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**FAMILY FIRMS: WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES AND  
ENTREPRENEURS**

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND WORK-RELATED STRESS

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## INTRODUCTION

All western economic systems are composed of a great number of family firms. Family firms are major contributors to economic development, growth and world economies (Zahra, Hayton, & Salvato, 2004), however, family relationships in family firms may represent cause of the stress for employees and entrepreneurs, and cause of the drop of the performance and ultimately, may bring to the failure of the business. In spite of this, a consideration of the potential effects of family characteristics and family involvement is largely absent from the literature (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

“The family should be included as a variable in organizational research, inasmuch as it influences behavior at the individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis. While there is considerable research on work-family issues, it typically views work and family as separate domains. Granted that one domain may influence behavior in the other (for example, family leave policies in the workplace), nevertheless they are studied as separate systems, with individuals making transitions in their roles from one system to the other. The family has been neglected in organizational research in the context where family and organizational domains overlap significantly or may even be isomorphic. The term *family business* is typically used to define organizations in which the behavior of firms and the actors within them are influenced by the familial relationships that are part of the organizational landscape.” (Dyer, 2003, pp. 401).

Family is a missing variable in organizational research, ignoring the family relationships, especially in family firms, can mask important relations for the evaluation of work and business that entrepreneurs and HR counselors should

consider.

Based on the relevance of this topic, the general aim of this dissertation is to gain more insight into the phenomenon of family firms, the well-being of employees and entrepreneurs and the role of family relationships at work considering its consequences for individuals and organizations. These objectives have been pursued by means of three empirical studies presented in the three chapters respectively.

*Chapter 1* focuses on comparing the employees of family and non-family firms to identify clearly the distinctive features. Some of job demands and resources may play a role in distinguishing of the psychosocial functioning of family and non-family firms for work related stress. The study presented in chapter 1, also focuses on gender role accomplishment in this type of businesses.

*Chapter 2* focuses on the Job demands-resources model and on the role of the emotional experience as an important variable in attempt to understand whether there is a different pattern of relationships in the model depending on the fact that the people work with or without kin.

*Chapter 3* focuses on the effects of work and family demands and resources on well-being of entrepreneurs, in terms of need for recovery after work, examining the differences between entrepreneurs of family and non-family firms.

Finally, general conclusion integrates and discusses the key findings of the

three studies.

The current dissertation has been written with the supervision of the Prof. Marc van Veldhoven, on the basis of the work carried out during the months spent at the Tilburg University.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Family firms: threat or buffer for work-related stress**

*Abstract.* Nel Capitolo 1 ci si propone di esplorare le percezioni delle caratteristiche del lavoro, in termini di domande e risorse, dei lavoratori di imprese familiari che hanno legami di parentela con la famiglia proprietaria per comprendere quali si configurano come punti di forza/debolezza o come caratteristiche distintive comparando tali percezioni con quelle dei lavoratori di imprese non-familiari senza legami di parentela al lavoro. Si vogliono inoltre esplorare le differenze di genere in entrambi i gruppi. Lo studio è stato condotto su 477 lavoratori (219 di imprese familiari, 258 di imprese non-familiari). Tutte le misure utilizzate sono scale del QEEW (Van Veldhoven & Meijman, 1994; Pace et al. 2010). I risultati confermano parzialmente le ipotesi e offrono interessanti spunti di riflessione per problematiche ancora poco affrontate in una letteratura ancora ricca di contraddizioni.

*Keywords:* Family and Non-Family Firms, Job Demand and Resources, Well-being of employees.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (up to 249 employees) play an important role in all Western economic systems. SMEs are often family firms, a common definition of family firms are a business in which the owner and at least one other family member work (Ward, 1987; Ward & Aronoff, 1990). Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999, p. 25) define the family firm as: “a business governed and/or managed with the intention to shape and pursue the vision of the business held by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family or a small number of families in a manner that is potentially sustainable across generations of the family or families.”

SMEs as well as large enterprises can be affected by stress. Indeed, stress can potentially affect any workplace and any worker, irrespective of the size of the company, field of activity, or form of employment contract or relationship. In fact, not all work places and not all workers are necessarily affected (European Framework for Psychosocial Risk Management at the Workplace, 2004).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as a process of constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands or conflicts appraised as taxing or exceeding one's resource.

According to the European Commission (2004) tackling stress at work can lead to greater efficiency and improved occupational health and safety, with consequent economic and social benefits for companies, workers and society as a whole. Stress is a state, which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions and which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with the requirements or expectations placed on them.

Work-related stress can be caused by different factors such as work content, work environment, poor communication, etc. Peculiar signs indicating problems of work-related stress may be observed in complex organization leading to consequences like high absenteeism or staff turnover, frequent interpersonal conflicts or complaints by workers.

Under framework directive 89/391, all employers have a legal obligation to protect the occupational safety and health of workers. This duty also applies to problems of work-related stress in so far as they entail a risk to health and safety. All workers have a general duty to comply with protective measures determined by the employer. In Italy this obligation has been accepted in D.lgs 81/08.

Psychosocial risks are defined as those aspects of work design and the organization and management of work, and their social and environment contexts, which have the potential for causing psychological, social or physical harm (Cox & Griffith, 1995). Psychosocial risks have been identified as a top priority and, especially, as the key challenge in modern occupational safety and health management (EU-OSHA, 2007). So, psychosocial risks factors may be conceived as job characteristics that can have an impact on health of employees, on organizational well-being and, in consequence, on business. Interpersonal relationships, role in the organization, career development, workload can be considered some of psycho-social risks factor (Fraccaroli & Balducci, 2011; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Many scholars have analyzed psychosocial risk factors in different work context and in different occupations (Costa, 1995; Sperandio, 1978; Kompier, 1996; Cox, Griffith & Cox, 1996; Vanderberghe & Huberman, 1999; Deschamps, Paganon-Badinier, Marchand & Merle, 2003;



Dormann & Zijlstra, 2003) but there are few studies specifically tapping on family firms.

The present study, aims at exploring the different perceptions of job characteristics between those who work in firms hold by they own families and those who don't.

According to the *Family Firm Institute*, 80-90% of the enterprises in the world are family ruled. For obvious relevance and number of SMEs in the European market, since 1994 the EU exposed a high socio-economic risk associated at the phenomenon of generational turnover and at bankrupt. The EU has taken measures as the *Small Business Act* (2008) with the purpose of increasing and sustaining the entrepreneurial skills in small enterprises and consequently in family businesses which one of the majority of small enterprises. Family firms seem to have distinctive features and different reasons than other enterprises, our purpose is to understanding the way in which principal actors of family firms perceive their work since the literature on this field is full of contradictions.

The present study compare family and non-family firms to identify clearly what are the distinctive features. Moreover, we are interested in gender role accomplishment in this type of businesses. Since workload, resources availability, tasks, roles, and interpersonal relations may play a role in distinguishing of the psychosocial functioning of family and non-family firms, we included (1) job resources at the interpersonal-level (Relationship with colleagues and superior/s), and the organizational level (Career possibilities); (2) job demands at quantitative-task level (Pace and amount of work) as well as qualitative-task level (Role

changes, Role conflicts); (3) positive (Organizational commitment) and negative (Need for recovery) outcomes.

### *Job demands and job resources*

Some of the prominent job characteristics models are the Demand–Control–Support (DCS) model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990) and the Job Characteristics (JC) model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). A currently important model of job characteristics is the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R). According to the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), every work environment has its own unique characteristics that can be classified in two general categories, job demands and job resources. The JD-R model assumes that high job demands exhaust the employee’s energy backup and job resources are linked via engagement with organizational outcomes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) (see Chapter 2). Occupational well-being has been often linked to outcomes that affect organizational performance; occupational well-being may be related to core business outcomes, for example, it was found that the satisfaction led to a greater discretionary effort that contributed to satisfaction that was being experienced by customer of the organisation (Hart, Palmer, Christie & Lander, 2002).

Several studies examine the relationships between job characteristics and work-related psychological and physical well-being and provide empirical support for the influence of job characteristics on well-being and affirm what several theoretical models have postulated to be the causal ordering among job characteristics and work-related psychological well-being (De Jong, Dormann, Janssen, Dollard & Landerweerd, 2001).

A study by Hackman and Lawler (1971) provides evidence that job characteristics can directly affect employee attitudes and behavior at work. These authors suggested that employees should react positively to core dimensions (i.e., variety, task identity, autonomy, feedback).

Although there is evidence in favor of the unidirectional flow, where job characteristics affect well-being outcomes, other studies (Edwards, 1998) emphasize the reciprocal nature of the stress process, in which perceived job characteristics are also affected by employee well-being. Or rather the impact of stress management on employee well-being multiplies itself over time, as increases in well-being and decreases in job stressors mutually reinforce each other (Daniels & Guppy, 1997). For instance, employees with a low motivation, or employees who are emotionally exhausted may receive less social support because people with poor well-being may not be seen as being able to reciprocate by their supervisors and colleagues (Daniels & Guppy, 1997). Those findings may be useful to understand the impact of the management strategies, regardless of uni-or-bidirectional flow. The present study describe a multivariate analysis of variance which was carried out to examine differences between employees of family firms that have ties of kinship at work and employees of non family firms without ties of kinship regarding job characteristics and outcomes.

#### *Family Firms and Job Demands*

Family-owned businesses are typically controlled by a small group of related people and managed by owner-managers. The most of family business rely

upon family members' commitment, and employ a small number of permanent staff.

The literature on family firms is full of contradictions. Several studies have attempted to compare the performance of family and non-family businesses, the results of this corpus of studies evidence conflicting results regarding the impact of family management (Gomez-Mejia, Nuñez-Nickel & Gutierrez, 2001; Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino & Buchholtz, 2001; Schulze, Lubatkin & Dino, 2003; Dyer, 2006). Some research (Anderson & Reeb, 2003) show that the turnover and the performance of family firms are usually higher than non-family businesses. Other studies have attempted to compare the performance of family and nonfamily firms in order to understand if and how family involvement in ownership and family involvement in management affect performance. The presence of the family in the ownership and management of the firm can be a benefit or a disadvantage for company competitiveness, thus creating unique paradoxical conditions to cope with (Moore & Barrett, 2002).

Poor strategic planning, informal execution and low level management, as well as lacking of an explicit incentive system and a vague corporate culture, discourage the involvement, commitment, and dedication of workers (Hu & Schaufeli, 2011). Faccio, Lang and Young (2001) claim that the poor performance of family businesses depends on family conflicts, thus representing a model of inefficient organization. For this reason, the best choice for any family business is to move as quickly as possible members of the family from leadership to professional managers who operate with greater objectivity and competence (Levinson, 1971). Other research has suggested that kin ties are less likely than

nonkin ties to provide resources and information (Fischer & Oliner 1983; Moore 1990; Wellman 1990; Wellman, Carrington & Hall 1988; Wellman & Wortley 1990). Family members are much more likely to share information with each other than are nonkin members, a high proportion of kin in a network may indicate a high level of redundancy in information sources. Perrow (1972) show that in family businesses is difficult to pursue the criteria of merit and competence as recruitment is not done. Nepotism often characterizes the selection of managers by family owners, with negative impact on subsequent company management and results (Lansberg, 1983), and makes it difficult for owning families to effectively evaluate family members (Dyer, 2006) and dismiss them in the case of inadequate performance (Gomez-Meja, Nunez-Nickel, & Gutierrez, 2001). In addition, in a family business, it seems likely that some disruption in the harmony among family members might occur in the face of role conflicts (Beehr, 1995). From this prospect, family firms, by definition, are inefficient and unproductive, especially in a long time not likely to survive in the marketplace.

To investigate how the family businesses distinguish themselves and how family members live their job is important to understand how family businesses is increasingly the bankrupting.

