



**SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND FAMILIES IN BUSINESSES: A
STUDY USING THE EXPERIENCE SAMPLING METHOD**

(BENESTAR SUBJECTIU EN LES FAMÍLIES EMPRESÀRIES: UN ESTUDI AMB EL
MÈTODE DE MOSTREIG D'EXPERIÈNCIES)

Author: *Lucia Ceja Barba*
PhD Candidate Work and Organizational Psychology
University of Barcelona

Research Assistant
Family Business Chair
IESE Business School
University of Navarra

TO THE POSITIVE IN ALL OF US...

BENESTAR SUBJECTIU EN LES FAMÍLIES EMPRESÀRIES: UN ESTUDI AMB EL MÈTODE DE MOSTREIG D'EXPERIÈNCIES

Lucia Ceja

Family Business Chair

IESE Business School, University of Navarra

RESUM

L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és explorar i aprofundir en l'actual comprensió del benestar subjectiu en el context de les famílies empresàries. La revisió multidisciplinària de la literatura ha fet possibles descobriments recents en el camp de la psicologia positiva i està atorgant un calidoscopi de perspectives sobre el benestar subjectiu. En aquest treball el benestar subjectiu s'entén com l'alta ocurrència d'experiències de *flow*. *Flow* fa referència a un tipus particular d'experiència que és tan absorbent i agradable que val la pena viure-la per ella mateixa encara que no tingui conseqüències més enllà d'aquesta. S'ha argumentat que el cim de la felicitat humana és viscut en el que s'anomena "experiències de *flow*". Considerant la popularitat del concepte de *flow* i el seu significat per al benestar de les persones, la investigació sobre les experiències de *flow* s'ha incrementat notablement en les últimes dècades. Tot i així, molt poc s'ha estudiat en referència a les experiències de *flow* dins del context de les famílies empresàries.

En aquest estudi van prendre part un total de 30 participants (empresari amb empenta - propietaris d'empreses familiars, N=10, altres empresaris amb empenta – propietaris d'empreses, N=10 i treballadors N=10). L'estudi va ser exploratori, amb un disseny longitudinal i dut a terme amb el mètode de mostreig d'experiències (ESM, Experience, Sampling Method), el qual té una sòlida reputació per a l'estudi de les experiències de *flow*. Així, als participants se'ls va facilitar una Agenda Digital Personal

(PDA, Personal Digital Agenda) que produïa sis senyals diàries de manera aleatòria (3 vegades durant la jornada laboral i tres vegades durant el temps d'oci i lleure); als participants se'ls va demanar que contestessin a sis preguntes cada una de les sis vegades en què es produïa el senyal, durant un període de 21 dies incloent-hi els caps de setmana. La metodologia utilitzada va permetre recollir informació tant del context com del contingut de la vida quotidiana dels individus; aquest objectiu és compartit per altres mètodes, tot i així, l'avantatge de l'ESM és la seva habilitat per capturar la vida quotidiana tal com és directament percebuda des d'un moment donat fins al següent, proporcionant-nos així una informació substancial sobre les experiències de *flow*.

Els resultats d'aquesta investigació demostren que els empresaris amb empena – propietaris d'empreses familiars difereixen dels altres grups estudiats en els seus nivells de *flow* a la feina. Així, s'ha trobat que la mitjana de les experiències de *flow* a la feina és major per als empresaris amb empena – propietaris d'empreses familiars que per als altres grups. S'argumenta que els empresaris amb empena – propietaris d'empreses familiars tendeixen a experimentar més el *flow* a la feina perquè normalment tenen les metes i els objectius més clars en les seves activitats professionals, donat que viuen un equilibri entre els desafiaments i les habilitats, la qual cosa pot dur-los a involucrar-se més en la seva feina, a concentrar-se i ser absorbits per les tasques. A més a més, acostumen a percebre la seva feina com altament significativa. Els resultats suggereixen que els empresaris amb empena – propietaris d'empreses familiars viuen en un context que els hi va molt bé, millorant així el seu benestar subjectiu.

Les implicacions de l'estudi per al camp de les empreses familiars, les seves limitacions i la futura investigació són discutits.

SUBJECTIVE WELL BEING AND FAMILIES IN BUSINESSES: A STUDY USING THE EXPERIENCE SAMPLING METHOD

Lucia Ceja
Family Business Chair
IESE Business School, University of Navarra

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore and deepen the current understanding of subjective well being in the family business context. The multidisciplinary literature review leans heavily towards recent findings made in the field of positive psychology and provides a wide range of views on subjective well-being. In the current study subjective well-being is understood as the high occurrence of flow experiences. Flow refers to a particular kind of experience that is so engrossing and enjoyable that is worth doing for its own sake even though it has no consequences outside itself. It is argued that the peak of human happiness is experienced in what it is termed experiences of flow. Given the soundness of the concept of flow and its significance for people's well-being, research on flow experiences has increasingly grown over the past few decades. However, little has been studied regarding the experience of flow within the family businesses context.

A total of 30 participants took part in the study (family business owner-entrepreneurs N= 10; other business owner-entrepreneurs, N=10 and employees, N=10). The study was explorative, had a longitudinal design and was conducted using the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), which has a solid reputation for studying flow experiences. To this end, participants were given a Personal Digital Agenda (PDA) that would produce six signals per day at random times (three times during working hours and three times during leisure time); participants were required to answer to six questions at

each signal over a period of 21 days including weekends. The used method allowed for the collection of information about both the context and content of the daily life of individuals; this purpose is shared by other methods, however, the advantage of ESM is its ability to capture daily life as it is directly perceived from one moment to the next, giving us rich information about flow experiences. Results from the study revealed that family business owner entrepreneurs differed from the other studied groups in their level of flow at work. This is, it was found that the mean of flow experiences at work was higher for family business owner entrepreneurs than for the other studied groups. It is argued that family business owner entrepreneurs tend to experience more flow at work as they often have clearer goals and objectives in their work activities, they experience a balance between challenges and skills which may lead them to become more involved in their work, to concentrate and to be absorbed in the situation. Moreover, they tend to perceive their work as highly meaningful. It is suggested that Family business owner-entrepreneurs live in a context that fits them very well enhancing their subjective well-being. Implications of the study for the family business field, its limitations and future research are discussed.

Introduction

Most researchers in the human sciences have tended to adhere to a traditional disease model, and have focused predominantly on issues such as stress, violence, psychological disorders, burnout, diseases, among many other human problems. A complete departure from this traditional disease model, in search for a more positive model, which focuses on human strength, optimal experiences, happiness and human flourishing, may open a new and promising field of study within the human sciences (Ceja & Navarro, 2008), and this is exactly the focus that the current study on well-being in family businesses is seeking: a shift in perspective.

Well-being and happiness has fascinated humans since the beginning of time, Aristotle already spoke about happiness in its treaty, entitled Nichomachean Ethics book X (Rus & Meabe, 2008), although the forms of pursuing and ways of enjoying life have changed along the years; in contemporary societies the pursuit of individual happiness and well-being has become such a driving force that it even affects societies, individuals and families (Seligman, 2002; Diener, 2000). Research on well-being and happiness has increased sharply over the past few decades. Moreover, happiness and well-being has not only captured the interest of psychologists (Ryff, 1989; Diener, 2000; Diener & Lucas, 2000; Grinde 2002; Seligman 2002) and sociologists (Veenhoven 2000; Layard 2003; 2005), but also economists (Baucells, 2008; Blanchflower & Oswald 2004; Alesina, DiTella & MacCulloch 2004; DiTella & MacCulloch 2007) have become interested in the role of happiness and well-being in society.

