

# **Primogeniture in Turkish Family Owned Businesses: An examination of daughter succession, the impact of national culture on gendered norms and leadership challenge**

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## **Abstract**

*Family owned and controlled businesses, which may be owned, controlled or operated by various family members, account for an enormous percentage of global employment, revenues and GDP. Although the majority of well-known companies are family owned, research indicates that unfortunately, only thirty percent of family businesses survive to the second generation. Therefore, successful transfer of the business to the next generation is an important issue for the family business literature. However, although succession is a vital issue for Family Owned Businesses (FOBs), the process is unfortunately very gender biased in most societies, with boys being generally favoured over girls so daughters are always excluded as candidates and other women are seldom considered as successors in family businesses. In many cases, especially in certain cultures, female members of the next generation are not even perceived as a viable option. Even in today's rapidly changing business climate, **primogeniture** continues to dominate the value system of family businesses.*

*Primogeniture is an accepted approach to family business succession planning; daughters are only considered for family business succession when all descendants are female or the daughter is the first born. This study aims to identify the reasons behind the primogeniture in Turkish FOBs. The objectives of the study were to examine the influence of attitudes, demographics and cultural assumptions of FOB incumbents on primogeniture and to examine the daughters' exclusion issues in FOBs. In this research study, an interpretivist methodology was adopted to explore, interpret and to understand meanings of knowledge. For this research, qualitative data were gathered via in-depth open-ended interviews with 20 male FOB owners who have at least one daughter. The questions were designed to measure different facets of FOB demographics and culture to understand their effects on the selection process within Turkish FOBs and gender norms in the context of FOB norms, which influence both family members and the business itself.*

*This study investigated daughters' succession in FOBs in Turkey, a developing country where women are less likely than men to engage in entrepreneurial activities and show that gendered norms are still considered when choosing the successor, in other words, primogeniture still dominates the family business succession process.*

**Keywords;** Woman entrepreneurship, Primogeniture, Family Business, Gender, Culture.

## **1. Introduction**

FOBs play a dominant role in all economies (Mazzola, Marchisio, & Astrachan, 2008; Zahra 2003, 2005, 2012; Curimbaba, 2002; Kontinen & Ojala, 2012 ; Schuman, Stutz & Ward, 2010; Adams, Manners, Astrachan & Mazzola, 2004; Pradham & Ranajee, 2012; Kidwell, Hoy, & Ibarreche, 2012; Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 1999 ; Rosenblatt, Mik, Anderson & Johnson, 1985 ) and succession planning is considered as a key theme in the family business literature. In many countries, such commercial enterprises are the main drivers of economic activity, growth and sustainability (Overbeke, Bilimoria & Somers, 2015; Pearson, Carr & Shaw, 2008; Miller, Steier, & Le Breton-Miller, 2003; Miller, Minichili & Corbetta, 2013; Miller, 2014; Wang, 2010; Al-Dajani, Bika, Collins & Swail, 2014). Therefore, these businesses' performance and sustainability is a vital issue for both the business itself and the wider economy.

Family businesses are unique institutions where two social units (i.e. families and businesses) are highly integrated (Harveston, Davis & Lynden, 1997) and in these unique institutions, traditional gender roles are often preserved (Lee, Fitzgerald & Bartkus 2015; Vadnjaj & Zupan, 2011; Moores & Barrett, 2002; Nelson & Levesque, 2007; Curimbaba, 2002). In particular, there is a gender bias when it comes to choosing the successor (Wang, 2010). It is, therefore, important to understand the gender differences occurring during the process of succession.

This is not the first study on gendered perceptions and cultural issues on Turkish FOBs. Karatas-Ozkan, Erdogan and Nicolopoulou (2011) and examined the key drivers, challenges and influences on Turkish women entrepreneurs who actively involved to family businesses. Ufuk and Ozgen (2001) examined the interaction between the business and family life of female entrepreneurs in Turkish FOBs. Recently, Maden (2015) examined the profile of women entrepreneurs in Turkey as a developing country. The current study, however, offers a different perspective on daughter succession implications from the perspective of stewardship,

by drawing attention to the perspectives and interests of incumbents who works together with their daughters. We conducted a multiperspective investigation of the key factors and demographics of incumbents associated with primogeniture; education, location, age and generation and this study contributes to a more coherent understanding of Turkish FOBs' succession process by examining the FOB owners' approach to their daughters' leadership challenge.

Our study offers unique insights on primogeniture and two research questions guided our investigation.

How are the key factors identified by the incumbents related to the primogeniture?

What are the similar and different demographic factors for incumbents related with their primogeniture approaches?

The current study investigates the succession processes involving the transition of leadership from father to daughter, focusing on the primogeniture and examine the factors influence the primogeniture in Turkish FOBs.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Family Owned Business and Succession Process**

The succession process represents one of the most critical events in the family business lifecycle (Bizri, 2016, p.133) and a major part of the FOB research has been dedicated to the exploration of the issues associated with this critical event (Bozer, Levin, & Santora, 2017; Chrisman, Chua, Kellermanns, & Chang, 2007).

Etymologically, the word succession comes from the Latin word 'successionem' meaning "a following, a coming into another's place" (Saxena, 2013). The term succession refers to situations where both the incumbent, as the person who holds the top management position in a family business and who must relinquish that position before another family member can take over, who relinquishes managerial control, and the successor, who takes it over, are family members (i.e. related by blood or by law) (De Massis, Chua, & Chrisman, 2008). Similarly,

succession also refers to the success and sustainability of a family business over the long run (Sorenson, Yu, Brigham, & Lumpkin, 2013). According to Sharma, Chrisman, Pablo & Chua (2001), succession concerns the actions and events that lead to the transition of leadership from one family member to another in family firms. In order to explain these actions and events, Handler (1994) asserts that succession is not simply a single step of handing over the baton. He says it is a multistage process over time, beginning before heirs even enter the business. Therefore, researchers tend to agree that succession is more a process than an event that should be planned carefully (Handler, 1994; Avloniti, Iatridou, Kaloupsis & Vozikis, 2014; Duh, 2014; Schlepffhorst & Moog, 2014; Cadieux, Lorraine & Hugron, 2002; Pardo-del-Val, 2009).