#### *Family member-employees role conflict*

People working in family business and who are part of the owning family are involved in role systems that both overlap and compete (the family and the business) (Beehr, Drexler & Faulkner, 1997). As noted by Burkart, Gromb, and Panunzi (1997), some families can adversely affect employees' efforts and

productivity, with negative effects on firm performance. These reflections are related to the so-called institutional overlap of family and business that can reduce the efficiency of the firm and its performance in several respects (Davis, 1983). In addition, family firms are fertile ground for misunderstanding and conflict (Boles, 1996; Miller & Rice, 1988; Swartz, 1989), since divergent groups pursue competing goals (Gersick, Davis, Hampton, & Landsberg, 1997). Financial goals may conflict with nonfinancial goals like increasing employment, and family objectives may conflict with business objectives. The goals of the family are to develop and support family members; family is founded on the values of unity, solidarity, stability, tradition. Business is inspired by the dynamism, the merit-based selection, competitiveness, economic rationality, risk (Mezzadri, 2005).

So there is an overlapping of the institutions family / business , and employee / member of the family, since family members may be involved in both roles (Burack & Calero, 1981; Davis & Stern, 1980; Kanter, 1989; Nelton, 1986; Ward, 1987; Lansberg, 1983). Some people family firms are related to others through both work and non-work roles, for example, roles as employer and employee as well as roles as mother or father and son or daughter (Beehr et al., 1997). This is a specific feature of family firms and concerns the nature of interdependent roles inherent in them. Often business and family also have a physical connection, the living spaces of the family are contiguous to the small shop, workshop, warehouse, creating an overlap of habitats that have specific meanings and implications (Bauer, 1997).

The family members-employees role conflict can be a source of stress, discomfort and the need to create "pull", to recover strength and energy. Recovery

has been defined as the period of time that an individual needs to return to a normal or pre-stressor level of functioning after a stressful experience or after a period of work effort (Craig & Cooper, 1992; Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Need for recovery can be observed especially during the last hours of work or immediately after work and it is characterized by temporary feelings of over-load, irritability, social withdrawal, lack of energy to put forth new efforts, and reduced performance levels (Van Veldhoven & Broersen, 2003). People working in a family firms and have ties of kinship at work, probably do not have the ability to recovery after work because they share the family context and the work context with the same people. These overlaps can harm the normal possibilities for recuperation. Need for recovery is considered a preliminary step toward prolonged fatigue or psychological distress (Jansen, Kant, & Van den Brandt, 2002), an indicator of work stress (Geurts & Sonnentag, 2006; Lundberg, 2005; Demerouti, Taris & Bakker, 2007).

The first set of hypotheses regards possible differences in quantitative-task level (Pace and amount of work) and qualitative-task level (Role conflict and Role changes) of job demands. In particular, may having family relationship with the owner make "employees-family members" more exposed to responsibility and, in turn, to have a greater workload and more tasks?

To give an answer to this question, the following Hypotheses have been stated:

*Hypothesis 1a:* Employees tied by kinship at work will have higher means scores in the scale of Pace and amount of work than employees of non-family firms.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Employees tied by kinship at work will have higher means scores in the scale of Role conflict and Role changes than employees of non-family firms.

### *Family Firms and Job Resources*

Literature showed that there are some advantage in working for a family firm such as family members might be especially committed and loyal to the organization and seek harmony more than people in non-family firms (Guzzo & Abbott, 1990; Donnelley, 1964). Owners says that working together strengthens their marriages (Wicker & Burley, 1991). When the business identity corresponds to family identity, pressure caused by having the family name on the product might lead to good performance, paying more attention to the quality of the product (Ward, 1987). Working in a family business may bring benefits such as having supervisors who really care about one's well-being but the family business. Nevertheless, literature is dominated by negative examples of the problems derived from working in firms owned by one's family (Beehr et al, 1997).

Researchers have contended that social support provided by members of the work and/or family domains can have a positive influence on workers' general health and well-being (Beehr & McGrath, 1992). Often family members-employees have higher organizational commitment. Family can construct the inner circles of the fiduciary community which serve as prime criteria for



recruiting employees, securing a firm's internal harmony and establishing business relation (Choi Chi-Cheung, 2006).

Those relationships may create some unique advantages for the firm because provide a highly committed workforce with shared goals and values, with a unique resource base of physical, human, and social capital (Fukuyama, 1995; Steier, 2001). In many cases successful businesses have been found they have operated within extensive networks based on kinship. Schulze et al. (2001) say:

“Altruism compels parents to care for their children, encourages family members to be considerate of one another, and makes family membership valuable in ways that both promote and sustain the family bond. These bonds, in turn, lend family firms a history, language, and identity that make it special. Communication and some types of decision making are facilitated by intimate knowledge about others... Altruism also fosters loyalty, as well as a commitment among its leaders to the firm’s long-run prosperity” (p. 102).

Our hypotheses concern the interpersonal level such as social support (relationship with colleagues and superiors) and the organizational level (career possibilities) of job resources among employees tied by kinship at work and employees of non-family firms:

*Hypothesis 2a:* Employees who have kin at work will have higher means scores in the scales of social support than employees of non-family firms.

*Hypothesis 2b:* Employees who have kin at work will have higher means scores in the scale of Career possibilities than employees of non-family firms.

In the present study no specific hypotheses were formulated about the outcomes, specific relations between job demands, job resources and stress were not examined.

#### *Gender in family and non-family firms*

Gender roles are consensual beliefs about the attributes of women and men that are normative for each sex (Eagly, 1987). The research focus is on how interpersonal relationships affect men and women on the organization differently. Several studies showed that there are inequalities between men and women, such as bias in selection and promotion processes or in training. For example, people are willing to recognize more authority and power to men since they believe that men are generally more influential than women in groups (Carli, 2001; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). Women and men typically occupy different roles, have different skills and behaviors; some differences between men and women can be noted both in family and business.

Contradictory results have been reached regarding the relationship between stress and gender. Some authors have demonstrated that there are no existing significant differences in the role of gender on stress (Plaisier, de Bruijn, de Graaf, Have, Beekman & Pennix, 2007; Thompson, Kirk & Brown, 2005). In contrast, some of recent studies have found that women experience more stress than men (Hall, Chipperfield, Perry, Ruthig, & Goetz, 2006; Hargreave, Petersson, & Kastrup, 2007; Jeffrey Hill, Jacob, Shannon, Brennan, Blanchard & Martinengo, 2008; Tytherleigh, Jacobs, Webb, Ricketts, & Cooper, 2007). Herrero, Sandi and Venero (2012) showed clearly that women suffer from higher levels of stress than

men; they wondered what are the reasons of gender differences in experiencing stress at work and they identified the task demands (i.e., need to work quickly and to work with tight deadlines) that more contribute to augment the differences in stress levels between men and women.

Most studies (Ergeneli, Ilsev, & KarapiNar, 2010; Jeffrey Hill et al., 2008; Sekine, Chandola, Martikainen, Marmot, & Kagamimori, 2010) agree that the main cause of differences between men and women in stress levels is the dual home-career workload, that is due to women's increased devotion to domestic chores and childcare, which ultimately leads to greater difficulties reconciling career and family life, a greater level of work dissatisfaction, and increased stress levels.

But what happens when career and family life are overlapped like in people tied by kinship at work? Researchers have found that men and women are embedded in different social networks and have suggested that network differences lead to divergent economic consequences (Popielarz, 1999). Women business owners included more kin in their business discussion networks than did men (Renzulli, 1998). For example, women tend to nominate more kin as people with whom they discuss important affairs (Marsden, 1987; Moore, 1990). Women who include greater proportions of kin in their affairs may secure greater social support than men (Fischer & Oliner 1983; Hurlbert, 1991). Social support provides the emotional strength, but such ties may also limit the diversity and reach of women's networks (Renzulli, Aldrich & Moody, 2000). Researchers have interpreted gender differences in network composition like a disadvantage

positions for women in the business world (Moore, 1990). For all of this reasons we hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 3a:* Among employees tied by kinship at work, women will have higher mean scores in the scales of Relationship with colleagues and superiors than men.

*Hypothesis 3b:* Among employees of non-family firms, women will have higher mean scores in the scale of Pace and amount of work than men.

*Hypothesis 3c:* Among employees of non-family firms, women will have lower mean scores in the scale of Career possibilities than men.

## **METHOD**

### ***Participants and procedures***

A survey study was conducted in Italy during 2012. The realization of the study can be divided into several steps. Prior to data collection, companies were invited by the researchers to take part in the study on the basis of company size and sector. The questionnaires were administered to small groups of employees during training courses in the companies or during daily work. After a brief explanation about the purpose of the research, employees were motivated to complete the questionnaire. At the end of the data collection process, questionnaires were placed in envelopes and sealed. The top manager of each company received a report following data collection. A sample of 477 workers (219 employees of family firms and family member, 258 employees of non-family

firms) was randomly selected from a target population of 1500 Italian workers to ensure that the sample of the study population of the present study was representative of the larger population. The total sample included 240 male (50,3%) and 237 female (49,7%). Their mean age was 40.35 ( $SD = 9.42$ ); Approximately 57,4% of participants had been working for their organization between 1 and 7 years, 21,5% from 8 to 14 years, and 21,1% over 14 years. Almost 18,2 of employees had primary education or lower secondary education, 56,7% higher secondary education, and 25,1% had a university degree or equivalent. All participants working in a tertiary sector.

The sample of employees of family firms (EFF) included 118 male (53,9%) and 101 female (46,1%). The sample of employees of non-family firms (ENFF) included 122 male (47,3%) and 136 female (42,7%). Both percentages of the educational level and the age classes are in the Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.** Educational level in Employees of Family Firms and Employees of Non-Family Firms

	<b>Educational level</b>	
	EFF	ENFF
	%	%
Lower secondary education	12,9	9,4
Higher secondary education	41,5	76,7
University degree	46,6	13,9
TOT	100	100

**Table 2.** Age in EFF and ENFF

	Age	
	EFF	ENFF
	%	%
<26	1,8	11,3
26-35	18,9	44,1
36-45	25,8	35,1
46-55	39,6	8,1
>55	13,8	1,4
TOT	100	100

### *Measures*

All measure are a subscales of QEEW (Questionnaire of Experience and Evaluation of Work - VanVeldhoven & Meijman, 1994), a self-reporting questionnaire that has been used in occupational health care services and in applied academic research in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway (e.g., Bakker, Van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010; Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2010; Notelaers, De Witte, Van Veldhoven, & Vermunt, 2007). The Italian version of the questionnaire were administered (Pace, Civillieri, Foddai, Lo Cascio, Passalacqua & Zanca, 2010). All dimension scores were transformed to the same range, with a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 100. Higher scores reflect more psychosocial job demands (Pace and amount of work, Role conflict, Role changes), more psychosocial job resources (Relationship with colleagues and superior, Career possibilities), more negative outcomes (Need for recovery) and more positive outcomes (Organizational commitment). Items were score on four-point frequency scale, ranging from 1 ('never') to 4 ('always').

### *Job demands*

Pace and amount of work: has been based on the JCQ (Karasek, 1985) and is assessed with 7 items that refer to quantitative workload ( $\alpha=.72$ ). An example item is: “Do you have to work very fast?”.

Role conflict: is assessed with 4 items that refer to the presence of undesirable tasks ( $\alpha=.70$ ). An example item is: “Do you have to do work which you would rather not do?”.

Role changes: are assessed with 3 items that refer to the effects that changes in tasks have on employees ( $\alpha=.70$ ). An example item is: “Do the changes in your tasks have negative consequences for you?”.

### *Job resources*

Relationship with colleagues and superior/s: Two separate scales are included in the questionnaire, one for colleagues and one for the direct boss/leader. Both are 5-item scales that contain a mix of positive and negative ways to describe the quality of the relationship. Item content ranges from social support to overt aggression, and from items about solidarity in behavior to items about general work atmosphere ( $\alpha=.80$ ;  $\alpha=.80$ ). The scales take a broad view on the social support dimension (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). An example item is: “Do you get on well with your colleagues/ boss?”.

Career Possibilities: evaluate the perception of the possibility offered by the company to improve their employment status ( $\alpha=.78$ ). An example item is: “My job gives me the opportunity to be promoted”.

### *Positive outcomes*

Organizational commitment: Six items measured affective commitment to the organization, in much the same way as in the affective commitment subscale proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990), ( $\alpha=.80$ ). An example item is: “I feel very at home working for this organisation”.

