

SUCCESSION AND CONFLICTS: RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS ABOUT FAMILY BUSINESSES

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This paper aims to identify the implications of conflict on a succession process in family business.

Methodology: For the development of this literature review, we based ourselves on the behavioral view of conflict, presenting a set of propositions and a framework for investigations in the field.

Originality: Even with the vast literature on conflict, there is still no complete understanding of its effects on a group or organization. In a family business, the process of succession can intensify conflicts, since it includes the simultaneous relationship between the business and the family, and there is a need for greater understanding of this phenomenon.

Main results: The results suggest that in family organizations, the relationship conflict may be present and negatively impact the succession process. Thus, management models focused on the collaborative view of conflicts can positively reflect the succession planning and the performance of the new management.

Theoretical contributions: As a contribution, we present a series of propositions that provide indications of the effects of conflict on the succession of family businesses, highlighting the importance of a governance system that provides balance to the process.

Keywords: Strategy. Governance. Decision-making process. Succession process. Strategic decision-making.

SUCCESSÃO E CONFLITOS: PROPOSIÇÕES DE PESQUISA ACERCA DAS EMPRESAS FAMILIARES

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este artigo tem o objetivo de identificar as implicações do conflito no processo de sucessão em empresas familiares.

Metodologia: Para o desenvolvimento desta revisão de literatura, nos fundamentamos na visão comportamental do conflito, apresentando um conjunto de proposições e um framework para investigações no campo.

Originalidade: Mesmo com a ampla literatura sobre conflito, ainda não há o completo entendimento de seus efeitos sobre um grupo ou organização. Em empresas familiares, o processo de sucessão pode intensificar os conflitos, pois compreende a relação simultânea entre o negócio e a família, havendo a necessidade de melhor entendimento deste fenômeno.

Principais resultados: Os resultados sugerem que nas organizações familiares o conflito de relacionamento pode estar presente e impactar negativamente no processo de sucessão. Assim,

modelos de gestão centrados na visão colaborativa de conflitos podem refletir de forma positiva no planejamento sucessório e no desempenho da nova gestão.

Contribuições teóricas: Como contribuição, apresentamos uma série de proposições que fornecem indícios dos efeitos do conflito na sucessão de empresas familiares, destacando a importância de um sistema de governança que proporcione equilíbrio ao processo.

Palavras-chave: Estratégia. Governança. Processo decisório. Processo sucessório. Tomada de decisão estratégica.

SUCESIÓN Y CONFLICTOS: PROPOSICIONES DE INVESTIGACIÓN SOBRE EMPRESAS FAMILIARES

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Este artículo científico tiene el objetivo de identificar las implicaciones de conflicto en el proceso de sucesión en empresas familiares.

Metodología: Para el desarrollo de esta revisión de literatura, nos basamos en la visión comportamental del conflicto, presentando un conjunto de proposiciones y un marco para investigaciones en el campo.

Originalidad: Incluso con la amplia literatura sobre conflicto, aún no hay un completo entendimiento de sus efectos sobre un grupo u organización. En empresas familiares, el proceso de sucesión puede intensificar los conflictos, pues comprende la relación simultánea entre el negocio y la familia, habiendo la necesidad de una mejor comprensión de este fenómeno.

Principales resultados: Los resultados sugieren que el conflicto de relaciones intenta estar presente e impactar negativamente en el proceso de sucesión. De esta forma, modelos de gestión centrados en la visión colaborativa de conflictos pueden reflejar de forma positiva sobre la planificación de la sucesión y en el desempeño de la nueva gestión.

Contribuciones teóricas: Como contribución, presentamos una serie de proposiciones que proporcionan indicios de los efectos del conflicto en la sucesión de empresas familiares, destacando la importancia de un sistema de gobernanza que proporcione equilibrio al proceso.

Palabras clave: Estrategia. Gobernabilidad. Proceso decisório. Proceso sucesorio. Toma de decisión estratégica.

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Introduction

The behavioral or contemporary view of conflict, according to Kirchoff & Adams (1982), indicates that it is present in all organizational forms (De Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012). This occurs because the conflict is inevitable, being a natural result of the interaction between two or more people or social entities (Rahim, 2017). Among the types of conflict described in the literature, three stand out: relationship conflict, task conflict and process conflict, each of which may impact an organization differently (Martínez-Moreno, González-Navarro, Zornoza, & Ripoll, 2009; Simons & Peterson, 2000).

