

## **GENDER EQUALITY IN FAMILY BUSINESS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The gender equality and women's empowerment phenomenon has grown rapidly in recent years (Dilip *et al.*, 2024). And this is not separated from our daily environment, which is family and even family businesses. Gender equality in family business management is now becoming commonplace, with many family businesses not prioritizing a specific gender to continue the family business. Currently, there are also many family businesses led by women, not just men. Over the period 1990 to 2019, the female labour force participation rates generally, but by no means universally, increased (Winkler, 2022).

**Key words:** gender equality, family business, women empowerment, entrepreneurship.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Family businesses play an important role in economic growth and job creation in various countries. According to Glossop, (2005), family businesses are able to contribute between 45% to 70% of GDP and absorb a lot of labor in many countries. In Indonesia, family businesses play an important role in the economy, accounting for 90% of GDP and employing more than 85 million workers (Amenah *et al.*, 2023). Although family businesses play an important role in the economy, they face various challenges such as leadership succession, governance, gender bias, and intergenerational transition, which cause obstacles to business sustainability and performance. Challenges in family businesses often arise due to internal issues such as emotional relationships between family members, differences in vision between generations, and cultural values that are ingrained in the family environment.

Family businesses in Indonesia frequently confront challenges rooted in cultural norms and entrenched gender roles. In several regions, patrilineal or matrilineal systems continue to shape ownership structures and leadership succession processes (Amenah *et al.*, 2023). Although these systems reflect longstanding traditions, they often institutionalize gender disparities in strategic decision making and executive authority, thereby constraining women's access to leadership positions. Such structural imbalances can weaken internal communication, complicate intergenerational succession, and hinder the development of sustainable and inclusive business strategies.

International evidence indicates that women often demonstrate effective managerial styles, yet gender segregation in leadership roles remains prevalent (Beloskar *et al.*, 2024). Within Indonesia, women play a substantial role in family enterprises as owners, managers, and micro and medium entrepreneurs (Amenah *et al.*, 2023). Prior research further suggests that gender equality in entrepreneurship fosters innovation and contributes to broader economic growth (Veckalne and Tambovceva, 2023). Strengthening the integration of gender equity within family business governance therefore represents a critical step toward enhancing women's empowerment and promoting fairer and more sustainable business practices.

Therefore, it is important to develop a deep understanding of the relationship between gender and family businesses, which can encourage balanced and sustainable business practices. This study seeks to analyze the role of gender dynamics in the sustainability of family businesses and how equality can strengthen women's empowerment in family businesses.

### **METHOD**

This study applies a Systematic Literature Review approach to map and synthesize research on gender equality in family businesses. The literature search covered publications from 1990 to October 31, 2025, using the databases Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, JSTOR, and Google Scholar.

The search strategy combined keywords such as "family business," "gender equality," "women empowerment," and "entrepreneurship." The researchers first screened titles and abstracts, followed by full text reviews of articles that met the inclusion criteria, namely peer reviewed empirical studies or review articles that

explicitly examined gender issues in family firm contexts. Two independent reviewers conducted the selection and data extraction process, and a third reviewer resolved discrepancies through discussion.

The study assessed methodological quality using the CASP or JBI appraisal instruments and classified articles as high, moderate, or low quality. The researchers extracted data into a standardized table that included author and year, research method, context, thematic focus, main findings, and theoretical framework. They then applied descriptive analysis and thematic synthesis to identify dominant themes, methodological patterns, and existing research gaps. Results were presented in the form of thematic narratives, and summary tables, to illustrate research trends. Several journal or article that we used are:

<b>Writers and Published Year</b>	<b>Research Purpose</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Source/DOI</b>
Maseda, A, Iturralde, T, Aparicio, G & Cooper, SY 2023.	The importance of addressing gender issues in family firms. Reinvigorates research by revealing its current state, identifying research gaps, and suggesting future agendas.	Bibliometric approach from the Web of Science database over the last 30 years (1991–2021).	Review provides an extensive literature base and suggests research topics that facilitate the adoption of a gendered lens in family firm literature and business practice.	Edinburgh Research Explorer, DOI: 10.1108/GM-02-2022-0056
Blanco-Gonzalez-Tejero, C. and Cano-Marin, E. 2023	To provide a global understanding of the role of women in entrepreneurship and family businesses, enabling the evaluation of the impact and the sentiment their role generates.	Quantitative and qualitative perspective through the evaluation of UGC from the social platform Twitter. Social Network Analysis (SNA) techniques and graph theory.	A positive relationship in the sentiment of the generated content in relation to women entrepreneurs and leaders.	Journal of Family Business Management, DOI: 10.1108/JFBM-04-2022-0050
Beloskar, V.D., Haldar, A., & Gupta, A., 2024.	Collecting and analyzing from existing literature on SDG 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment) from a managerial perspective, to identify key themes, actors (authors, institutions), geographic trends, research barriers, and future research agendas.	Bibliometric methods and systematic review of 1,713 articles taken from the Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection databases.	Board diversity, financial performance, and company value. Women on boards and CSR strategies. And, demographic diversity of corporate boards	Journal of Business Research, DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114442
Amenah, A., Maghfiroh, M., Wardana, L. W., Indrawati, A., & Setiawan, B. 2023.	Reviewing and identifying various problems that arise in family businesses,	Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Qualitative Research Method.	Four main indicators of family business problems are gender, communication,	Journal of Management and Social Sciences (JIMAS), e-ISSN: 2963-5497

