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Supplier Relationships to Family Firms

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Supplier Relationships to Family Firms

Foreword by Prof. Dr. Andreas Hack

Springer Gabler

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Vallendar, Germany

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Foreword

In times of increasing market complexity and dynamics, management in networks is gaining particular importance for many companies. While close provider-customer relations have always represented a significant competitive advantage, stable, long-term relationships have become a critical factor of success today. Consequently, marketing literature increasingly focuses on the prerequisites and contingency factors of trustful cooperation.

It seems to be clear that, besides economically comprehensible facts, emotional assessments also play an important part when it comes to business relations. For example, it was demonstrated that perceived cooperative intentions on the part of buyers had a concrete influence on buyer satisfaction. Especially for family-owned companies, that pursue financial as well as socio-emotional objectives, these factors should be of particular importance. Surprisingly, no paper investigating this moderating influence in detail has been found in business literature yet. The literature includes some initial conceptional considerations stating that special effects on stakeholder relations are to be expected due to non-financial values of family-owned companies, but professional exchange relations between suppliers and customers have not yet been investigated.

The present paper deals with this research question, which is highly relevant in theory. The author, however, does not only take a conceptional approach, but provides an empirical database that substantiates his statements in a remarkable manner. In addition, Christoph Rose provides a broader differentiation of the perspective on family-owned companies. In contrast to several studies that merely discuss family-owned companies and non-family companies, his differentiation is based on family influence, so the dominating heterogeneity of family-owned companies in practice is taken into account. Moreover, he is the first to attempt to make the conceptional FIBER model of socio-emotional wealth suggested in literature accessible to empirical analysis.

I think this paper is as relevant to practice as it is to theory. Especially in networks, intimate knowledge of measures serving to increase the quality of relevant relationships is extremely important. The present study provides responses as to what behaviour will result in an increase of quality and, especially, as to what measures are particularly favourable for what types of companies.

The present dissertation enriches the discussion about professional networks in family-owned companies to a particular extent. I am confident that selected findings from this thesis will be adopted in the journals of our industry. Moreover, I hope that it will be broadly received in entrepreneurial practice. The internalisation of its findings may contribute to the establishment of deeper and trustful long-term networks. I would like to congratulate the author on his work.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Hack

Acknowledgments

The dissertation at hand has been written at WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management. It was an extraordinary challenge which I could never have completed without the numerous people whom I met and who supported me on this journey.

First of all, I would like to thank my doctoral advisor, Professor Dr. Andreas Hack. His support of my research ideas, motivational attitude and always pragmatic, forward-looking and encouraging style were most crucial to the success of this work. I am thankful for the constructive and supportive feedback which both motivated me and helped me to improve my research step by step. It was a pleasure to be supported by his great mindset and approach to interacting with others. Furthermore, I would like to thank my secondary advisor, Professor Dr. Franz W. Kellermanns. He provided me with highly valuable support, which simultaneously improved and further developed my work and at the same time motivated me personally to always continue my efforts. I am thankful for his inspiration. He significantly shaped my perspective towards my own research.

Special thanks go to all my fellow doctoral students. Throughout the work on this dissertation they all contributed both directly and indirectly. Getting direct input is essential in solving concrete research questions. Simultaneously, the attitude and work environment created helps tremendously to overcome all the challenging times which were part of this dissertation.

Last but not least, I want to thank my family, who always supported me and provided me with the best backing possible. I want to thank my parents for their ongoing, unconditional support. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

Christoph Rose

Table of contents

List of tables

List of figures

List of abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CI	Condition Index
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
FIBER	Family Control and Influence, Family Members' Identification with the Firm, Binding Social Ties, Emotional Attachment, Renewal of Family Bonds to the Firm through Dynastic Succession
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
RMSEA	Root Mean Squared Error Approximation
SEW	Socioemotional Wealth
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and research motivation

This work focuses on family firms and their supplier interaction, more precisely customer-supplier relationships with a family firm being the customer. The analysis of the family firm's interaction with a stakeholder group in general and this particular focus are a new and extraordinarily promising path of research. Supplier relationships of family firms, which are the focus, offer unique answers to the understanding of family firms' distinct characteristics.

