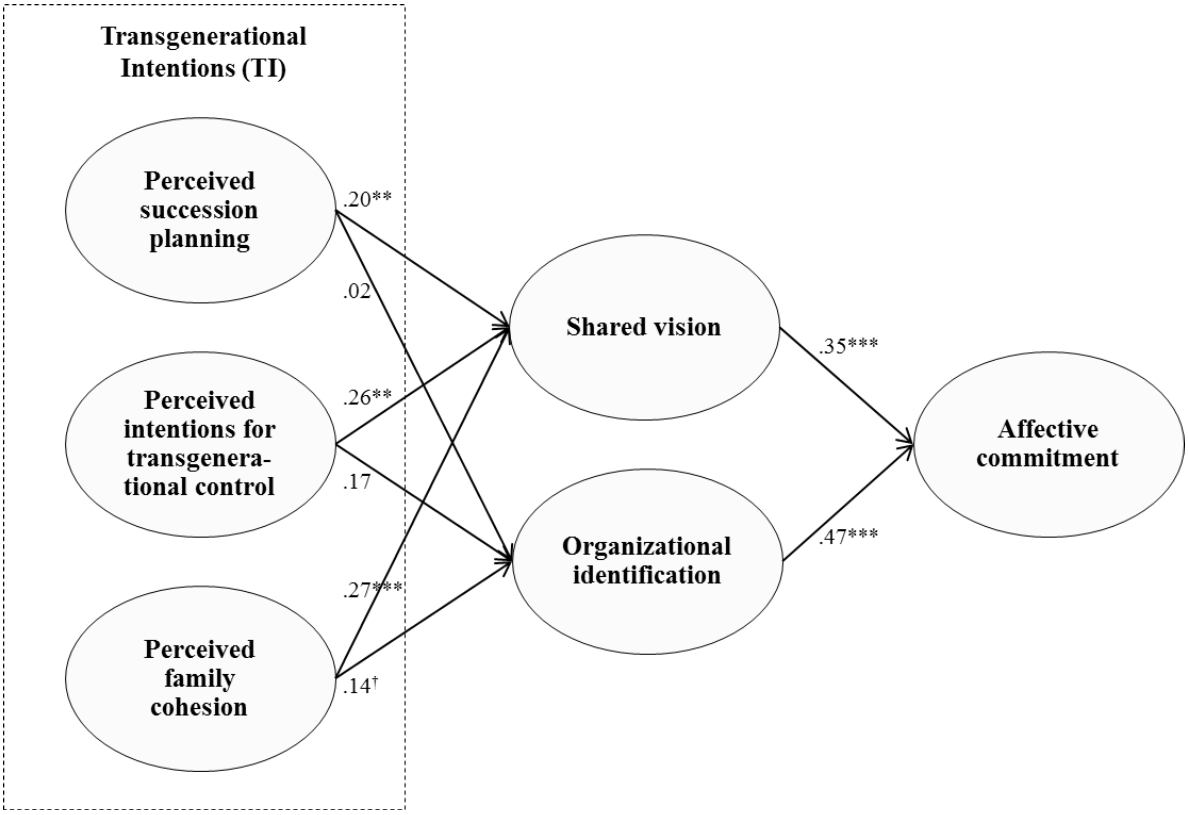
Model test	**Df**	χ^2	**CFI**	**TLI**	**SRMR**	**RMSEA**
Thresholds			>.90	>.90	<.08	<.08
Hypothesized model 1: Relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment mediated by perceived shared vision and organizational identification	460	768.22	.94	.93	.05	.04

n=389; χ^2 values significant at p≤.001

4.3. Structural model results

After confirming good fit of the measurement models underlying the theoretical models, the next step was testing the main hypothesized structural model, in which I suggest that the relationships between perceived transgenerational intentions (i.e. perceived succession planning, perceived intention for transgenerational control and perceived family cohesion) and affective commitment of nonfamily employees are mediated by perceived shared vision and organizational identification. The SEM results of the hypothesized model indicate good fit with the data (χ^2[495] = 865.77, p ≤ .001; SRMR = .06, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .93). As outlined above, despite the significant chi-square test, I conclude a good global fit of the model based on the generally accepted SEM indices.

Figure 4: Main model – path coefficients results



* p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001
Standardized coefficients are displayed. Control variables are not displayed

Assessment of hypothesized effects by evaluation of path coefficients

The hypothesized model represents a full mediation model, where no direct paths connect the independent and the dependent variables, i.e. perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment. I carried out the evaluation of the single hypotheses in a two-step approach by first looking at the path coefficients estimating the hypothesized relationships between variables and then conducting a comparison of model fit indices to alternative models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

First, I evaluate the first three hypotheses regarding *the effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on shared vision* (Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c). The corresponding coefficients of the paths from perceived succession planning ($\beta = .20$, $p \leq .01$), perceived intentions for transgenerational control ($\beta = .26$, $p \leq .01$) and perceived family cohesion ($\beta = .27$, $p \leq .001$) to perceived shared vision were positive and statistically significant. These results provide preliminary confirmation for the first three hypotheses stating that the three expressions of transgenerational intentions are positively related to employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision.

In the next step I evaluate the hypotheses with regard to the *indirect effects of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through shared vision*. For this purpose, I require an estimation of both the direct effects of perceived intentions for transgenerational control, perceived succession planning and perceived family cohesion on affective commitment, and the mediation of this relationship by shared vision (Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c). The positive univariate correlation between perceived succession planning and affective commitment ($r = .24$, $p \leq .001$, see Table 8) indicates a significant direct effect in absence of the mediator (consistent with Wang et al., 2005). Accordingly, the univariate correlations between perceived intentions for transgenerational control ($r = .23$, $p \leq .001$), perceived family cohesion ($r = .27$ $p \leq .001$) and affective commitment indicate significant direct effects in absence of the mediators.

Finally, I look at the path coefficients between the independent variables perceived transgenerational intentions, the proposed mediator shared vision and the dependent variable affective commitment to assess the mediation effect (Hayes, 2009). As shown before, all three paths between perceived transgenerational intentions and perceived shared vision had positive significant coefficients. Furthermore, the path coefficient from shared vision to affective commitment of nonfamily employees is positive and highly statistically significant ($\beta = .35$, $p \leq .001$). Summing up, these results provide preliminary support for significant indirect effects of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through their perception that all organizational members share the same vision, as suggested in Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c.

Second, I evaluate the hypotheses regarding *the effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on organizational identification* of nonfamily employees (Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c). The paths from perceived succession planning ($\beta = .02$, $p > .10$) and perceived intentions for transgenerational control ($\beta = .17$, $p > .10$) to organizational identification have positive, but not sufficiently significant coefficients, providing no support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b. The path form perceived family cohesion ($\beta = .14$, $p \leq .10$) to organizational identification have a positive, but only marginally significant coefficient, partly supporting the hypothesis 2c. Hence, these results do not provide sufficient support for the hypotheses 2a and 2b, stating that perceived succession planning and intention for transgenerational control are positively related to employees' organizational identification. The hypothesis 2c can be partly confirmed due to marginal significance of the corresponding path coefficient.

In the next step I evaluate the hypotheses with regard to the *indirect effects of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through organizational identification*. I have shown above, that there are positive univariate correlations between all three perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment of nonfamily employees, indicating significant direct effects in absence of the mediators. Further, I look at the path coefficients between the independent variables perceived transgenerational intentions, the proposed mediator organizational identification and the dependent variable affective commitment to assess the mediation effect (Hayes, 2009). The coefficient of the path from organizational identification to affective commitment of nonfamily employees is positive and highly statistically significant ($\beta = .47$, $p \leq .001$). However, as shown before, the paths between perceived intentions for transgenerational control, perceived succession planning and organizational identification were positive, but not statistically significant. The path from perceived family cohesion to organizational identification was positive and marginally significant. Summing up, these results provide no support for hypotheses 4a and 4b stating positive indirect effects of perceived succession planning and intention for transgenerational control on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through organizational identification. The hypothesis 4c with regard to positive indirect effect of perceived family cohesion can receives preliminary partly confirmation. The path diagram with the structural model results for the main hypothesized model is presented in Figure 4.

Evaluation of full mediation by comparison to alternative nested models

As mentioned above, in order to test the full mediation by perceived shared vision and organizational identification, I followed the approach which has been suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and applied in multiple studies (for example in Wang et al. 2005 and Zhang and Bartol 2010): I compared the hypothesized model (also called baseline model) to a series of alternative nested models. A model "is said to be nested within another model, M_2, when its set of freely estimated parameters is a subset of those estimated in M_1" (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988, p. 418). In this setting, a full (or complete) mediation is confirmed when a model with an additional direct path does not fit the data significantly better than a model without (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 2006). The comparison of model fit is based on the significance of the $\Delta\chi^2$ between the nested models (Hair, 2010). Furthermore, a full mediation implies that the direct effect of independent variable on the dependent variable loses its significance when the mediator is included (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Alternative model 1a represents the baseline model with an additional direct path from perceived succession planning to affective commitment ($\beta = -.01$, $p > .10$). In alternative models 1b and 1c, respective direct paths from perceived intentions for transgenerational control ($\beta = .04$, $p > .10$) and perceived family cohesion ($\beta = .10$, $p > .10$) to affective commitment were added to the baseline model. Alternative model 1d contained all three direct paths from perceived transgenerational intentions ($\beta_{SP} = -.04$, $p > .10$; $\beta_{ITC} = .02$, $p > .10$; $\beta_{FC} = .10$, $p > .10$) to affective commitment. According to their compositions, the baseline model is nested within the alternative models 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d.

The differences between chi-square values of the baseline model and all four alternative nested models were not significant. Thus, the more parsimonious baseline model provides the best data fit (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The statistically not significant coefficients of the direct paths between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment provide further evidence for full mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The results of the comparison between alternative models and the baseline model are presented in the Table 17.

Alternative models 1e and 1f are not nested within the baseline model. They are included in the model fit assessment in order to evaluate the effects of a modification of the construct order. In alternative model 1e I tested the influence of perceived shared vision and organizational identification on affective commitment which is mediated by perceived transgenerational intentions (i.e. control intention, succession planning and family cohesion). The model fit indices of model 1e demonstrate poor data fit ($\chi^2[488] = 1{,}339.98$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .11, TLI = .83, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .84), providing support for superior fit of hypothesized model. Furthermore, the coefficients of both paths from perceived succession planning ($\beta = .02$, $p > .10$) and perceived intentions for transgenerational control ($\beta = .29$, $p > .10$) to affective commitment are not significant, providing further support for superiority of the baseline model.