	including aspects of gender, communication, business strategy, and the role of women.		business strategy, and the role of women. Common problems include business ownership, business strategy, and generational differences in family businesses.	
Veckalne, R., & Tambovceva, T. 2023.	Analysis of Gender Equality in promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Identification main obstacle that may be faced by women entrepreneurs in several countries.	Qualitative with Semi-Structured Interviews and Bibliometric Analysis by VOSViewer.	Gender equality has been shown to increase innovation, economic growth, and social creativity. Access to capital, networks, markets, education/training, and gender bias are key barriers for women.	Marketing and Management of Innovations, DOI: 10.21272/mmi.2023.1-014
Mogaji, E. 2024.	Highlighting the experiences of women entrepreneurs in family businesses in the transportation sector in Africa, with a focus on the influence of patriarchy, polygamy, and limited infrastructure on their opportunities and obstacles.	Perspective / Conceptual Paper based on concise literature review.	Patriarchal culture, polygamy practices, and infrastructure inequality that limits women's roles are key barriers. Women are beginning to enter the transportation sector through the gig economy (such as app-based drivers).	Journal of Family Business Management, DOI: 10.1108/JFBM-08-2023-0121

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**1. Family Business and Gender Perspectives in Family Business Dynamics**

Family businesses constitute a central pillar of the Indonesian economy, contributing approximately 90 percent to national economic activity and employing more than 85 million workers. Despite this substantial role, these enterprises confront persistent structural challenges that threaten long term sustainability. A literature review by Amenah et al. (2023) identifies leadership succession, governance structures, and intergenerational transition as recurring constraints. Among these issues, gender bias emerges as a critical barrier, particularly when cultural norms and inheritance systems restrict women’s access to strategic decision making and ownership positions.

Scholars argue that strengthening women’s empowerment requires the systematic integration of gender perspectives into family business research and practice (Maseda et al., 2023). Their study outlines the barriers, motivations, and opportunities that shape women’s participation and leadership within family firms. The findings indicate that family businesses often replicate patriarchal family structures in their governance arrangements and managerial professionalization processes. Women frequently assume dual responsibilities as household managers and organizational contributors. However, entrenched social norms

that associate women primarily with domestic roles often lead firms to undervalue or fail to formally acknowledge their strategic contributions.

In their further research, Maseda et al. (2023) argue that gender-neutral business practices can provide a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics and succession planning, which are essential factors for achieving long-term business sustainability. Moreover, the rise of digital transformation has created new opportunities for women in family businesses to express leadership and develop their personal identity. A study by Blanco-Gonzalez-Tejero and Cano-Marin (2023) establishes a connection between social media empowerment and family business management. Their social network analysis of Twitter revealed that topics such as women's leadership, family succession, and entrepreneurial innovation often serve as sources of inspiration and solidarity among women.

## **2. Digital Empowerment and Women's Representation.**

Women's empowerment in family businesses through digital platforms such as Twitter, as in the study by Blanco-Gonzalez and Cano-Marin (2023). The study emphasizes assessments influenced by public sentiment or emotions regarding women's roles in leadership and business. The results of the study show that social media can be a place for advocacy, visibility, and empowerment that enables women to reclaim their role in business and society. Meanwhile, according to Mogaji (2024), transformative change in the male-dominated family business sector is urgently needed in the transportation sector, especially in countries with patriarchal cultures and infrastructure that still does not fully support women.

In line with research by Veckalne and Tambovceva (2023) which explains that gender equality in entrepreneurship can drive innovation and economic growth, the relationship between gender dynamics and family business structures is crucial to ensuring business sustainability and systems. Addressing gender gaps in family businesses can improve decision-making quality, company performance, and intergenerational leadership sustainability.

## **3. Gender Equality as a Driver of Innovation and Sustainability**

Research by Veckalne and Tambovceva (2023) explains that gender equality in entrepreneurship and family businesses is not merely a social issue, but also a factor that can drive innovation and economic growth. The involvement of women in managerial positions has been shown to increase organizational creativity, decision-making quality, and efficiency in resource management.

Thus, when women have equal access to capital, networks, and entrepreneurship education, families become more adaptive to market and technological changes. In addition, gender diversity in management teams creates a balance between rational (profit) and social (family values and sustainability) perspectives. Gender equality can therefore serve as a catalyst for improving the competitiveness and sustainability of family businesses.

## **CONCLUSION**

Family businesses play an important role in the economy, but still face several challenges, including gender perspectives that are still closely tied to cultural norms and traditional systems of patriarchy. Women often play dual roles as household managers and business members, but their contributions are often not formally recognized. Integrating gender perspectives into family businesses, as stated by Maseda et al. (2023), is key to understanding more inclusive leadership and succession dynamics.

Digital transformation, as described by Blanco-Gonzalez-Tejero and Cano-Marin (2023), opens up new opportunities for women to build visibility and empowerment through social media. On the other hand, Mogaji (2024) emphasizes the importance of structural change in sectors that are still male-dominated, especially in countries with patriarchal cultures. In line with this, Veckalne and Tambovceva (2023) show that gender equality not only promotes social justice, but also strengthens innovation, decision-making, and the sustainability of family businesses. Therefore, gender equality needs to be seen as a strategic factor in improving the competitiveness and sustainability of family businesses in the modern era.

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