In the field of family business there are remarkably few studies on overall well-being and happiness (Webb 1999; Karofsky et al., 2001; Harter, Schmidt & Keyes 2003; Halter & Fueglistaller 2003; Parslow et al., 2004; Kauko-Vally, 2008) and health promotion (Patterson, Bennett & Wiitala, 2005). This is somewhat surprising given that family success is all about healthy family relationships, which will form the foundation for family business success (Walsh, 2006; Nicholson & Bjornberg, 2008). It has also been emphasized that entrepreneurial projects have all the potential to offer experiences of success and well-being (Kauko-Vally, 2008). Recent findings in the field of psychology (Seligman 2002; Fredrickson 2001; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) seem to emphasize the benefits of pursuing a life full of pleasant and happy experiences. Several studies by Barbara Fredrickson (2001) have shown, that positive emotions can broaden the momentarily available thought action repertoires and lead to a greater ability to deal with the challenging situations found in the daily life of individuals. Moreover, positive emotions such as joy, love and satisfaction, can help in bulding the person's repertoire of personal resources and increase personal resilience (Fredrickson, 2002). Furthermore, from the point of view of entrepreneurship, happiness and well-being are of vital importance, as the majority of family business owner-entrepreneurs work in relatively isolated positions and must continuously build personal resources, to promote their personal well-being and the success of their business. Similarly, negative emotions, such as anxiety, anger and fear may put at risk their families and their business. Thus, owner-entrepreneurs often live in a challenging context as a result of, for example, multiple roles and role expectancies (Tagiuri & Davis, 1982). Nevertheless, family business as a context of living, can allow the person to adjust challenges and resources flexibly. To have control of their work

environment and to feel that the work he/she is performing is meaningful for the family business and for the society where the family business is located. Moreover, the family business context offers possibilities for independence and autonomy that have been associated to high levels of well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) as well as possibilities to build an overall meaningful lifestyle. Moreover, it has been found that belonging to a social group that offers the possibility to contribute to the enrichment of the society in which the social group operates, is likely to result in increased levels of well-being (Seligman, 2002).

. Within the realm of the study of happiness and well-being a professor from the University of Chicago, named Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, came about with the concept of flow, which could be defined as the mental state of operation in which the person is fully immersed in what he or she is doing by a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) postulates that the peak of human happiness is experienced in what he has termed experiences of *flow*. Moreover, and within a broader sense of thought, flow has been described as the “engine” of psychological selection, this is, flow experiences appear to be the vital link between cultural and biological selection, and thus it has been emphasized the importance to further study flow experiences and to increase their frequency in society (Csikszentmihalyi & Massimini, 1985). Given the soundness of the concept of flow and its significance for people’s wellbeing, research on flow experiences has increasingly grown over the past few decades, and the relationship between the conditions of flow and a set of different qualities of this experience has been amply documented (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007).

However, no studies have been conducted on flow experiences in the context of

family businesses, knowledge of how the family business as a form of entrepreneurship affect the occurrence of flow experiences, do family business entrepreneurs experience flow with the same frequency as other business entrepreneurs and employees? Research on flow experiences within the family business context may start giving us some insight regarding the ways in which to enhance the frequency of flow experiences among family business owner-entrepreneurs and thus increase their well-being and the overall family business climate. Following this line of thought, and conceiving subjective-well being as the high occurrence of flow experiences, the principal objective of the present study is to bring in the concept of flow to the family business field and to explore whether the context of family business offers possibilities for experiencing flow.

The concept of flow

Csikszentmihalyi and Figurski (1982) have stressed that if flow were absent from a person's life, there would be little purpose for living. It strongly influences an individual's subjective well-being and increases a person's happiness, positive affect and life satisfaction (Diener, 2000).

Moreover, the flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2000) postulates that the experience of flow is a function of the skills that individuals perceive themselves to have in relation to the activity and the perceived challenges of the activity. Thus, when the skills and challenges are low an individual will tend to experience apathy, which will result in an experience of the lowest quality. When challenges are greater than the skills possessed by an individual, anxiety is likely to be experienced. In contrast to this, when an individual's skills are greater than those required by the challenges, he/she is likely to experience

boredom/relaxation; nevertheless, the quality of experience in the latter condition is considered to be of higher value than when apathy is experienced.

However an optimal situation is thought to be when challenges and skills are high and in equilibrium, such as when the individual experiences flow in consciousness, resulting in an experience of the highest quality (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) See figure 1. Thus according to flow theory, the core elements of flow are related to the skills that an individual believes him/herself to possess in relation to an activity, and the perceived challenges of this activity. It has also been suggested that the experience of flow produces feelings of enjoyment and pleasure which make the experience intrinsically rewarding and, therefore, the person is likely to remember it more fully and also more likely to seek such experiences more often (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Furthermore, it has been found that the experience of flow can be achieved by anyone engaged in any sort of activity, however, it is suggested that flow experiences are most likely to occur while at work (Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre, 1989).

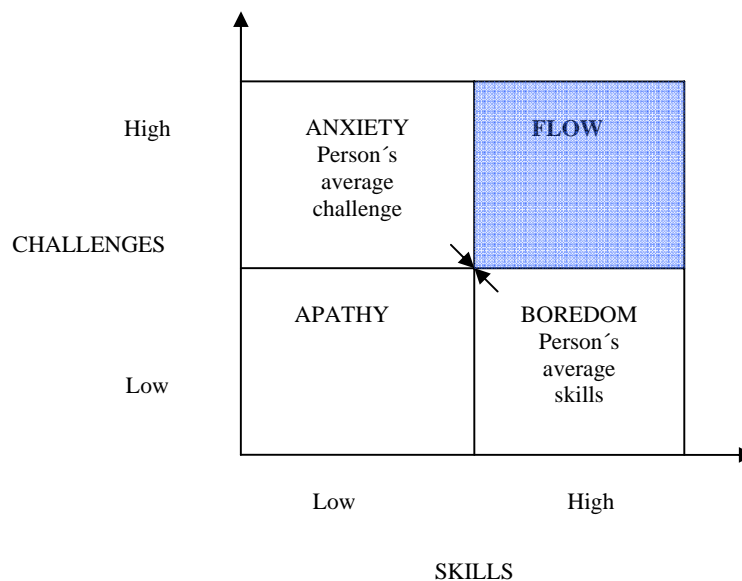


FIGURE 1. Flow in consciousness adapted from Csikszentmihalyi, 1990

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) identifies the following as accompanying an experience of flow:

1. *Clear goals* (expectations and rules are discernible and goals are attainable and align appropriately with one's skill set and abilities).
2. *High level of concentration*, a high degree of concentration on a limited field of attention (a person engaged in the activity will have the opportunity to focus and to delve deeply into it).
3. *A loss of the feeling of self-consciousness*, the merging of action and awareness.
4. *Distorted sense of time*, one's subjective experience of time is altered.
5. *Clear and immediate feedback* (successes and failures in the course of the activity are apparent, so that behavior can be adjusted as needed).
6. *Balance between skill level and challenge* (the activity is neither too easy nor too difficult).
7. *A sense of personal control* over the situation or activity.
8. *The activity is intrinsically rewarding*, so there is an effortlessness of action.
9. *People become absorbed in their activity*, and focus of awareness is narrowed down to the activity itself, *action awareness merge*

Flow at work

The study of flow at work has been conducted within several arenas. For instance, a

number of studies have looked at flow experience in relation to internet usage (Chen, Wigand & Nilan, 1999), technology workers (Ghani & Deshpande, 1994; Webster, Trevino & Ryan, 1993), music teachers (Bakker, 2005), executives (Donner & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992), to name a few.