In past decades, family business research has increased steadily.[1] Family firms have exceptional characteristics and often possess a unique resource base and capabilities.[2] Consumer perceptions of family firms are generally positive.[3] General stakeholder theory emphasizes that it is highly beneficial for companies to have trusting relationships with their stakeholders. Family firms in particular are long-term, and long lasting stakeholder relationships can be considered to be in their mutual interest.[4] Some authors see competitive advantages for family firms when it comes to building stakeholder and especially customer relationships.[5]

It is acknowledged that acquiring new customers is more expensive than keeping existing ones.[6] Higher levels of competition make companies shift their focus towards customer retention and loyalty, in which case long-term relationships are considered to be mutually beneficial.[7] With regard to non-family firms' antecedents, dimensions and consequences of the customer relationship quality were researched by various

[1] Sharma, Chrisman, and Gersick (2012); Sharma (2004); Zahra and Sharma (2004)
[2] Sharma (2004); Chrisman, Chua, and Litz (2003); Habbershon, Williams, and MacMillan (2003); Goutas, Krappe, and Schlippe (2011); Covin (1994)
[3] Carrigan and Buckley (2008); Orth and Green (2009)
[4] Choi and Shepherd (2005) Jones (1995) Carney (2005); Morck and Yeung (2003)
[5] Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006)
[6] Athanasopoulou (2009); Zeithaml (2000); Fornell and Wernerfelt (1987); Anderson and Sullivan (1993)
[7] Morgan and Hunt (1994); Doney and Cannon (1997/04)

C. Rose, *Supplier Relationships to Family Firms*,
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colleagues.[8] The customer relationship is viewed from both the buyer's and seller's[9] perspective[10]. Only a few studies were found that were close to the relevant overlap discussed here, but those were mostly in a business to consumer context.[11] To date no attention has been paid to the family firm's direct supplier relationships nor the customer-supplier relationships in a business-to-business context, either in theoretical or empirical analysis. Customer-supplier relations, and especially their associated relationship quality, are an important topic in academia and from a practitioner's perspective as well. To best understand the context, it is necessary to consider from which side the relationship is analyzed, but nevertheless relevant impact is seen for both the buyer and the seller side. The general relevance of this relationship to corporate success and the advantages from both the buyer as well as the seller side are provided by various colleagues.[12] The buyer and seller side both profit from good relationships in a similar way. The buyer's advantages are seen in reduced transaction cost and lower uncertainty as well as advantages such as counseling assistance, which is associated with good long-lasting buyer-seller relationships.[13] Furthermore, buyers anticipate and avoid switching costs.[14] Lower risk levels and increased levels of cooperation are also advantageous for the seller side of the relationship. Additionally, they have a strong economic motivation. An increase in customer retention rates is associated with tremendous increases in profits.[15] This indicates a direct link to the practical relevance of the topic discussed.

Generally it can be considered surprising that research and especially empirical studies on the strategic management and the value creation of family firms are still so underdeveloped. We know that family firms have unique characteristics and resources,

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[8] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Morgan and Hunt (1994); Doney and Cannon (1997/04)
[9] Dwyer and Oh (1987); Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992); Johnson, Sakano, Cote, and Onzo (1993); Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp (1995); Doney and Cannon (1997/04); Smith (1998); Garbarino and Johnson (1999); Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, and Gremler (2002)
[10] Morgan and Hunt (1994); Baker, Simpson, and Siguaw (1999); Friman, Gärling, Millett, Mattsson, and Johnston (2002); Lages, Lages, and Lages (2005)
[11] Carrigan and Buckley (2008); Orth and Green (2009); Cooper, Upton, and Seaman (2005)
[12] Morgan and Hunt (1994); Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Grönroos (1994)
[13] Marshall, Palmer, and Weisbart (1979); Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[14] Dwyer and Oh (1987)
[15] Grönroos (1994); Heskett (1987); Reichheld (1992); Reichheld and Sasser (1990)

and this uniqueness is often discussed. Furthermore, we know that customer relationships are of great importance in a business-to-business environment. Overall, however, customer-supplier relationships of family firms are rarely explored in literature.[16] This is remarkable for various reasons, but especially because family firms are considered to have a competitive advantage with regard to customer relationships.[17] We do not know if customers in a business-to-business setting account for the familiness of their suppliers, what this potentially results in, or what role the customer's family firm status can play. Furthermore, we do not know which of the factors that characterize family firms moderate this relationship and whether this may result in a competitive advantage for family firms. The current level of knowledge about family firms' unique characteristics, and especially resources and the way they are used, is insufficient.[18] The relationship marketing paradigm, which is summarized by Grönroos (1994) as an interactive process in a social context with relationship building and management as corner stones, is extraordinarily promising. The following paragraph provides an overview of this work's research agenda and the contributions developed.