With the alternative model 1f I tested the influence of perceived transgenerational intentions on shared vision and organizational identification and mediation by affective commitment. The model fit indexes provide evidence for poorer data fit than the baseline model ($\chi^2[485] = 1{,}344.23$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .11, TLI = .82, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .84), confirming the superior fit of the hypothesized model. The results of the comparison between the baseline model and the alternative models are presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Main hypothesized model – summary of model fit indices

Model test	**d*f***	***χ²***	**Δd*f***	**Δ*χ²***	**CFI**	**TLI**	**SRMR**	**RMSEA**
Thresholds[1]					>.90	>.90	<.08	<.08
Hypothesized model 1[b]	495	865.77			.93	.92	.06	.04
Alternative model 1a (nested): Add. direct path SP → AC	494	865.71	1	.06	.93	.92	.06	.04
Alternative model 1b (nested): Add. direct path ITC → AC	494	865.51	1	.26	.93	.92	.06	.04
Alternative model 1c (nested): Add. direct path F C → AC	494	862.65	1	3.12	.93	.92	.06	.04
Alternative model 1d (nested): Add. direct paths SP → AC, ITC → AC, FC → AC	492	862.29	3	3.48	.93	.92	.06	.04
Alternative model 1e (not nested): Reversed order of constructs. OI and SV → AC fully mediated by SP, ITC and FC	488	1,339.98			.84	.83	.11	.07
Alternative model 1f (not nested): Reversed order of constructs: SP, ITC and FC → OI and SV, fully mediated by AC	485	1,344.23			.84	.82	.11	.07

n = 389; χ2 values for the measurement and structural models are significant at $p \leq .001$
* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$
[b] Baseline model
[1] Hair (2010)
$\Delta\chi^2$: Difference in χ^2 values between the baseline model and nested models
Δd*f*: Difference in the number of degrees of freedom between the baseline model and nested models
SP – perceived Succession Planning; ITC – perceived Intentions for Transgenerational Control; FC – perceived Family Cohesion; SV – perceived Shared Vision; OI – Organizational Identification; AC – Affective Commitment

Summing up the results of the full mediation assessment, the positive, significant correlation between independent and dependent variables, positive, significant path coefficients to and from the mediator shared vision along with the result of the comparison to a series of nested and altered models provide support for full mediation Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c: Perceived transgenerational intentions of nonfamily employees are positively related to their affective commitment via the perception that all organizational members share the same vision. Furthermore, the outcomes provide weak support for Hypothesis 4c: Organizational identification mediates the positive effect of perceived family cohesion on affective commitment. However, the results do not provide support for Hypotheses 4a and 4b: The corresponding path coefficients are not statistically significant and thus don’t confirm the mediation of the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment by organizational identification.

To sum up, the estimation results of the structural equation model provide support for Hypotheses 1a,b,c, 2a,b,c, 3a,b,c and 4c, but no support for Hypotheses 4a,b: Perceived transgenerational intentions in form of succession planning, control intentions and family cohesion are positively related to affective commitment of employees. This relationship is fully mediated by their perception that all organizational members share the same vision. With regard to mediation by organizational identification, it is only marginally significant for the relationship between perceived family cohesion and affective commitment. There is no empirical support for the mediation effect of organizational identification of the relationship between perceived succession planning and perceived intentions for transgenerational control and affective commitment of nonfamily employees. An overall summary of the hypotheses results is presented in Table 18. The implications of the results on the theoretical considerations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Effects of control variables

Control variables used in the present study affect the dependent variable affective commitment of nonfamily employees in several ways. Based on the results of the main hypothesized model, I found positive significant coefficients of individual controls age ($b = .21$, $p \leq .001$) and firm tenure ($b = .13$, 4$p \leq .01$), consistent with previous empirical work (an overview in Meyer, and Stanley et al. 2002). Gender ($b = -.04$, $p > .10$) is negatively, however not significantly linked to affective commitment. The same holds true for nonfamily employees' level of education ($b = -.07$, $p > .10$), which does not have a significant impact on affective commitment. The managerial position ($p = .00$, $p > .10$) also has only little impact on affective commitment. Regarding the controls referring to the organization, I find no significant influence on affective commitment by company size ($b = .06$, $p > .10$) or by company age ($b = .03$, $p > .10$).

Table 18: Summary of SEM results

Hypotheses		Result
1a	Perceived intention for transgenerational control is positively related to nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision.	Confirmed
1b	Perceived succession planning is positively related to nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision	Confirmed
1c	Perceived family cohesion is positively related to nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision.	Confirmed
2a	Perceived intention for transgenerational control is positively related to nonfamily employees' organizational identification.	Not confirmed
2b	Perceived succession planning is positively related to nonfamily employees' organizational identification.	Not confirmed
2c	Perceived family cohesion is positively related to nonfamily employees' organizational identification.	Partly confirmed
3a	Perceived intention for transgenerational control has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via perceived shared vision.	Confirmed, full mediation
3b	Perceived succession planning has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via perceived shared vision.	Confirmed, full mediation
3c	Perceived cohesion of the owner family has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via perceived shared vision.	Confirmed, full mediation
4a	Perceived intention for transgenerational control has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via organizational identification.	Not confirmed
4b	Perceived succession planning has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via organizational identification.	Not confirmed
4c	Perceived cohesion of the owner family has a positive indirect effect on employees' affective commitment via organizational identification.	Partly confirmed, full mediation

4.4. Robustness checks

The SEM results presented in Chapter 4.3 provide support for the Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c and partially 2c as well as 3a, 3b, 3c and partially 4c. At the same time they provide no support for Hypotheses 2a and 2b as well as 4a and 4b. I tested the robustness of these outcomes by addressing three potential methodological concerns. First, estimating mediation with SEM doesn't allow direct testing of the significance of the indirect effects. Second, as SEM tests all model effects simultaneously, it doesn't allow testing the separate effects in the same model. And third, results of reliability tests of the applied scales identified two scales with less satisfactory parameters, indicating necessity of testing the model with adjusted scales. I will address all three concerns in the following robustness checks.

4.4.1. Robustness check of mediation

In the first robustness check I performed an additional test of the indirect effects of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment as suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004). I performed a test of the significance of the indirect effects by applying a bias-corrected bootstrapping technique with 5,000 bootstrap-samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008)[5]. Table 19 shows the indirect effects with the corresponding standard errors and the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

The indirect effects of perceived succession planning on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through their perception that all organizational members share the same vision is significant ($p < .01$), with 70% of the total effect mediated. The indirect effect of perceived intention for transgenerational control on affective commitment through shared vision is significant ($p < .05$), with 42% of the total effect mediated. The indirect effect of perceived family cohesion on affective commitment through shared vision is significant ($p < .001$), with 32% of the total effect mediated. These three bootstrap results confirm the robustness of the SEM results for the hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c.

The indirect effects of perceived family cohesion on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through their organizational identification is significant ($p < .05$), with 22% of the total effect mediated. This result confirms the robustness of the SEM result for the hypotheses 4c. However, the indirect effects of perceived succession planning and intentions for transgenerational control on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through their organizational identification are not significant. Hence, the robustness of results for all mediation hypotheses is confirmed.

[5] As our data consist of observations clustered by company, this technique can be considered only an approximation. The application of this method on potentially nested data has been demonstrated in empirical studies, e.g. Breugst, Domurath, Patzelt, and Klaukien (2012).

Table 19: Indirect effects of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment via perceived shared vision and organizational identification

Indirect effects	**Bootstrap-indirect effect**	**SE**	**Lower limit 95% CI**	**Upper limit 95% CI**
Perceived succession planning → SV → AC	.06**	.02	.03	.10
Perceived intentions for transgenerational control → SV → AC	.07*	.03	.02	.13
Perceived family cohesion → SV → AC	.11***	.03	.06	.18
Perceived succession planning → OI → AC	.01	.02	-.02	.05
Perceived intentions for transgenerational control → OI → AC	.03	.03	-.03	.10
Perceived family cohesion → OI → AC	.08*	.04	.01	.15

n = 389; confidence intervals are bias-corrected based on 5,000 bootstrap samples
* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$
CI – Confidence Interval; SE – Standard Error; SV – perceived Shared Vision; OI – Organizational Identification; AC - Affective Commitment

4.4.2. Robustness check with disaggregated models

The structural equation model results for the main hypothesized model confirm the indirect effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment of nonfamily employees. However, they suggest that proposed mediators shared vision and organizational identification do not play an equally significant role for this effect. Due to varying outcomes for the mediating effects, I conduct a robustness check of the separate effects. For this purpose I divide the main model in two disaggregated models. The results of these models will be displayed in the present chapter.

Measurement model results

As I disaggregate the main model and look at the isolated mediation effects of perceived shared vision and organizational identification, in the *disaggregated model 2* I test the proposition that the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment of nonfamily employees is mediated solely by perceived shared vision (see Figure 5). The measurement model for the Model 2 resulted in both absolute and incremental goodness of fit indices within the recommended thresholds (χ^2 [294] = 459.62, $p \leq .001$; SRMR =.04, TLI = .96, RMSEA =.04, CFI = .97), indicating good fit of the data.

In the *disaggregated model 3* I suggest that the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment of nonfamily employees is mediated solely by organizational identification (see Figure 6). The measurement model results for the Model 3 (χ^2 [350] = 623.66, p≤ .001; SRMR =.05, TLI = .93, RMSEA =.05, CFI = .94) indicate good fit of the data. An overview of measurement models' goodness of fit results for both disaggregated models is displayed in Table 20.