When flow is applied to the context of work, most studies (Ellis, Voelkl & Morris, 1994) define it as an optimal experience that is the consequence of a situation in which challenges and skills are high and in equilibrium. Some researchers (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007) suggest that a situation like this facilitates the occurrence of a flow-related phenomena, such as positive emotions, enjoyment, interest and absorption. Moreover, Ghani and Deshpande (1994) have emphasized that the three main elements of flow at work are the (a) total immersion in the activity. (b) the enjoyment that people experience during such activity and (c) their interest in the activity. These authors go on to argue that there must be an optimum level of challenge relative to an individual's skill level.

Furthermore, in a study looking at flow experiences in work related activities, Donner and Csikszentmihalyi (1992) found that 80 percent of the time at work is spent in either high-challenge anxiety, or flow. While the remaining 20 percent is spent in apathy or boredom. On average, about 44 percent of time at work is spent in flow, indicating that the workplace is an optimum environment for people to experience flow. Building on this thought, in the family business context, where business and ownership merge and create a complex environment for the family business owner entrepreneurs to deal with. There are internal and external challenges to overcome, however if the situation is taken care successfully it can be truly satisfying as they can place the family business owner-entrepreneur in a situation of high challenge, where the context of living allows him/her to adjust challenges and skills flexibly, a situation that is very likely to lead to the flow

experience.

Additionally, research has shown that developing a rich and challenging workplace environment that can promote flow experiences, may enhance employee productivity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). In other words employees who are engaged in complex tasks that challenge them to use their talents and strengths and develop new skills are most likely to find their work enjoyable and intrinsically worthwhile, which, in turn, improves productivity. Csikszentmihalyi (2003, p.86) argued that “from the view point of the firm such workplace is ideal because it attracts the most able individuals; it is likely to keep them longer, and obtain spontaneous effort from their work.” Following this line of thought, it has been suggested that the key to promoting well-being and engagement in the workplace is the maximization of flow experiences (Novak, 1996). Within the family business context, the work environment for the family business owner-entrepreneur is often rich and challenging, as a result of for example multiple roles and role expectancies, nevertheless such merge of family and business can allow the person to adjust challenges and skills and to have control over their work environment and to feel the work she/he is doing is meaningful. All these characteristics have been connected to flow experiences and thus to over-all well being, which is likely to form the base for good family relationships, which is the foundation for both success and continuity of the business across generations.

Building on this, we find that studying flow within the family business context is central for increasing the family business owner-entrepreneur’s well being and thus the well-being of the whole family. Even though organizational psychologists have recently become more interested in the concept of flow at work (Bakker, 2005; Demerouti, 2006) there is still limited knowledge about this phenomenon and more research on the matter is needed, specially, within the family business field.

Family-Owned business and well being

Family business as a form of entrepreneurship, has gained increased research interest within the family business field for the past decade (Zahra & Sharma 2004; Sharma & Nordqvist, 2008), although family business scholars have not yet reached a consensus regarding the definition of what can be considered as a family business (Sharma & Nordqvist, 2008). Some authors have contributed with good definitions of family firms, for example, the Family Business Network (FBN) and the European group of Owned Managed and Family Enterprises (GEEF) have agreed that a family business is considered as a family company if:

1. The majority of votes are in possession of the natural person(s) who established the firm, in possession of the natural person (s) who has/have acquired the share capital of the firm, or in the possession of their spouses, parents, child or children's direct heirs.
2. The majority of votes may be indirect or direct
3. At least one representative of the family or kin is involved in the management or administration of the firm.
4. Listed companies meet the definition of family enterprise if the person who established or acquired the firm (share capital) or their families or descendants possess 25 per cent of the right to vote mandated by their share capital.

The family is often described as the first social environment that humans get to know and it is where their self esteem is formed and developed (Polaino, 2004). Moreover,

and as Belardinelli (2002) states, the values related to work and the organizational culture are learned within the family sphere. However, when the business and the family systems are combined to form what is known as a family-owned business, due to the differences of the two systems, several conflicts often arise, and thus family business owner-entrepreneurs can find it difficult to reach a balance between the different challenges they face and their personal resources, also they must learn how to deal with different roles and expectations, especially during the succession process, in which the owner-entrepreneur is leaving the “throne” and passing the baton to the next generation (Lansberg, 1999). The problems between the family and the business system are likely to start when one of the two systems is unbalanced and overwhelms the other system. In the case of the business system, for the owner-entrepreneur, it is often easy to become obsessed with the business, and work compulsively for extensive periods of time, this may be a consequence of the big challenge that creating a business from scratch brings on its train; however, this may also affect the family system, as the owner-entrepreneur may spend more time in the business than with the family. A study by Schaufeli, Tris and Bakker (2008), suggests that business directors are often more prone to experience a phenomenon that has been coined as “workaholism”, which refers to the individuals that work excessively hard; the authors have related this phenomenon to negative emotions such as anxiety and stress. Similarly, and as Sharma (2004) suggest, if the family system overwhelms the business system, with excessive demands and family conflicts, this may also have a negative effect at the business level. Therefore, it is critical for the owner-entrepreneur and the whole family to maintain a balance between the two systems, if they wish to thrive. An important characteristic of family-owned firms is the permeability of both systems, in this sense, family issues often spillover to the business and viceversa, making the boundaries of

both systems “fuzzy”. These “fuzzy” boundaries may be regarded as a positive characteristic, in the sense that positive emotions created by a well functioning family, will likely have a positive and direct effect on the business success, which in turn will result in family satisfaction. A strong, well functioning family, can deal with challenging business and family issues. And thus the opportunity for experiencing flow will increase for the family business members. Similarly, a well functioning business can give structure to a dysfunctional family. Moreover, the family business can also be responsible for the increase in the cohesion of the family as a group, especially for desengaged families, where family members tend to be more individualistic (Olson, 2000). Some of the characteristics of successful family-owned firms include having suitable structures that set the boundaries between the family and the business system. A way of creating these clear boundaries is through the implementation of governance bodies, such as the family council, the board of directors and the family assembly (Lansberg, 1999). Similarly, Sharma (2004) points out the importance of finding answers to the following question: what is success for a family-owned business? She states that family business success could be defined in financial and emotional terms, this is, success exists when a family business thrives within the economic and the emotional spheres. In other words, successful family businesses create economic and emotional wealth, for the family and for the society in which they operate.

It is important to emphasize that often in the family-owned businesses there are overlapping roles that stakeholders in a family-owned firm can have. This is, family members working in a family-owned firm, can have three simultaneous roles: as family members, as owners and as managers (Tagiuri & Davis, 1982). This makes the family-owned firm a complex dynamic system, in which individuals change roles as they evolve in

the family life cycle. In the following section, all the possible roles that a member of a family firm can have, will be explained.

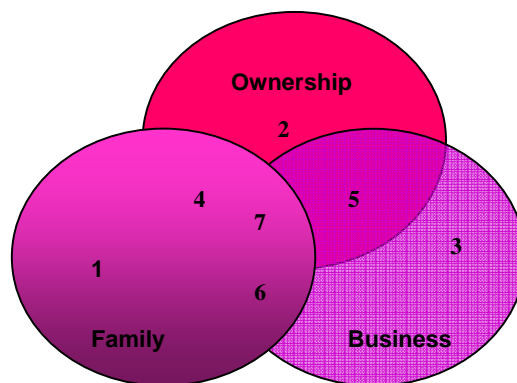


FIGURE 2 Three circle model (Tagiuri & Davis 1982).