Additionally, leadership succession is one of the most challenging tasks in organisational life as it tests the mettle of the firm by exposing complex relationship issues that may have lain dormant during the firm's day-to-day operations (Zahra & Sharma, 2004). Researchers observe that managerial transmission in FOBs is more delicate and complex than patrimonial transmission (Cadieux et al., 2002; Zahra & Sharma, 2004). In these companies, culture influences ways of being, thinking, and doing, which can affect the role of each family member, as well as how the patrimony is passed on between generations, the choice of the successor, and the predecessor–successor relationship (Barbot, Bayad & Bourgiba, 2004).

Although succession is a vital issue for FOBs, the process is unfortunately very gender biased in most societies, with boys being generally favoured over girls so daughters are always excluded as candidates and other women are seldom considered as successors in family businesses (Wang, 2010; Haberman & Danes, 2007; Harveston et al., 1997; Dumas, 1992; Glover, 2014; Miller et al., 2003; Remery, Matser, & Hans Flören, 2014; Vera & Dean, 2005). In many cases, especially in certain cultures, female members of the next generation are not even perceived as a viable option (Wang, 2010; Miller et al., 2003; Vera & Dean, 2005). Even in today's rapidly changing business climate, primogeniture continues to dominate the value system of family businesses (Francis, 1999; Vera & Dean, 2005; Halkias, Thurman, Smith & Nasan 2011). Thus, while a son is generally expected to join the business, a daughter may only be given a chance, or not even invited (Francis, 1999, p.15).

Succession is a challenge to family businesses for a number of reasons, including the need to address the issue of intergenerational handover. Therefore, it must be considered more broadly than as just a process for identifying people with “the right stuff” (Royer, Simons, Boyd & Rafferty, 2008; Fiegenger et al., 1996). The transfer of management decision authority within the family businesses is critical for the long-term viability of FOBs (Danes, Lee, Amarapunkar,

Stafford, Haynes, & Brewton, 2009; Ward, 1997) so succession is a vital stage for FOB survival (Stavrou, 1999). Successful family business management transfer requires the senior generation to mentor, encourage, and support the upcoming generation as it takes control of the business and its operations (Haberman & Danes, 2007). On the other hand, the existing manager's feeling of immortality and fear of retirement, the lack of appropriate successor candidates, or lack of trust in the next generation's entrepreneurial competence are the main reasons cited to explain why some firms do not think about succession (Pardo-del-Val, 2009, p.167).

## **2.2.The influence of gender dynamics on the succession process**

Before explaining gender-based roles in FOBs, specifically during the succession process, it is necessary to discuss how individuals show gendered or gender-typed differentiations through preferences, identity, characteristics, behaviours, social influences, and cognitions. Several major theories have been proposed to explain gender development (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), particularly social cognitive and cognitive development theories. Social cognitive theory is a learning theory based on the basic premise that people learn by observing others (Bandura, 2001). It posits that the learning environment, individual behaviour and attitudes, beliefs and perceptions (collectively known as person factors) are all key variables that influence trainee development (Bandura, 2002).

Research on gender differences and business practices has focused on strategic management, entrepreneurs, managerial styles, firm bureaucracy, firm performance, and employment relationships (Danes, Stafford & Loy, 2007; Worthley, MacNab, Brislin, Ito & Rose, 2009; Thiruvadi & Huang, 2011). Many researchers have investigated management and entrepreneurial styles by gender (Barrett & Moores, 2009; Moores & Barrett, 2002; Sonfield & Lussier, 2009a, 2009b). The growth of women's entrepreneurship has also created increased interest in research on gender differences and firm performance, with several studies showing performance differences between women- and men-owned businesses (Poggesi, Mari & Vita, 2016; Juma & Sequeira, 2016; Diaz-Garcia & Brush, 2012; Carter, 2000). This body of research has expanded in response to the growing proportion of women in the managerial, entrepreneurial and small business workforce, and their increasing rate of firm creation and small business ownership (Sonfield & Lusier, 2014). However, while more women are seeking entry into male-dominated occupations, the integration of women into positions of authority

within business organisations has achieved only limited success (Poggesi et al., 2016; Juma & Sequeira, 2016)

Although there is a body of literature dealing with gender comparisons of management practices (Poggesi et al., 2016; Moores & Barrett, 2002; Pringle, 2008; Glover & Kaplan, 2009; Kyriakidou, 2012) and another in the field of family business (Curimbaba, 2002; Vadnjal & Zupan, 2010; Kontinen & Ojala, 2010; Schuman et al., 2010; Adams et al., 2004; Pradhan & Ranajee 2012; Zahra, 2003; Kidwell et al., 2012; Chua et al., 1999; Rosenblatt et al., 1985; Zahra, 2012), only a few research studies (Remery et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Danes et al., 2007; Lussier & Sonfield, 2009; Entwisle, Henderson, Short, Bouma & Fengying, 1995; Hamilton, 2013; Danes et al., 2007; Glover, 2014) have focused on gender issues in family businesses.

Remery et al. (2014) analysed to what extent women are involved in the actual succession process in family firms and gender differences in terms of capabilities and ambition. They found few differences between male and female successors in the level of education, although female successors are more likely to be university educated than male successors. However, their results show that there is a clear gender difference regarding ownership; men strive more often for full ownership, whereas women opt for shared ownership, even when controlling for relevant variables such as the presence of children (Remery et al., 2014, p.79). Similarly, Lee et al. (2015) also find that the socialised gender perspective of the business owner is a key contextual construct. Studies investigating opportunities for women in family businesses reveal instances of (veiled or open) discrimination and present proposals to overcome these obstacles to make better use of women's potential (Curimbaba, 2002; Lee et al., 2015; Remery et al., 2014).