Table 20: Overview measurement model results for disaggregated models

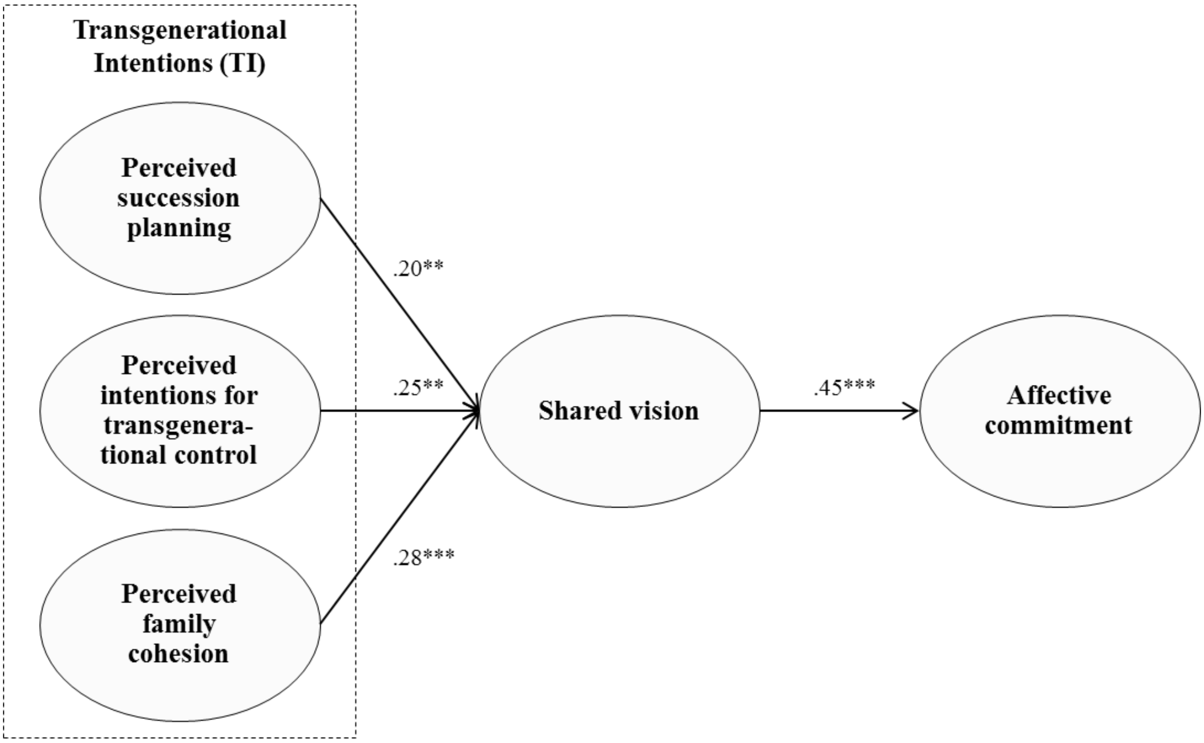
Model test	**D*f***	χ^2	**CFI**	**TLI**	**SRMR**	**RMSEA**
Thresholds			>.90	>.90	<.08	<.08
Disaggregated model 2: Relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment mediated by shared vision	294	459.62	.97	.96	.04	.04
Disaggregated model 3: Relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment mediated by organizational identification	350	623.66	.94	.93	.05	.05

n=389; χ^2 values significant at p≤.001

Structural model results for disaggregated model 2: Effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment mediated by perceived shared vision

After confirming good fit of measurement model, in the next step I tested the structural equation models for the disaggregated Model 2, in which I suggest that the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment of nonfamily employees is mediated solely by the perception that all organizational members share the same vision.

Figure 5: Disaggregated model 2: Mediation through shared vision



* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$
Standardized coefficients are displayed. Control variables are not displayed

The SEM results of the baseline model indicate good fit with the data (χ^2[322] = 537.04, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .05, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .95). Analogous to the main model, the model 2 represents a full mediation, where there are no direct paths from perceived transgenerational intentions to affective commitment. The coefficients of the paths from perceived succession planning ($\beta = .20$, $p \leq .01$), perceived intentions for transgenerational control ($\beta = .25$, $p \leq .01$) and perceived family cohesion ($\beta = .28$, $p \leq .001$) to perceived shared vision, and from perceived shared vision to affective commitment ($\beta = .45$, $p \leq .001$) are positive and statistically significant. These results provide further support for the positive effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision, as suggested in Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c. They also indicate a positive indirect effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on nonfamily employees' affective commitment through their shared vision perception. The path diagram with the results of the structural model is presented in Figure 5.

To test the full mediation by perceived shared vision I followed again the approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988): I compared the hypothesized model to a series of nested models. Alternative model 2a is the baseline model with an additional direct path from perceived succession planning to affective commitment ($\beta = .02$, $p > .10$). In alternative model 2b I added a direct path from perceived intentions for transgenerational control ($\beta = .12$, $p > .10$). The goodness of fit parameters of both nested models were within recommended thresholds. The differences between chi-square values of the baseline model and alternative models 2a and 2b were not significant. Applying the principle of model parsimony, the results indicate that the full mediation baseline model fits the data best (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The non-significant direct path coefficients support this conclusion. This result provides further support for Hypotheses 3a and 3b, suggesting full mediation of the relationship between both perceived succession planning and perceived intentions for transgenerational control and affective commitment by perceived shared vision.

In alternative model 2c I added a direct path from perceived family cohesion to affective commitment ($\beta = .16$, $p \leq .05$). The goodness of fit parameters of the third nested model was within recommended thresholds. The difference between chi-square values of the baseline model and Model 3 is significant at $p \leq .01$. Considering the significance of the direct path coefficient, this result indicates that a model where the relationship between perceived family cohesion and affective commitment is partially mediated by perceived shared vision fits the data better than a model with a full mediation. This result provides further support for Hypothesis 3c, while indicating partial mediation of the relationship between perceived family cohesion and affective commitment by perceived shared vision.

Alternative model 2d contains all three direct paths from perceived transgenerational intentions ($\beta_{SP} = -.04$, $p > .10$; $\beta_{ITC} = .07$, $p > .10$; $\beta_{FC} = .14$, $p \leq .10$) to affective commitment. The goodness of fit parameters of the forth nested model were within recommended thresholds. The difference between chi-square values of the baseline model and alternative model 2d is significant at $p \leq .01$, indicating a slightly better data fit than the baseline model. However, the coefficients of the direct paths between perceived transgenerational intention constructs and affective commitment in the Model 2d are not significant. Thus, the results provide support for a full mediation when all three direct paths are included in the model. Summarizing, I draw a conclusion that in the overall model, where the direct effects of perceived succession planning, intentions for transgenerational control and family cohesion are estimated simultaneously, shared vision fully mediates the effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment, confirming my Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c. The results of the comparison between nested models and the baseline model are presented in Table 21.

Table 21: Disaggregated model 2 – summary of model fit indices

Model test	d*f*	χ^2	Δd*f*	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Thresholds[1]					>.90	>.90	<.08	<.08
Hypothesized model 2[b]	322	537.04			.95	.95	.05	.04
Alternative model 2a (nested): Add. direct path SP → AC	321	536.93	1	.11	.95	.95	.05	.04
Alternative model 2b (nested): Add. direct path ITC → AC	321	534.78	1	2.26	.95	.95	.05	.04
Alternative model 2c (nested): Add. direct path FC → AC	321	529.67	1	7.37**	.95	.95	.05	.04
Alternative model 2d (nested): Add. direct paths SP → AC, ITC → AC, FC → AC	319	529.15	3	7.89**	.95	.95	.05	.04
Alternative model 2e (not nested): Reversed order of constructs. SV → AC fully mediated by SP, ITC and FC	320	554.01			.95	.94	.05	.04
Alternative model 3f (not nested): Reversed order of constructs: SP, ITC and FC → SV, fully mediated by AC	322	654.75			.93	.92	.08	.05

n = 389; χ2 values for the measurement and structural models are significant at $p \leq .001$
* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$
[b] Baseline model
[1] Hair (2010)
$\Delta\chi^2$: Difference in χ^2 values between the baseline model and nested models
Δd*f*: Difference in the number of degrees of freedom between the baseline model and nested models
SP – perceived Succession Planning; ITC – perceived Intentions for Transgenerational Control; FC – perceived Family Cohesion; SV – perceived Shared Vision; AC – Affective Commitment

Analogue to the testing procedure of the main hypothesized model, the alternative models 2e and 2f were not nested within the baseline model. They were included in the model fit assessment in order to evaluate the effects of altering the construct order. In alternative model 2e I tested the influence of perceived shared vision on affective commitment mediated by perceived transgenerational intentions. The model fits data well ($\chi^2[320] = 554.01$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .05, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .95), but poorer than the baseline model. The path coefficients from perceived succession planning to affective commitment ($\beta = .01$, $p > .10$) is not significant, the same holds true for the path coefficient from perceived intentions for transgenerational control to affective commitment ($\beta = .23$, $p > .10$). This result indicates a better fit of the hypothesized disaggregated model (baseline model).

In alternative model 2f I tested another reversed order of constructs, by assessing the influence of perceived transgenerational intentions on perceived shared vision as mediated by affective commitment. The model fit indices provide evidence for slightly poorer data fit than the baseline model (χ^2[322] = 654.75, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .08, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93), confirming superiority of the hypothesized baseline model, however indicating the possibility of mutual impact of the reversed variables perceived transgenerational intentions and shared vision. This result will be discussed in the discussion chapter 5. The results of the comparison between altered models and the hypothesized disaggregated model 2 (baseline model) are presented in Table 21.

To sum up, the estimation of the disaggregated model 2 confirms the positive effects of perceived intentions for transgenerational control, perceived succession planning and perceived family cohesion on the perception of the employees that all organizational members share the same vision. Furthermore, the results confirm the hypothesized positive effects of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment via perceived shared vision, supporting results of the main model and showing that they remain valid when the mediator organizational identification is excluded from the model.

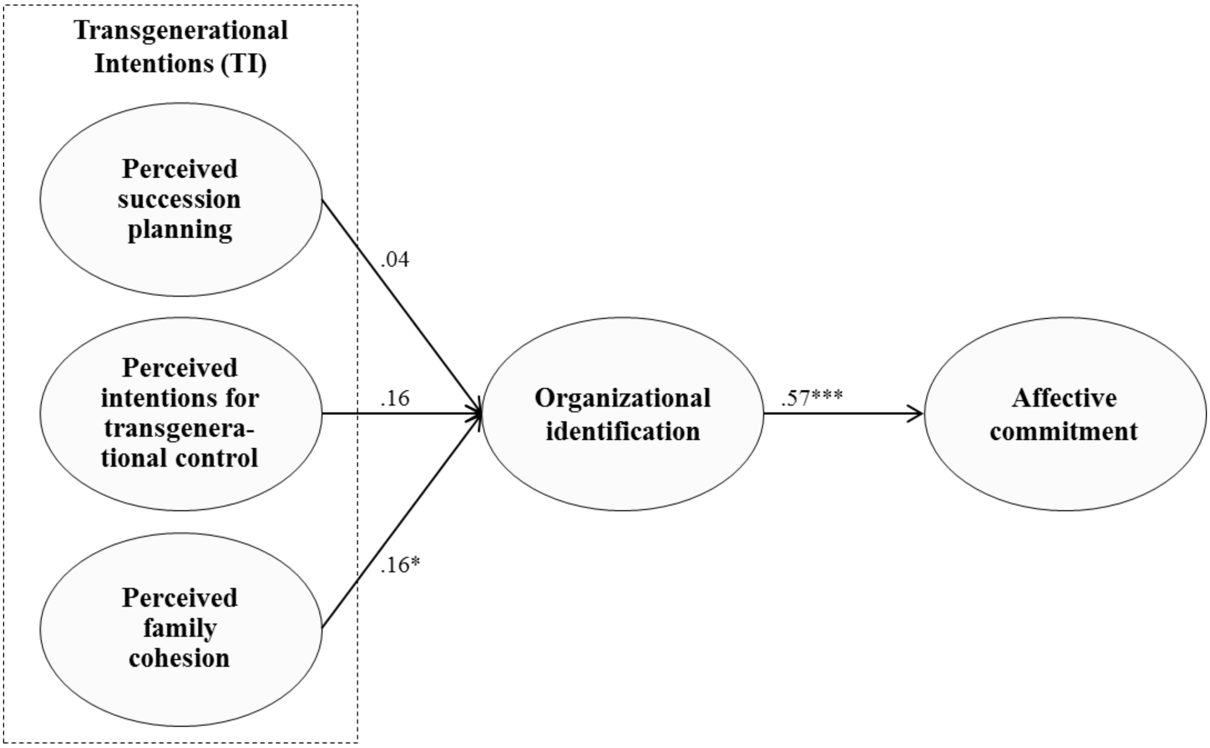
Structural model results for disaggregated model 3: Effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment mediated by organizational identification

After testing the main model where the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment is mediated by perceived shared vision and organizational identification, and after confirming the mediation effect of perceived shared vision in a separate model, I tested the SEM of the remaining disaggregated model (disaggregated model 3), in which the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment of nonfamily employees is mediated solely by organizational identification.