The three-circle model of family business, smartly illustrates the complex relationships resulting from the merge of the family and the business systems. It illustrates the possible location of each member of the family business, and often helps in clarifying the different and often quite contradictory roles, available in the family business realm (Tagiuri & Davis 1982). Individuals who belong to the family but have no active role or influence in the business system belong to *position 1*. For example, children of the owner-entrepreneur or entrepreneurial couple could be placed here, as they are family members

but are not part of the business sphere yet. *Position 2* is relevant for family business-owners. In this case, they are not employees and they do not belong to the family system, but are engaged in the family business system from a shareholders perspective. They could be anyone that owns shares of the business; they will often be more concerned regarding the economic success of the business, and are usually not emotionally bonded to the business. Employees, who are not shareholders or family members would occupy position *number 3*. This group is connected to the family business through a written contract, and they are often most preoccupied for their compensation in return to their work. *Positions 4, 5, 6 and 7* are all complex positions, with multiple occupational roles and different expectations. *Sector 4* is an interesting position, as it is occupied by people who belong to the family and have an ownership role, but are not actively involved in the daily management of the company. They are often concerned with the family relationships and they generally see the business as a family patrimony, which is a source of emotional and economic security for them. They often find it difficult to understand the needs of the business and thus, they may be difficult to deal with, if they are not well informed by the management team. In order to avoid conflict and promote transparent and clear communication within the family firm, it is often useful to organize structured shareholder meetings, in which the business strategy and financial performance are discussed with the shareholders and the management team. This way, the people that are placed in *position 4*, will be well informed on what is happening in the family business and will more likely act as responsible owners, which can contribute enormously to the success of the family business. Moreover, it is critical regarding the decision process, to have clear family values upon which the important decisions are based, this will aid in directing the shareholder group towards the same objective. *Position 5* represents people who are actively working in the business and also

have an ownership role. These people are not family members and they may have difficulties in understanding the role and influence of the family, especially in terms of values and principles, they often will not experience the emotional ownership that is so prominent within family members. In this case, it is important to avoid nepotistic practices, as employees who are not part of the family, often feel they are being treated unfairly compared to those who work in the business and are also family members. In *position 6* the two systems of family and work are combined and the person is in the middle of both systems. Here, the challenge lies within the ability to wear different hats, depending on the perspective of each of the two systems. As it has been stated before both systems have different (and often contradictory) goals and patterns of social behavior. For example, the relationship at work may be different from the one encountered in the family context. Problems arise, when the emotions are mixed with the more rational business decisions. As most characteristics in the family firms, this position may be a double-edge sword, in the sense that working with family may result in feelings of security and trust, nevertheless, it also can be the source of conflict and rivalries between family members and family conflicts often spill over to the business system.

Finally, in *position 7*, family, business and ownership combine and create a complex and multifaceted environment for the family business owner-entrepreneurs to deal with, and this is the position that have been investigated within the present study. This role is often filled with great challenges and feelings of satisfaction; however the owner-entrepreneur may also feel lonely from time to time. In this position, there are personal as well as family pressures to deal with and this may be difficult to manage. For example, the owner-entrepreneur emotional state can affect the family and the business systems in several ways

as he or she is the one leading the family project. For family business owner-entrepreneurs is often hard to fulfill all the demands placed by the different people placed in the various positions stated above; thus, finding a balance between personal fulfilment and satisfying the demands of everyone involved in the business, is often very challenging. Also differentiating and wearing different hats and behaving in the right manner for each circumstance (like mother/father, CEO and shareholder) can give rise to difficult situations. Therefore, the position of the owner-entrepreneur may be very challenging, and when the challenge is perceived as higher than the personal resources, the owner-entrepreneur may experience anxiety and stress, however when the challenge and the personal resources are high and in equilibrium, the owner-entrepreneur has the opportunity to experience high levels of well-being and satisfaction. Theoretically, it seems that business owner-entrepreneurs are better off than employees from the point of view of well-being, in the sense, that they are in charge of their overall situation, whereas employees' decision power is restricted by their position in the company as well as company structures and policies. In this sense, the opportunity for experiencing flow increases for them, as they generally feel in control of their working environment and this allows them to find the right balance between challenging situations and personal resources and skills. Furthermore, family business owner-entrepreneurs might benefit from a more holistic lifestyle instead of leading totally separate lives at work and at home. Moreover, they often feel that their work is highly meaningful to their families (in the sense that the business will be passed to their offspring someday) and thus they often see the business as a legacy (Lansberg, 1999). Moreover, owner-entrepreneurs often perceive themselves in control of his or her actions and of the environment, in the sense that the position they occupy in the family and the business context, gives them great levels of autonomy, which is not easily found within

other positions. Finally, the warm feeling of closeness to the family, is critical for the well-being of the owner-entrepreneur; Csikszentmihalyi (1990) states, that the sense of “communitas” where the person loses his or her ego boundaries with that of a group of people, with whom the person shares a goal or values, is very important for individual subjective well-being. Thus, owner-entrepreneurs due to their membership to the family firm can experience this sense of “communitas” that will make them feel secure and trusted, by a group of people that will be there to support them unconditionally.

From the figure shown before, we can see that there is a multitude of possible roles present in family businesses. We can therefore, contemplate the challenge of leading a family firm, nevertheless for the owner-entrepreneur it can be a truly satisfying and rewarding experience that will directly affect his or her well-being. From a quality of life perspective, working in a challenging environment such as the one offered by a family-owned firm, can provide excellent opportunities for experiencing flow at work. Learning to deal with and solve complex issues on a daily basis, can add to the overall sense of self-efficacy and help in facing new challenging situations with a positive perspective, increasing the likelihood of experiencing flow at work.

Within a nutshell, at the core of the present study lies the intention to contribute to the study of family businesses by conceiving flow as the main promoter of well-being. Moreover, this study intends to unite existing theory on family business with the concepts of the flow theory, and understand well-being of family business owners-entrepreneurs from an innovative perspective. Therefore, this study will address the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: Family business owners-entrepreneurs will tend to experience more flow than

other business owner-entrepreneurs and employees.

In light of the complexity that the merge of the family and business bring in its train, it would follow that given the fact that such complexity is taken care of successfully, such complex environment might provide excellent opportunities for experiencing flow, learning to deal with everyday complexity can add to the over-all sense of self efficacy and help in looking for challenging and meaningful experiences increasing the opportunity for experiencing flow and thus enhance the well being of the family business owner entrepreneur, which in turn will help in developing and strengthening good and strong relationships in the family business.

Method

Participants

A total of 30 individuals from Mexico and Spain took part in the study. The sample is relatively small due to the difficulty of collecting data with the method used; nevertheless it has been argued that due to the richness of the data, even studies with as few as five or ten participants can produce sufficient data to be used reliably (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). Moreover, experience sampling method samples are usually purposive and they are not typically designed to be representative; rather, they are aimed at understanding the experience of a specific group or groups (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). Therefore, the study sought a sample of family business owner-entrepreneurs N= 10, other business owner-entrepreneurs N= 10 and employees N = 10

from different occupations and background, most of the employees were lower white collar employees, with two employees holding a leadership position.