Unfortunately, as in their examination of gender role and job preferences, Kaufman and White (2015) state that gender is a stronger predictor of job values than other demographic characteristics and gender egalitarianism plays an important role in a family business like other businesses (Lee et al., 2015). Gender egalitarianism is defined as "the degree to which an organisation or a society minimises gender role differences while promoting gender equality" and emphasises societal norms regarding women's and men's roles (Javidan, Bullough & Dible, 2016; Powell, Francesca & Ling, 2009). Cultures that are higher in gender egalitarianism have a higher proportion of women in positions of authority, more female participation in the labour force, and less sex segregation in employment (Powell et al., 2009). In gender egalitarian cultures, men and women have more freedom to participate in the workplace and in the family,

which translates into higher incomes and higher business leadership positions for women (Constantinidis & Nelson, 2009). Families with more egalitarian cultures and structures are more likely to display a demand for daughter successors (Overbeke & Bilimoria, 2013).

Not only in business, but also within families, the roles and patterns of behaviour are often gender specific (Danes & Olson, 2003). Although sons and daughters are equally well educated, even in management and business, fathers are deeply concerned about whether daughters can effectively manage the demanding tasks associated with the company. Fathers also wish to 'protect' their daughters from the harsh world of having to deal with business management (Lingas, 2013). Such studies refer to family culture and structure that exclude daughters (Barnes, 1988; Curimbaba, 2002; Dumas, 1990; Hollander & Bukowits, 1990). Much research has explored gendered identity in management, generating considerable debate about why women's position in business and society differs from that of men (Barrett & Moores, 2009; Pringle, 2008; Glover & Kaplan, 2009; Kyriakidou, 2012).

Although, in 2002, Astrachan's study (2003) state that women's preference for management in FOB might lead to smoother succession, similarly, Vera and Dean (2005) assert that daughters faced greater challenges than sons in the succession process, majority of studies indicate that women are often not considered as candidates for succession (Remery et al., 2014; Glover, 2014; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016; Al-Dajani et al., 2014). The specific literature indicates that when a daughter takes over the family business, the acceptability of her position is under threat: she is the first to perceive that if a son is present, then he is the "natural" successor, and she is thus constructed as an "invisible" successor (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016; Glover, 2014; Remery et al., 2014). Consequently, as discussed above, the owner and the candidate successor are two main characters of the succession process and the influence of the founder on this process are accepted as a critical factor by researchers (Sonfield and Lussier, 2009a; Zahra, 2012; Gao, Bai & Shi, 2011). As cited by Sonfield and Lussier (2009b, p.101) in a multi-generation family business a generational shadow, shed by the founder, may be cast over the organisation and the critical processes within it. The importance of the founder and the effect on the process will be examined in the previous chapter.

### **2.3. Daughter as a successor in FOBs.**

Researchers have examined the successful integration of offspring into a FOB, whether male specifically or not (Miller et al., 2003; Breton-Miller et al., 2004; Miller et al., 2013; Habbershon & Williams, 1999; Habberman & Danes, 2007; Chua et al., 2003). Several studies

(Remery et al. 2014; Sonfield & Lussier, 2012; Habberman & Danes, 2007; Astrachan, 2003; Dumas, 1992) find that gender differences exist in FOB management succession. Historically, family business configurations focused on the male founder and his male heirs so that although mothers, wives, daughters, and female in-laws are often represented in family trees, they are included without job titles or salaries next to their names (Lyman et al., 1985). As Dumas (1992) points out, it is necessary to study not only the sons in the context of family firm management but also the daughters.

Many family business studies (Miller et al., 2003; Malinen, 2001; Bizri, 2016) focus on sons as successors and their relationship with their fathers as owners. Unfortunately, in family businesses, succession is very much biased by gender with daughters being almost always excluded as candidates (Wang, 2010, p.475). Hence, the FOB literature describes daughters as an untapped resource (Dumas, 1992; Lyman et al., 1985; Francis, 1999), underutilized resource (Dumas, 1990; Dumas, 1992), invisible partners (Martinez Jimenez, 2009; Humphreys, 2013), temporary additions (Martinez Jimenez, 2009), noting how daughters' abilities are generally underestimated, unrecognized, and subsequently under-utilized (Wang, 2010). Humphreys et al., (2013) shows that women's journey to FOB leadership relies on having the right skills and education to manage and lead their family firms. Wang (2010) and Martinez Jimenez (2009) suggest that, in the FOB succession process, daughters are almost always excluded as candidates due to an interaction of macro (sociocultural attitudes to women) and micro (individual and family) factors. However, according to Miller et al. (2003), this preference for accepting an inappropriate candidate while overlooking daughters as FOB successors may be a critical cause of succession failure, particularly for FOB survival beyond one or two generations. Recently, Glover (2014) argues that this gender bias in family businesses may stem from broader societal attitudes and cultural expectations of their gendered roles in society.

The FOB literature generally focuses on obstacles and barriers facing women in FOBs, particularly invisibility and primogeniture (Martinez Jimenez, 2009, Wang, 2010; Dumas, 1998, Overbeke & Bilimoria, 2013; Gilding, Gregory & Cosson, 2015). Women are rarely considered as a successor because of primogeniture, with the firstborn male child being expected to become the successor (Martinez Jimenez, 2009; Overbeke et al., 2015). Various studies have examined primogeniture issues (Ward, 1997; Garcia-Alvarez et al., 2002; Francis, 1999; Wang, 2010; Humphreys, 2013), demonstrating that the oldest son is seen as the primary

successor candidate. Primogeniture is an accepted approach to family business succession planning; daughters are only considered for family business succession when all descendants are female or the daughter is the first born (Garcia-Alvarez et al., 2002; Curimbaba 2002; Francis, 1999). Hiebl (2015) even finds that, in some cases, if there is no son in the family, the family business may be sold rather than passed on to the daughter. In family businesses, resistance to succession from incumbents is low, because even when children assume business leadership, they are expected to consult with their father and show him respect (Yan & Sorenson, 2006; Gupta & Levenburg, 2012).