1.2 Overview of research and contributions

This dissertation project focuses on a particular gap in the field of family business research and contributes to the understanding of the supplier relationships of family firms, a customer's perspective within customer-supplier relationships of family firms and family firms' unique characteristics, by deepening the research on supplier relationships. Research on family firms has focused on two aspects of family firms: first, explaining differences between family and non-family firms, and second,

[16] Eddleston, Morgan, and Pieper (2011)
[17] Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987); Gummesson (1987); Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006); Aldrich and Cliff (2003)
[18] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005); Habbershon, Williams, and MacMillan (2003); Hack (2009)

understanding variations among the behavior within the group of family firms. Both contribute to the overall objective of explaining the family's influence on firm success.[19]

This research can be summarized and integrated in the research landscape under five major points: First is the contribution to the (to date insufficient) research on the unique characteristics of family firms, which remains a research question of highest relevance.[20] Habbershon & Williams (1999) argue that within family firms specific and unique characteristics evolve due to the similarly unique interaction between the family as a system, individual members of the family and the company. Many of those are related to a unique set of goals oftentimes observed in a family firm context. Those are economic – like the maximization of corporate value and revenues – and noneconomic goals – for example the preservation of the family's strategic influence – as well.[21] In particular, a deeper understanding of the influence of family's noneconomic goals within the family firm is needed.[22] Stakeholder theory offers a promising theoretical basis to identify, from a customer's perspective, distinguishing characteristics of family firms. This is an important issue and closely related to the second focus: the differences between family firms and non-family firms. Understanding the black box of family firm success will be possible only when we also understand the differentiating factors that occur. Former research points out that family firms are superior in terms of financial performance and enjoy a better financial structure than non-family firms.[23] Oftentimes, anecdotal evidence is presented to argue in favor of family-owned businesses, but full-scale explanations are still lacking.[24] The research community puts a strong emphasis on this question as well as on my third focus:[25] understanding the particular characteristics within the group of family firms and the existing differences among the sub clusters as compared to each other and as compared to non-family firms. The

[19] Zellweger, Eddleston, and Kellermanns (2010)
[20] Hack (2009)
[21] Lee and Rogoff (1996); Burkart, Panunzi, and Shleifer (2003); Chrisman, Kellermanns, Chan, and Liano (2010); Westhead and Howorth (2007)
[22] Gómez-Mejia, Núñez-Nickel, and Gutierrez (2001); Sirmon and Hitt (2003); Eddleston and Kellermanns (2007)
[23] Astrachan and Shanker (2003); Sharma (2004)
[24] Cooper, Upton, and Seaman (2005)
[25] Westhead and Howorth (2007)

heterogeneity and the accompanying complexity within family firms is not yet in focus.[26] The fourth focus is on the investigation of family firm's customer-supplier relationship performance and important but as yet undiscovered moderating variables in this context.[27] Fifth, I investigate how the relationship between a buying and a selling firm is influenced when the buyer side is a family firm, and what influence the familiness has in this context.

These five points demonstrate the relevance of my research to state-of-the-art research questions and show how this work contributes to the further development of the field. Furthermore it is important to recognize that this work focuses on an intersection between two fields of research: the areas of family business and business-to-business marketing research. The intersection has not been addressed before by academics and stepping into this area offers a promising new path. It is especially promising in light of the abovementioned first three research questions. These focus on the further development of the field of family business research, which is the primary field of contribution for this work.

1.3 Outline

This dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 gives an introduction to relationship quality and thereby presents the context of this work. Section 2.1 provides the reader with an introduction to relationship marketing, a useful perspective to gain a broad understanding of this work. Section 2.2 presents the concept of relationship quality, which is a main building block in this research. Further, sections 2.3 and 2.4 lay the foundation and develop the core of the empirical model of relationship quality, its antecedents and consequences, which is the subject of this work.

Chapter 0 introduces the reader to the second major pillar of this work, which is family business research and in particular family businesses' stakeholder relationships. Section 3.1 provides a general introduction to the still young research focus on family

[26] Hack (2009)
[27] Hack (2009)

firms and gives an overview of the general development and the various unique characteristics. Section 3.2 provides the necessary and important definitional approaches before section 3.3 introduces the common theoretical dimensions. Those are principal agent theory (section 3.3.1), stewardship theory (section 3.3.3) the resource-based perspective (section 3.3.4) and the stakeholder relationship approach to family firm research (section 3.3.5). Section 3.4 finally provides a summary and an overview of the current research attempts which exist in the relevant filed of this dissertation.