The SEM results of the baseline model indicate good fit with the data (χ^2[377] = 729.63, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .07, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .92). As in previously tested models, the hypothesized model presents a full mediation model without direct paths between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment. The coefficients of the paths from perceived family cohesion to organizational identification ($\beta = .16$, $p \leq .05$) and from organizational identification to affective commitment ($\beta = .57$, $p \leq .001$) are positive and statistically significant. This result provides support for Hypotheses 2c and 4c, supporting a positive relationship between perceived family cohesion and organizational identification as well as the effect of perceived family cohesion on affective commitment via organizational identification.

The coefficients of the paths from perceived succession planning (β = .04, p > .10) and perceived intentions for transgenerational control (β = .16, p > .10) to organizational identification are positive, but statistically not significant. These outcomes support the results of the main combined model and provide no evidence for Hypotheses 3b and 3c as well as 4a and 4b. There is no evidence for a full mediation of the relationship between perceived succession planning and intentions for transgenerational control and affective commitment by organizational identification. The path diagram with the results of the structural model is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Disaggregated model 3: Mediation through organizational identification



* p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001
Standardized coefficients are displayed. Control variables are not displayed

To complete the test of full mediation, I followed again the approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and compared the baseline model to a series of nested models. The results of the comparison of nested models against the baseline model are presented in the Table 22. Alternative model 3a contained the baseline model with an additional direct path from perceived succession planning to affective commitment (β = .14, p ≤ .05). The goodness of fit parameters of the nested model 3a were within recommended thresholds. The difference between chi-square values of baseline model and alternative model 3a was significant at $p \leq .05$. Thus, the more parsimonious baseline model representing full mediation doesn't fit data better (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Hence, the partly mediated model shows better fit. The coefficient of the direct path from perceived succession planning to affective commitment is positive and significant; however, analogues to the baseline model, the path coefficient from perceived succession planning to the proposed mediator organizational identification is not significant. Thus, the result confirms the positive relationship between perceived succession planning and affective commitment, but supports neither a partial nor a full mediation by organizational identification. Hence, the results of the baseline model 3 and alternative model 3a provide further support for a rejection of Hypothesis 4b which proposes the relationship between perceived succession planning and organizational commitment to be mediated by organizational identification and confirms the results of the main hypothesized model.

In alternative model 3b I added a direct path from perceived intentions for transgenerational control to affective commitment ($\beta = .23$, $p \leq .01$). The goodness of fit parameters of the nested model 3b were within recommended thresholds. The difference between chi-square values of the baseline model 3 and the alternative model 3b is significant at $p \leq .01$, suggesting a better data fit of partially mediated model. Also the coefficient of the direct path from perceived intentions for transgenerational control to affective commitment is positive and significant, suggesting partial mediation. However, analogues to the baseline model, the path coefficient between perceived intentions for transgenerational control and the proposed mediator organizational identification is not significant. Thus, the result confirms the positive relationship between perceived intentions for transgenerational control and affective commitment, but doesn't support a partial mediation by organizational identification. The results of the baseline model and alternative model 3b provide further support for a rejection of Hypothesis 4a which proposes the relationship between perceived intentions for transgenerational control and organizational commitment to be mediated by organizational identification and confirms the results of the main model.

In alternative model 3c I added respective direct paths from perceived family cohesion to affective commitment ($\beta = .22$, $p \leq .001$). The goodness of fit parameters of the nested model 3c were within recommended thresholds. The difference between chi-square values of the baseline model 3 and model 3c is significant at $p \leq .01$, suggesting a better data fit of partially mediated model. Both the direct path from perceived family cohesion to affective commitment and the paths to and from the mediator organizational commitment have positive and significant coefficients. The result provides support for Hypothesis 4c which proposes the relationship between perceived family cohesion and affective commitment of nonfamily employees to be mediated by organizational identification and indicates partial mediation.

Alternative model 3d contained all three direct paths from perceived transgenerational intentions to affective commitment ($\beta_{ITC} = .10$, $p > .10$; $\beta_{SP} = -.01$, $p > .10$; $\beta_{FC} = .18$, $p \leq .05$). The goodness of fit parameters of the nested model 3d were within recommended thresholds. The difference between chi-square values of the baseline model 3 and Model 3d is significant at $p \leq .01$, suggesting a better data fit of partially mediated model. While the direct paths between perceived succession planning and intentions for transgenerational control and affective commitment have statistically non-significant coefficient, the direct path between perceived family cohesion and affective commitment is marginally significant. These results confirm the conclusions drawn above: The models with direct path between perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment fit the data very well, while the paths to the proposed mediator have not significant or marginally significant coefficients. Hence, a partial mediation of the relationship between perceived family cohesion and affective commitment by organizational identification can be confirmed, while a mediation of the relationship between perceived succession planning and intentions for transgenerational control and affective commitment by organizational identification cannot be confirmed.

Alternative models 3e and 3f were not nested within the baseline model. They were included in order to evaluate the effects of a change in the construct order. In alternative model 3e I tested the influence of organizational identification on affective commitment mediated by perceived transgenerational intentions. The model results indicate acceptable data fit with global fit indices fulfilling the recommended thresholds ($\chi^2[375] = 767.82$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .07, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .92). In the model with reversed order of constructs organizational commitment and perceived transgenerational intentions, the paths from perceived succession planning and control intentions to affective commitment are not significant, indicating no superiority of the alternated model compared to the hypothesized model.

In alternative model 3f I tested the influence of perceived transgenerational intentions on organizational identification when mediated by affective commitment. The model results indicate acceptable data fir ($\chi^2[377] = 742.46$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .06, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .92). However, the path coefficients between perceived succession planning and control intentions and affective commitment are not significant, indicating no superiority of the alternated model compared to the hypothesized model. These outcomes additionally confirm good data fit of the hypothesized variables order. The results of the model comparison for the disaggregated model 3 are presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Disaggregated model 3 – summary of model fit indices

Model test	**d*f***	χ^2	**Δd*f***	$\Delta\chi^2$	**CFI**	**TLI**	**SRMR**	**RMSEA**
Thresholds					>.90	>.90	<.08	<.08
Hypothesized model 3[b]	377	729.63			.92	.92	.07	.05
Alternative model 3a (nested): Add. direct path SP → AC	376	723.35	1	6.28*	.92	.92	.06	.05
Alternative model 3b (nested): Add. direct path ITC → AC	376	717.28	1	12.35***	.93	.92	.06	.05
Alternative model 3c (nested): Add. direct path FC → AC	376	711.93	1	17.70***	.93	.92	.06	.05
Alternative model 3d (nested): Add. direct paths SP→ AC, ITC→ AC, FC→ AC	374	709.53	3	20.10***	.93	.92	.06	.05
Alternative model 3e (not nested): Reversed order of constructs. OI → AC fully mediated by SP, ITC and FC	375	767.82			.92	.91	.07	.05
Model 3f (not nested): Reversed order of constructs: SP, ITC and FC → OI, fully mediated by AC	377	742.46			.92	.91	.06	.05

n = 389; χ2 values for the measurement and structural models are significant at $p \leq .001$
* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$
[b] Baseline model
[1] Hair (2010)
$\Delta\chi^2$: Difference in χ^2 values between the baseline model and nested models
Δd*f*: Difference in the number of degrees of freedom between the baseline model and nested models
SP – perceived Succession Planning; ITC – perceived Intentions for Transgenerational Control; FC – perceived Family Cohesion; OI – Organizational Identification; AC – Affective Commitment

4.4.3. Robustness check with adjusted scale versions

After confirming the robustness of mediation results, I evaluated the robustness of the models with alternated versions of selected scales. The reliability examination results of measures used in the study which were presented in chapter 4.1.1 have proved good overall reliability of all applied scales. However, the reliability of a few single items measuring affective commitment of nonfamily employees and perceived family cohesion were below the required threshold. Although I could explain these deviations based on specific items content, as a further robustness check I assess the stability of the model results using adjusted scales for affective commitment and perceived family cohesion.

Adjusted scale version for affective commitment

I began with testing of hypothesized models with an eight-item version of the affective commitment scale, initially developed by Allen & Meyer (1990) and applied in numerous studies (for example in Breugst et al. (2012) and Shepherd et al. (2011)). The additional items were "I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it" (measured with Likert scale) and "I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one" (measured with reversed Likert scale), as displayed in Table 5. The Cronbach's alpha of the eight item construct was .72, indicating good reliability of the measurement (Hair, 2010).

The SEM results of the robustness check of the main hypothesized model 1 with the alternated eight-items measurement of affective commitment indicate good fit with the data (χ^2[597] = 1105.12, p $\leq$ .001; SRMR = .06, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .91). The coefficients of the paths between perceived transgenerational intentions, the mediator perceived shared vision and the adjusted outcome variable affective commitment remain positive and significant. Also the path between perceived family cohesion and the mediator organizational identification has a positive, statistically significant coefficient, while the paths between perceived succession planning and intentions for transgenerational control and the moderator organizational identification are not significant. These outcomes support the robustness of the initial results. The outcomes of robustness check models are displayed in Table 23.

Also the SEM results of disaggregated model 2 containing the eight-item measurement of affective commitment suggest good data fit (χ^2[406] = 719.66, p $\leq$ .001; SRMR = .05, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .94). The coefficients of the paths between latent variables remain positive and significant, confirming the initial results. The SEM results of disaggregated model 3 containing the eight-item measurement of affective commitment also indicate acceptable fit with the data (χ^2[467] = 952.80, p $\leq$ .001; SRMR = .07, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .90). The coefficients of the paths between both perceived succession planning and intentions for transgenerational control and organizational identification are positive, but not statistically significant, while the path between perceived family cohesion and organizational identification has a positive, significant coefficient. Thus, the model outcomes confirm the results of the initial model. The outcomes of the robustness check of the main and disaggregated models with the eight-item measurement of affective commitment are displayed in the Table 23.