Out of the 30 participants, 13 were females and 17 were males (mean age 39 years; age range 27 to 62), all of them had undergraduate degrees and two of them had Master degrees. The participants had spent on average ten years working in their companies (minimum 0.3 years and maximum 43 years), nine years in their current post (minimum 0.2 and maximum 28), dedicated an average of 7.8 hours per day to work (minimum four and maximum 11) and 40 hours per week (minimum 20 hours and maximum 55).

The ownership status varied between 10 percent and 100 percent for both family business owner-entrepreneurs and for other business owner-entrepreneurs. Out of the group of family business owner-entrepreneurs 50 percent were sole owners of their business compared to the 80 percent in the group of other business owner-entrepreneurs. A clear majority in both groups had started their business alone, 50 percent in the family business owner-entrepreneurs and 80 percent in the other business owner-entrepreneurs. In the group of family business owner-entrepreneurs 3 participants have received the business through succession and represent the second and beyond generations in running the business. It is worth noting that although some other business owner-entrepreneurs had acquired their business through the succession process they themselves no longer considered the business as a family business. It can be seen that on the one hand a business may technically fulfil the requirements for being a family business but the owner may still not perceive it as being a family business. On the other hand, it could be possible that the business does not fulfil the criteria for being classified as a family business; however the owner is so attached to the business that he/she “subjectively” perceives it as a family business.

Participants were reached through personal contacts, either directly by the researcher or via third parties; requirements for inclusion in the study were to be a family business owner-entrepreneur, another business owner-entrepreneur or a full time employee at the time of the study, and a high commitment to participate in the research. Participants did not receive any financial compensation for taking part in the research.

Moreover, following the ethical principles of psychologists and its code of conduct, some ethical considerations were taken into account. At the beginning of the study each participant was given a consent form, where the objectives and procedure of the study were introduced and the confidentiality of the data collected was assured, also the contact details (email address and telephone number) of the researcher were included; participants and researcher signed the consent form. Furthermore, once they finished the study, each of the participants received a personal “face to face” feedback session regarding their levels of flow at work and leisure activities. Each feedback session lasted for approximately 30 minutes, and consisted in presenting the results of the study to the participants, and inviting them to ask any questions regarding the information they just received.

Design and Procedure

Due to its solid reputation for studying flow, the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) was used in the present study. The ESM has been widely used within flow research (Hektner, Schmidt and Csikszentmihalyi, 2007) and also in other disciplines such as medicine, nursing and pharmacology (Weber and Beverly, 2000; Hektner, Schmidt and Csikszentmihalyi, 2007).

More specifically, the ESM refers to the collection of information about both the

context and content of daily life of individuals; this purpose is shared by other methods, however, the advantage of ESM is its ability to capture daily life as it is directly perceived from one moment to the next, giving us the opportunity to examine fluctuations over time (Hektner, Schmidt and Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). The method is able to achieve this by asking individuals to provide written responses to both open and closed ended questions at several random times during each day of an average week on the life of the participant, whenever a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) prompts to respond. This method has proved to be very useful for measuring the conditions necessary for flow and the experience of flow per se (Hektner, Schmidt and Csikszentmihalyi, 2007).

The study had a longitudinal design and was conducted using the ESM which allowed recording of the flow experiences from a temporal perspective. All the participants completed the ESM following a standard procedure (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007).

To this end, participants were given a PDA that would produce six signals per day at random times; participants were required to answer to six questions at each signal over a period of 21 days including weekends. Beal and Weiss (2003) concluded that periods longer than 21 days presented deterioration in the quality of the data when using the experience sampling method. Therefore, we consider a period of 21 days to be long enough to capture the dynamics of flow experience without placing excessive burden on the participants, which could lead to the deterioration of the data. The principal aim was to obtain a minimum of 100 recordings per participant for each one of the variables included in the diary. In order to achieve this, a flow diary was developed and participants were asked to record the activity they were carrying out at the time being signalled and their levels of challenge, skills, enjoyment, interest and absorption with respect to the activity in

question.

After creating the flow diary, this was logged into each PDA using the software Pendragon 4.0¹. The models of the PDA's utilized were Palm Zire 21, Palm phone (trio) and Palm Vx. Before conducting the real study a pilot study involving two participants was carried out, in order to make sure the instruments were used correctly, and to identify possible difficulties that actual participants could encounter during the study, some of the feedback obtained from this pilot study were: the importance of reminding the participants to make sure the PDA always had its battery fully charged to prevent possible data loss, and also to adjust the volume of the alarm in accordance to the work environment of each individual, among other suggestions.

During the actual study, participants were interviewed in three occasions. The first interview was set during the initial day of the study, where general information needed to identify the sample was gathered (age, sex, educational level, type of work, organization, hours spent at work per day/week), at this instance the participants were also informed on how to use the PDA and how to answer the flow diary, we also discussed with the participants the operating definitions specially of task, challenge and skill and a few examples were given to make sure they understood what was meant by all the terms included in the study. During this first interview each participant was given a consent form, where the study was introduced and the confidentiality of the data collected was assured, also the contact details of the researcher were included, participants and researcher signed the consent form. The second interview was carried out in order to see how the study was

¹ Pendragon 4.0 allows the data from the PDA to be automatically transferred into a database, each time the PDA is synchronized with a computer.

going on, this is, the participant was asked to give the researcher some feedback regarding their experience in the study so far. The last interview which took place at the end of the study included several personal questions regarding the participants' job, and their own flow experiences while being at work and in leisure activities. Finally, a personal feedback was given after a week of completing the study, once the data was analyzed.

The instrument

The flow diary contained six questions (to see how the questions appeared in the PDA see figure 3) covering the six aspects under examination: activity, perceived challenge, skill level, enjoyment, interest and absorption. These variables were included for the following reasons. The variables level of challenge and level of skills were chosen because of their key role as “flow conditions”, this is, when the perceived challenges and skills are in balance and they are high (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2000; Stain et al., 1995). The variables of enjoyment, interest and absorption were included because as suggested by the flow theory, these three variables are at the core of the experience of flow (Hunter, 2002; Shernoff, 2001). From these five variables, two flow measures were created; measure 1 which involved the first two variables: balance of high challenges and skills; and measure 2 that involved the average of the three remaining variables: enjoyment, interest and absorption. Specifically the questions were the following:

1. What activity am I carrying out at this moment?
2. How challenging I find this activity?
3. What is my skill level for performing this activity?
4. How much do I enjoy doing this activity?
5. How interesting is this activity?
6. How quick does time passes while I'm doing this activity?

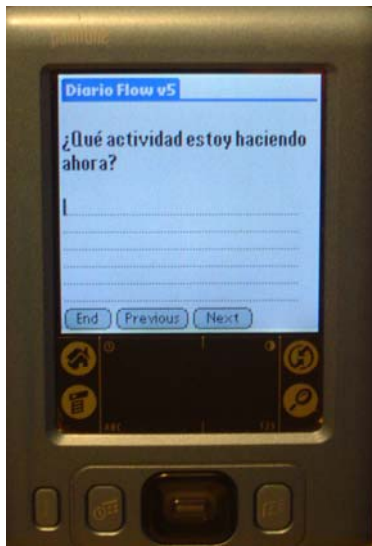


Figure 3. The first question was open and the participant had to explain the activity he/she was performing at the moment.

The first question aimed at focusing the individual's attention on a specific activity (the one being performed when the PDA sounds), so that the other questions were responded with this activity in mind. The first question was open and the person had to write a brief description of the activity being performed, the information acquired was in the form of text. Some examples of work related activities presented by the participants are: "I am having a board meeting", "I am conducting a family therapy".