Relationship conflict refers to the lack of understanding among the members of a group regarding interpersonal aspects, such as: divergences with the norms, values and personality of each one (Amason, 1996; Camelo-Ordaz, García-Cruz, & Sousa-Ginel, 2015). In the task conflict, the disagreement among the members arises from the content and the results of the tasks performed (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954; Jehn, 1995; Parayitam, Olson, & Bao, 2010). The process conflict, on the other hand, derives from the disagreement over what the accomplishment of a certain task is or will be like, its delegation, steps and responsibilities (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999).

A certain level of conflict, especially when it comes to tasks, can lead to positive results for the organization (Serra, Tomei, & Serra, 2014). This type of conflict stimulates innovation, critical thinking and improves decision-making, preventing premature consensus (Amason, 1996; Jehn, 1995; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999; Tjosvold, 2007; Van de Vliert & De Dreu, 1994).

The relationship conflict, which is linked to affective and emotional issues, can affect organizations negatively (Großmann & Von Schlippe, 2015; Jehn, 1995). Personal incompatibility, which is central to this type of conflict, intensifies stress and hostility behaviors, and may impair organizational success (Caputo et al., 2018; Amason, 1996; Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007).

In family businesses, the conflict can corrupt relationships and the business itself (Ramadani, 2017). It occurs mainly due to the different strategic views of the business and due to the succession process, a phase in which there is an intense emotional burden, while for the succeeded ones it is a clear sign of old age, for the successor it is the accomplishment of an aspiration (Corbetta & Salvato, 2012). Add to this: a) possible disputes between brothers and others involved in the succession (Handler, 1994; Levinson, 1991; Stern, 1986); b) emotional connections with the business (Miller & Rice, 1967; Roth, Tissot, & Gonçalves 2017); and c) possible uncertainties about who the successor will be (Handler, 1994).

Although conflict is a central and emerging issue, it is still necessary to understand its effects, especially when it comes to business management (Xi et al., 2015). From some identified research gaps, such as: a) the need for a better understanding of the impact of conflict in the context of family businesses (Nosé, Korunka, Frank, & Danes, 2016; Rousseau, Kellermanns, Zellweger, & Beck, 2018); and b) the emergence of research on the dimensions - structural and behavioral - involved in the succession process of these organizations (Bozer, Levin, & Santora, 2017; Umans et al, 2020), we have developed a

literature review study aiming to identify the implications of conflict in the succession process of family businesses. As a result, we present a set of propositions that allow us to broaden the knowledge about this field of research, also providing some indications and possibilities of future research.

1 Conflict

Conflict is a situation where the different objectives of the participants in a group are intrinsically incompatible (Boulding, 1963; Smith, 1966). Litterer (1966) & Hocker and Wilmot (1985) define conflict as a type of behavior that occurs when two or more parties are in opposition to a certain activity. One of the main differences between these two views is that while Smith (1966) considers conflict as a situation, Litterer (1966) considers it as a behavior.

Coser (1968) points out that conflict is based on values and projections, with a view to power, where the objective is to neutralize the opponent and eliminate his/her rivals. Tedeschi, Schlenker & Bonoma (1973) and Marx & Morita (2000) complement this view, emphasizing that conflict is an interactive state in which the behaviors or goals of one party are incompatible or opposed to the behaviors or goals of the other party.

When reviewing some definitions of conflict, Mack & Snyder (1957) and Baron (1990) concluded that, although the definitions are not identical, they overlap with the following elements: a) conflict is a situation where there are opposing interests between individuals or groups; b) such opposing interests must be recognized for conflict to exist; c) in a conflict situation, both sides believe that the other will frustrate (or is already frustrating) their interests; d) conflict is a process that builds on existing relationships between individuals and reflects their past interactions and the contexts in which they occurred; e) the actions of one, or both sides, produce frustration of the objectives of those on the other side.

In a seminal study of organizational theory, March & Simon (1958) characterized conflict as a break in the standard mechanism of decision making, so that individuals or groups confront each other when there is difficulty in making a choice. The intergroup conflict emerges when there is a need for collective decisions; different goals involved; different perceptions of reality by the team and may be the result of the interaction between cognitive and motivational factors (Rahim, 2017; Ribeiro, 2015).