Chapter 4 links the two pillars of this research – first customer-supplier relationships in a business-to-business setting and second family business research – by developing the hypotheses which are the subject of this dissertation. Section 4.1 states those hypotheses and is subdivided into the core model (sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2) and the moderation analysis (sections 4.1.3 and 4.1.4). Section 4.2 summarizes the hypotheses' development by presenting an aggregated overview of the model discussed.

Chapter 5 introduces the reader to the research methodology applied. It first describes the underlying data set and the data collection (section 5.1) and gives detailed information regarding the sample and its descriptive statistics (section 5.2). Section 5.3 is about the applied measures and provides the background of independent (section 5.3.1), dependent (section 5.3.2) and control variables (section 5.3.3).

Chapter 6 presents the results of the empirical analysis provided in Chapter 5. Furthermore, section 6.1 is an extensive presentation of the qualitative research results, whereas section 6.2 discusses these results in an integrated and holistic way.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation project. Limitations and implications for future research projects are highlighted (sections 7.1 and 7.3). The strong practical use of this work is reflected in section 7.4, which provides the managerial implications of the work.

2 Relationship quality in business to business customer-supplier relationships

This chapter introduces the concept of relationship quality and presents the relevant conclusions of state-of-the-art customer relationship research and customer relationship marketing. A particular focus is on customer relationship marketing, as looking into this field of study provides an improved understanding of the various types, dimensions, and determinants of buyer-seller relationships. Furthermore, this chapter introduces the crucial factors that will allow for a comparison with the family business sector.

2.1 Introduction to relationship marketing and customer relationships

Today, customers are considered one of the most important stakeholder groups for any corporation.[28] In addition to relationship marketing, the focus on customer relationship management as a practice has accordingly increased in recent years.[29] The focus of this dissertation is on customer-supplier relationships and the way these relationships are influenced by the unique characteristics of family businesses when they are a party in the relationship. Customer-supplier relationships are of great relevance and a large body of research is available. This work focuses on the relationship itself and gives a short introduction to relationship marketing and customer relationship management. These introductions are provided to facilitate the understanding of the relationship, its antecedents, and consequences.

Marketing scholars today focus largely on a company's long-term relationships with clients, wholesalers, retailers, and suppliers. The aim of relationship marketing is the development of a company-specific network comprising the relevant stakeholder groups. Competition is no longer seen as happening between individual companies,

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[28] Hillman and Keim (2001); Collins, Steg, and Koning, Martine A. S. (2007)
[29] Grönroos (2000)

C. Rose, *Supplier Relationships to Family Firms*,
Familienunternehmen und KMU, DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-19048-4_2

but between networks of companies. Consequently, those with the best networks have the highest success probabilities, and business-to-business relationships offer opportunities to create competitive advantages and achieve superior results.[30] Long-term relationships with customers can be considered the essence of business-to-business marketing.[31] Long-term competitive advantage, resulting from the investment in the collaboration process, was made clear by Jap (1999), who used a dyadic longitudinal study to investigate the collaboration process between buyers and suppliers, pointing out that the process itself is worthwhile. Within this work the ultimate focus is on supplier relationships of family firms. Nevertheless the customer relationships are very closely related to supplier relationships as it is mostly a matter of the researcher's perspective and allows for an adequate examination. This work partly builds upon relationship marketing literature and therefore a thorough introduction into the field is provided.

The term "relationship marketing" dates back to the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first appearance of the term occurs in Berry (1983). Dwyer & Oh (1987) commented that marketing research neglected the relationship aspects of buyer-seller behavior and tended to study transactions as discrete events. Grönroos (1994) called for a paradigm shift in marketing, away from the paradigm of the four Ps and marketing mix management and towards a focus on customer retention, market- and customer relationship economies. They provide a solid overview of the change from the old marketing paradigm, which lasted for decades, and towards the approach of relationship marketing. Today's focus has generally shifted from a transactional approach to a relationship marketing approach. Despite this development, a solid theoretical foundation for relationship marketing is still lacking. There is a theory-reality gap between marketing textbooks and the related fundamental theories of marketing, especially in the area of relationship marketing.[32]

A relationship between two parties, a buyer and a seller, is characterized by interdependence; it is the result of a joint effort by both parties. Relationships exist