According to Philbrick and Fitzgerald (2007), barriers to daughter succession interact at both the macro (sociocultural) and micro (individual and family) levels. At the macro level, broad societal attitudes toward women and cultural expectations of their gendered roles in society and family are important barriers (Ward, 2011). When daughters are involved in family businesses, the first concern is that the daughter's assumed desire to become a mother and raise children while at the same time holding their position in the family business and working long hours may prevent them from raising a family, which can raise doubts about her own identity and conflict with societal expectations that she should produce offspring (Cole, 1997; Salganicoff, 1990). As Cole (1997) notes, there is a belief that women in the family businesses continue to struggle with the traditional limitations imposed on them by others, with a general assumption that they need flexible schedules, have difficulty in reconciling private and professional spaces, struggle with child care, and are not always willing to advance in their careers (Curimbaba, 2002). Masuo, Fong, Yanagida & Cabal (2001) and Philbrick and Fitzgerald (2007) also suggest that work-to-family conflict may be perceived by women as a lack of support from the organisation, making life particularly complex for women who manage both their family and a business.

As can be seen in this chapter, traditional cultural values and gender-based norms are dominant in family firms. Kizildag (2013) stress this issue as in which traditional structures are strong and protected, female family members are kept out of the business. Beyond the traditional structure, parents feel a need to 'protect' their daughters (more than sons) and avoid placing them in the position of having to deal with the problems that come with managing a business (Hollander & Bukowitz, 1990). Hence, Dumas (1992) finds that daughters are typically brought into the family business to do "gender congruent" work, usually on a temporary basis. However, crises (e.g. health or economic problems) tend to increase the likelihood that families

(and daughters themselves) consider the prospect of daughters working in the firm (Dumas, 1992).

#### **2.4. Stewardship Theory and Succession Process**

Stewardship theory offers a contrasting perspective to agency theory (Corbetta & Salvato, 2004), which highlights the possibility of goal commitment between owners and managers (Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson, 1997).

One of the main arguments of stewardship theory is that the owning family has a crucial impact in shaping the 'model of man' prevailing within the organisation, whether the self-serving, economically rational man of agency theory, or stewardship theory's self-actualising, collective-serving man (Vallejo-Martos & Puentes-Poyatos (2014). Additionally, as indicated by Davis, Allen and Hayes (2010), stewardship theory applies to the family business because the leadership of the family business can act independently of the family that owns the organisational wealth. The family firm is conceptualised as a dual system with the properties of both a family and a business (Whiteside & Herz-Brown, 1991), so most models developed to explain family businesses suggest a dual rather than a single system (Stafford et al., 1999). For instance, Donaldson (1990) points out that agency theory is one-sided because it examines an individual's moral and collective behaviour while ignoring worker loyalty, pride, and identification with the organisation's mission and goals. Therefore, stewardship is considered as a capability of family businesses by the authors (Le Breton Miller & Miller, 2015). Linking stewardship theory to family business, this study argues that stewardship FOB owners dominate the FOB culture and succession process by his/her stewardship culture.

Stewardship literature suggests moving from an agency relationship toward a stewardship relationship built on trust, alignment of goals, and organisational identification. Identification with an organisation and its values is strongly related to commitment in that individuals who consider themselves as belonging to an organisation are much more likely to form stewardship relationships than others that do not identify themselves with their organisation (Toivonen & Toivonen, 2014, p.1361), which is strongly related to succession as well. As Handler (1994) notes, the greater the commitment to family business perpetuation as a family value, the more likely it is that the individual will have a positive succession experience (except when the commitment is to business means rather than business ends). Vallejo (2009, p.384) also suggests that the identification level of non-family employees positively and significantly influences the profitability and the survival or continuity of family-owned businesses. Thus,

stewardship theory holds that people with a high level of identification with the in which they work are more likely to behave as stewards in their relationship with the principal than people with a lower level of identification (Vallejo-Martos & Puentes-Poyatos, 2014, p.787).

## **2.5.FOB ownership and effects on the succession process**

Family business ownership is probably the most dominant ownership structure found in many national contexts and a key characteristic that distinguishes the structure of family governance from that of non-family firms (Chung & Chan, 2012; Dow & McGuire, 2016). This leads family members to preserve and control their values and beliefs, and disseminate these to other family members (Zahra, 2012; Gupta & Levenburg, 2012). Studies also indicate that, in family businesses, family ownership and family leadership are key control mechanisms (Gómez-Mejía, Nuñez-Nickel, & Gutierrez, 2001; Jiang & Peng, 2010; Villalonga & Amit, 2006) for both succession process and the performance (Lissoni, Pereira, Almeida & Serra, 2010; Ward, 1997). Additionally, family business owners' succession intention will not only be solely affected by their wills but also by the institutional environment (Zhou, Hu, Yao & Qin, 2016) like culture, capital market characteristics and legal frameworks (Dow & McGuire, 2016)

Most of the literature on family business shows that founders intend to continue their business through next-generation family members: children first, followed by other family members (Hartel, Bozer & Levin, 2009; Garcia-Alvarez et al., 2002). However, family members often hold all the key leadership positions, often chair the board of directors or serve as board members to control their family firms, frequently preventing non-family members from taking key leadership positions (Lipman, 2010; Chu, 2011). Therefore, non-family members are unlikely to hold leadership positions in FOBs (Ward, 1997). Thus, family descendants are the first option for a founder's succession (Garcia-Alvarez et al., 2002). Family leaders agree that the best successor is someone who wants the job and has the trust and the respect of family members and employees (Chrisman et al., 2009).