### *Negative outcomes*

Need for recovery: is measured by a 6-item scale that refer to the severity and duration of symptoms, which may indicate that the respondent is not fully recovered from the effects of sustained effort during the work day ( $\alpha=.88$ ). An example item is: “I find it difficult to relax at the end of a working day”.

### ***Statistical analyses***

We conducted preliminary analyses, descriptive statistics and correlations analysis. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determinate if employees of family firms (EFF) and employees of non-family firms (ENFF) differed with regard to job demands, job resources, and indicators of work stress and well-being respectively. Given our interest, in differences in the patterns of relationship among job demands, job resources and outcomes, gender differences were considered in all analyses conducted. For this multivariate analysis, Wilks's  $\lambda$  criterion was used.



## **RESULTS**

### *Descriptive statistics*

The means, standard deviations and correlations for all study variables are presented in Table 3. All significant relationships between variables were in the expected direction. As literature shown, job demands and job resources are related to negative and positive outcomes.

**Table 3.** Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and correlations among the study variables.

<b>Descriptive and Correlations</b>									
	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Pace and amount of work	43,60	17,92							
2. Relationship with colleagues	74,37	19,18	-.293**						
3. Relationship with superiors	68,29	21,43	-.275**	.557**					
4. Role conflicts	32,28	18,37	.466**	-.413**	-.477**				
5. Role changes	20,29	18,83	.383**	-.342**	-.341**	.447**			
6. Career possibilities	43,34	22,90	.001	.166	.326**	-.275**	-.146**		
7. Organizational commitment	60,92	21,16	-.182**	.427**	.593**	-.532**	-.290**	.505**	
8. Need for recovery	32,24	18,62	.536**	-.320**	-.328**	.384**	.419**	-.075	-.186**

\*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$

### *Multivariate Analysis of Variance*

The first and the second set of hypotheses concern the comparison between family members-employees of family firms and employees of non-family firms in order to understand if the family connection at work may be considered like work-related factor on stress.

Concerning job demands and job resources and outcomes, MANOVA revealed the main effects for the groups (Wilks's Lambda = .838,  $F = 8.98$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

As regards to the first set of hypotheses, multivariate analyses (Table 4) revealed that employees in family firms showed higher mean scores in the scales of Pace and amount of work, Role conflicts, Role changes and also Need for recovery than employees of non-family firms. As regards the second set of hypotheses, multivariate analyses revealed that employees in family firms showed lower mean scores in the scales of Relationship with colleagues and superior, Career possibilities and Organizational commitment than employees of non-family firms. Those results are in contrast with our hypotheses. Although a number of significant differences emerged, their *effect sizes* were small with  $\eta^2$  ranging from .003–.029. On the other hand, underlining the *effect size*, employees of family firms with respect to employees of non-family firms showed higher mean scores on the scales Role conflict ( $F = 31.33$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .062$ ) and Role changes ( $F = 40.77$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .079$ ) (Table 4), exactly as expected.

**Table 4.** Results of MANOVA for family firms/non-family firms.

		<b>Family firms vs. Non-Family firms</b>				
		M	DS	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Pace and amount of work	Family	46,70	18,21	12,37	<b>,000</b>	,025
	Non-Family	40,98	17,28			
Rel. with colleagues	Family	71,78	19,30	7,46	<b>,007</b>	,015
	Non-Family	76,56	18,84			
Rel. with superiors	Family	66,00	21,54	4,64	<b>,032</b>	,010
	Non-Family	70,23	21,19			
Role conflicts	Family	37,23	18,84	31,33	<b>,000</b>	<b>,062</b>
	Non-Family	28,07	16,89			
Role changes	Family	26,03	20,14	40,77	<b>,000</b>	<b>,079</b>
	Non-Family	15,42	16,15			
Career possibilities	Family	38,15	22,51	21,66	<b>,000</b>	,044
	Non-Family	47,74	22,34			
Organiz. commitment	Family	57,66	21,90	9,78	<b>,002</b>	,020
	Non-Family	63,69	20,15			
Need for recovery	Family	34,66	19,44	6,89	<b>,009</b>	,014
	Non-Family	30,19	17,68			

$n = 477$  (EFF=219; ENFF=258)

As regarding the third set of hypotheses, specifically about gender differences in family firms (Wilks's Lambda = .819,  $F = 4.58$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), contrary to our hypotheses, men showed higher mean scores in the scales of Relationship with colleagues and superiors than women; men showed also higher mean scores in the scales of Career possibilities and Organizational commitment than women (Table 5). Mainly, the *effect sizes* were small with  $\eta^2$  ranging from .003–.029.

**Table 5.** Results of MANOVA, gender differences in family firms.

<b>Gender differences - Family firms</b>						
		M	DS	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Pace and amount of work	Male	45,48	18,75	1,32	,251	,006
	Female	48,34	17,67			
Rel. with colleagues	Male	75,13	20,05	6,40	<b>,012</b>	,029
	Female	68,58	17,67			
Rel. with superiors	Male	69,52	22,82	6,34	<b>,013</b>	,029
	Female	62,18	19,62			
Role conflicts	Male	35,24	18,07	2,70	,102	,012
	Female	39,44	19,47			
Role changes	Male	23,75	21,17	2,76	,098	,013
	Female	28,31	18,92			
Career possibilities	Male	42,80	24,50	10,17	<b>,002</b>	,045
	Female	33,17	19,07			
Organiz. commitment	Male	69,57	20,59	3,91	<b>,040</b>	,018
	Female	68,87	22,29			
Need for recovery	Male	32,20	20,24	3,17	,076	,015
	Female	36,89	18,18			

$n = 219$  (M=115; F=104)

Concerning gender differences in the group of employees of non-family firms (Wilks's Lambda = .821,  $F = 5.37$ ,  $p < .0001$ ), men showed higher mean scores in the scales Pace and amount of work ( $F = 43.73$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .146$ ), Role conflict ( $F = 18.16$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .066$ ) and Role changes than women. In despite of this, no significant differences between men and women were found about positive and negative outcomes (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Results of MANOVA, gender differences in non-family firms.

<b>Gender differences - Non-Family firms</b>						
		M	DS	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Pace and amount of work	Male	47,93	17,20	43,73	<b>,000</b>	<b>,146</b>
	Female	34,73	14,85			
Rel. with colleagues	Male	75,08	16,97	1,43	,232	,006
	Female	77,89	20,35			
Rel. with superiors	Male	68,36	22,43	1,81	,180	,007
	Female	71,91	19,95			
Role conflicts	Male	32,65	17,62	18,16	<b>,000</b>	<b>,066</b>
	Female	23,96	15,13			
Role changes	Male	18,40	16,58	8,09	<b>,005</b>	,031
	Female	12,74	15,33			
Career possibilities	Male	49,11	21,29	0,87	,351	,003
	Female	46,51	23,25			
Organiz. commitment	Male	62,47	20,56	0,85	,359	,003
	Female	64,78	19,78			
Need for recovery	Male	32,39	18,53	3,61	,058	,014
	Female	28,22	16,70			

*n*= 258 (M=122; F=136)

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to explore the differences between employees of family firms tied by kinship at work and employees of non family firms without kinship at work, and then to explore the gender differences for each group.

Consistent with our first set of hypotheses, about job demands, employees of family firms tend to have more pace and amount of work and, especially, more role conflicts and problems in tasks. This is possibly due to the of having greater responsibility, and also the perception that other have more expectations on themselves. For instance, owner's sons may feel that are entrusted to them more tasks and probably they have to do things they don't want to do or don't like to do, indeed especially role conflicts and role changes are significantly higher in family firms.

Contrary to what had been assumed in the second set of hypotheses, employees of family firms do not show significantly higher mean scores in the scales of social support than non family employees. In our sample of family employees, social support does not seem to be a distinctive strength and is not as high as had been expected. Even if literature showed that relations in family firms are a strong point because in those contexts the logics of behaviors concern more altruism, trust and care (Choi Chi-Cheung, 2006; Schulze et al., 2001), we found that family businesses don't distinguish oneself for having good relations. Probably, as some studies underlined, family can be source of success, certainly in the early stage of development, but over time, the overlap of family and business can become an obstacle. The interpersonal conflicts born in family have great effect on business and vice versa, as inside a circular relations. The strong emotional charge of family relationships it marks both the cooperative moments and conflict moments, making it more difficult choices of rational order, and the overlap can lead to failure (Guidi, 2005). Relationships can become complicated when conflicts and grudges emerge; bad relationships and conflicts may be born

both in family and in business and have an even more serious effect on business than in non-family firms. As Dyer (2003) note “strong feelings of altruism or antipathy characterize relationships in family firms, and relationships are the building blocks of action in organizations. Relationships in an organization have a tremendous impact on governance structure, social networks, and team dynamics, as well as leadership succession, career development, and change strategies” (pp. 408).

In order to explain these findings and reconcile the gap between theory and evidence, is important consider some variables, for instance phases of the development of the business and the dark side of the relationships. Schulze et al. (2003), say that the agency relationships in the family firms are distinctive because they are embedded in the parent - child relationships found in the household, and so are characterized by altruism. Altruism encourages family members to be considerate of one another, and foster loyalty to the family and firm. However, altruism has a dark side in that it can give both parents and children incentive to take actions that can threaten the welfare of the family and firm alike. This dark side might explain why the relationships in family firms often don't distinguish oneself as strength point and why the relationships in the family firms often can lead to serious consequences for the family members and firm in terms of well-being of employees and performance of the business.

Karra, Tracey and Phillips (2006) say that often in family firms the principal enters into a contract with an agent who is not well qualified or is in some other way unsuitable for the tasks to be performed; often we can observe a moral hazard, is a "form of opportunism and includes shirking, free riding, and the



consumption of perks" (Karra et al., 2006, p. 863). Agency problems such as these inhibit cooperative relationships between agents and principals and might create asymmetric relations. Agency costs regard a series of incentive mechanisms, of negotiating, as well as the costs of monitoring. About the relationship between altruism and agency costs in family business, Karra et al. (2006) have found that altruism reduced problems and agency costs in the early stages of the business, but that agency problems increased as the venture became larger and more established. To confirm this, a great number of family businesses in European market failed to survive at the generational turnover, a particular phase in which arise hard feelings and rich source of interpersonal conflicts. Among the companies that participated at the study, there are no companies in the start-up or early stages of development; we don't have structured the information collecting process about these aspects. For this reason, our suggesting for future research is to consider the time variables and the developmental phases of the business.

Furthermore, we hypothesized that family member-employees have more career possibilities than employees without ties by kinship with family owner because of nepotism. This is not confirmed, employees without ties by kinship with family owner which work for non-family firms perceive more possibilities perhaps because family members often join the company with higher positions more than what happens in non-family firms.

We hypothesized that job demands and job resources were higher in family firms than in non-family firms. Considering the JD-R model, this wouldn't cause of differences in outcomes, for this reason we haven't formulated specific hypotheses about this. At any rate, some differences were observed. Literature

showed that need for recovery is related to fatigue and workload (Jansen, Kant, & Van den Brandt, 2002); in fact, employees of family firms showed high scores in the scale of Pace and amount of work as well as in the scale of Need for recovery. Contrary to common feeling the Organizational commitment is lower than other, but, as already argued the outcomes may be caused by numerous variables in different contexts.

Concerning the third set of hypotheses, about gender differences in family firms we hypothesized that women have more social support than men because women are able to create strong networks especially with kin. This prediction is not confirmed. Results show that men have better relations than women but it is also true that those differences are not really strong. The explanations of those results are probably associated at cultural reasons. Data was collected mainly in the southern of Italy, where is highlighted the social role of the family and where it's possible to find cultures near to familism. "Familism" is a form of social structure in which the needs of the family as a group are more important than the needs of any individual family member, "familist ideology" is principally responsible of the spread of the ideal of woman-housewife, as "wife and mother, and guardian angel of the hearth". For women, devotion to family and the house certainly entails less time spent in the business and, thus, less commitment and career possibilities and relationships at work than men.