Robbins & Judge (2010) classify the approach to conflict into three categories: a) traditional - where conflict is treated as harmful and should be eliminated; b) human relations - where conflict is understood as a natural occurrence; and c) interactionist - a modern approach where conflict on a healthy and balanced level should be stimulated, offering some benefits to the organization. In the latter perspective, Sharma & Sharma (2011) highlight that different types of conflicts can add costs and benefits to the decision-making process.

The task conflict is based on cognitive aspects and related to organizational activities, and the relationship conflict is associated with emotional aspects resulting from interpersonal disagreements

(Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954; Priem & Price, 1991). On the other hand, the process conflict is a separate form of conflict; in this case, debates are seen as a discussion about "how" to accomplish a certain task (Jehn, Greer, Levine, & Szulanski, 2008).

Examining the benefits and losses generated by the conflict, Jehn (1995) concluded that these facts depend on the type of conflict, the interdependence of the tasks performed and the norms of the group. Relationship and task conflicts are often negatively associated with the individual's satisfaction and desire to remain in the group. However, in groups involved in non-routine tasks, the task conflict may not have a negative effect. Similarly, McIntyre (2012) states that conflict situations contain a positive value when used to enrich personal and organizational growth, enabling improvements in innovation and productivity, and can be a stimulant factor for personal, group and organizational change.

1.1 Impacts of conflict in organizations

Team activities can add knowledge, creativity, an environment for acceptance of ideas, commitment and motivation, but they can promote compliance and conflict at the same time (Bisseling & Sobral, 2011). It is still difficult to understand the impacts of conflict in organizations, as studies show both negative and positive effects (Ebhoite & Monday, 2015). Conflict can be associated with reduced productivity and low team satisfaction (Gladstein, 1984; Pondy, 1967; Wall & Nolan, 1986); detrimental group and organizational performance (Bourgeois, 1980); reduced well-being and increased staff turnover (Spector & Jex, 1998).

In contrast, other evidence has shown that conflict within teams brings benefits linked to the quality of decision and strategic planning, financial performance, and organizational growth (Bourgeois, 1985; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990; Schweiger, Sandberg, & Rechner, 1989). Baron (1991) verified the unfolding of conflict in groups and its organizational impact, the results provided evidence that task conflicts within groups encourage people to develop new ideas.

Some positive effects of conflict are also highlighted by Cunha, Silva & Moreira (2003), among them: a) awakening greater synergy within the group, causing the group to discover more efficient ways to accomplish tasks, as well as seek answers and solutions in a creative and innovative way; b) after the resolution of conflicts there may be harmony and creation of an identity of the group; c) the conflict may act as a repairer of existing problems, avoiding relevant deadlocks; d) increased productivity through agreement between the parties.

Tjosvold (1997) identified that the conflict is directly related to a higher level of innovation and organizational efficiency. Conflict can act as a driver for social development and, if properly conducted, can establish cooperative relationships that can achieve problem solutions with benefits for all parties involved (Deutsch, 1991; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). It prevents the team from remaining in the comfort zone, making decision-making more productive and effective, however, excessive conflict can lead to a path of organizational anarchy, being ideal to seek balance (Hampton, Summer, & Webber, 1987).

In this context, aiming at the longevity of the organization, adequate conflict management is necessary (Rahim, 2017). These challenges are intensified for those organizations that are family-based, since, in addition to the labor aspects, there are family issues involved (Kelm & Schorr, 2011).

Widely present in family organizations, conflict can interfere with business performance and destructively affect family life (Alderson, 2015; Großmann & Von Schlippe, 2015). In family organizations, the relationship conflict, one of the most present, even affecting the succession process (Rondeau, 1996).

With regard to succession, the quality of the working relationship between parents/succeeded and their children/successors may indicate whether or not the conflict will be beneficial (Follet, 1997; Meira Teixeira & Carvalhal, 2013). The choice of successors by means of unclear criteria may lead to feelings of frustration and injustice for the parties not chosen, and may thus trigger a harmful conflict (Rondeau, 1996). The balance between individual and/or family interests and organizational goals can be the path to survival for these companies (Tillmann & Grzybovski, 2005).

1.2 Succession planning in family businesses

Passing on the business to subsequent generations is one of the most important missions of a family business (Davis, 1968; Davis & Harverston, 1999). The quality and effectiveness of the succession can determine the longevity of the company (Sharma, Chrisman, & Chua, 1997). Thus, the dominant theme in family business literature is succession (Morris, Williams, & Nel, 1996).