Similarly, family-firm founders exhibit stronger requirements for control and are less likely to delegate power so family firms tend to be centralised and controlled by the founder's beliefs (Brice & Jones, 2008). Uhlaner, Hoy, Eddleston and Kellermanns (2012) use the term "family management" to contrast with "professional management". Although some studies find that, in family businesses, family ownership and family leadership are key control mechanisms (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2001; Jiang & Peng, 2010; Villalonga & Amit, 2006), recently, family

business groups are starting to introduce diversity of ownership and management configurations (Chung & Chan, 2012). This issue was examined by Villalonga and Amit (2010) and their results show that founding families retain control and give the firm a competitive advantage, whereas non-founding families and individuals seem to act exclusively in their own interest. According to Huang, Ding and Kao (2009), family firms are also less likely to seek external sources of information due to the strong social ties within the organisation, which supports Chung and Chan (2012). Miller et al. (2013) investigated the choice between a family business owned leader or non-family owned, finding that family member leaders do better than non-family leaders when firms are smaller and family ownership is more concentrated; however, they perform less well than non-family leaders when firms are larger and family ownership is more diffuse.

Some family businesses suffer from a lack of human resources because parents tend to offer investment opportunities to their children (Lubatkin, Ling & Schulze, 2007), even if they have insufficient skills for international entrepreneurship and even though hiring the right person is accepted as one of the most important functions of human resource management (Busser, 1996; Collings & Wood, 2009). However, in terms of ownership and management, there is significant evidence that family businesses are quite reluctant to accept non-family ownership (Vadnjal & Zupan, 2011). In minority-owned family firms, however, the preference for hiring family members may be culturally rooted and not based on business needs alone (Shinnar, Cho & Rogoff, 2013).

### **3. Method**

One of the main reasons for choosing this daughters' succession process as a research issue is that in FOBs, successor selection is very much biased by gender, with daughters being usually excluded as candidates (Wang, 2010). Therefore, an interpretivist and social constructivist philosophies are used to assess FOB members' own perceptions that they construct, in order to able to examine daughter succession process.

From an interpretivist perspective, the social world of management and business is too complex to be formulated in natural science theories and laws (Walliman, 2011). Interpretivism also argues that are many truths and meanings of a simple fact, with several factors affecting the nature of individuals, such as differences in individual living standards, social and cultural environment, or personality and family groups (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012; Johnson

& Christensen, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the literature suggests that succession encompasses many activities. These include training the successor from childhood onwards (Sharma, Chrisman & Chua, 2003), getting information about the family and business, becoming familiar with family culture (Cabrera-Suarez et al., 2011), and selecting and training the successor in appropriate skills and experience to lead the organisation into its next phase (Dyck, Starke, Mischke, & Mauws, 2002). Social constructivism and interpretive research must begin with the assumption that access to reality passes through social constructions such as language and shared meanings (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p.140). Both perspectives hold that reality is unique to each individual and to the manner in which each individual, given their own unique set of circumstances and life experiences, constructs, experiences, and/or interprets their world (Quinlan, 2011, p.13).

This research adopts a qualitative approach since this approach is generally most suited to gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or situation under study (Huff & Smith, 2008). Following an interpretivist philosophy as part of the social constructivist perspective, this action research data is collected either in collaboration with the research participants, namely the FOB owners, or by the participants themselves in order to understand the cultural context and to bring about direct and immediate practical change in the context of the research (Andrews, 2012).

### **3.1.Data Collection**

This study collected data from family businesses through semi-structured interviews with each company's owner and daughter. While structured interviews have a formalised set of questions, semi-structured interviews are flexible, allowing the interviewer to raise new questions during the interview according to the interviewee's responses (Shaw & Gould, 2001). As defined by Kvale and Brinkman (2009), a semi-structured qualitative research interview aims at obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena. In this study, semi-structured qualitative research interviews were used to obtain the FOB owner's opinions about selecting his daughter as a successor in order to interpret their considerations on FOB succession. In general, a frequent form of participant engagement in the semi-structured interview is intended to achieve clarification and understanding, and engaging for clarification ensures, as much as possible, accurate interpretation (Galletta, 2013, p.78).

### **3.2.Data Analysis**

For the purposes of this study, family-owned and managed organisations were defined as those where 51% or more of the business was controlled by the family, decisions about management or ownership were influenced by family members, and two or more members of the immediate family (i.e. father, mother, daughter or son) were employed and actively participating in the firm's management (Dumas, 1992). While FOB researchers use various forms of this definition, the common factor is that the FOBs are managed and controlled by family members.

In individual interviews, 20 fathers told their succession stories. The interviews were designed to allow participants to reflect and select content relevant to themselves and their experiences. The researcher conducted the interviews on a one-to-one basis. The language spoken was Turkish, the main language of the researcher and all interview partners. Interviews varied in length from 50 to 60 minutes, depending on the length of the participants' explanations. Two sets of open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were prepared by the researchers to understand the participants' opinions about succession under the influence of Turkish national culture.

From each company, the first target group of interview partners were female successor candidates who were actively involved in their family's business. The second group of interview partners were the fathers of first target group who are still actively working in the business. In individual interviews, 20 fathers and 20 daughters told their succession stories. The qualitative design of this research presented the voices of fathers and daughters as family business incumbents and successors respectively. The interviews were designed to allow participants to reflect and select content relevant to themselves and their experiences. The researcher conducted the interviews on a one-to-one basis during spring 2015. The language spoken was Turkish, the main language of the researcher and all interview partners. Interviews varied in length from 50 to 60 minutes, depending on the length of the participants' explanations.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1.FOB owner and daughter as a successor

In order to understand FOB owners' approaches about choosing daughter as a successor, they were asked a couple of questions. First, they were asked (**Appendix 1, Question 1**) **Is there a certain successor for the leadership of the company? If succession is expected, has a date been set or announced?**

We classified answers as a "Certain Successor" under the six subheadings; (1) Daughter, even though she has an eldest brother, (2) Daughter, as an eldest child, (3) Daughter, since there is no other option, (4) Son, as an eldest kid, (5) Son, even though he has an eldest sister, (6) Son in law.