Another evidences of those explanations concern the Career possibilities of family-employees; men perceive to have more career opportunities than women. This might suggest that, especially in family businesses, women have to do more with the family matters than with the management of the business. Also, men

perceive to have more organizational commitment than women, probably because they spend more time at work and dedicate themselves to the business more than women.

Concerning employees of non-family firms our hypotheses were not confirmed; men perceive more Pace and amount of work than women and also more role conflicts and role changes; the differences are highlighted above all on job demands as on workload and on problems in tasks but those differences don't contribute to augment the differences in stress levels between men and women. Probably this is due to multiplicity of variable that may generate or protect from stress. Also in this case the reason probably lie on the same cultural issues described above.

Some of this results demonstrate that is important include the family variables in organizational research because behavior in one domain may influence behavior in the other, nevertheless they are studied as separate systems, with individuals making transitions in their roles from one system to the other. The family has been neglected in organizational research in the context where family and organizational domains overlap significantly, especially in the family business in which the behavior of firms and the actors within them are influenced by the familial relationships that are part of the organizational landscape (Dyer, 2003). In spite of this, a reflection of the potential effects of family characteristics and family involvement is largely absent from the general entrepreneurship literature (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) and the family result as a neglected variable in organizational research (Dyer, 2003).

### *Limitations and practical implications*

To conclude, we believe that this study offer an interesting point of view to the job stress and about particular relations at work. Therefore this study may be seen as a attempt to foster knowledge in a scarcely explored domain. We think that is very important increase the number of the studies in this field, above all to understand why the family firms are sometimes example of efficiency and success and sometimes go bankrupt, bringing to collapse both business and family.

The first limitation of the present research is that we cannot draw any conclusions regarding the direction of the causal flow between variables. We focused, on purpose, only about the differences, some directions of those variables will be considered in the next chapter. Another limitation of the present study is that all the data are self-reported, which may imply a bias due to common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). In despite of this, other studies in this field uses self-reported, common method variance may have not been a critical factor for the current findings. Possible is one to the heterogeneity of selected experimental groups, or rather, within our groups there is still considerable opportunity for heterogeneity which influence the nature of the differences observed.

Given the high number of bankrupt and given the social-economic risk caused by failure of family businesses to society, theoretically speaking, we underlined that we need more robust theoretical models to explain this phenomenon but practically, entrepreneurs need of guidelines and pragmatic information which might be useful in the management of the business and the

management of human resources. We think that this contribution is one of the steps on this direction.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Family firms and the Job demands-resources model: a multi-sample study**

*Abstract.* Nel Capitolo 2 ci si è focalizzati sul Job Demands-Resources model, modello ampiamente studiato in tema benessere organizzativo. Di recente, alcuni ricercatori (Balducci, Schaufeli & Fraccaroli, 2011) hanno rielaborato il modello evidenziando l'importanza delle reazioni emotive al lavoro come mediatori nei processi energetico e motivazionale postulati dal modello. Nel presente studio sono stati considerati tali mediatori ed è stata condotta un'analisi multi-gruppo con lo scopo di osservare se esiste un diverso pattern di relazioni tra i costrutti nel modello in funzione dei legami di parentela al lavoro. Allo scopo è stato utilizzato un modello di equazioni strutturali. Lo studio è stato condotto su 477 lavoratori (219 di imprese familiari, 258 di imprese non-familiari). Tutte le misure utilizzate sono scale del QEEW (VanVeldhoven & Meijman, 1994; Pace et al. 2010). I risultati confermano che i due gruppi (lavoratori di imprese familiari e lavoratori di imprese non familiari) sono differenti, ovvero che ignorare i legami di parentela al lavoro come parte del processo potrebbe mascherare importanti relazioni tra le variabili.

*Keywords:* family and non-family firms, job demand-resources model, job-related affect.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As discussed in the chapter 1, working in one's family's business might have some specific advantages but also some specific disadvantages.

Several scholars speak about the distinctive relationships in family firms, the family members are embedded in the parent-child relationships found in the household (Schulze et al., 2003). Some evidences about family firms suggest that family firms are plagued by conflicts (Levinson, 1971), and as we shown in chapter 1, there is a gap between theory and evidence.

The Agency theory "posits that family owner-managements promotes communication and cooperation within the firm and guards against opportunism, sparing them the need to closely monitor management or the expense of pay incentives" (Schulze et al., 2003). Altruism has influences on the agency relations in family firms and represents powerful force both within family life and within family firm. However, several evidences are in odd with this conclusion. Altruism behind the interpersonal relationships in family firms has a dark side and can become a problem and it can be important in order to understand this curious phenomenon.

Theoretically speaking, due to these contradictions, we can think that the relationships between variables describing energetic and motivational process in the workplace differ across the two groups (family members-employees of family firms and the employees of non-family firms).

The organizational well-being has been amply studied from many scholars and one of the most important models is the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) described next. Recently some scholars attempted to integrate the JD-R model

with the job-related affect and have focused on the role of job-related affect in the relation between job demands and job resources from one side, and health and well-being to the other side (Balducci et al., 2011). Following the suggestion of those authors, we have underlined the role of the emotional experience as an important variable in attempt to understand whether there is a different pattern of relationships in the model depending on the fact that the people work with or without kin.

#### *The job demands-resources model*

According to the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), every work environment has its own unique features that can be classified in two general categories: job demands and job resources.

Job demands represent physical, psychological, social or organizational characteristics of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort and are therefore associated with physiological and/or psychological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). “Although job demands are not necessarily negative, they may turn into job stressors when meeting those demands requires high effort and is therefore associated with high costs that elicit negative responses such as depression, anxiety, or burnout” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 296). Examples of job demands are work pressure, emotional load, complex tasks that challenge employees cognitively (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

Job resources refer to physical, psychological, social or organizational job aspects that may be functional in achieving work-related goals; reduce job



demands and the associated costs; encourage personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker et al., 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job resources may be located at the organizational level (i.e. job security, opportunities to learn), at the interpersonal level (i.e. supervisor and colleague support), at the level of organisation of work (i.e. communication, information exchanges, participation in decision making), and at the level of the task (i.e. skill variety, autonomy) (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

The JD-R model assumes two processes: (1) the health impairment process, “an energetic process of overtaxing and wearing out in which high job demands exhaust the employee’s energy backup; (2) a motivational process in which lacking resources preclude dealing effectively with high job demands and foster mental withdrawal or disengagement” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 296).

The energetic process links job demands with health problems via burnout as Hockey suggest (1993, 1997). High job demands require sustained effort and this effort makes increase costs; an active coping response to work may be maladaptive if sustained over a long period (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The motivational process links job resources with organizational outcomes via engagement. Job resources may play an intrinsic and extrinsic motivational role, for instance social support at work may increase the chance successful in achieving one's work goals. In the model engagement mediates the relationship between job resources and organizational outcomes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The JD-R model has been adopted in a number of studies concerned with different job demands and job resources of different occupations. In a recent study, for the first time, some authors have focused on the role of job-related

affect in the relation between job demands and job resources and health and well-being (Balducci et al, 2011). Balducci et al., (2011) seek to integrate the role of job-related affect within the JD-R model by focusing on both negative and positive affects, and by postulating that affect play a crucial mediating role in the job stress process. The job-related affective experiences can play a important role in mediating the relationship between the work environment and positive and negative health and well-being outcomes, particularly in family firms and, generally speaking, about kin at work:

*Hypothesis 1a:* Job demands and Job resources are negatively related.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Negative affect and Positive affect are negatively related.

*The role of the “emotional experience” at work*

Research has mainly focused on negative emotions such as anxiety or depressions, but recently great attention is paid to positive emotions (Folkman, 2008; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and their health protective role. Balducci et al. (2011) say:

"Job-related affective experiences may play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between the work environment and positive and negative health and well-being outcomes, there is a need for more refined research in this area" (p. 472).

Affect refers to feelings, including different moods and emotions. Warr (2007) has described a theoretical model on psychological well-being in terms of affections, or rather, in terms of emotional experience; the author says that

psychological well-being coincides with emotional well-being and he individuated two independent dimensions in terms of mental activations and positive or negative direction of an experience, those dimensions have been labeled "pleasure" and "arousal". Warr (2007) distinguished two axis of pleasure (and displeasure) and mental arousal; he also designed a circumflex description of the process in which some descriptors have slightly different meanings in different contexts, but broadly summarize possible combinations of pleasure and arousal. There are also two horizontal axes, the first axis runs diagonally from anxiety to comfort and the second axis from depression to enthusiasm. As well Warr (2007) has underlined the psychological well-being also requires specifications in term of level or scope, the breadth of a life-space area to which feelings are directed. The broadest is "context-free", in terms of life in general, overall and without restriction to particular setting. The second is "domain-specific", in terms of segment of life space (job, family, health, oneself). The third is "facet-specific" targeted one particular aspect of a domain. Because of the conceptual overlap, the three levels are interrelated.

Several studies have shown that job-related affective experiences can play a important role in mediating the relationship between the work environment and positive and negative health and well-being outcomes (Frost, 2003; Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector & Kelloway, 2000).

Our hypothetical model in graphically displayed in Figure 1. It include energy-depleting process and the motivational process. In addition, figure 1 includes some cross-links between both process. First, we expect a negative relationship between Job demands and Job resources; a negative relationship

between Negative affect and Positive affect (Fraccaroli & Balducci, 2013). Second, we expect that both Negative affect and Positive affect play a mediating role in the energetic and motivational process, respectively.

*Hypothesis 2a:* Negative affect mediates the relation between job demands and need for recovery.

*Hypothesis 2b:* Positive affect mediates the relation between Job resources and Pleasure at work.

Moreover, emphasizing our previous findings exposed in the Chapter 1, that is that family businesses don't distinguish oneself for having good relations, in the present study we focused on the effect of Job resources on Negative affect; we assumed that Job resources play an important role as protective variables of Negative affect considering especially the interpersonal relations variables.

*Hypothesis 3:* Job resources are negatively related to Negative affect.

Hypotheses are tested simultaneously across two independent sample (employees-family member of family firms and employees of non-family firms) using structural equation modeling methods. In the first chapter, we have found that family businesses don't distinguish oneself for having good relations; we have also found that the Job demands for the employees of family firms are significantly higher than the employees of non-family firms. Following these results, we expect the two group are different.

*Hypothesis 4:* comparing the research model to the multiple groups model (equality enforced) a significant drop in model fit is observed.

## **METHOD**

### ***Participants and procedures***

In line with our purposes and with previous findings (see Chapter 1), in the present study we deepened the relations between some important variables, considering more complexity, in the same sample of employees. Following the description of the sample and procedures as in the first study.

A survey study was conducted in Italy during year 2010. The realization of the study can be divided into several steps. Prior to data collection, companies were invited by the researchers to take part in the study on the basis of company size and sector. The questionnaires were administered to small groups of employees during training courses in the companies or during day's work. After a brief explanation about the purpose of the research, employees were motivated to complete the questionnaire. At the end of the data collection process, questionnaires were placed in envelopes and sealed. The top manager of each company received a report following data collection. A sample of 477 workers (*sample 1*: 219 employees of family firms and family members; *sample 2*: 258 employees of non-family firms) was randomly selected from a target population of 1500 Italian workers to ensure that the sample of the study population of the present study was representative of the larger population. The total sample included 240 male (50,3%) and 237 female (49,7%). Their mean age was 40.35

( $SD = 9.42$ ); Approximately 57,4% of participants had been working for their organization between 1 and 7 years, 21,5% from 8 to 14 years, and 21,1% over 14 years. Almost 18,2 of employees had primary education or lower secondary education, 56,7% higher secondary education, and 25,1% had a university degree or equivalent. All participants working in a tertiary sector.

The *sample 1* (N=219) of employees of family firms (EFF) included 118 male (53,9%) and 101 female (46,1%).