A succession should not be considered just an event, but a continuous, long-term process (Harvey & Evans, 1995). This process has implications for the various parties involved, and for a long period of time (Barach & Ganitsky, 1995; Dyck, Mauws, Starke, & Mischke, 2002; Morris et al., 1996). Long and Chrisman (2014) warn that the events and consequences of such a process must be planned and revised frequently to be successful.

The succession process involves the actions and events of the transition of leadership from one family member to another, in which the successor may or may not belong to the same generation (Handler, 1994; Sharma, Chrisman, Pablo, & Chua, 2001). The family has considerable importance in decision-making, being the central hereditary factor in the choice of the successor (Meireles, Debastiani, & Rojo, 2015). Leone (1991) points out that the ritual of passage between generations can occur gradually and in a planned manner, or suddenly, in the case of illness, accident or death of the administrator. There are two types of succession processes: a) related to family succession, which occurs when the business is taken over by another family member; b) related to professional succession, which occurs when the person taking over is a non-family member (Leone & Leone, 2006; Oliveira, Albuquerque, & Pereira, 2012).

The goal of a succession is always the continuity of the family business, according to Ip & Jacobs (2006) and Whatley (2011), but there is consensus that the process can be quite traumatic (Santos,

Schutz, Sehnem & Casagrande, 2017). Despite the evidence on the positive results of planning the succession process (Morris et al., 1996), it is often completely disregarded by organizations (Handler, 1994; Mazzola et al., 2008).

Succession planning should consider three stages: a) the personal development of the possible successor; b) the business involvement of the successor; and c) leadership development (Handler, 1991). At each stage may occur: conflicts between the current manager and the possible successor; conflicts between family members and non-family employees; and changes in managerial roles (Morris et al., 1996).

Thus, the succession process in family businesses is delicate, as it not only deals with the administrative management of the business, but also involves affective and emotional issues among the members, and may affect the structure of the business and the family (Oliveira, 2006). When there is a sudden and unplanned succession, a high level of anxiety, uncertainty and conflict may occur, however, if the organization already has a succession planning process, this encourages the sharing of affective values, reducing the possibility of conflicts (Harvey & Evans, 1995).

1.3 Conflict in succession in family businesses

The conflict is part of the nature of the family business (Roth et al., 2017). In these companies, emotions and feelings of affection for the business are present (Carmon, Miller, Raile, & Roers 2010; Spranger, Colarelli, Dimotakis, Jacob, & Arvey, 2012). Thus, understanding the family business, clearly identifying the position of each member in the company and knowing the sources of personal conflicts is fundamental (Roth et al., 2017).

Family organizations have an environment where the two subsystems interact, the business and the family, this can facilitate the emergence of conflicts (Miller & Rice, 1967). Conflicts between family members (Levinson, 1991; Stern, 1986) and uncertainties of the potential successor can impair the succession process (Handler, 1994). Conflicts between founders and heirs are partly responsible for the high mortality rate of family businesses (Meira Teixeira & Carvalho, 2013). The changes in management imply that the values of the founder and the new administrator may not be compatible (Lissoni, Pereira, Almeida, & Serra, 2010).

An alternative that makes the succession process more balanced is corporate governance, which aims at: best practices, transparency, establishing rules, defining structures, and constituting the roles of all those involved in the family business, also minimizing relationship conflicts (Roth et al., 2017). Governance in the family business is the link that unites and mediates between the individual, the company and the family (Lambrechth, 2005).

The constitution of a council collaborates to channel and formalize the interests between company and family, instituting a balance between the needs of personal and professional achievement (Oliveira, Álvares, Pinheiro, & Pimentel, 2011). Thus, the family council plays a central role, even

helping the group to be cohesive around the business, since issues related to emotions can arise and trigger intra-family conflicts (Corten, Steijvers, & Lybaert, 2017). When the board is excessively composed of family members, a clear distinction between family and company rules is essential in order to mitigate potential conflicts (Cohn, 1991). In this sense, the participation of external members (directors who do not belong to the family nuclei involved in the business) is essential (Dias & Davila-Junior, 2018). In light of these arguments, we make the following proposition:

Proposition 1. In family businesses, high levels of governance may reflect positively on the balance of the succession process.

A well-structured governance model includes a clear definition of the role of owners, administrators and family members (Oliveira et al., 2011). Clear rules avoid power abuses and conflicts, further reducing the climate of perceived injustice in the company environment (Carmon et al., 2010; Spranger et al., 2012). Family governance contributes to the establishment of incentive criteria, responsibility norms and management procedures, enabling better organizational control and facilitating the achievement of strategic objectives (Carney, 2005).