In the next step, I tested the robustness of model results with a four-item version of the affective commitment scale used in the study, which I obtained by adapting the scale according to the reliability evaluation, i.e. excluding item 5 due to its low loading (.36) (Hair, 2010, consistent with Kuvaas, 2006). The Cronbach's alpha of the four-item construct is .71, indicating good reliability of the measurement (Hair, 2010). The SEM results of the main hypothesized model 1 with the four-item measurement of affective commitment indicate good fit with the data ($\chi^2[463] = 809.39$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .06, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .93). The coefficients of the paths between latent variables are consistent with the results of the hypothesized models, supporting robustness of the results. The SEM results of disaggregated models 2 and 3 with the four-item measurement of affective commitment also indicate good fit with the data (see Table 23). The coefficients of the paths between latent variables are consistent with the results of the hypothesized models, supporting robustness of the results.

Also the SEM results of disaggregated model 2 containing the four-item measurement of affective commitment suggest good data fit ($\chi^2[296] = 497.51$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .05, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .96). The coefficients of the paths between latent variables remain positive and significant, confirming the initial results. The SEM results of disaggregated model 3 containing the four-item measurement of affective commitment also indicate acceptable fit with the data ($\chi^2[349] = 679.81$, $p \leq .001$; SRMR = .07, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93). The coefficients of the paths between both perceived succession planning and intentions for transgenerational control and organizational identification are positive, but not statistically significant, while the path between perceived family cohesion and organizational identification has a positive, significant coefficient ($p \leq .05$). Thus, the model outcomes with the four-item measurement of affective commitment confirm the results of the initial model. The robustness check outcomes with the four-item scale are displayed in the Table 23.

Adjusted scale version for family cohesion

Finally, I tested the hypothesized and disaggregated models with an adjusted seven-item version of the family cohesion scale used in the study, which I obtained by excluding item 7 due to its low loading (.34) (Hair, 2010). The Cronbach's alpha of the seven-item construct is .93, indicating good reliability of the measurement (Hair, 2010). The SEM results of the main hypothesized model with the seven-item measurement of perceived family cohesion indicate good data fit (χ^2[463] = 818.46, p $\leq$ .001; SRMR = .06, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .93). The coefficients of the paths between latent variables are consistent with the initial results, supporting robustness of the model. The SEM results of disaggregated models 2 and 3 with the seven-item measurement of perceived family cohesion also indicate good fit with the data (see Table 23). The coefficients of the paths between latent variables are consistent with the results of the hypothesized models, supporting robustness of the results. The results of the robustness check with the seven-item measurement of family cohesion are displayed in Table 23. Summarizing, I confirmed robustness of the results supporting Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 3a, 3b, 3c, as well as 2c and 4c, and rejecting Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 4a, 4b.

Table 23: Results of robustness check of hypothesized models with adjusted measures of affective commitment and family cohesion

	d*f*	χ^2	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA	Path coefficients							
Thresholds			>.90	>.90	<.08	<.08	SP→SV	ITC→SV	FC→SV	SP→OI	ITC→OI	FC→OI	SV→AC	OI→AC
Main model 1 with initial scales	495	869.98	.93	.92	.06	.04	.20**	.26**	.27**	.02	.17	.14†	.35***	.47***
Model 2 with initial scales	322	541.42	.95	.95	.05	.04	.20**	.25**	.28***				.45***	
Model 3 with initial scales	377	733.44	.92	.92	.07	.05				.04	.16	.16*		.57***
Main model 1 with 8 item AC scale	597	1109.77	.91	.90	.06	.05	.20**	.26**	.27**	.02	.17	.14†	.38***	.43***
Model 2 with 8 item AC scale	406	724.69	.94	.93	.05	.05	.20**	.25**	.28***				.48***	
Model 3 with 8 item AC scale	467	956.91	.90	.89	.07	.05				.04	.16	.17*		.56***
Main model 1 with 4 item AC scale	463	813.46	.93	.93	.06	.04	.20**	.26**	.27**	.02	.17	.14†	.34***	.48***
Model 2 with 4 item AC scale	296	501.69	.96	.95	.05	.04	.20**	.25**	.28***				.45***	
Model 3 with 4 item AC scale	349	683.41	.93	.92	.07	.05				.04	.16	.17*		.58***
Main model 1 with 7 item FC scale	463	822.47	.93	.93	.06	.05	.20**	.26**	.27**	.02	.17	.14†	.35***	.47***
Model 2 with 7 item FC scale	296	499.62	.96	.95	.05	.04	.20**	.25**	.28***				.45***	
Model 3 with 7 item FC scale	349	691.48	.93	.92	.07	.05				.04	.16	.16*		.57***

n = 389; χ2 values are significant at p ≤.001
* p < .05; ** p < .01; ***p < .001
SP – perceived Succession Planning; ITC – perceived Intentions for Transgenerational Control; FC – perceived Family Cohesion; SV – perceived Shared Vision; OI – Organizational Identification; AC – Affective Commitment

5. Discussion and conclusion

The goal of my study was to examine how the perceived transgenerational intentions of the leading family, i.e. their intention for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion, impact the affective commitment of nonfamily employees. For this purpose and based on theoretical considerations, I proposed two mechanisms which explain how the perceptions of transgenerational intentions impact employees' commitment: through their perception that all organizational members share the same vision on the one hand, and their identification with the organization on the other.

The data collected from 389 nonfamily employees of family owned and managed firms in Germany confirmed my hypotheses that perceived intention for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion have a positive impact on employees' impression of an overall shared vision – through which these perceived transgenerational intentions influence indirectly the affective commitment of nonfamily employees. However, the data did not confirm the hypotheses that perceived intention for transgenerational control and succession planning have a positive impact on organizational identification of employees. Meanwhile, the effect of perceived family cohesion on organizational identification could be partly confirmed, through which the perceived family cohesion also influences indirectly the affective commitment of nonfamily employees. My findings were consistent across models containing both mediation mechanisms as well as those containing isolated effects of the mediators.

5.1. Theoretical implications

In this chapter I discuss the results of my study with regard to their theoretical implications for research on family businesses, organizational commitment, vision and identification.

5.1.1. Implications for family firm research

The results of the present study provide several important contributions to the family business research. In the present chapter, first, I discuss the contribution of the study to the individual nonfamily employee perspective research and the familiness research in family businesses. Further, the significant impacts of the three aspects of transgenerational intentions on employees' affective commitment through perceived shared vision are discussed. Finally, I discuss the possible explanations of the nonsignificant results for the effect of perceived control intentions and perceived succession planning on organizational identification of employees, at the same time explaining the significance of the impact of perceived family cohesion.

First, I reply to Barnett and Kellermanns (2006)'s and Memili and Barnett (2008)'s calls for research with regard to individual perspective of nonfamily employees and the impact of family firm-specific attributes on employees' attitudes, behaviors and attachment. I also contribute to research on attractiveness of family firms on the labor market, adding on the insights of the study by Hauswald et al. (2015). First, my study provides an insight about the positive role of transgenerational intentions for employees' commitment to the family firm. Despite the potential downsides for employees which are linked to the involvement of a family in a firm, such as limited access to executive positions (Lubatkin et al., 2005; Schulze et al., 2003) and uncompetitive payments (Chrisman et al., 2014), employees develop a strong sense of commitment towards a family firm when they sense a pronounced intent of family members to maintain the family firm under their control and management as well as a cohesive relationship between them. The results of the present study indicate that salient, family oriented goal settings do not create a gap between family and nonfamily members, but contributes to a common vision within the firm, by that making the goals serve not only family interests, but interests of members of the company.

With the results I also contribute to the familiness research (Chua et al., 1999a; Zellweger, Eddleston et al., 2010) by providing theoretical explanation and empirical evidence for the transgenerational familiness aspects to be a substantial factor for employees' attachment to the company. By this, I refer to the call for research by Chrisman, Chua, and Steier (2005) claiming a need for understanding various facets of familiness including the transgenerational intentions, and how the familiness contributes to the success of family firms. I suggest two mechanisms of how transgenerational intentions positively affect nonfamily employees' commitment – which is considered one of the most crucial assets of family firms (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). First, my research results show that when nonfamily employees perceive intentions for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion, they perceive higher levels of vision shared by all organizational members. This result indicates that transgenerational intentions enable employees to perceive a clear joint outlook into the company's future and enable evolvement of a common organizational cognition among them. Second, my results show that when employees sense high levels of family cohesion, their levels of identification with the family firm are higher. This result indicates that a lack of family cohesion can represent a threat to perceived positive family identity due to signaling of disunity and lack of bonding between family members, and hence, endangering the long-term family character of the firm. This indication strengthens the conclusion that transgenerational aspects of familiness are important for nonfamily employees as they reduce the perceived threat of a loss of family-related firm identity and provide certainty about stability of family involvement in the firm. Furthermore, my study results provide evidence that both an increase of perceived shared vision and of organizational identification are associated with higher levels of affective organizational commitment, thus confirming the significance of perceived transgenerational intentions for commitment of nonfamily employees –an outcome which is critical for success of family firms (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002; Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum et al., 2008).

Further, the results of my study indicate that the three transgenerational intentions aspects – employees' perceptions of family control intentions, succession planning and cohesion – have similar effects on their perception of all organizational members sharing the same vision (with respective path coefficients of .26 ($p \leq .01$), .20 ($p \leq .05$) and .27 ($p \leq .001$)). With regard to *perceived intention for family control*, this result indicates that disadvantageous attributes such as strong altruistic behavior of family leaders towards family members which have been associated with the family control (Schulze et al., 2001), do not dominate nonfamily employees' perceptions. Instead, clarity of company purpose, trust into the long-term goals and reduced uncertainties about change of family supervision provided by the intentions to maintain family control, have positive impact on the perception of a shared vision. The significant indirect impact of perceived control intentions on affective commitment through the perceived shared vision (.07, $p \leq .05$) confirms the relevance of family control intentions and their positive role for holding the nonfamily employees in the family firm.

The results of the study with regard to *perceived succession planning* also implicate interesting conclusions. The allocation of top-management positions to descendants of the owner-manager family has been mainly associated with disadvantageous attributes related to nonfamily employees, such as unfair human resources practice and preferential treatment of family members (Chua et al., 2003b; Schulze et al., 2001). At the same time, positive characteristics of the company, such as knowledge and network accumulation and transfer as well as stewardship behavior can also be associated with internal succession (Boyd, Royer, Pei, & Zhang, 2015; Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2001; Miller, Le Breton-Miller, & Scholnick, 2008). The results of the study resolve inconsistency and provide evidence that employees perceive pronounced intentions for family-internal succession as a vision-creating signal, displaying purposeful, target-oriented and uncertainty reducing planning behavior. This outcome confirms succession planning activities being crucial for the sustainability of the firm not only because of its contribution to an effective succession (Sharma et al., 2003; Steier, 2001b; Verbeke & Kano, 2012), but also with regard to the future outlook and shared vision perceptions of nonfamily employees. The significant indirect effect of perceived succession planning on affective commitment through perceived shared vision (.06, $p \leq .01$) further confirms the positive impact of succession planning on employees – and stresses the threats associated with a lack of clear expression and communication of the succession activities towards nonfamily employees. Hence, both control and management continuities seem to be perceived as positive, desirable attributes in the creation of a common vision and employees' commitment.