The *sample 2* (N=258) of employees of non-family (ENFF) firms included 122 male (47,3%) and 136 female (42,7%). Both percentages of the educational level and the age classes are in the Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.** Educational level in EFF and ENFF

	Educational level	
	EFF	ENFF
	%	%
Lower secondary education	12,9	9,4
Higher secondary education	41,5	76,7
University degree	46,6	13,9
TOT	100	100

**Table 2.** Age in EFF and ENFF

	Age	
	EFF	ENFF
	%	%
<26	1,8	11,3
26-35	18,9	44,1
36-45	25,8	35,1
46-55	39,6	8,1
>55	13,8	1,4
TOT	100	100

## *Measures*

All measures are subscales of QEEW (VanVeldhoven & Meijman, 1994), a self-reporting questionnaire that has been used in occupational health care services and in applied academic research in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway (e.g., Bakker, Van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010; Hauge, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2010; Notelaers, de Witte, Van Veldhoven, & Vermunt, 2007). The Italian version of the questionnaire were administered (Pace et al., 2010). All dimension scores were transformed to the same range, with a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 100. Higher scores reflect more psychosocial job demands (Pace and amount of work, Role conflict, Emotional load), more psychosocial job resources (Relationship with colleagues and superior, Communication), more negative outcomes (Need for recovery) and more positive outcomes (Pleasure in your work). Items were score on four-point frequency scale, ranging from 1 ('never') to 4 ('always').

### *Job demands*

Pace and amount of work: has been based on the JCQ (Karasek, 1985) and is assessed with 7 items that refer to quantitative workload ( $\alpha=.72$ ). An example item is: "Do you have to work very fast?".

Role conflict: is assessed with 4 items that refer to the presence of undesirable tasks ( $\alpha=.70$ ). An example item is: "Do you have to do work which you would rather not do?".

Emotional load: is assessed with five-item that refer to perceived pressure about the responsibilities and personal requests ( $\alpha=.70$ ). An example item is: "Are

you confronted with things that affect you personally in your work ?”.

### *Job resources*

Relationship with colleagues and superior/s: Two separate scales are included in the questionnaire, one for colleagues and one for the direct boss/leader. Both are 5-item scales that contain a mix of positive and negative ways to describe the quality of the relationship. Question content ranges from social support to overt aggression, and from items about solidarity in behavior to items about general work atmosphere ( $\alpha=.80$ ;  $\alpha=.80$ ). The scales take a broad view on the social support dimension (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). An example item is: “Do you get on well with your colleagues/ boss?”.

Communication: is measured by 4 items that refer to the perception of the company's ability to give relevant information ( $\alpha=.78$ ). An example item is: “Do you hear enough about how the company/business is running?”.

### *Positive outcomes*

Pleasure in your work: Six items measured pleasure at the workplaces, in terms of positive feelings experienced in the workplace ( $\alpha=.80$ ). An example item is: “Mostly, I am pleased to start my day's work”. We modelled pleasure in your work in terms two randomly selected of three-item parcels.

### *Negative outcomes*

Need for recovery: is measured by a 6-item scale that refer to the severity and duration of symptoms, which may indicate that the respondent is not fully



recovered from the effects of sustained effort during the work day ( $\alpha=.88$ ). An example item is: "I find it difficult to relax at the end of a working day". We modelled need for recovery in terms two randomly selected of three-item parcels.

### *Mediators*

Negative affect and Positive affect: Job-related affective well-being was assessed with 12 items based on Warr's (1990) scale that investigate the frequency of experience of positive and negative affective states associated with an individual's work across the previous few weeks, with responses given on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 ("Never") to 4 ("Always"). We derived the following two six-item subscales: negative affects (e.g. "Tense"; "Worried") that refers to the display and treatment of unpleasant emotions; positive affects (e.g. "Contented"; "Relaxed") that refers to the display and treatment of pleasant emotions. The scales were found to be an excellent predictor of work-related stressors and strains (Van Katwyk et al., 2000) ( $\alpha=.81$ ;  $\alpha=.80$ ). As theoretically explained, we modelled negative affect in terms of a three-item low pleasure/high arousal parcel and a three-item low pleasure/low arousal parcel, and we modelled positive affect in terms of a three-item high pleasure/high arousal parcel and a three-item high pleasure/low arousal parcel.

### *Statistical analyses*

Structural equation modeling (SEM) methods as implemented by AMOS (Arbuckle, 1997) were used for data analyses. Model testing was carried out in two samples simultaneously by using the so called multiple-group method.

### ***Fit indices***

Maximum likelihood estimation methods were used and the input for each analysis was the covariance matrix of the items. Five measures of model fit were calculated:  $\chi^2$ , comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI); the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI). A non-significant  $\chi^2$  indicates good model fit; however,  $\chi^2$  is sensitive to sample size. For CFI value greater than .90 are considered as indicating a good fit (Hoyle, 1995), a RMSEA value of .06 or lower indicate good model fit (Hu & Butler, 1999). The distribution of the GFI and the AGFI is unknown, no statistical test or critical value is available (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1986).

## **RESULTS**

Means, standard deviations and correlations for the full sample are reported in Table 3. Examination of correlations between study variables suggests that there are significant positive relationships between Need for recovery and Job demands, or rather with Pace and amount of work ( $r = .536; p < .01$ ), Emotional load ( $r = .321; p < .01$ ) and Role conflict ( $r = .384; p < .01$ ), and Negative affect ( $r = .548; p < .01$ ); there are significant positive relationships between Pleasure at work and Job resource, or rather with Relationship with colleagues ( $r = .341; p < .01$ ), Relationship with superiors ( $r = .427; p < .01$ ), Communication ( $r = .409; p < .01$ ), and Positive affect ( $r = .523; p < .01$ ); there are significant negative relationships between Negative affect and Job resources, or rather with Relationship with

colleagues ( $r = -.349; p < .01$ ), Relationship with superiors ( $r = -.409; p < .01$ ),  
Communication ( $r = -.343; p < .01$ ).

**Table 3.** Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and correlations among the study variables.

<b>Descriptive and Correlations</b>											
	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Pace and amount of work	43,60	17,92									
2. Emotional load	48,70	22,12	.398**								
3. Role conflicts	32,28	18,37	.466**	.216**							
4. Relationship with colleagues	74,37	19,18	-.293**	-.143**	-.413**						
5. Relationship with superiors	68,29	21,43	-.275**	-.103*	-.477**	.577**					
6. Communication	60,10	22,96	-.308**	.027	-.501**	.395**	.560**				
7. Positive affect	14,01	2,91	-.391**	-.101*	-.549**	.446**	.481**	.424**			
8. Negative affect	10,68	3,13	.474**	.280**	.444**	-.349**	-.409**	-.343**	-.564**		
9. Need for recovery	32,24	18,62	.536**	.321**	.384**	-.320**	-.328**	-.297**	-.453**	.548**	
10. Pleasure in your work	71,16	18,00	-.209**	.005	-.515**	.341**	.427**	.409**	.523**	-.449**	-.348**

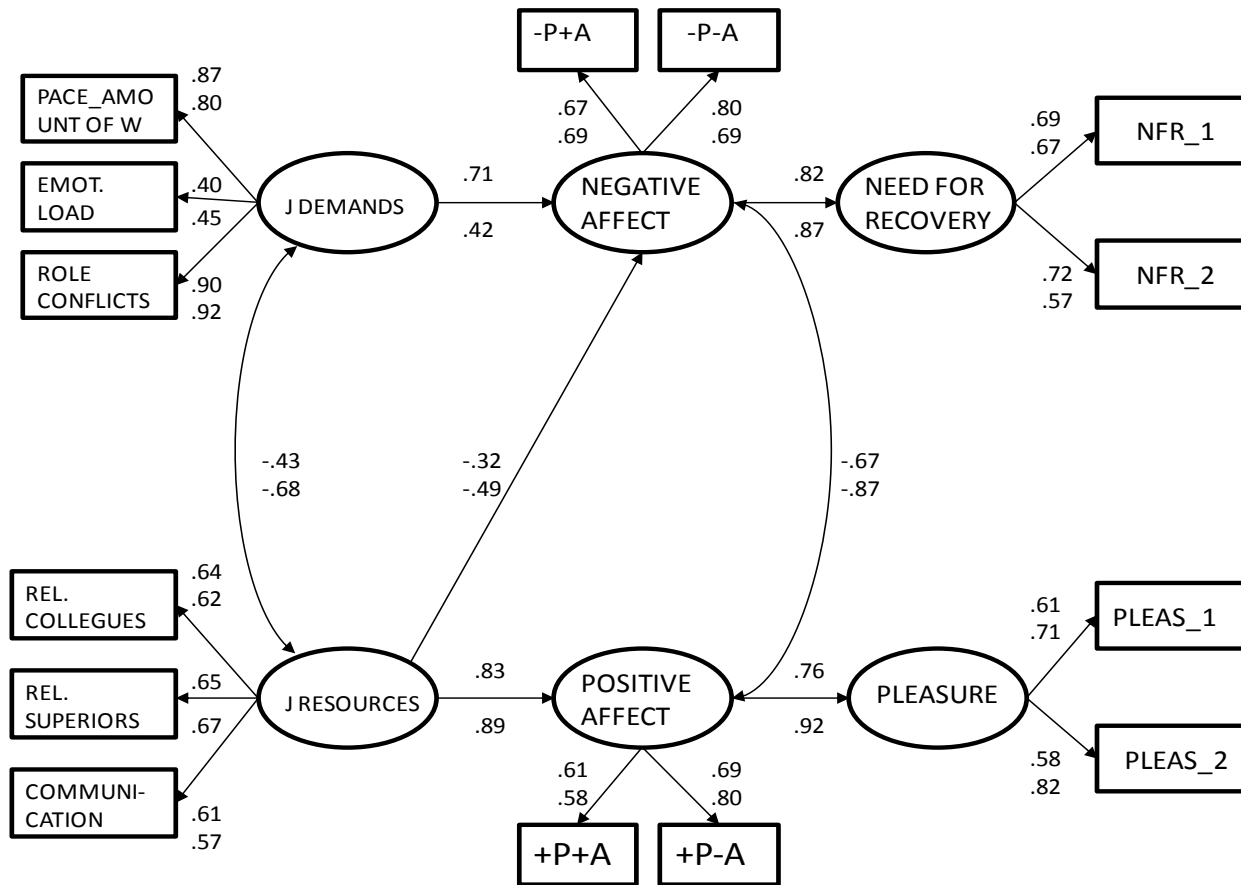
\*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$

### *Multi-group analysis*

The Hypotheses proposed as part of JD-R model were tested using Amos 7 (Arbuckle, 2006). In order to test the Hypothesis, the fit of two models was compared.

Multiple groups analysis, using AMOS 7 (Arbuckle, 2006), was used to examine potential kinship related differences in the model. In order to test our Hypotheses, the model was displayed in Figure 1 was fitted to the data for all samples simultaneously. Initial review of the unconstrained structural model demonstrated good model fit (See M1 on Table 4).

**Figure 1.** The research model (standardized path coefficients). Top: range of coefficients of *Sample 1* (family firms). Bottom: range of coefficient of *Sample 2* (non-family firms).



**Table 4.** The fit of the model (see Figure 1), multiple group analyses including *Sample 1* ( $N = 219$ ) and *Sample 2* ( $N = 258$ ).

	$\chi^2$	d.f.	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
M1	503.60	246	.913	.879	.922	.04
M1 <sub>constrained</sub>	589.77	262	.900	.896	.901	.04
M2	516.13	248	.911	.897	.919	.04

Table 4 displays the results of SEM models by which we tested our hypotheses. Model 1 (M1), the full mediation model of job-related affect, with negative affect mediating the Job demands/Need for recovery relationship and positive affect mediating the Job resources/Pleasure in your work relationship, and the effect of Job resources on Negative affect, had an acceptable fit to the data (see Table 4). These results indicate that when parameter estimates were set free across the groups, the model fit the data well.