Governance makes it possible to define principles and agreements aimed at mitigating potential disputes of interest between family members, establishing transparent and direct channels of communication, avoiding the transfer of conflicts from the family to the company and from the company to the family (Arteaga & Menéndez-Requejo, 2017; Umans et al., 2020). As divergences between generations can arise in the coexistence of family members (Davis, 2007), family governance can improve levels of clarity during the succession process, providing a better condition for working together.

The formal structuring of policies and guidelines, in order to define the rules for succession, entry, stay and exit of members, contributes to mitigate the problems and conflicts of the family business (Oliveira et al., 2011). Thus, it is crucial to establish mechanisms that allow the survival of the family business throughout successive transitions (Gersick, Lansberg, Desjardins, & Dunn, 2003; Velloso & Grisci, 2014). Since unresolved conflicts can be extremely damaging to an organization over time (Velloso & Grisci, 2014). From these arguments we present the second proposition:

Proposition 2. In family businesses, governance mechanisms reduce relationship conflicts during the succession process.

Even if governance mechanisms provide support for the continuity of family organizations, succession planning is often not carried out effectively (Umans et al., 2020). Attention to factors related to succession planning is one of the main reasons for the success of companies, especially small ones (Mokhber et al., 2017). The lack of planning and management of the succession process may

compromise the outcome, including of prosperous and already consolidated organizations (Caputo et al., 2018).

Succession planning can also help in identifying specific attributes of successors, as well as the criteria for choice (Chrisman, Chua, Sharma, & Yoder, 2009; Mokhber et al., 2017). The relationship between father/succeeded and son/successor itself can be more harmonious, favoring the successful transfer of power and mitigating conflicts (Tagiuri & Davis, 1992). When decisions are planned, communicated and shared, levels of conflict can be reduced. However, if there are high levels of relationship conflicts, delays in communication and decision-making can occur (Alderson, 2015). This is due to interpersonal rivalries that reduce understanding of the organization's real interests (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

Succession planning should be present in the early stages and be one of the most important tasks of a family business leader (Ramadani et al., 2017). But even in the face of this importance, it is common for him/her to be ignored or constantly postponed (Gilding, Gregory, & Cosson, 2015). His/her role is central, in the management of conflicts in the family, which can occur through a proactive approach, seeking the resolution of problems, being essential for a harmonious succession (Dunn, 1995; Lansberg & Astrachan, 1994; Seymour, 1993; Umans et al., 2020).

Conflict in a family business has a unique nature that needs to be understood in detail in order to then be managed (Sorenson, 1999). During the succession phase divergences of information may occur, these uncertainties may promote the emergence of competing coalitions in the different family nuclei that seek their own agendas (Sorenson, 1999). Thus, conflict management, elaborated through specific demands of the succession phase, can effectively impact the success of the management transition (Ahmad & Yaseen, 2018). From these observations, we present the following propositions.

Proposition 3a. In family businesses, succession planning positively moderates the elements of governance, generating greater balance in the succession process.

Proposition 3b. In family businesses, succession planning positively moderates the elements of governance, helping to reduce relationship conflicts during succession.

Excessive consensus on a group's decision reduces the level of conflict that exists, but it can trigger an accommodation process that impedes the company's strategic actions (Berrone, Cruz, & Gomez-Mejia, 2012; Bradley et al., 2015). There may be a sacrifice of the organization's results for the sake of family satisfaction, where the ideal is a collaborative management focused on family and business objectives.

According to Kaye and McCarthy (1996), a strategy based simply on avoiding conflict can generate low family satisfaction, reduce mutual trust, and increase rivalry among those involved. Collaborative conflict management is an approach that attempts to fully satisfy the concerns of all parties involved, addressing individual and collective desires in an integrated manner (Paul, Seetharaman,

Samarah, & Mykytyn, 2004). In this way, it is possible to mitigate conflicts by identifying family and business objectives (Rahim, 1983; 2017).

In Sorenson's (1999) view, one of the central points in conflict management in family businesses is collaboration, especially when practices are formalized. Collaborative models promote positive results in family relationships and organization, reducing the level of accommodation and maintaining discussions about the future of the business (Amason & Schweiger, 1994; Jehn, 1997; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989).