Regarding the third examined element of transgenerational intentions – *perceived family cohesion* – the results of my study also provide evidence for its strong positive effect on the shared vision perception of employees (coefficient .27, $p \leq .001$). Besides, perceived family cohesion has a highly significant indirect effect on affective commitment (.11, $p \leq .001$). This outcome implicates that along with communication of family control continuity and management succession intentions, particularly the disharmony between family members and visible dysfunctional conflicts between them harm the creation of the common vision and, with it, employees' commitment. An incohesive family cannot persuasively convey confidence about the future of the company which is required to positively affect organizational cognition and create a perception of a shared vision for nonfamily employees. Moreover, another implication of the positive effect of perceived cohesion is the importance of family members' behavior towards each for nonfamily employees' commitment and with it, for the overall success of the family firm. Family members play a central role within family firms and their actions are perceived as representative for the company (Donnelley, 1988). My results indicate that the owning family's cohesiveness might serve as a role model for employees, indicating commonalities between family members and becoming reflected in the employees' perception that all organizational members of the company share the same vision.

Further, my data provide unexpected results with regard to the effect *of perceived transgenerational intentions on the organizational identification of employees*. Contrary to the propositions, employees' perceptions of family members' transgenerational control intentions and succession planning did not have significant impact on their identification with the company. Also the moderation bootstrapping results confirm an insignificant indirect effect on affective commitment through organizational identification. There might be various reasons for this outcome. A reason for the lack of an effect of perceived control intentions can be that they do not promote self-enhancement of employees – one of the central motivations for organizational identification based on social identity theory (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008). It is possible that other company attributes are more relevant for the self-enhancement motive, such as company brand (Kärreman & Rylander, 2008) or social responsibility activities (Brickson, 2007; Dyer & Whetten, 2006; Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum et al., 2008; Zellweger, Eddleston et al., 2010). A reason for the lack of a significant effect of perceived succession planning might be the personification motive. As tenures of family leaders in family firms are particular long (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2006; Tsai, Hung, Kuo, & Kuo, 2006), it is possible that employees will personify the identity of the firm with the incumbent CEO and not with the successor. Hence, the perception of succession planning might take an effect against the personification with the incumbent. Moreover, the uncertainty reduction aspect might play a particular role in the relationship between perceived transgenerational intentions (in form of control intent and succession planning) and organizational identification (Hogg & Terry, 2000). It is possible that the effect of the perceived intention for keeping the control and leadership in family's hand on identification of employees unfolds only under particular company uncertainty promoting company internal or external conditions of hazard or hostility, such as a threat of a hostile take-over (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Hogg, 2001).

Another aspect which might explain the nonsignificant effect of perceived transgenerational control intentions and succession planning on employees' organizational identification is the employees' perceptions of fairness within the firm. The choice of transferring the company control and leadership to a family successor can be perceived as representative for the company's human resource (HR) management. The perceptions of HR fairness have been proposed to be crucial for employees' attitudes and behaviors in family firms (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). Violation of employees' sense of equity and fairness can lead to their withdrawal from the organization (Ensley et al., 2007). Hence, it is possible that specifically for employees who had ambitious career aspirations or consider other, non-family candidates more suitable for the executive position, intra-familial succession planning might signal HR practices unfairness and, hence, have a negative impact on their identification with the firm, leading to an overall insignificant effect. In contrast to identification, possible association of perceived transgenerational intentions – expressed by control intent and succession planning –

with unfairness does not seem to impact the positive effect on employees' perception of a shared vision in the organization.

A further interesting result of the study is that – unlike perceived control intentions and succession planning – the data partially confirmed the hypothesis about the positive effect of *perceived family cohesion on organizational identification* of employees. Particularly in the disaggregated model in which I tested the isolated effect of transgenerational perceptions on organizational identification, the path coefficient from perceived family cohesion to organizational identification of employees was positive and statistically significant (.16, $p \leq .05$). Also the bootstrapping outcomes for the indirect effect of perceived cohesion on affective commitment through organizational identification were significant at $p \leq .05$ (coefficient of .08). This result provides evidence for a difference between intentions for transgenerational control and succession planning on the one hand and family cohesion on the other. Family' intentions for transgenerational control and succession planning activities are process-related aspects of transgenerational intentions with a direct relation to the future of the company. On the contrary, family cohesion is not related to the process of handing-over company control and management, and has only an indirect relation to the company future. The fundamental difference between the natures of the three examined aspects of transgenerational intentions is particularly visible with regard to their impact on organizational identification of employees: While the results of my study do not confirm the effect of processual aspects (perceived control intentions and succession planning) on organizational identification, they confirm a positive, significant relationship between perceived family cohesion and organizational identification, as well the significant indirect effect of perceived cohesion on employees' affective commitment. This result indicates on the one hand that cohesive family relationships and the consequential low level of conflict signal resilience, harmony and mutual understanding between family members and enable employees trust the present and future family (Björnberg & Nicholson, 2012). On the other hand, the result indicates that with high levels of perceived cohesion between family members, employees' do not necessarily feel excluded or not belonging to the inner circle of the company which might be limited to the family members only (Stamper & Masterson, 2002; Zahra, 2012) – but on the opposite, identify themselves stronger with the company and feel committed and belonging. With this implication I also add to the family business research on conflicts (Davis & Harveston, 2001b; Ensley & Pearson, 2005) by showing that the perception of low levels of family cohesion which is associated with higher level of visible conflicts, will have not only have organizational outcomes, but will also affects individual attitudes of employees who are not directly involved in the conflicts.

Summarizing, the present study makes contributions to family business research with regard to the interrelation between family firm-specific attributes related to firms' transgenerational orientation and nonfamily employees' affective commitment to the firm.

5.1.2. Implications for commitment research

Besides implications for the family business research, the present study makes several contributions to the commitment research both in family firms and other organizational context. In the present chapter I first discuss the results with regard to the effects of perceived transgenerational intentions, stressing the importance of the cognitive mechanism of a shared vision creation. Further, I discuss the contribution of my study to the commitment research with regard to change, emphasizing the importance of communication with regard to future events for a perceived uncertainty reduction. Thereafter, the results with regard to the importance of vision assimilation for affective commitment are discussed. Finally, I discuss the central role of cohesion as well as the link between organizational identification and affective commitment.

First, the results of the empirical study support the proposed relationships between *perceived transgenerational intentions and affective commitment*. Family firms are often characterized by extraordinary high levels of commitment of their employees (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996, Vallejo, 2009b, see chapter 2.2.3). So far, affective commitment has been mainly associated with antecedents related to personal characteristics of individuals and with their instant work experience such as leadership and organizational support (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). These relationships are largely based on stewardship (Davis et al., 2010) and exchange theories (Meyer et al., 2006), linking the emotional attachment of employees to the positive attributes and behaviors of the employer towards them. The basis of these relationship is often suggested to be the display of the managers' own commitment to the organization (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002). The present study expands the commitment evolvement literature by providing evidence that perceptions of transgenerational company goals – which are not primarily directed towards employees, but have a distinguishable, long-term oriented and uncertainty-reducing character – have a positive impact on the affective commitment of employees through a cognitive path by enabling a shared vision creation. That is, the demonstration of transgenerational intentions of the leading family seems to be a strong sign of their own commitment to the family firm, thus, it allows nonfamily employees to rely on the family-firm relationship and creates their positive emotional attachment towards the firm.

Second, my study results contribute to the *commitment research with regard to change* – hence, referring to the call for research by Meyer, and Stanley et al. (2002). Earlier studies have shown that when information about a meaningful future event – which can potentially lead to major changes in the company – is withheld from employees, it creates a demand for alternative sources of uncertainty reduction. This demand is often covered by rumors which, however, are not effective for minimizing uncertainty. Thus, the perceived uncertainty leads to lower levels of trust, reduced commitment and higher turnover intentions (Schweiger & Denisi, 1991). With my research we show that in family firms, disregarding of the proximity of the succession event, commitment of the employees can be enhanced by reduction of uncertainty with regard to the family control and management continuity through communication of transgenerational intentions of family members. Further, I provide empirical evidence for the proposition by Klein, Molloy, and Brinsfield (2012) that its employees' subjective, individually perceived attributes of the firm which contribute to the feeling of trust and are central determinants of their commitment to the company. Hence, I show that nonfamily employees' commitment largely depends on their perceived certainty that family members have the intention and the necessary cohesiveness to maintain the company under their "wings".

Further, I provide empirical evidence for the research by Dvir et al. (2004) and Cole et al. (2006) who suggest a connection between perceived clarity and assimilation of vision and affective commitment of employees. With the confirmation of the effect of *perceived shared vision on affective commitment*, my research stresses the importance of the employees' perception perspective – as I show that the perception of the shared vision is the essential determinant of affective commitment. Interestingly, the data provide evidence for the relationship of perceived family cohesion and affective commitment being only partially mediated by perceived shared vision. That is, there is a direct effect in presence of the mediator: In the disaggregated model which tests the mediation by shared vision only, the nested model with a direct path from perceived family cohesion to affective commitment shows significance of the effect: .16, $p \leq .5$. This result one more time stresses the special nature of family cohesion being a central aspect of transgenerational intentions, while being not directly related to the succession process or company future, but rather to behavioral, fundamental attributes of family relationship standing for family members' commonness, closeness, and the wish to stick together (Zahra, 2012). Thus, the empirical evidence for the significant direct effect of perceived cohesion on affective commitment in presence of perceived shared vision indicates a particular importance of family cohesion perceptions within family firms for the affective commitment of employees – and indicates the magnitude of the destructive effect of conflicts between family members on commitment of employees.

Moreover, my data provide further confirmation for a strong link *between organizational identification and affective commitment* (.47 with $p \leq .001$ in the main model). With these results I contribute to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) and Lam and Liu (2014) research by providing a theoretical model and empirical confirmation for understanding commitment from the identity point of view. I also respond to Ashforth, and Harrison et al. (2008)'s call for research and build a connection between identification and commitment research literature. As opposed to the social exchange perspective that associates affective commitment of employees with leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support (Lam & Liu, 2014; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000), social identity theory is particularly helpful in explaining the attachment of employees to the organization based on intrinsic self-determined motives such as self-enhancement and pride (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), as well as distinction and self-expression (Dutton et al., 1994; Lam & Liu, 2014). This means that when the personal identity of employees and the identity of the company overlap, the emotional attachment of employees to the company increases.