When the structural path estimates were constrained to be equal for the two groups (equality across the groups was enforced), a significant drop in model fit was observed [ $\Delta\chi^2(16) = 80.16, p < .0001$ ] (see M1<sub>constrained</sub> on Table 4). This significant drop in fit suggests that the pattern of relationships between constructs differs across the two groups. This finding suggests that ignoring kinship at work as part of the modeling process can mask important relationships. However, this test does not indicate where the significant differences in the model exist. Nevertheless, we can directly observe some differences: as shown in the Figure 1, the path from Job demands to Negative affect for the family employees was greater than the non-family employees ( $\beta = .71, p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .42, p < .001$ ); the path

from Positive affect to Pleasure for the family employees was lower than the non-family employees ( $\beta = .76, p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .92, p < .001$ ). Furthermore, as we expected, the path from Job resources to Negative affect for the family employees was lower than the non-family employees ( $\beta = -.32, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = -.49, p < .01$ ). Consistent with the previously obtained results (see Chapter 1), that is that the two groups are different underlining that the employees of family firms perceive less social support than the employees of non-family firms; is confirmed that for the family employees the effect of Job resources (social support and communication) on Negative affect is lower than the non-family employees.

In order to test the Hypotheses, M2 was fitted simultaneously to the data of all two samples again, but now without additional paths running from Job resources to Negative affect. The alternative model (M2) fitted significantly worse to the data to M1,  $\Delta\chi^2(2)=12.52, p < .001$ . Thus, Model 1, which is graphically represented in Figure 1, was the best-fitting model. Subsequently, the mediating paths were evaluated by using the Sobel (1986) test. Sobel tests supported the mediating role for both job-related negative affect and job-related positive affect,  $Z = 8.25, p < .000$ , and  $Z = 8.05, p < .000$ , respectively.

Hence, we can conclude that Hypotheses are confirmed, Job demands and Job resources are negatively related (*H1a*); Negative affect and Positive affect are negatively related (*H1b*); Negative affect mediates the relation between job demands and need for recovery (*H2a*); Positive affect mediates the relation between Job resources and Pleasure at work (*H2b*); Job resources are negatively related to Negative affect (*H3*) and the two groups differ in many ways (*H4*), for instance, the effect of Job resources on Negative affect for the employees of non-



family firms is strongest than the employees of family firms (in line with our findings – see Chapter 1).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The J D-R model has been successfully adopted in several studies concerned with different contexts, different occupations or different Job characteristics, but, for the first time, in the present study the J D-R model has been adopted to compare the functioning of family and non-family firms to understand the generating process of job related-stress and the well-being of employees tied by kinship at work.

Following the JD-R model, our hypothetical model has seen the motivational process and the energetic process mediated by positive and negative affect (Balducci et al., 2011). We accordingly tested the model in which the motivational process, in terms of the effect of Job resources on Pleasure at work, has been mediated by Positive affect, and, the energetic process, in terms of the effect of Job demands on Need for recovery, has been mediated by Negative affect. As Balducci et al. (2011) have found, our results of the SEM analysis have supported our hypotheses (*H1, H2, H3*), indicating that the J D-R model fitted the data well and all structural relations have been in the expected direction. Our findings represent an additional contribute in developing a more complete theory that consider the role of the emotions and the affect at work.

Generally in the organizations the Job resources may play an important role as protective factors on the job-related stress process; in spite of our previous

findings about the Job resources in family firms, or rather that social support does not seem to be a distinctive strength and is not as high as had been expected (see Chapter 1), we wanted to highlight the effect of the Job resources on Negative affect (*H3*). Indeed, as well as data have shown, removing this relation (M2) has caused a significant drop in fit. Concerning our research model (M1), these results have confirmed our Hypotheses and we have contributed to affirm the robustness of the J D-R model, but also to extend the J D-R model by including job-related affect.

Concerning the multi-group analyses, when the two group were constrained to be equal (M1<sub>constrained</sub>) a significant drop in model fit was observed; these findings suggests that the pattern of relationships between constructs differs across the two groups (*H4*), in other words, ignoring the ties of kin at work as part of the model processes it can masks important relationships that worthwhile consider. We were limited to observe the differences in the path estimates, for this reason, for the future studies, we suggest to focus on the significant differences in the model.

Relationships, especially between family members in family firms, can become complicated, relationships and the stage of development of the business are important variables for the future studies, in order to reviewing the salient points of the theory and the literatures to reconcile the gap between theory and evidence and become useful to the practice.

### ***Limitations and practical implications***

Concerning the limitations, as in study 1, all the data are self-reported, this

may produce a bias due to common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Anyway, given that other studies in this field uses self-reported, common method variance may have not been a critical factor for the current findings.

Again, the heterogeneity among participants in the selected experimental groups, may play against statistical power. Future researches should concentrate on specific work and organization domain to reduce within samples heterogeneity.

We underlined that the pattern of relationships between constructs differs across the groups, or rather, the relationship between variables might differ depending of the presence of ties of kin in the workplace. The research on these issues is still at the beginning and these findings suggests that, not considering the ties of kinship at work can mask important relations that may represent the first cause of the stress of employees, and of the drop of the performance and ultimately, bring to the failure of the business. Considering our findings, we can highlight some practical implications: in many countries exists the obligation to evaluate the psycho-social risks factors, including the job-related stress; in several countries process and procedure are improving, often there aren't clear directions and, certainly, there aren't specific indications about the people who work with kin. Understanding the differences and the specific features can help to give indications to create specific measures and procedures for the evaluation of work.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Entrepreneurs of Family Firms: Work and Family Variables and Need for recovery.**

*Abstract:* Il Capitolo 3 vuole esaminare gli effetti delle domande e delle risorse negli ambiti lavorativi e familiari sul benessere degli imprenditori, in termini di necessità di recupero dopo il lavoro. Nel caso delle imprese familiari, la famiglia può avere un differente impatto sui comportamenti dell'imprenditore, sul suo benessere e, di conseguenza sul business. Inoltre, il presente studio vuole esaminare le differenze tra gli imprenditori di imprese familiari e gli imprenditori di imprese non familiari al fine di contribuire alla conoscenza del fenomeno in una letteratura ricca di contraddizioni. Hanno partecipato allo studio 89 imprenditori, 47 imprenditori di imprese familiari e 42 imprenditori di imprese non-familiari. Sono state condotte analisi descrittive, di correlazione e t-test allo scopo di esaminare le differenze tra i gruppi e analisi gerarchiche di regressione. I risultati confermano parzialmente le ipotesi ed evidenziano la necessità di ulteriori approfondimenti teorici che ancora la letteratura non ha fornito.

*Keywords:* Entrepreneurs, Family Firms, Work and Family Demands, and Resources, Need for recovery.

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of widespread restructuring and downsizing, and economic crisis, entrepreneurship has become an increasingly attractive career. Family firms are essential for economic growth and development through new business and growth of existing family firms. Entrepreneurial behavior is essential for such growth to occur.

The present study examines the effects of work and family demands and resources on well-being of entrepreneurs, in terms of need for recovery after work. In the case of family business, the family may have a different impact on entrepreneurial behaviors, and in consequence, on business. Furthermore, the present study examines the differences between entrepreneurs of family and non-family firms in terms of work and family demands and resources, and outcomes, in attempt to increase the poor knowledge on this field and to clarify a literature which is full of contradictions.

### *Entrepreneurial Work/Family demands*

Work organizations and family units have undergone considerable change over the last few decades (Halpern, 2005). Balancing the demands of work and family roles has become a principal daily task for many working adults (van Emmerik & Jawahar, 2006; Williams & Alliger, 1994).

Some studies examine the influence of work and family variables on the career success and psychological well-being of entrepreneurs. Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk and Beutell (1996) have showed that work-domain variables account for significant variation in time commitment to work, whereas family-

domain variables explain substantial variation in time commitment to family. Work–family conflict and family–work conflict are forms of inter-role conflict; Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996) have refined the construct by separately defining work–family conflict and family–work conflict. Several researchers have reported a reciprocal relationship between work–family conflict and family–work conflict such that these conflicts often give rise to and perpetuate each other (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson & Keough, 2003; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000).

Generally, experiences of inter-role conflict occur when participation in one role inhibits effective performance in another role, experiences of inter-role conflict are correlated with depression, alcoholism, health complaints, burnout, and turnover intentions and decreased job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and quality of family life (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Thus, previous research indicates that inter-role conflicts are related to a number of undesirable outcomes. Such outcomes include depression (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992), alcohol abuse (Frone, Russell & Barnes, 1996), and psychological distress (Little, Simmons & Nelson, 2007); increased turnover intentions (Boyar et al., 2003; Netemeyer et al., 1996), and burnout (Burke & Greenglass, 2001; Cinamon, Rich & Westman, 2007; Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005).

Several studies have examined the influence of inter-role conflict on the prediction of burnout (Jawahar, Kisamore, Stone & Rahn, 2012):

"inter-role conflict usurps energy or resources and limits the opportunity to recoup resources. This occurs because multiple, major life domains (e.g., work and family) are competing for many of the same resources an individual has (e.g., time, energy) leaving little opportunity to replenish

resources and disengage from inter-role conflict. This inability to disengage leads to feelings of stress and burnout" (Jawahar et al., 2012, pp. 244).

Entrepreneurship is characterised by specific tasks and responsibilities, high levels of uncertainty, change, responsibility and income uncertainty (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983; Covin & Slevin, 1991; Douglas & Shepherd, 2000). Managing a business is complicated and possibly stressful because of the uncertainty and risk involved. Few studies have previously focused on entrepreneurial job demands (Rahim, 1996; Harris, Saltstone, & Fraboni, 1999; Tetrick, Slack, Da Silva & Sinclair, 2000). Certain "deadline-driven and/or client-centered businesses may involve schedule constraints that exacerbate work-role pressures, and reduce the time available to devote to family-role demands" (Parasuraman et al., 1996, pp.280).

Often, businesses risk being hurt by rapidly changing markets, due to an unpredictable economy and, the next generation's unclear interests in the case of family firms, entrepreneurs tend to escape to the risky decisions in order to protect family and business.

*Hypothesis 1a:* For entrepreneurs, greater perceptions of Inter-role conflict will be positively correlated with perceptions of Need for recovery, Negative affect.

*Hypothesis 1b:* For entrepreneurs, greater perceptions of Uncertainty and risk will be positively correlated with perceptions of Need for recovery, Negative affect.

### *Entrepreneurs of Family firms*

A burgeoning literature suggests that family firms are different from other firms due to the unique interplay among individual family members, the family “system,” and the business “system” (Gersick, Davis, Hampton, & Landsberg, 1997; Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). Often in family firms, the inter-role conflict can assume a strange form due to the overlap of the roles:

“More often family businesses discover the family is the stumbling block. This can occur for many different reasons: unresolved personal conflicts, lack of trust, difficult family relationships or family demands on the business. Conflict is a natural element of human relationships. Unfortunately in some families, conflict becomes the regular pattern of interaction. Working together intensifies family interactions and can exacerbate family problems such as sibling rivalry or competition between the generations. When a family allows unresolved or recurring conflicts to diminish communication and trust in the family, it becomes difficult for family members to share ideas, discuss issues or make decisions effectively” (Carlock & Ward, 2001, pp.4).

Entrepreneurial activities increase the distinctiveness of the family firms’ products and therefore enhance their profitability and growth (Zahra, 2003). Thus, it is important that family firms are able to innovate and aggressively pursue entrepreneurial activities (Zahra et al., 2004). Perhaps the greatest problem of the entrepreneurs of family firms is that, in order to protect the firm over the long run,



entrepreneurs may become too strategically conservative, by minimizing entrepreneurial behaviors, the innovations, the risks to take (Kellermanns, Eddleston, Barnett & Pearson, 2008), in any way, this tendency is especially acute in family business, where family roles are also likely to affect the work roles (Beehr et al., 1997).

*Hypothesis 2a:* Entrepreneurs of family firms will have higher means scores in the scale of Inter-role conflict than entrepreneurs of non-family firms.

*Hypothesis 2b:* Entrepreneurs of family firms will have higher means scores in the scale of Family expectations than entrepreneurs of non-family firms.

*Hypothesis 2c:* Entrepreneurs of family firms will have higher means scores in the scale of Uncertainty and risk than entrepreneurs of non-family firms.

*Hypothesis 3:* For entrepreneurs of family firms Inter-role conflict are more strongly positive related to Need for recovery than entrepreneurs of non-family firms.