Family businesses still have low levels of adoption of control mechanisms for conflict resolution, whether in their governance model, in family management, or in the succession process (Laimer & Tonial, 2014). Still, when there is a low level of relationship conflict, the company tends to grow and prosper through generations (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). This is due to the fact that members generally have moderate levels of altruism, high levels of trust and a sense of justice with family members (Alvarado-Alvarez, Armadans, & Parada, 2019). From these arguments we present the fourth proposition:

Proposition 4. In family businesses, low levels of relationship conflicts have a positive impact on the balance of the succession process.

Another problem identified in the succession process in family businesses is rivalry among the successors. The relationships and interactions among these members impact every phase of planning and the results of a succession (Saxena, 2013). Conflicts related to family versus work are extremely difficult to resolve even after a succession process has been successfully implemented (Gabriel & Bitsch, 2019). Thus, the way conflicts are constantly managed can determine the quality of organizational results (Borges & Lima, 2012).

Special attention should be given to the residual conflict that occurs after the succession, it can undermine future administrations and undermine the performance of the organization (Harvey & Evans, 1995). Managing change alone can trigger conflicts (Beckhard & Dyer, 1983), and sometimes family relationships aggravate the situation, making managing the business a difficult task (Harvey & Evans, 1995).

Uncertainty about the direction of the business or the new leadership of the family business produces a naturally stressful environment. Thus, a certain level of succession conflict can be considered the "price" of change (Harvey & Evans, 1995). When there is a gradual process of building up the leadership of the successors, there is also a greater possibility that the family business will carry on its legacy (Bayad & Barbot, 2002).

In order to deal effectively with stress and residual conflict after a succession, it is necessary to implement a proactive conflict management process, continuously monitoring the events that arise (Handler, 1994). A successful transfer of power cannot be understood as the elimination of negative

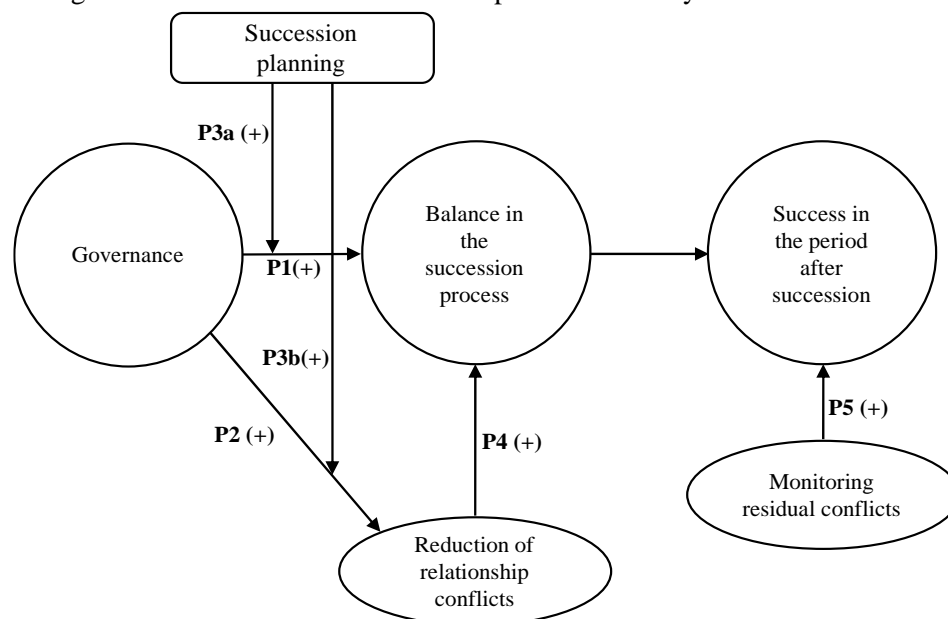
emotions, reduction of stress levels and consequently reduction of conflicts. The final measurement of a succession process can be made by evaluating performance, efficiency and sustainability of the business in the period after the succession (Mokhber et al., 2017). At this stage, the successor has the task of managing any residual conflict that may emerge, also ensuring the maintenance of a good performance of the company (Buckman, Jones, & Buame, 2019). From the observations, we present the fifth proposition:

Proposition 5. In family businesses, even after succession, the constant monitoring of residual conflicts impacts positively on the success of the new management.

2 Discussion

Based on the literature review and the formulated propositions, we developed a model for the succession process of family businesses. The model, observed in Figure 1, contemplates the history of success in the period after a succession in family businesses.