Additionally, I provide evidence that out of the three expressions of transgenerational intentions, it is the *perceived cohesion between family members* which impacts employees' affective commitment additionally through their organizational identification (bootstrapping results in an indirect effect coefficient of .08, $p \leq .05$). This result provides further support for the extraordinary role of family cohesion for family firms. Cohesion is an attribute of a family which is generally considered to be one of the crucial characteristics for family resilience, sustainability and longevity (Björnberg & Nicholson, 2007). As the identity of the leading family and that of the family firm overlap (Dyer & Whetten, 2006; Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013), the cohesiveness of this family seems to enhance the attractiveness of the firm identity for employees who do not belong to the family. Furthermore, the lack of evidence for the effect of perceived control intentions and succession planning on employees' identification, but the presence of a significant effect of the perceived family cohesion implies a considerable difference in the mechanisms between the process-related aspects of transgenerational intentions and formation of organizational identification. The identification of nonfamily employees seems to be less linked to the processual, directly future related transgenerational intentions aspects, and more linked to the characteristics and behaviors of the leading family. This is an important implication for understanding the formation of emotional attachment of nonfamily employees to family firms.

5.1.3. Implications for organizational vision research

In the present chapter I discuss the results of the study and their implications for the organizational vision research. First, I discuss the contributions of the study to the research of antecedents of shared vision in organizations, in particular with regard to management goals and major company events. Further, I discuss the importance of stable and uncertainty-reducing boundary conditions for the creation of a shared vision. Finally, I point out implications for the leadership literature with regard to organizational vision.

The results of the present study confirm the three full mediation hypotheses which state that perceptions of all organizational members sharing the same vision mediate the positive relationship between perceived elements of transgenerational intentions – intentions for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesions – and affective commitment of nonfamily employees. The evolvement of shared vision has been associated with shared mental models in the organization (Pearce & Ensley, 2004), mainly affected by team dynamics (Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994; Mohammed, Ferzandi, & Hamilton, 2010) and mental models of company leaders with regard to the organizational goals (Strange & Mumford, 2002, 2005). With the results of my study I contribute to the research of Pearce and Ensley (2004) that suggests that management goals and organizational shared vision are related, however proposing that there is a "distinction between a single leader communicating his or her vision to a team and the shared cognitive process of the team mutually developing and creating the team's vision collectively" (p. 261). With my study I specify this relationship by showing that the perception of a shared vision among employees can be built effectively with goals that contribute to a reduction of uncertainty about company future – particularly with regard to major events such as transfer of company control or management. Further, Cannon and Edmondson (2001) suggest that a clear direction contributes to the shared beliefs about failure within organizations. The result of my study adds on to the research on antecedents of shared vision, suggesting that the perception of company leaders' intentions directed towards long-term continuation of the current control and management practices contributes positively to the perceptions of a shared vision between employees. Besides, researchers have also proposed that cohesion is one of the central antecedents of shared mental models in organizations (Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994). The results of my study contribute to that motion, implying that also the mere perception of cohesion within the group of the key actors in organizations – such as family members for family firms – has a positive effect on the sharing of a common vision by employees.

Another interesting implication of my results is that the goals which determine how much employees perceive that there is a vision shared by all organizational members, do not have to be directly related to the employees: Transgenerational intentions of family members are primarily directed to ensure sustainability of the family control, management and knowledge transfer in the family firm. Hence, the long-term horizon and clarity of the goal setting seem to be sufficient attributes of the goals to contribute to the creation of a shared vision. This result emphasizes the importance of stable boundary conditions for the creation of a shared vision: Under a perceived certainty about the control and management circumstances in the firm, employees are able to perceive an existence of a vision shared by all organizational members.

Last but not least, I contribute to the leader related research of organizational vision. According to O'Connell et al. (2011), the evolvement of a shared or assimilated organizational vision depends inter alia on the future images of the company of the organizational leaders and the interexchange between the leaders and the employees. The present study expands this notion, implying that the way how employees perceive the goas and aspirations of leaders in family firms is a crucial determinant of their shared vision perception. Family firm leaders who demonstrate long-term aspirations and goals are more likely to trigger shared vision perception. Further, the results of my research show that not only the future directed aspects of transgenerational intentions such as control intention and succession planning are relevant for the perception of shared vision – but also the perceived family cohesion, which does not relate directly to the company future. Hence, the creation of shared vision among employees starts with the communication of shared goals of the leaders, accompanied by the expression of the leadership team cohesion.

5.1.4. Implications for organizational identification research

In this chapter I discuss the results of my study with regard to organizational identification research, first outlining the implications of the lack of a significant effect of perceived intentions for transgenerational control and succession planning on employees' organizational identification, and then discussing the significant effect of perceived family cohesion.

The results of my study do not confirm the hypothesized positive impact of process- and future-related aspects of transgenerational intentions – perceived intentions for transgenerational control and succession planning – on the organizational identification of nonfamily employees. That is, employees' perceptions of transgenerational control and succession planning do not play a central role for their self-definition in terms of the affiliation with the given family firm. This unexpected outcome has several implications for organizational identification research, including the aspects of stability of company environment for the uncertainty reduction motive

First, family members' intentions for transgenerational control demonstrate their commitment to the firm. I proposed that this expressed commitment would result in a reduction of the perceived threat to the positive social identity of nonfamily employees associated with the employer-family firm. Hence, uncertainty reduction motive (Hogg & Terry, 2000) would be one of the main reasons for a positive impact of perceived intentions for transgenerational control on organizational identification of employees. However, it might be conceivable that in family firms' work environment, employees have a general feeling of pronounced safety and security due to family involvement in the firm, and a sense of trust in family's management. Under these circumstances, a high level of perceptions of transgenerational control intentions and succession planning would not contribute to a higher certainty for employees, as they might consider continuation of family control and management an indiscerptible part of the firm. For identification research this implies that a sense of identity threat is not an integral part employees' perceptions – and confirms the notion that core features of organizational identity, such as transgenerational control and management for family firms, are stable and resilient organizational treats (King, Felin, & Whetten, 2010).

Further, the results of my study make a contribution to the research on organizational identification motivation. According to social identity theory, the main motives of identification evolvement are self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction (Glynn, 2000; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Further, salience and subjective meaningfulness foster identification emergence (Zellweger, Nason et al., 2013). As we argued in Chapters 2.5.2 and 2.5.3, perceived intentions for transgenerational control and succession planning are company goals which address these motives. However, transgenerational intentions as a goal setting within family firms might lack another attribute important for the evolvement of identification – the chronical accessibility for employee. Hsu and Elsbach (2013) suggest that there are spontaneous aspects of identification involvement based on everyday experience of individuals. Hence, a lack of the accessibility might be the explanation for the non-significant results.

Finally, the results of the present study strengthen the opinion that despite the individual need for affiliation and identification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), employees might not necessarily identify themselves with the organization including its distinct features (such as transgenerational sustainability), but with the occupation or career (Ashforth, Harrison et al., 2008). These identification types are more abstract and only indirectly linked to the company itself, making the effect of uncertainty-reducing and stability-providing company characteristics less relevant for the evolvement of identification.

With regard to the third aspect of transgenerational intentions – the perceived family cohesion – the results of my study confirm its positive effect on organizational identification of nonfamily employees. This outcome indicates several contributions to the organizational identification research. First, the confirmation of the significant impact confirms the relevance of similarity of social identity characteristics on the desirability of a social category (Massis, 2012). My result indicates the positive role of the company's leadership team characteristics which have similarities to desirable characteristics of employees with regard for example to their families. Hence, the positively occupied cohesion between family members can increase the desirability of the organization as a social group for the employees, even though this characteristic lacks any direct relation to the employees. Further, my result indicates the important role of trust for identification creation within organizations (Gedajlovic et al., 2012). The belief of employees in the family members to be able to pursue common goals is strengthened by the visible bonding between them and creates trust, which has a positive effect on identification of employees with the organization (Mael & Alderks, 1993; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

5.2. Practical implications

Besides theoretical implications, the present study provides practical contributions for management of family firms. Nonfamily employees represent a crucial resource for family firms (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Chrisman et al., 2003). Retaining valuable human capital within the firm belongs to the main concerns of family firm managers (Chua et al., 2003b). High competitiveness of labor market, professional employee branding and aggressive head hunting make increasingly challenging for family firms, in particular the small- and medium size ones, to be competitive in the “war for talent” (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). The results of this study provide specific guidance for family firm managers with regard to their decisions how to formulate long-term company goals in general, and how openly and prominently to express and communicate the family-related transgenerational intentions in the company specifically.

First, based on my findings, family members involved in the family firm can be advised to be open in their *communication* with regard to their intentions to keep company ownership and management under their control, thus making these intentions easier to perceive by employees. Doing so, they can foster the shared vision perception among employees and strengthen their desire to stay associated with the company. Additionally, it can be recommended to demonstrate cohesion between family members, as the results of my study show that the perception of cohesion supports employees’ sense of shared vision as well as organizational identification with the company. The managers can be explicitly encouraged for targeted instrumentalization of the transgenerational orientation in order to bind employees to the firm. With the enhancement of employees’ affective organizational commitment through perceived transgenerational intentions, family firms can reduce turnover and enhance citizenship behavior among employees (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002; Xiao-Ping Chen, Chun Hui, & Sego, 1998) which are highly desirable attributes for organizations.

Further, the results of the study aim to encourage family firm executives to establish a distinct *brand identity* linked to the family character of the firm with emphasis on transgenerational family orientation with elements of control, management as well as family cohesiveness. This brand identity can help both long tenured and new employees to perceive a common purpose and vision of the firm. Thereby, family firms can enhance the salience of transgenerational character of the firm and create an even stronger link between employees and the company due to their enhanced identification and commitment.

Another practical contribution for family managers is an awareness of the importance of transgenerational character of the firm and hence, using the corresponding aspects when *planning succession*. Open and precocious communication of succession planning combined with stressing the transfer of experience and knowledge can enhance the trust in the successor and thereby, increase the shared vision creation.

However, due to the lack of empirical evidence for the link between perceived control intentions and succession planning and organizational identification, family firm managers should be cautious about creating an i*dentity gap* between the family and the nonfamily employees. Emphasizing the commonalities in the interests of the organization, its employees and the family and stressing the positive aspects of family association of the company can help creating a family-related company identity which is accessible also for nonfamily employees. Furthermore, family firm executives can be encouraged to stress other distinctive family firm characteristics which will enhance social identity of employees by addressing their self-enhancement or uncertainty reduction motives. Finally, making the transgenerational sustainability of the company present in the daily company life can contribute to a stronger link between employee and family firm identity and enable a positive impact on employees' identification

5.3. Limitations

Based on theoretical focus, the selected methodology and the used sample, this study has a number of limitations, which offer several interesting paths for future research. First, the focus of the present work lies on the effect of perceived family members' intentions and their effect on the behavior and attitudes of nonfamily employees. I do not consider that in general, employees with certain personal characteristics, such as conservatism, might be particularly attracted to family firms (Hauswald et al., 2015). Also employees' career aspirations can play a role in their perceptions of family's transgenerational intentions. As this study and its implications are directed towards understanding employees' attitudes within family firms, this limitation does not bound the generality of the results and their transferability to other family firms. This might however create limits in transferring the commitment research implications to nonfamily firms.