Four owners, who has an eldest son, show to much desire for to leave their business to their sons but, in two business, since their boys' decide to choose another carrier, and due to sector (jewellery and pastry) and their sons' low interest, daughters were chosen as a successor. 2 FOB owners who has an eldest daughter/s and youngest son, want to hand over his business to their eldest daughters without considering their youngest son. Company 19's owner also tried to direct his daughter away from their family business as he wanted to hand over the business to his son However, the latter's lack of interest gave the daughter an opportunity, who seems to work with great enthusiasm despite knowing that she has no chance of taking over the business. Results also show that family members' relationships and the relationship with the father motivate daughters to work in their father's FOB.

**Table 1. Daughters were chosen as a successor, instead of eldest brother.**

<b>FOB Owners</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Generation</b>
O4	52	University	Kitchenware	Central Anatolia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O10	53	University	Furniture	Northern Region	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O15	66	High School	Bakery	Aegean Region	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O19	71	Primary School	Jewellery	Northern Region	1 <sup>st</sup>

When we look at the FOB owners' responds, 6 owners decided to leave their business to their daughter without any doubt, however they do have only daughters and they do not have any other choice. Therefore, these results do not help to identify owners' approach about primogeniture.

On the other hand, when we look at the responds of other FOB owners, who has oldest son, want to hand over his business to their son. 3 owners even though they have an oldest daughter, want to hand over his business to their son. They both stated that even though they both have daughters, they desired to make their son a new leader after them. At one company, even though the daughter is the eldest child, she was not considered a viable successor by her father because the business is in farming.

Surprisingly, in one case, even though he has three daughters want to leave their business to his biggest son in law.

When we look at Table 2. FOB owners; they think their daughter will be able to manage their organisations, however, they think their business sector is not suitable for daughters.

**Table 2. Daughters excluded due to sector.**

<b>FOB Owners</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Generation</b>
O2	72	High School	Supermarket	Aegean Region	2 <sup>nd</sup>
012	55	University	Construction	Istanbul	2 <sup>nd</sup>
016	64	High School	Sunflower Oil	Thrace Region	1 <sup>st</sup>

As an overall consideration of the first question; FOB owners' selected successors and reasons are shown below.

**Table 3. Selected successors with reasons.**

<b>Next Successor selected by the FOB owner</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Daughter, even though she has an eldest brother	20%
Daughter, as an eldest child	10%
Daughter, since there is no other option	30%

Son, as an eldest kid	20%
Son, even though he has an eldest sister	15%
Son in law	5%

As an overall analysis; if the owner has an eldest son they do not think to give any chance to their daughters. According to primogeniture; daughters are only considered for family business succession when all descendants are female or the daughter is the first born. Results showed that daughters were generally preferred as a successor when all descendants are female or firstborn son do not consider to take over the business. On the other hand, when we look at the results, one of the most interesting decision was given by the owners was to hand over his business to his son, even though they have an eldest daughter.

#### 4.2.FOB Owners' Gendered assumptions

In another question (**Appendix 1; Question 2**), FOB owners were asked, **whether gender makes any difference when evaluating the successor and how?**

Like previous quotes, the majority of FOB owners think the business life is not suitable for a woman. As an overall consideration of the question 2, eleven out of twelve FOB owners state that gender is an important factor for choosing a successor, because some of them state the importance of the sector and some mentioned the regional cultural characteristics. On the other hand, nine interview partners did not agree with evaluating gender while considering their successor, instead stating that they just look at talent.

According to interview results, FOBs demographics who did not agree with evaluating gender while considering their successor as follows. (Table 4)

**Table 4. Gender is not considered while choosing the successor.**

FOB Owners	Age	Education	Sector	Location	Generation
O3	59	University	Textile	Central Anatolia	1 <sup>st</sup>
O6	63	University	Transformer	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>

O7	54	Master	Construction	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O8	57	University	Chemicals	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O10	53	University	Furniture	Northern Region	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O13	58	PhD	Chemical	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O14	71	Master	Transformer	Aegean Region	2 <sup>nd</sup>
O17	51	University	Olive Oil	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O20	57	PhD	Smart Card	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>

### 4.3. Daughter as a successor

As another question, in order to understand more in terms of gendered assumptions, FOB owners were asked (Appendix 1; Question 3) **If you had an older son, would you have chosen your daughter as the successor? Why?**

To be able to evaluate FOB owners' gendered norms, when we look at the quotes; the majority (14 out of 20) leaders agree upon to not to choose their daughter as a successor if he has an eldest son. O2 and O12 think it is a succession rule and they don't do it. O12 also stressed the importance of the sector. O4, O10 and O15, even though they will hand over their businesses to their daughters, they don't think it is fair and added, if their sons accepted to be the next leader, they wouldn't have chosen their daughters as a successor. Moreover, O10, O11 and O19 stated that not only them no one would choose their youngest daughter if she has an eldest son.

Rest of six owners agree upon the importance of the capabilities and performance, they think that the gender is not important for choosing a successor. They think, they would choose their youngest daughter as a successor, if she has sufficient characteristics, experience and talent.

In order to be able to understand the demographics of the leaders who would choose their youngest daughter as a successor, if she has sufficient characteristics, we analysed their demographics below in Table 5.

**Table 5. FOB Owners, who would choose their youngest daughter.**

FOB Owners	Age	Education	Sector	Location	Generation
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O5	68	University	Metal	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O6	63	University	Transformer	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O7	54	Master	Construction	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O8	57	University	Chemicals	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O17	51	University	Olive&Olive Oil	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O20	57	PhD	Smart Card	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>

Interestingly, interview results show that all the owners who would choose their youngest daughter as a next leader if she has sufficient characteristics and experience are the first generation of their businesses. As an another indicator, their education level is considerable higher than who never choose his daughter as a next leader if he had an older son.

#### **4.4.Turkey as a favourable country for woman entrepreneurs**

Finally, 20 FOB owners were asked (Appendix 1, Question 4) **Do you think Turkey is a favourable country for woman managers? Why?**

When asked to evaluate Turkey as a favourable country for women managers, 4 out of 20 fathers stressed location and think in some regions business life is not easy for a woman. On the other hand, 9 FOB owners think Turkey is a very favourable country for woman entrepreneurs. Demographics of these two different groups are shown in Table 6. and Table 7.