Figure 1 - Background of success in the succession process of family businesses



Source: Produced by the authors (2020).

The implementation of a governance system in the family organization is essential in the succession process. It contributes to conflict management, especially when it comes to relationship conflict, as it allows the succession process to be balanced through a collaborative approach. Succession is considered one of the most critical situations faced by family organizations (Oliveira, Albuquerque, & Pereira, 2012). At this stage, conflicts tend to emerge or escalate (Grzybovski, Hoffmann, & Muhl,

2008). In turn, conflicts can have a negative impact on family cohesion, which is central to the longevity of these companies.

The dimension - family - brings complex challenges to business management, governance mechanisms go beyond the role of controlling and monitoring administrators in order that they make decisions according to owners' interests and minimize conflicts of interest (Motwani, Levenburg, & Schwarz, 2006; Umans et al., 2020). These mechanisms, such as: good practices; transparency; rule setting; and role structure and its articulation with the succession process, contribute to the management of the company, helping the successor to understand his/her new role (Fischer-Günther, Fernandes-Pereira, Loch, & Costa, 2010).

Issues related to the choice of successor, expansion of the company and growth in the number of family members, are changing the ownership structure of the organization, this requires the implementation of mechanisms to support changes in organizational structure, assets and strategy (Grzybovski, Hoffmann, & Muhl, 2008). However, the logic of family businesses adds challenges to the traditional model of corporate governance (Melin & Nordqvist, 2000; Mustakallio, Autio, & Zahra, 2002). The use of a collaborative approach to conflict resolution, allowing for discussions on tasks, criticisms and suggestions, impacts of the succession process. This approach provides greater participation of members and teams and improves the quality of decisions made (Paul et al., 2004).

The succession process of family businesses is not always characterized by entirely objective criteria, and it is usually accompanied by conflicts arising from the relationship among family members (Zilber, Maccari, Carneiro-Filho, & Jordan-Nohara, 2010). This is mainly due to the problem based on the interaction between family and company (Bartholomeusz & Tanewski, 2006).

2.1 Implications and future research

This paper presents some limitations because it is a literature review that does not include all theoretical perspectives on the subject. However, the results provide some evidence on the set of variables related to the success of succession planning. Thus, the proposed model may stimulate new empirical research in the field, since concepts around this theme are still fragmented (Gabriel & Bitsch, 2019; Ip & Jacobs, 2006).

Some advances in the current literature can be pointed out, as it treats succession planning not as a variable directly linked to the success of the organization after a succession, but as a strong moderator of the process, reducing relationship conflicts and improving its balance. It is noteworthy that conflict, at this stage, is a critical factor that most compromises business development (De Massis, Chua, & Chrisman, 2008). In this sense, empirical research in the field of family organizations can employ a broad view of conflict, contemplating its direct and/or indirect impacts in all phases of the succession process.

As Molly, Laveren & Deloof (2017) point out, the succession involving the first generation and subsequent generations should be treated differently as there are discrepancies in the process. Thus, future studies may verify the impact of planning on the levels of relationship conflicts in organizations with different generations involved.

Even if the relationship conflict is a type evident in family organizations (Bammens, Voordeckers, & Van Gils, 2011; Caputo & Zarone, 2019), task conflicts and process conflicts can have direct and/or indirect effects on succession and also require greater understanding. New research can deepen the understanding of the effects of governance and planning for these types of conflicts - task and process - including their impact on succession success.

The recent literature shows important findings linking succession with the longevity of family businesses, according to Gabriel and Bitsch (2019), however, it is emerging that there is progress in understanding the phenomenon of conflicts and their impact on succession. Thus, this article contributes to the discussions that seek a better understanding of the complex dynamics that permeate the succession process in family businesses.

3 Conclusion

This paper aimed to identify the implications of the conflict in the succession process in family businesses. As a starting point, we used a theoretical basis centered on the contemporary perspective - which addresses the conflict as a phenomenon that can affect the organization in a positive or negative way. Thus, the literature review explored the complex relationships related to succession, governance, planning and conflict. As a result, we present a series of propositions that provide some evidence on the effects of conflict on the succession process, highlighting the importance of a system of governance and planning that provides balance to the succession process. Residual conflict, in the period after a succession, can also hinder the activities of the next management, however, when properly monitored and managed it can be positive for the organization. The main contribution of this review is the presentation of some clues for future investigations. Thus, new studies can empirically assess the relationships proposed here in order to validate the propositions presented.

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