For the remaining questions a scale was computed, that consisted on a continuous line blocked off at either end. For questions 2, 4 and 5 which looked at challenge, skills and enjoyment, the scale comprised the labels: "a little" and "a lot" respectively. Similarly, question 3 that assessed interest, contained the labels "very interesting" and "little interesting" As for the question on absorption (question 6) the labels in the scale indicated "time passes very fast" and "time passes very slowly". For questions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

participants were asked to place a mark on the line that appeared in the screen (scale) directly, and the PDA automatically converted the mark into a 0 to 100 scale.

The last interview was semi-structured and had been elaborated with the aim of finding out what variables are related to the experience of flow at work. There were 60 questions that collected information about several variables that have been related to the experience of flow. More specifically the interview explored aspects such as the existence of goals, type of goals. Balance between challenge and skills at work, meaningfulness of the job, task planning, autonomy, flexibility among others. The answers were presented as open choices which were then codified later on by the researchers. In this process two external judges revised the categories, presenting an agreement rate of 90 %.

Analysis

Different information was obtained for each participant from the diary of flow, more specifically: a list of the activities performed; a five time series concerning the variables challenge, skills, enjoyment, interest and absorption; and other qualitative information gathered during the three interviews. For each measure of flow a time series was obtained, therefore, two time series per participant were analyzed using the following methods: line graphs,

Following Guestello, Johnson and Rieke's (1999) suggestions, the measure 1 of flow for each activity logged by every participant was the cross product of their skill and challenge levels recorded for each activity divided by the cross-product of the within-person standard deviations for skill and challenge. For the second measure 2 of flow was operationalized as the average of the variables enjoyment, interest and absorption. A correlation analysis was also performed among the two measures of flow (measure 1 and

measure 2) in order to see the extent to which both measures were related to each other.

In order to study the differences between the flow means of the three groups (Family business owners-entrepreneurs, business owners-entrepreneurs and employees), an ANOVA was conducted using the SPSS Software package. Moreover, taking into consideration the variety of the data, this is quantitative and qualitative, and in order to be able to correlate qualitative information with quantitative data we used the multiple correspondence analyses technique. As the correspondence analysis allows you to relate qualitative variables to quantitative variables but does not give you any information regarding their level of significance, a Chi-Square test was conducted with those variables that appeared as associated to the groups.

Results

The number of recordings obtained per participant was equal or above 100 for all participants, and ranged between 100 (participant 1) and 154 (participant 12), the mean number of recordings was 119. Overall the participation level in the study was high and most participants were highly motivated to complete the study as they all found it an innovative area of research and also because they were very interested in the personalized feedback given to all participants at the end of the study. An initial describing approach to the flow series including components of both measures of flow is shown in Table 1.

Moreover, in order to see the strength and direction of the relationship between the two measures of flow used in the study, a Pearson correlation analysis for the two measures was performed and there was a significant correlation in a sample of 15 percent of the all

data ($r = 0.241$, $p < .01$, $n = 349$). Results from the one way ANOVA showed no significant difference in means for measure the measure 2 of flow, however when analysing the measure 1, significant differences were found, more specifically family business owners-entrepreneurs experienced more flow, than the other two groups $p < .05$.

In sum it can be said that at this level of analysis it seems that family business owner-entrepreneurs as a group scored highest on *frequency of flow experiences*. Thus a clear trend in favour of family business owner-entrepreneurs in general may be recorded. Furthermore, it can be seen that other business owner-entrepreneurs scored higher than employees on the frequency of flow experiences. These results clearly support our hypothesis: *Family business owners-entrepreneurs will tend to experience more flow from than other business owner-entrepreneurs and employees*. However we must point out that this is an explorative study and results must be taken with caution.

Following the results from the correspondence analysis, a series of variables were associated to the different study groups. More specifically, the variables associated to the family business owner-entrepreneurs group were; clear goals and objectives in the work activities, balance between challenges and skills, high levels of concentration and absorption in work related activities, work meaningfulness and satisfaction with family-work balance. Similarly the variables associated to the business owner-entrepreneurs were clear goals and objectives in work activities, flexibility at their work, and dissatisfaction with family-work balance. Finally, the variables associated to employees, where lack of clear goals and objectives, lack of autonomy and power, lack of work meaningfulness and non satisfaction with work-life balance.

Discussion

The study originated a series of new and interesting findings about flow at work in the context of family business. The participants, data collected and results are a valuable contribution to this area in generating a series of conclusions and new directions for further research on flow experiences in the context of family business.

All participants were actively engaged in the study, 94.4 percent of the participants made the 100 recordings which were required to analyze the data (only one participant retired from the study before completing the whole procedure). This was very positive as it is hard to obtain such a high number of recordings from all participants in a study of this nature (Hektner, Schmidt & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007). An important factor that kept participants engaged, was that all of them had certain level of interest on the research topic (flow experiences) thus, they perceived the study as a way to receive feedback on how often they experienced flow over a period of three weeks; all of them found the feedback given at the end of the study very interesting and resourceful for their own personal growth. Therefore, it may be important to keep in mind that for ESM research, special attention should be placed on the personalized feedback as a way to keep participants actively engaged in the study.

Flow experiences and family businesses

The current study looked at the level of well-being in each of the study groups; well-being was defined as the high occurrence of flow experiences. Looking at the flow means, results show that family business owner-entrepreneurs on average experienced more

flow than the other study groups. More specifically, results showed that family businesses even in its basic form, offers a complex context for daily living. The special nature of family business can be traced back to the intertwined systems of family and business where both systems operate on a rather different logic. From the point of view of well-being it was noted that family business owner-entrepreneurs differ from other business owner-entrepreneurs in the frequency they experienced flow. The groups also differed in the perceived work-family balance, as the family business owner-entrepreneurs experienced a high balance between family and work, this may be explained as both the family system and the business system are combined. This is different for other business owner-entrepreneurs as they feel that there is a lack of family-work balance. Furthermore, the study groups differ in the level of work meaningfulness, family business owner-entrepreneurs feel their work is highly meaningful, while the other business owner-entrepreneur do not feel their work is as meaningful as their counterparts. Entrepreneurs further differ from employees in the level of autonomy, clear goals and objectives, balance between challenge and skill, work meaningfulness and family work balance regarding everyday structures.

Family business owner-entrepreneurs as a group showed a distinct pattern in the level of well-being from other business owner-entrepreneurs and significantly from the group of employees. The found differences were both statistically and theoretical significant showing rather a consistent pattern in favour of family business owner-entrepreneurs. While the three study groups share a similar goal in pursuing well-being and happiness, the tools available for achieving it as well as the context where happiness and well being are pursued may be different.

In this sense the family business context appear to promote the experience of flow among family business owner-entrepreneurs as it offers a safe environment where there are plenty of resources for finding a balance between different roles in life (work and family), and a balance between challenges and skills. The balance between challenges and overall resources in life is one of the most important conditions for experiencing flow in life, which in turn is the peak for both happiness and satisfaction with life (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). . The family business context also offers the sense of meaningfulness and power of decision, which is strongly related to being satisfied with ones life as a whole. Moreover, the sense of meaningfulness may be connected to the sense of continuity, this is, that the family business owner-entrepreneur may perceive that his/her work is meaningful as it will be passed on to his/her offspring.