**Table 6. Turkey is not a favourable country for woman entrepreneurs**

<b>FOB Owners</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Generation</b>
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O6	63	University	Transformer	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O7	54	Master	Construction	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O8	57	University	Chemicals	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O11	65	High School	Catering	Istanbul	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O13	58	PhD	Chemical	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O14	71	Master	Transformer	Aegean Region	2 <sup>nd</sup>
O15	66	High School	Bakery	Aegean Region	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O17	51	University	Olive Oil	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O20	57	PhD	Smart Card	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>

**Table 7. Turkey is a favourable country for woman entrepreneurs.**

<b>FOB Owners</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Generation</b>
O1	69	University	Jewellery	Aegean region	2 <sup>nd</sup>
O2	72	High School	Supermarket	Aegean Region	2 <sup>nd</sup>
O3	59	University	Textile	Central Anatolia	1 <sup>st</sup>
O4	52	University	Kitchenware	Central Anatolia	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O5	68	University	Metal	Aegean Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O9	73	High School	Newspaper	Istanbul	1 <sup>st</sup>
O10	53	University	Furniture	Northern Region	3 <sup>rd</sup>
O12	55	University	Construction	Istanbul	2 <sup>nd</sup>
O16	64	High School	Sunflower Oil	Thrace Region	1 <sup>st</sup>
O18	62	Primary School	Carpet	Central Anatolia	2 <sup>nd</sup>
O19	71	Primary School	Jewellery	Northern Region	1 <sup>st</sup>

Results show that, FOBs in large and modern cities, like Istanbul, Izmir (In Aegean Region) think Turkey is a favourable city for woman entrepreneurs. On the other hand, FOBs, in Central

Anatolia and Northern Region on Turkey tend to be thought of as not favourable for woman entrepreneurs. One of the other demographic factors that affect this assumption can be seen as education. Interview results show how the education level of FOB owner may be relevant characteristics determining their vision.

#### **4.5. The FOB family and daughter interaction in FOB**

One of the family-specific factors affecting succession is motivation from the family. The literature emphasises the importance of education and experience for daughters to gain leadership positions (Kaslow, 2006; Dumas, 1992; Vera and Dean, 2005; Wang, 2010) and Gallo and Point (1994) find that the most successful international family firms are those whose successors have education and work experience outside their home country as well as outside their company. In several cases in this study, the daughters reported that they were encouraged by their family to gain education and experience. This generally had an important facilitating effect on succession.

The reflective, semi-structured interviews allowed the daughter participants to share, in their own words, their perceptions and understandings of their experiences that led to their current positions of leadership in their family businesses. The second interview question (Appendix 2, Question 2) asked, "*What kind of work experience do you have? Did you work outside the family business? If yes, why did you leave? What do you bring to the family business as a result of this work? Did the family business encourage you in outside work experience? Why or why not?*" Participants were encouraged to say as much as they wanted before further probing questions were asked.

In a number of cases in this study, the daughters reported that they were encouraged by their family to gain education and experience. Some (D3, D19) reported that they have an outside experience even though they were not encouraged, while some (D17, D20) reported they don't have, even though, they were encouraged. Such daughters, who represent 50% of the sample, as can be seen on the table, have very well-educated families.

Table 7. Family structure of motivated successors.

<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Run by generation</i>	<i>Father's Education/age</i>	<i>Mother's education</i>
1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	University / 52	High School
4	3 <sup>rd</sup>	University / 52	Primary School
7	1 <sup>st</sup>	Master degree / 54	University
8	1 <sup>st</sup>	University / 57	University
10	3 <sup>rd</sup>	University / 53	High School
12	1 <sup>st</sup>	University / 55	University
13	1 <sup>st</sup>	PhD / 58	University
14	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Master / 71	University
17	1 <sup>st</sup>	University / 51	High School
20	1 <sup>st</sup>	PhD / 57	Master

On the other hand, ten participants reported that they were not encouraged by their families to gain outside experience. As can be mentioned in literature review section paternalism occurs in a hierarchical relationship between a “superior” and “subordinate” who occupy different roles and the role of the “superior” is provide care, protection and guidance to the “subordinate” in both work and non-work domains (Mussolino & Calabro, 2014). In a broad sense, in the FOB context, paternalist FOB owners seem to protect daughters not only from the outside experience but also working life. Additionally, as can be seen at Table, 70% of daughters’ who hasn’t got any outside experience works in FOBs, the only one has a university graduated father, rest of those 70%’s father is graduated from high school and lower. When we look at those 70%’s mothers’ education, the highest degree is high school graduation.

Table 8. Family education of daughters, who did not motivated by their families.

<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Run by generation</i>	<i>Father's education/age</i>	<i>Mother's education</i>
2	2 <sup>nd</sup>	High School / 72	Primary School
3	1 <sup>st</sup>	University / 59	High School
5	1 <sup>st</sup>	University / 68	University
6	1 <sup>st</sup>	University	High School
9	1 <sup>st</sup>	High School	Primary School
11	2 <sup>nd</sup>	High School / 65	Primary School
15	3 <sup>rd</sup>	High School / 66	High School

16	1 <sup>st</sup>	High School / 64	High School
18	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Primary School / 62	Primary School
19	1 <sup>st</sup>	Primary School / 71	Primary School

Family characteristics influence the successor's development because they affect the quality of the relationship between predecessor and successor, and the level of family commitment to the business. This section has shown that uneducated family business owners do not tend to send their daughters another company to gain outside experience whereas educated families support and encourage their daughters to do this.

In 12 cases, either under their family's influence or through their own decision, early commitment during childhood or as the basis of their educational choice was reported as a motivation factor by the daughters. During interviews conducted for this study, daughters who work at their family business made the statements that demonstrate the research approach and provide an induction for the topic the study will investigate. Quotes demonstrating early commitment attributes in twelve interview partners can be found below.