#### *Entrepreneurial Job Resources*

In general, social support has been linked to lower multiple role stress, lower psychological distress, and greater life satisfaction (Quimby & O'Brien, 2006). In the management of work and family roles, social support (e.g. from spouses, supervisors) is associated with lower inter-role conflict and greater inter-role enrichment (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux & Brinley, 2005; Wayne, Musisca & Fleeson, 2004).

Recent research suggests that the beneficial effect of social support depends

upon the appropriateness of both the source of support and the type of support in dealing with a particular stressor (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1994; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1994). Spouse support represents an interpersonal coping resource, and is conceptualized as the flow of resources from one partner to the other aimed at helping the receiver and enhancing his or her well-being (Parasuraman et al., 1996). In family firms, often, people who work on the business are almost all family members, thus for entrepreneurs family support is overlapped to the support perceived from employees.

*Hypothesis 4a:* For entrepreneurs, greater perceptions of Employees support will be positively correlated with perceptions of Positive affect.

*Hypothesis 4b:* Entrepreneurs of family firms will have higher means scores in the scale of Employees support than entrepreneurs of non-family firms.

*Hypothesis 5:* For entrepreneurs of family firms Employees support are more strongly negative related to Need for recovery than entrepreneurs of non-family firms.

## **METHOD**

### ***Participants and procedures***

Data was collected in collaboration with trade associations and professional studios. Beforehand, entrepreneurs were contacted via e-mail and they were invited by the researchers to participate in the study on basis of company size and sector. Questionnaires was administered during meetings specifically fixed. After

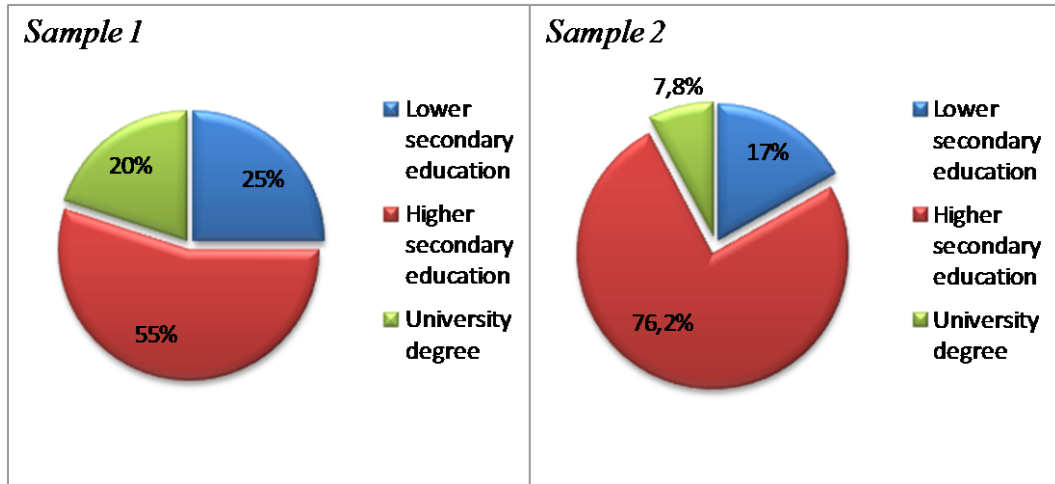
a brief explanation about the purpose of the research, entrepreneurs were motivated to complete the questionnaire. Entrepreneurs of each company received a report following data collection. A sample of 89 entrepreneurs (47 entrepreneurs of family firms, 42 entrepreneurs of non-family firms).

The total sample included 62 male (69,7%) and 27 female (30,3%). Their mean age was 40.29 (SD = 10.83); almost 21,3 of entrepreneurs had lower secondary education, 65,2% higher secondary education, and 13,5% had a university degree or equivalent. Fifty-one percent of the respondents were married, 9% live together, 35% were single and 5% were separated or divorced. Regarding the annual turnover, 22,5% of entrepreneurs declared increasing turnover, 37,5% stable turnover, and 40% decreasing turnover. All participants managing enterprises in service sector.

The *Sample 1* of entrepreneurs of family firms included 34 male (72,3%) and 13 female (27,7%). Their mean age was 41.17 (SD = 11.29). Twenty-five percent of the entrepreneurs of family firms had lower secondary education, 55% higher secondary education, and 20% had a university degree or equivalent (Fig. 1).

The *Sample 2* of entrepreneurs of non-family firms included 28 male (66,7%) and 14 female (33,3%). Their mean age was 39.31 (SD = 10.34). Seventeen percent entrepreneurs of non-family firms had lower secondary education, 76,2% higher secondary education, and 7,8% had a university degree or equivalent (Fig. 1).

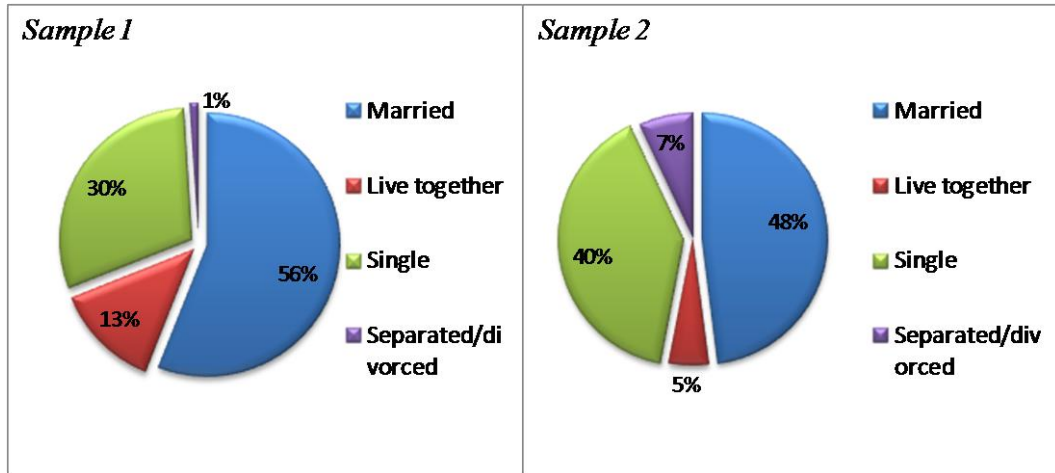
**Figure 1.** The educational level of the participants, *Sample 1 and Sample 2*, respectively.



The *Sample 1* included fifty-six percent of entrepreneurs of family firms were married, 13% live together, 30% were single and 1% were separated or divorced (Fig. 2).

Regarding the *Sample 2*, almost 48% of this entrepreneurs were married, 5% live together, 40% were single, and 7% were separated or divorced (Fig. 2).

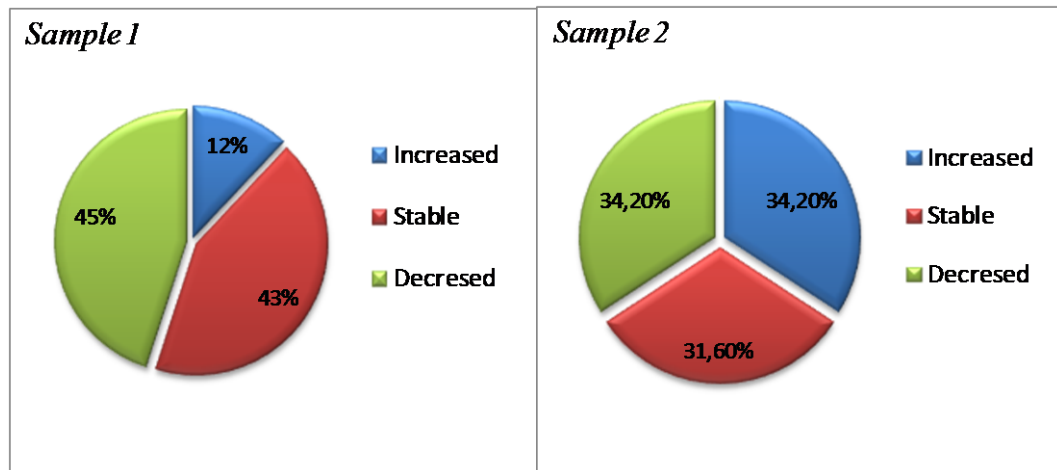
**Figure 2.** The marital status of the participants, *Sample 1* and *Sample 2*, respectively.



Regarding the annual turnover, the *Sample 1* included 12% of entrepreneurs declared increasing turnover, 43% stable turnover, and 45% decreasing turnover (Fig. 3).

The *Sample 2* included 34,2% of entrepreneurs of non-family firms declared increasing turnover, 31,6% stable turnover, and 34,2% decreasing turnover (Fig. 3).

**Figure 3.** The annual turnover declared by the participants, *Sample 1* and *Sample 2*, respectively.



### ***Measures***

#### *Work/Family demands*

Family expectations: consisted of single item “My family has high expectations for me when I am doing my work”. This item measured on a seven-point agree-disagree scale (modified Beehr, Drexler & Faulkner, 1997).

Inter-role conflict: consisted of 4-item concerned the pressure that family have on entrepreneurial work-role. This item measured on a seven-point agree-disagree scale. Item example: “My work and family lives seem to get in the way of each other” ( $\alpha=.79$ ) (Beehr, Drexler & Faulkner, 1997).

#### *Entrepreneurial Job demands*

Uncertainty & risk: are 6-item scale that contain items about finding

difficult to cope with uncertainty about the functioning of yourself as entrepreneur or finding hard to take the initiative to lead your company on the right track. Item example: “Do you find it hard to make decisions for your company?” ( $\alpha=.76$ ) (Dijkhuizen, Van Veldhoven, Schalk, *submitted*).

#### *Entrepreneurial Job resources*

Employees support: are 5-item scale that contain a mix of positive and negative ways to describe the quality of the relationship with employees. Question content ranges from social support to overt aggression, and from items about solidarity in behavior to items about general work atmosphere. The scale takes a broad view on the social support dimension (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Item example: “Do you get on well with your employees?” ( $\alpha=.80$ ) (modified VanVeldhoven & Meijman, 1994).

#### *Outcomes*

Job-related affective well-being: was assessed with 12-item based on Warr’s (1990) scale that investigate the frequency of experience of positive and negative affective states associated with an individual’s work across the previous few weeks, with responses given on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (“Never”) to 4 (“Always”). We derived the following two six-item subscales: negative affects ( $\alpha=.87$ ) (e.g. “Tense”; “Worried”) that refers to the display and treatment of unpleasant emotions; positive affects ( $\alpha=.82$ ) (e.g. “Contented”; “Relaxed”) that refers to the display and treatment of pleasant emotions. The scales were found to be an excellent predictor of work-related stressors and

strains (Van Katwyk et al., 2000).

Need for recovery: is measured by a 10-item scale that refer to the severity and duration of symptoms, which may indicate that the respondent is not fully recovered from the effects of sustained effort during the work day. Item example: “I find it difficult to relax at the end of a working day”. ( $\alpha=.88$ ) (Pace, Lo Cascio, Civillieri, Guzzo, Foddai & Van Veldhoven, 2013).

### ***Statistical analyses***

We conducted preliminary analyses, descriptive statistics and correlations analysis; t-test was conducted to determinate the differences between the two groups of entrepreneurs with regard the variables used in this study. Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in order to test our hypotheses.

## **RESULTS**

Table 1 present correlations between the variables used in this study. Examination of correlations between study variables for the entrepreneurs regarding Inter-role conflict, Uncertainty and risk and Employees support, all significant relationships between variables were in the expected direction. Furthermore, were observed significant positive relationship between Family expectations and Inter-role conflict ( $r = .407$ ;  $p < .01$ ), and Uncertainty and risk ( $r = .247$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Thus, *Hypothesis 1a, 1b, 4a* were supported.