Looking at Antonovsky's salutogenic framework (1979) may help us to explain how a high sense of meaningfulness can help people to cope with the changing and pressuring that the family business context often places upon family business owner-entrepreneurs. Antonovsky (1979) argues that the central resource concept is the sense of coherence (SOC), which refers to a global orientation of the individual towards her/his inner and outer environment, which is proposed to have a direct and positive effect on well-being at work, irrespective of stressors (Feldt, 1997). In this global orientation, the individual sees the world as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful. Antonovsky (1987) proposed that a strong SOC, especially a high sense of meaningfulness, which is defined as the extent to which people feel that life makes sense emotionally, and that the exigencies encountered are challenges, worthy of commitment and emotional engagement, makes it possible to perceive a stressful situation as a challenge rather than as a threat (Antonovsky, 1993). The sense of meaningfulness is the most central component of SOC and it is the most related to

flow experiences, due to its motivational component. A high sense of meaningfulness makes it possible to perceive a stressful situation as a challenge rather than as a threat. In this sense Antonovsky's SOC may explain why family business owner-entrepreneurs still manage to experience flow, despite of the stress and demands that often tend to exist in the family business context.

Practical implications of the study

As it was noted earlier for individuals living in Western societies especially happiness and well-being is seen as the ultimate goal of a successful life or at least an integral part of it. Success for family business entrepreneurs then is tied to their ability to create balance, to finding meaning in life and to living overall in such a way that those around one (possibly all different stakeholders) appreciate you as a person.

Following this line of thought, from the practical point of view it can be noted that increasing flow experiences which in turn will enhance happiness and satisfaction with life, as positive psychologists such as Fredrickson (2001; 2002) suggest, would be in this case beneficial for increasing for example the sense of balance (as between different roles in life and between challenges and available resources and skills in life). It can be seen how positive enforcing circles could be created where flow experiences, happiness and satisfaction with life increase, having a profound effect on the overall functionality of the family business.

From a management point of view, the results from this study have important implications in that one of the most important goals to achieve in a family business is to get

a highly motivated, committed and happy workforce. As we have stated before, flow represents the peak of human happiness, more specifically the highest form of intrinsic motivation, in which challenge and skill are both elevated and in equilibrium. If we are respectful with the flow model, family business owner-entrepreneurs should design jobs for their own and for their employees, in which the level of challenge is high and, consequently, select or train people to guarantee that they also have a high level of skills and sufficient competencies to execute their jobs. To check periodically these two aspects (challenge and skills), having in mind their subjective point of view and that of their employees, would be a useful practice. In order to achieve this, the use of questionnaires or diaries would provide the family firm with key information for maintaining the well-being of the family, the business and the workforce.

Another important point relies within the results, which show that the group of employees are the ones that hardly experience flow due to a lack of autonomy and self-direction in their jobs. It is vital to enable employees in the family firm with a sense of autonomy and self-direction in their jobs. These variables are the key to create some conditions that instigate the feeling of control at work. Indeed, to promote flow experiences, it is important that employees feel that they can control the tasks they perform at work. With this feeling, employees can self-manage their own behaviour in order to achieve their work objectives. Summing up, it is very important to provide some contextual conditions that empower employees with self-control rather than trying to externally control their behaviour.

Limitations of the study

There are some limitations of the study that we would like to point out. The first

limitation is related to the sample size (30 participants). However, it is important to note that although the sample size was relatively small due to the demands that must longitudinal designs place upon study participants, in this case asking participants to respond to several questions per day over a period of 21 days, it is worthwhile noticing that small samples have been also used in similar studies (Navarro, Arrieta & Ballén (2007) worked with a sample of 20 participants, and Guastello, Johnson and Rieke (1999) used a sample of 24 participants). Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile to replicate the study using larger samples.

Moreover, one of the initial participants left the study before completing it, this person had an executive position, and expressed that the use of a PDA to collect the data was too disturbing and stressful for the work he was doing, therefore we came to the conclusion that in order to overcome this limitation and to capture the experiences of people in this type of positions an “internet diary” may be an interesting option, in which the diary questions pop-up in the participant’s screen at random times during the course of a day just as a with the PDA.

Future Research

This study opens to future possibilities for analyzing flow; it explores new horizons of sophisticated methodological techniques, rising new questions and possibilities for conducting research on optimal experiences such as flow in the context of family firms. Results from the present study clearly depicts that the context of family business may offer interesting tools for experiencing flow. Therefore, this study may be opening a new window to build upon current research and reach further in our understanding of flow in the context of family firms. The challenge ahead is very inspiring and consists in conceiving

flow as a predictor of happiness and well-being and construing explanatory models of overall well-being. Although understanding the experience of flow is interesting, it would be equally important to understand better the predictive causes of the experiences of flow and well-being.

Moreover, further research would be needed using larger samples in order to observe whether the results obtained in the present investigation can be replicated within larger samples, this is to say, to rectify whether family business owner-entrepreneurs tend to experience more flow than other business owner-entrepreneurs and employees.

Furthermore, future studies could take a look at the experience of flow among men and women. From the point of view of family business research it seems that women differ from men both in their motivation to start a business as well as in the goals they set for themselves in the business. How does the gender difference reflect in the experience of flow? Similarly, studying different age groups might be interesting and beneficial. For example, the role of goal attainment and autonomy might change in different age groups. Also taking into account, that a significant amount of family businesses will face succession in the coming years, it might be worthwhile studying the experience of members of the next generation, from a well-being perspective. Moreover, if the findings from positive psychology, which reflect the power of positive emotions, such as flow experiences, for enhancing confidence in overcoming challenges and broadening the person's repertoire of thought and action is true for family business owner-entrepreneurs, ways of improving for example creativity, innovation and to enhance the ability to adjust to change and face challenges, could be created. Future studies could also seek to study, the flow experiences of several family business stakeholders at the same time.

Finally, from an intervention perspective it may be interesting and worthwhile to analyse further why the family business context tend to be more conducive to flow experiences than other business contexts; this is important in the sense that the extent to which people experience more flow in both family businesses and other business contexts, will contribute to people's overall well-being. Therefore, more research is needed looking at the factors affecting the prevalence of flow experiences in family firms and other business contexts.

Summing up, the present study is the first investigation to look at flow experiences within the family business context; it allows us to start uncovering the importance of promoting flow experiences in family firms. The challenge ahead is very inspiring and consists in incorporating the existing flow theory to the family business field . In this way, this study offers a set of results that hopefully will stimulate research on the well-being in family firms that might aid in providing further scientific basis to protect and promote the continuity and success of family businesses all over the world.

References

Alesina, A., DiTella, R. & MacCulloch, R. (2004). Inequality and happiness: are Europeans and Americans different? *Journal of Public Economics* 88 (9), 2009–42.

Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, Stress and Coping*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Antonovsky, A. (1993). Complexity, conflict, chaos, coherence, coercion and civility. *Social Science and Medicine*, 36, 725-733.

Bakker, A. B. (2005). Flow among music teachers and their students. The cross-over of peak experiences. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 66 (1), 26- 64.

Baucells, M. (2008). The mathematics of happiness. Economics of behaviour and decision, seminar series, London Business School.

Beal, D.J., & Weiss, H.M. (2003). Methods of ecological momentary assessment in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 6, 440-464.

Belardinelli, S. (2002). The evolution of family institution and its impact on society and business. *Family Business Review* 15, (3) 169–173.

Blanchflower, D. & Oswald, A. (2004). Well-being over time in Britain and the USA. *Journal of Public Economics* 88 (7-8), 1359–1386.