Table 9 gives an overview of the early committed daughters' motivation issues. In a number of cases, there was a clear interest in the activities of the family business. Additionally, some reported a general interest in the business, which influences their decisions.

Six interview partners also expressed the feeling a connection between employees. Interview partners D1, D3, D5, D7, and D13 reported feeling the father's wish early for the child to join the family business. D5 reported having felt a sense of responsibility and obligation to the family. D4 made their decision rather early, as their decisions also depended on their older brother's decision. D11 mentioned the need to combine work and child-care demands as reasons for considering joining the family business. D11 stressed the financial issue as a motivation factor and having more holiday was also stressed by D5 as a pushing factor to the business. The comments of D3, D6, and D9 demonstrated their great respect for their fathers' sacrifice for the business, highlighting the importance of their fathers' efforts to enable them to run the businesses, and his necessity to push them to work there.

Table 9. Early committed daughters' motivation factors in FOBs.

<b>Company</b>	<b>Motivation issues</b>
1	- Education - Helping the father
3	-Education -Father's entrepreneurial characteristics -Helping the father
5	-Education -Family's encouragement -Absence of another successor -Making money easily, -Make holiday more
6	-Admiring father's sacrifice to their business
7	-Giving more confidence and trust by the family -Role model family members
8	-Giving more confidence and trust by the family -Growing up in the business
9	-Helping to her father
11	-Education -Making money easily -Need to combine work and childcare
12	-Reducing father's workload, -Admiring father's sacrifice to their business
13	-Father's strong enthusiasm to their business and his entrepreneurial characteristics
14	-Education -Father's great entrepreneurial characteristics -General interest in the business
17	Encouraged by father, -Feeling father's high trust -Father's great entrepreneurial characteristics -Growing up in the business

#### 4.6.Father–daughter relationship and location preferences

## 5. Conclusions

The aim of the current study was to better understand daughter succession and the succession decision process in Turkish FOBs from the perspectives of the incumbent, using the principles of stewardship theory. This study examined the nature of such family businesses in an attempt to explain why some family businesses in Turkey accept daughters as a successor easily and others do so with difficulty.

The conceptual framework of the study presented key drivers and challenges identified in the extant literature and introduced issues of succession, drivers, contributions, and challenges in selecting daughters' as a successor. Drawing on empirical material collected through semi-structured interviews with participant FOB owners, the study highlighted the importance of FOB owners' demographics in the daughter succession process in Turkish FOBs.

The current analysis revealed several gendered assumptions stemming from the business culture. The succession process, especially a daughter's succession, was deeply influenced by the owner's gendered attitudes. It comes as no surprise that several incumbent FOB owners declared that gender is an important factor in selecting a successor. Majority of FOB owners, who were all male, acknowledged the importance of gender while evaluating the successor selection process. They stressed the difficulties of being a woman in business life, seeing marriage and motherhood as barriers to women's employment, and assuming that business life in Turkey is a man's world. Additionally, some owners considered the business sector of their company as a barrier for women, claiming that, as well as gender being an important factor for evaluating the successor, the company's business sector also plays an important role.

The most important and interesting result is that some owners did not agree with evaluating gender while considering their successor, claiming that they just look at talent. This appears to be related to their educational backgrounds rather than cultural norms because two of them had PhDs, two had master degrees while the other four had all graduated from universities.

This study shows that gendered norms are still considered when choosing the successor, in other words, primogeniture still dominates the family business succession process. Daughters, if they have an elder brother who does not choose another career, are not considered for leadership roles in a family business. However, in some cases, it was observed that when first-born sons reject the family business as a career option, daughters are considered as a successor. Additionally, sometimes, the sector that the family operates in is considered unsuitable for a man by the son so it opens up daughter's succession path. However, a majority of owners tend to make their sons their next leader. In terms of entrepreneurship characteristics, research indicates that some cultures are more supportive of entrepreneurship activities. For instance, entrepreneurship tends to be lower in collectivist cultures, in which group thinking may outweigh individual initiative so few individuals would put their entrepreneurial ambitions into action. This research's interview results show that first generation family business culture leaders more easily accept a daughter as a successor without considering gender as a critical

factor. This is because the founder of the family business often displays characteristics of an entrepreneurial personality.

The interviews with the fathers also demonstrated that their first concern about their daughter's succession stems from their guardian instinct, thinking that business life is unsuitable for their daughters. While a majority of fathers think that Turkey is an unfavourable country for working women, a majority also emphasise that the region within Turkey also matters. While major cities like Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, or western Turkey more generally, are suitable for women in business life, Anatolia and northern Turkey are considered unfavourable to women by both daughters and fathers. Regarding FOB employees' views, this study demonstrates that there is no general trend across FOBs in Turkey. Even within the same city or region, the employees from separate FOBs had different attitudes regarding the daughter's succession.

In preparing for fieldwork, an interesting finding was that whereas all the women contacted for an interview agreed to participate, it was difficult to persuade fathers to do so, which highlights a generational difference regarding FOB privacy. Similarly, most FOB owners did not give information about their FOB's rules. Even though they were assured of keeping the information safe, they feel their FOB like their own family and privacy is considered as their safety. This study confirms that a majority of Turkish families are still paternalistic, especially regarding their daughters, both within the family and in their family business. While education, work experience, interpersonal relations, foreign language skills, and family ties are push factors for the fathers, work experience, recognition by employees, and interpersonal relations are push factors for the daughters. On the other hand, sector and location maybe both pull and push factor for daughters, depending on the circumstances.

Regarding entrepreneurship for the new generation of Turkish women, a majority of the fathers believe there are no limits to what their daughters can achieve in business life. Due to being well-prepared, educated, and experienced, Turkish women entrepreneurs no longer feel any differences from their male counterparts in business life. However, even though FOB owner and family accept their daughters' capacities and capabilities for managing the organisation, the majority of them agree with Turkey's paternalistic environment, as well as cultural factors for accepting daughters as an entrepreneur.

This study investigated daughters' succession in FOBs in Turkey, a developing country where women are less likely than men to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

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