Hence, future researchers can be encouraged to consider employees' personal attributes as moderators for the influence of perceived transgenerational intentions. Furthermore, the career ambitions of employees can be a factor influencing their perceptions of transgenerational intentions, in particular of succession planning. Besides, certain conditions with regard to legislation, business environment and market competition can create circumstances which favor or hinder the creation of shared vision and organizational identification based on the perceptions of transgenerational intentions. For example, instability from the outside like high market competitiveness or threats of hostile take-overs can increase the sense of instability and uncertainty, whereas stable market conditions ensure a sense of stability (Beckman, Haunschild, & Phillips, 2004). Further, it is interesting to consider how the opposite intentions of family managers – the intentions to discontinue their management and control involvement in the firm – would influence employees' attitudes. A study by Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (1997) shows that, when group status is endangered, employees with higher identification are less likely to consider a change to a different group. Hence, I would like to further motivate researchers to examine the impact of identity threat conditions on employees' affective commitment.

Second, in the present study I suggest that perceived transgenerational intentions influence the perceptions of nonfamily employees that all organizational members share the same vision and their organizational identification. These shared vision perceptions will, in turn, enhance their affective commitment. Yet, it is possible that employees, who are characterized by high levels of affective commitment to the organization, will perceive the family members to have stronger transgenerational intentions. Hence, despite the theoretical considerations supporting the proposed causality, I cannot be completely certain about the direction of the causality. Thus, an avenue of future research could be to conduct a longitudinal study in which the development of attitudes and perceptions are examined over a period of time.

Third, I examine the effect of transgenerational intentions of family members within family firms as attributes of their transgenerational orientation and the familiness of the company. However, the visibility and presence of these intentions can also depend on the life cycle phase of the company with regard to the proximity of the succession event (Gersick, Davis, Hampton, & Landsberg, 1997; Griffeth, Allen, & Barrett, 2006). Even though the age of the company was included as a control variable, I cannot exclude the possibility that the succession proximity plays a role for the impact of transgenerational intentions on employees. This limitation signals a need for longitudinal empirical studies which would enable researchers to identify possible differences in the salience of transgenerational intentions over time and corresponding differences of perceptions by organizational members.

Fourth, the complete research study was carried out in Germany. This setting is justified due to the particular relevance and importance of family firms for the German economy (Klein, 2000; Koropp, Grichnik, & Kellermanns, 2013). Yet, the outcomes of the perceptions of family-specific company attitudes might be biased due to a generally positive reputation of family firms (Hauswald et al., 2015; Krappe et al., 2011). However, studies carried out in different industrial countries show a particular concern of family firms about their reputation, e.g. in Italy (Campopiano, Massis, & Chirico, 2014), as well as in other countries such as Germany, France, India, and Japan (Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013). Further, research publications have shown positive family firm image in the United States of America, for example with regard to customers (Craig et al., 2008) and job applicants (Covin, 1994). However, there is single case indication for a least advantageous reputation of family firms in the Asiatic region (Young, Peng, Ahlstrom, Bruton, & Jiang, 2008). Hence, I would like to motivate further studies to examine the similar effects in countries with less favorable reputation of family corporations.

Further, due to the research design, my sample consists of employees with a direct contact to the family executive. This is a valid approach as I am interested in the direct perceptions of family members' intentions and behaviors. However, employees holding positions close to the company executives are likely to be involved in the determination of the strategic direction of the firm. Despite the fact that I included management position of employees as a control, perceptions of employees without contact to the family executives may differ from the ones close to the family leader. Hence, I would like to encourage future research to examine whether the results stay consistent when observing employees that do not interact directly with family CEOs.

5.4. Future research outlook and final conclusions

Based on the findings of my study, future research can extend the results by pursuing following directions. First, research attention may be focuses on the influencing factors of the perception of transgenerational intentions by nonfamily employees. Although transgenerational intentions have been subject of numerous family business studies (Chua et al., 1999a; Williams et al., 2013), the evolvement of the perceptions of transgenerational intentions of the family members by employees remain unexamined. The results of my study provide evidence for the relevance of these perceptions for employees' commitment towards the firm. Thus, additional research on the employees' awareness of transgenerational intentions in the firm can contribute to creation of a more complete picture of the effect of family-related features on family firms and their employees.

Second, the finding of my study can be refined by examining the conditions which play a role for the effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on affective commitment. In particular, the lack of evidence for the effect of perceived intentions for transgenerational control and succession planning on affective commitment of nonfamily employees through their organizational identification strengthens this call for research. It could be presumed that uncertainty-relevant inter-company conditions such as a perceived threat of a take-over might have an impact on the dependency of organizational identification on the level of perceived transgenerational intentions (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Hogg, 2001). These conditions could also be studied in a panel study design in order to gain understanding of the impact of company life cycle on the relationship between transgenerational intentions and attitudes of employees in dependence of uncertainty-relevant events, such as management change in companies. Another aspect which may be researched in this context is a comparison of perceived uncertainty levels and uncertainty-relevant aspects in family and nonfamily firms with the goal to reveal the potential particularities of family firms with regard to providing employees a sense of security and certainty which are indicated by the findings of my study.

The third venue of future research may lay in exploration of the relationship between company goal setting and commitment. As the results of the present study demonstrate the relevance of transgenerational goals for affective commitment of employees although these goals are neither directly related to their instant work nor to their perceived organizational support (Meyer, Stanley et al., 2002), it might be interesting to investigate further company goals, both with and without family reference, with regard to their impact on employees' commitment. The gripping research question could be whether the actual content of the goals or rather solely the clarity about them influence the affective attachment of employees to the company.

Finally, the results of my study with regards to the positive effect of perceived transgenerational intentions on the perception of shared vision on the individual level of employees can be extended to the organizational level examination of the evolvement of shared vision in family firms. The research could focus on examination of the evolvement of organizational shared mental models (Rentsch & Klimoski, 2001) and how they are shaped by family-specific organizational attributes of family firms.

In conclusion, the present study addresses the highly relevant and not sufficiently researched topic of commitment of nonfamily employees in family firms. The results of my study provide theoretical framework and empirical evidence for the positive impact of perceived intentions for transgenerational control, succession planning and family cohesion on the nonfamily employees' perception that all organizational members share the same vision. Through this perceived shared vision the perceived transgenerational intentions of family members positively influence the affective commitment of nonfamily employees. Further, my study provides evidence for the positive impact of perceived cohesion between family members involved in family firms on the organizational identification of employees with the firm. Through the organizational identification, the perceived family cohesion also has a positive impact on employees' affective commitment. However, the outcomes of the present study do not deliver evidence for the impact of perceived intentions for transgenerational control and succession planning on organizational identification of employees, by this, emphasizing the difference between future oriented transgenerational intentions on the one side and perceived family cohesion with no direct relation to family firm future on the other. The results of the study carry important implications both for the theory and practice of family firms and open up interesting and promising new venues of research.

6. Appendix

Appendix 1: Missing data

Construct items	Percent missing
Controls referring to individual	
Age	.00
Gender	.00
Firm tenure	1.54
Education	.00
Position	.00
Controls referring to organization	
Company size	.00
Company age	.00
Exogenous constructs	
Intentions for transgenerational control	
ITC1	1.03
ITC2	1.29
Succession planning	
SP1	2.06
SP2	1.80
Family cohesion	
FC1	9.77
FC2	7.46
FC3	7.46
FC4	8.23
FC5	6.94
FC6	7.97
FC7	9.00
FC8	7.97
Endogenous constructs	
Shared vision	
SV1	.00
SV2	.00
SV3	.00
SV4	.00

Organizational identification	
OI1	.00
OI2	.00
OI3	.00
OI4	.00
OI5	.00
OI6	.00
Affective commitment	
AC1	
AC2	.00
AC3	.00
AC4	.00
AC5	.00
AC6	.00
AC7	.00

n = 389; calculated with Stata 13

Appendix 2: Single item reliabilities

Constructs and items	**Individual item reliability** (Standardized factor loadings)
Threshold	≥ .5
<u>*Exogenous constructs*</u>	
Intentions for transgenerational control	
ITC1	1.00
ITC2	.50
Succession planning	
SP1	1.00
SP2	.79
Family cohesion	
FC1	.82
FC2	.91
FC3	.76
FC4	.89
FC5	.86
FC6	.91
FC7	.34
FC8	.90
<u>*Endogenous constructs*</u>	
Shared vision	
SV1	.68
SV2	.83
SV3	.71
SV4	.70
Organizational identification	
OI1	.64
OI2	.54
OI3	.41
OI4	.59
OI5	.72
OI6	.53
Affective commitment	
AC1	.63
AC2	.53
AC3	.58
AC4	.83
AC5	.36

n=389; no dummy and categorical variables are displayed

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Declaration of authorship / Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre an Eides statt, dass ich bei der promotionsführenden Einrichtung, der Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften der Technischen Universität München, zur Promotionsprüfung vorgelegten Arbeit mit dem Titel:

Nonfamily employee commitment in family firms:
The role of perceived transgenerational intentions, shared vision and organizational identification

am Lehrstuhl für Betriebswirtschaftslehre – Entrepreneurship unter der Anleitung und Betreuung durch Prof. Dr. Dr. Holger Patzelt ohne sonstige Hilfe erstellt und bei der Abfassung nur die gemäß § 6 Abs. 6 und 7 Satz 2 angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt habe.

- Ich habe keine Organisation eingeschaltet, die gegen Entgelt Betreuerinnen und Betreuer für die Anfertigungen von Dissertationen sucht, oder die mir obliegenden Pflichten hinsichtlich der Prüfungsleistungen für mich ganz oder teilweise erledigt.
- Ich habe die Dissertation in dieser oder ähnlicher Form in keinem anderen Prüfungsverfahren als Prüfungsleistung vorgelegt.
- Die vollständige Dissertation wurde nicht veröffentlicht.
- Ich habe den angestrebten Doktorgrad noch nicht erworben und bin nicht in einem früheren Promotionsverfahren für den angestrebten Doktorgrad endgültig gescheitert.

Die öffentlich zugängliche Promotionsordnung der Technischen Universität München ist mir bekannt, insbesondere habe ich die Bedeutung von § 28 (Nichtigkeit der Promotion) und § 29 (Entzug des Doktorgrades) zur Kenntnis genommen. Ich bin mir der Konsequenzen einer falschen Eidesstattlichen Erklärung bewusst. Mit der Aufnahme meiner personenbezogenen Daten in die Alumni-Datei der TUM bin ich einverstanden.

München, den 03.08.2016 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Lidia Tseitlin