**Table 1.** Correlations for the variables in the analysis (*Total Sample*: N = 89)

	Correlations						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Family expectations	-						
2. In-role conflict	.407**						
3. Uncertainty-Risk	.247**	.306**					
4. Employees support	.120	.128	-.255**				
5. Need for recovery	.100	.259**	.474**	-.193*			
6. Positive affect	.023	-.038	-.339**	.320**	-.363**		
7. Negative affect	.022	.223*	.405**	-.292**	.408**	-.655**	-

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

In order to test our hypotheses, concerning the comparison between entrepreneurs of family firms and entrepreneurs of non-family firms, was conducted t-test; results show that the main difference regard the social support perceived by employees which coincide with family members regarding the family firms (see Table 2). Thus, *Hypothesis 2a, 2b, and 2c* were not supported, while *Hypothesis 4b* were supported.

**Table 2.** Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and results of t-test.

<b>Descriptive statistics - t Test</b>					
		M	SD	t	sig.
1. Family expectations	FAM	3,94	1,63	.297	ns
	NONFAM	3,83	1,66		
2. Inter-role conflict	FAM	2,27	1,35	-1.320	ns
	NONFAM	2,68	1,60		
3. Uncertainty-risk	FAM	14,29	4,00	.681	ns
	NONFAM	13,70	4,06		
4. Employees support	FAM	17,41	1,77	3.119	<b>.002</b>
	NONFAM	15,89	2,66		
5. Need for recovery	FAM	23,17	7,02	.357	ns
	NONFAM	22,91	5,57		
6. Positive affect	FAM	2,74	0,65	.046	ns
	NONFAM	2,73	0,60		
7. Negative affect	FAM	2,11	0,65	-.575	ns
	NONFAM	2,19	0,72		

The hypotheses are tested through hierarchical regression analysis. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Results of Regression of Need for recovery on Work/Family Demands, Work/Family Resources, Entrepreneurial Job demands for Family and Non-Family Entrepreneurs (N = 47; N = 42).

Variable	Family Firms			Non-Family Firms		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Family expectations	-.11	-.09	-.28	.14	.26	.23
In-role conflict	.18	.20	.14	.35*	.26	.13
Empl. support		-.23	-.22		-.30*	-.14
Uncertainty-Risk			.53**			.43**
R <sup>2</sup>	.033	.085	.317	.205	.288	.428
Change in R <sup>2</sup>	.033	.052	.232	.205	.083	.140
F for Change in R <sup>2</sup>	.744	2.46	14.26**	5.01*	4.43*	9.08**

*Note.* Standardized regression coefficients are presented.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Step 1 and Step 2 includes the Work/family demands and the Entrepreneurial Job Resources; Step 3 add the coefficients for Entrepreneurial job demands. Regarding the entrepreneurs of family firms, only after we included the Entrepreneurial job demand (step 3), or rather the Uncertainty and risk ( $\beta = .53$ ;  $p < .01$ ), the model reach the 31,7 % of the variance explained in Need for recovery. No other Work/family variables seems have impact on Need for recovery.

Regarding the entrepreneurs of non-family firms, on the first step the Work/family demands, or rather the Inter-role conflict explained 20,5 % of the variance in Need for recovery, while it will become not significant in the second step, when the Employees support was included. In the second step the Employees

support explained 28,8% of the variance, and it will become not significant in the third step, when the Uncertainty and risk was included. Uncertainty and risk ( $\beta = .43$ ;  $p < .01$ ) explained 42,8 % of the variance in Need for recovery. When the entire set of independent variables are included in the regression model the results are really similar for both family and non-family entrepreneurs.

The changing in the coefficients might be sign of mediation: the relationship between Work/Family demands and Need for recovery has changed when it was included the Employees support.

Nevertheless, observing these analyses, we can say that it is verified the opposite of what we had hypothesized, thus, *Hypotheses 3, 5* were not supported.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The present study examined the relative salience of work and family demands and resources in relation to well-being of entrepreneurs, in particular of need for recovery after work; and examined the differences between entrepreneurs of family firms and entrepreneurs of non-family firms.

An interesting picture of family firms emerged here. The existing literature, mainly based on qualitative observations, provides frequent assertions that such businesses have more conflict or would be more susceptible to conflicts than similar non-family-owned business. A recurrent theme in the literature has been that the existence of family members working together in a family-owned business would be associated with the presence of problems (Beehr et al., 1997). For this reason, we hypothesized that entrepreneurs of family firms perceive

stronger demands in terms of Inter-role conflict, Family expectations and Uncertainty and risk.

Our findings regarding the Inter-role conflicts and the comparison between entrepreneurs of family firms and the entrepreneurs of non-family firms replicate the findings of Beehr et al., (1997). The second and the third sets of hypotheses proposed that there would be differences in the amounts of conflicts and demands between family-relevant groups and others. Comparisons among the groups shows that the type of behavioral inter-role conflict between work and family roles found in the previous descriptive literature on family businesses, does not appear to be stronger in family businesses, and the same can be said for Family expectations and Uncertainty and risk.

These findings are in line with several studies which have underlined the advantages to working in a family firm (Guzzo & Abbott, 1990; Donnelley, 1964). Overall, the previous literature about conflicts in family businesses evidences a major set of problems arising from the dual status of family member and organization member. However, our findings, (as Beehr et al, 1997) suggests that it is more likely that some benefits arise from this dual status, as the employees support, and if there are inherent problems in such situations, family members appear usually to have found ways to solve, circumvent, or ignore them. It not exclude the social desirability bias regarding the declarations about family conflicts. However, regarding entrepreneurs, this study presents a happier picture of family businesses than the one frequently appearing in the previous literature, and, than our previous findings regarding the perceptions of employees.

Several studies suggest how social support influences relationships in family

firms and helps explain why the conduct of these firm often differs from use observed in other types of business organizations (Schulze et al., 2003; Karra et al., 2006). Indeed, it was hypothesized for employees support, or rather for entrepreneurs of family firms have been hypothesized higher mean scores in the scale of employees support than employees of non-family firms; in this case, concern the family members. Effectively our *Hypotheses 4b* was confirmed and it leads to think that there is positive advantage of running an family business, indeed, there is apparently no greater inter-role conflict for family entrepreneurs.

We have underlined the importance of Employees support for the entrepreneurs of family firms as distinctive feature of family firms, in spite of this, strange findings have been observed. Indeed, it was proposed that the relationships between employees support and outcomes (Need for recovery) would be stronger in family businesses and particularly among entrepreneurs of family firms than for other group of people (*Hypotheses 5*). This was not borne out by the data, however. Regarding entrepreneurs of family firms, employees support seems not really be configured as a protective variable for stress. In contrast, for entrepreneurs of non-family firms, employees support seems play an important role as mediator in the relationship between work and family demands and need for recovery, for this reason, we suggest to continue on this field.

However, it was thought that, speaking about the J D-R model, social support certainly is configured as important resources regarding the motivational process, following the definition of Job Resources (see Chapter 2), Job resources potentially reduced Job demands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and indeed, following our findings, this seems true when we refers to the entrepreneurs of

non-family firms. This may lead to think that there are "family dynamics" still unknown. On the other hand, still few empirical studies have been conducted regarding the well-being of entrepreneurs and especially regarding entrepreneurs of family business.

Aldrich and Cliff (2003, p. 574) suggest: "very little attention has been paid to how family dynamics affect fundamental entrepreneurial processes." They also say: "We need more research on how family systems affect opportunity emergence and recognition, the new venture creation decision, and the resource mobilization process. We need to learn more about the role that family characteristics and dynamics play in why, when, and how some people, but not others, identify entrepreneurial opportunities" (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003, p. 593).

We think that it is important to improve the knowledge in this domain and the future research regarding the entrepreneurial behavior and the effect of family dynamics on well-being and on business, entrepreneurship is believed to be a necessary component of family firm survival.

### ***Limitations and practical implications***

Based on our findings, we argue that future research should continue to investigate the mechanisms by which work and family affect the management of multiple life roles, especially when exist the institutional overlap.

The present study makes one contribution to the literature. It highlights the importance of work and family variables for well-being for entrepreneurs of family firms and for entrepreneurs of non-family firms, given that entrepreneurship is important for value creation, growth and development of

business (Zahra, Neubaum, & Huse, 2000), and the important role family firms play in creating new ventures (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003).

Not many suggestions as to how it can use the findings from this study to help individuals more effectively manage the demands of multiple life roles are provided. Certainly, several entrepreneurs often are not able to focus on their role both as entrepreneur and as family member; this study would like to be an opportunity to reflect.

Limitation of the present study is that all the data are self-reported, which may imply a bias due to common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the extensive use of self-report measures may have reduced the validity of the current findings.

Concerning the impact of Work and Family variables on Need for recovery, is important to note that we did not take into consideration all possibly variable that could affect the Need for recovery.

The number of participants in the study overall would not have been sufficient to study the effects that specific variables, or combination of variables, has on Need for recovery and on well-being of entrepreneurs.

We hope that with our findings we contributed not only to a better understanding of work and family variables and well-being of entrepreneurs but also to give suggestions in order to help the entrepreneurs to running the business and to make a point regarding family firms.



## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

Today, the whole world is undergoing an profound economic and sociological change. In many countries, the organizational and psychological well-being are becoming a key challenge in modern occupational safety and health management. According to the *Family Firm Institute*, 80-90% of the enterprises in the world are family ruled. Family firms are major contributors to growth and world economies (Zahra, Hayton, & Salvato, 2004), but several authority as the EU, for many years exposed a high socio-economic risk associated at the generational turnover of family firms, at the running and the management of family firms. Family relationships in family firms may represent cause of stress, poor performance and failure of the business but, it is also true that family can construct the inner circle of fiduciary community which serve as securing a firm's internal harmony and establishing business relations (Choi Chi-Cheung, 2006). In spite of this, a consideration of the potential effects of family characteristics and family involvement is largely absent from the literature (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). The existing literature on this field is full of contradictions and it can shown the gap between theory and evidence.

For these reasons, it seems particularly relevant in this field to gain more insight in such problem, since its causes are often concealed and negated. Whether organizational well-being may represent key challenge for the future, is important to observe and clarify some problems to give answers and guide lines to growth and social and economic development.

In light of these considerations, the central aim of this dissertation was to give a significant contribution to the understanding of family firms.

Specifically, the goals of the studies presented were: 1) to compare the employees of family and non-family firms to identify clearly the distinctive features and to compare the gender role accomplishment in this type of businesses; 2) to understand whether there is a different pattern of relationships in the model depending on the fact that the people work with or without kin; 3) to investigate the effects of work and family demands and resources on well-being of entrepreneurs, in terms of need for recovery after work, and to examine the differences between entrepreneurs of family and non-family firms.

In the first study conducted on employees, an unhappier picture of family firms was shown, employees of family firms tend to have more pace and amount of work, more role conflicts and problems in tasks and, seems don't distinguish oneself for having good relations. Family can be source of success, certainly in the early stage of development, but over time, the overlap of family and business can become an obstacle. In order to reconcile the gap between theory and evidence, is important consider some variables, for instance phases of the development of the business and the dark side of the relationships which can lead to conflicts, grudges with serious consequences for both family and business. Furthermore, regarding the gender role in family firms, seems that in our sample, the ideal of wife and mother, in terms of lower organizational commitment, career possibilities and interpersonal relations at work, was shown. For the future research, we suggest to focus on the phases of development of business.

The second study focuses on the organizational well-being of employees of family and non family firms using the J D-R model and on the on the role of the

emotional experience as an important variable in attempt to understand whether there is a different pattern of relationships in the model depending on the fact that the people work with or without kin. We have shown that ignoring the ties of kin at work as part of the model processes it can mask important relationships and, that interpersonal relationships and communication play an important role as protective variables from negative affect. For the future research, we suggest to focus on the significant differences in the model.

The third study examines the effects of work and family demands and resources on well-being of entrepreneurs of family and non-family firms, in terms of need for recovery after work. Furthermore, the present study examines the differences between entrepreneurs of family and non-family firms in terms of work and family demands and resources, and outcomes. In this study, was shown an happier picture of family businesses than the one frequently appearing in the previous literature, and, than our previous findings regarding the perceptions of employees. For the future research, we suggest to attempt to control possible bias and, to attempt to integrate the survey method with other more qualitative methods to give more information and accurately discuss the findings. Anyways, those findings indicate that research is still at the first step to reconcile the gap between theory and evidence and we hope we have contribute to this goal.

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