Ceja, L., & Navarro (2008). Dynamics of flow: A nonlinear perspective. *Journal of Happiness Studies*. DOI : 10.1007/s10902-008-9113-6.

Chen, H., Wigand, R.T., & Nilan, M.S. (1999). Optimal experience of Web activities. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 15 (5), 585-608.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. NY: Harper and Row Publishers.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). *Beyond boredom and anxiety* (2nd edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2003). *Good Business, Leadership, Flow, and the Making of Meaning*. USA: Pinguin Books.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Figurski, T.J. (1982). Self-awareness and aversive experience in everyday life. *Journal of Personality*, 50 (1), 14-26.

- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & LeFevre, J. (1989). Optimal experience in work and leisure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56 (5), 815–822.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Massimini, F. (1985). On the psychological selection of bio-cultural information. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 3 (2), 115-138.
- Demerouti, E. (2006). Job Characteristics, Flow and Performance: The Moderating Role of Conscientiousness. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 11(3), 266-280.
- Di Tella, R. & MacCulloch, R. 2007. Happiness for central banks. Paper prepared for the Federal Reserve of Boston, Behavioral Policy Conference.
- Diener, E. & Lucas, R. (2000). Explaining differences in societal levels of happiness: Relative standards, need fulfillment, culture and evaluation theory. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 1, 41–78.
- Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a national index. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 34-43.
- Donner, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M (1992). Transforming Stress into Flow. *Executive Excellence*, 9, 16-17.
- Ellis, G.D., Voelkl, J.E., & Morris, C. (1994). Measurement and analysis issues with explanation of variance in daily experience using the flow model. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26(4), 337-356.
- Feldt, T. (1997). The role of sense of coherence in well being at work: analysis of main and moderator effects. *Work & Stress*, 11, 134-147.
- Fredrickson, B. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist* 56, 218–226.
- Fredrickson, B. (2002). *Positive Emotions*. In C. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.). *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ghani, D.A., & Deshpande, S.P. (1994). Task characteristics and the appearance of Optimal flow in human computer interaction. *Journal of Psychology*, 128, 381-391.
- Grinde, B. (2002). Happiness in the perspective of evolutionary psychology. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 3, 331–354.
- Guastello, S., Johnson, E.A., & Rieke, M. (1999). Nonlinear Dynamics of Motivational Flow. *Nonlinear Dynamics, Psychology and Life Sciences*, 3 (3), 259-273.

Halter, F. & Fueglistaller, U. (2003). *The Leader's Happiness in Family Businesses as a Motivator: A Theoretical Convergence*. In P. Poutziouris, L. Steier (Eds.) Research Forum Proceedings. New Frontiers in Family Business Research – the Leadership Challenge, 403-425.

Harter, J., Schmidt, F. & Keyes, C. (2003). *Well-being in the Workplace and Its Relationship to Business Outcomes: A Review of the Gallup Studies*. In C. Keyes, & J., Haidt (Eds.) 2003. Flourishing. Positive Psychology and the Life Well-lived. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Hektner, J.M., Schmidt, J. A., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2007). *Experience Sampling Method Measuring the Quality of Everyday Life*. London: Sage Publications.

Hunter, J.P. (2002). Vital Powers and Waste Possibilities: Engaged and bored teenagers in America. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 62, 4818.

Kauko-Valli, S. (2008) Subjective Well-being as an individual constructed phenomenon. Doctoral dissertation, University of Jvaskyla.

Karofsky, P., Millen, R., Yilmaz, M., Smyrnios, K., Tanewski, G. & Romano, C. (2001). Work-family conflict and emotional well-being in american family businesses. *Family Business Review* 14 (4), 313–324.

Lansberg, I. (1999). *Succeeding Generations, realizing the dream of families in business*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Layard, R. (2003). *Happiness: Has social science a clue?* Lionel Robbins Memorial. <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/events/lectures/layard/RL030303.pdf>

Layard, R. (2005). *Annexes*. Available at <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/layard/annex.pdf>.

Navarro, J., Arrieta, C., and Ballén, C. (2007). An approach to the study of Dynamics of Work Motivation Using the Diary Method. *Nonlinear Dynamics, Psychology, and Life Sciences*, 11(2), 473-498.

Nicholson, N. & Bjornberg, A. (2008). The shape of the things to come- Emotional ownership and the next generation in the family firm. *Paper presented at the International Family Owned Business Conference, IESE Business School, Barcelona*.

Novak, M. (1996). *Business as a Calling*. New York: The Free Press.
of nations. JPSP 69, 851–864.

Olson, D.H. (2000). Circumplex model of marital and family systems. *Journal of family therapy*, 22, 144-167.

- Parslow, R., Jorm, A., Christensen, H., Rodgers, B., Strazdins, L. & D'Souza, R. (2004). The associations between work stress and mental health: a comparison of organizationally employed and self-employed workers. *Work & Stress* 18 (3), 231–244.
- Patterson, C., Bennett, J. & Wiitala, W. 2005. Healthy and unhealthy stress unwinding: promoting health in small businesses. *Journal of Business and Psychology* 20 (2), 221–247.
- Polaino, A (2003). *Autoestima y familia*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Rus, S., & Meabe J.E. (2008). Aristóteles ética a Nicómaco. Instituto de Humanismo y Tradición Clásica: Universidad de León.
- Ryff, C. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57 (6), 1069–1081.
- Schaufeli, W.B., Taris, T.W. & Bakker, A.B. (2008). It takes two to tango. Workaholism is working excessively and working compulsively. In R.J. Burke & C.L. Cooper, *The long work hours culture. Causes, consequences and choices* (pp. 203-226). Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Seligman, M. (2002). *Authentic Happiness. Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. London: Nicholas Bredley.
- Sharma, P. (2004). An overview of the field of family business studies: current status and directions for the future. *Family Business Review* 17 (1), 1–36.
- Sharma, P & Nordqvist M. (2008). Classification scheme for family firms: from family values to effective governance to firm performance. Paper presented at the International Family Owned Business Conference, IESE Business School, Barcelona.
- Shernoff, D.J. (2001). The experience of student engagement in high school classrooms: A phenomenological perspective. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago.
- Stein, G., L., Kimiecik, J. Daniels, J., & Jackson, S. (1995). Psychological antecedents of flow in recreational sports. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21(2), 125-135.
- Tagiuri, R. & Davis, J. (1982). Bivalent attributes of the family firm. Working paper. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School. *Reprinted in Family Business Review* 1996, 9 (2), 199–208.
- Veenhoven, R. (2000). Well-being in the Welfare State: Level not Higher, Distribution not More Equitable. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 2, 91–125.
- Walsh, F. (2006). *Strengthening Family Resilience*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Webb, K. (1999). *The Influence of Anxiety within a Business*. In P. Comella, J. Bader, J. Ball, K. Wiseman & R. Sagar (Eds.). *The Emotional Side of Organizations*. USA: Georgetown Family Center.

Weber, B.A., & Beverly, R. (2000). Data collection using handheld computers. *Nursing Research*, 49(3), 173-175.

Webster, J., Trevino, L.K., & Ryan, T. (1993). The dimensionality and correlates of flow in human computer interactions. *Computers in Human Bbehaviour*, 9, 411-426.

Zahra, S. & Sharma, P. (2004). Family business research: a strategic reflection. *Family Business Review* 17, 331–346.

Zahra, S., Hayton, J. & Salvato, C. (2004). Entrepreneurship in family vs. nonfamily firms: a resource-based analysis of the effect of organizational culture. *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice* 28 (4), 363–381