[30] c.f. Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, and Wong (2010, p. 36); Jap (1999); Ulaga (2003)
[31] Hutt and Speh (1992)
[32] Gummesson (2002)

between all customers and suppliers in business markets. “Relationship marketing is marketing seen as relationships, networks and interaction. Relationships require at least two parties who are in contact with each other. The basic relationship of marketing is that between a supplier and a customer.”[33] Relationship marketing involves the initiation, preservation, and improvement of stable relationships with customers and other stakeholder groups. Relationship marketing has a clear long-term focus; the aim is to provide long-term value for the buyer.[34] The added value for the buyer is not the sole outcome of relationship marketing. Value-creation for the seller side exists as well. It is important to note that many of the advantages (e.g. reduced uncertainty and transaction cost) apply to both sides. This dissertation relies on Bruhn's definition of relationship marketing as including "all actions for the analysis, planning, realization, and control measures that initiate, stabilize, intensify, and reactivate business relationships with the corporation's stakeholders - mainly customers - and to the creation of mutual value.”[35] To best understand relationship marketing, the practices associated with it, and its potential drivers, it is necessary to draw a distinction between relationship marketing and transaction marketing. This comparison is helpful and furthermore important for a deeper understanding of either one. Transaction marketing is marketing focused on single transactions, especially when the fact that a customer has bought a product (or made a repeated purchase) does not influence the likelihood of any future interactions. In contrast, the influence of one purchase on the likelihood of making a second one is very important in relationship marketing. It is primarily this factor that differentiates relationship marketing from transaction marketing.[36] More precisely, transaction marketing, as the opposite of relationship marketing, is characterized by a short-term time horizon. Customers in transaction-related settings tend to be more price sensitive, and price sensitivity plays a major role in the context. The dominant quality dimension is the quality of the output, not the quality of the interactions as would be the case in relationship marketing. The relevant dimension has a rather technical quality dimension in spite of the more functional quality

[33] Bruhn (2004-2005, p. 120)
[34] Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, and Wong (2010, p. 555)
[35] Bruhn (2004-2005, p. 120)
[36] Bruhn (2004-2005)

dimensions of the relationship-oriented approach. Of special importance is the distinction in terms of the customer satisfaction measurement. The transaction-based paradigm uses monitoring of market share as the relevant, but indirect, dimension of customer satisfaction, whereas within the relationship approach a direct measurement of the customer base is applied. Another clear and important difference is found in the internal role of marketing. This is of very limited importance to success in the transaction-oriented case, but the role is of substantial strategic importance when a relationship marketing approach is followed.[37] In the remainder of this dissertation, I focus solely on cases of repeated purchase, not on spot market interactions with no or extremely short customer lifecycles. Repeated purchase relationships reflect long-term relationships and are thereby in line with the core purpose of this work; they especially reflect the basic model assumptions from previous research that I build upon.[38] Further, this is in line with the family business-related assumptions of this work, as discussed in chapter 0 of this work.

Based on the above definition of relationship marketing, various dimensions of relationship marketing orientation can be identified. Most relevant to the focus of this work is the underlying concept of stakeholder orientation in relationship marketing. Stakeholder orientation in the context of marketing underlines marketing's aspiration to create value for all related stakeholders not only customers. Furthermore, this underlines this work's approach of analyzing the customer-supplier relationship. Others would be, for example, decision, time-horizon, or value orientation. Nevertheless, stakeholder orientation provides the most appropriate perspective for this analysis.[39] Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of all related stakeholder groups.

Relationship marketing is about the establishment, maintenance, and enhancement of relationships for the creation of mutual benefits. Relationship marketing and customer relationship management are two closely related concepts that need to be discussed

[37] Grönroos (1994)
[38] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4); Dwyer and Oh (1987)
[39] Bruhn (2004-2005)

jointly in order to clearly understand how they relate and how they differ.[40] Furthermore, when discussing only one in isolation there is a high potential for creating confusion, in part because some researchers use them interchangeably.[41] According to Ryals & Payne (2001), the two terms are best distinguished by associating relationship marketing with the strategic dimension, and customer relationship management with the tactical dimension. The latter includes the implementation of relationship marketing, with an especially strong focus on information technology. Customer relationship management focuses on building and establishing relationships with profitable customers.[42] Relationship marketing, on the other hand, and especially important in the context of this work, focuses on building relationships with an entire set of stakeholders, including those beyond the customer-supplier dyad.[43] A third and last major distinction pertains to the fact that relationship marketing is focused on emotional and behavioral practices, e.g. trust and reciprocity[44], while customer relationship management is focused on management practices.

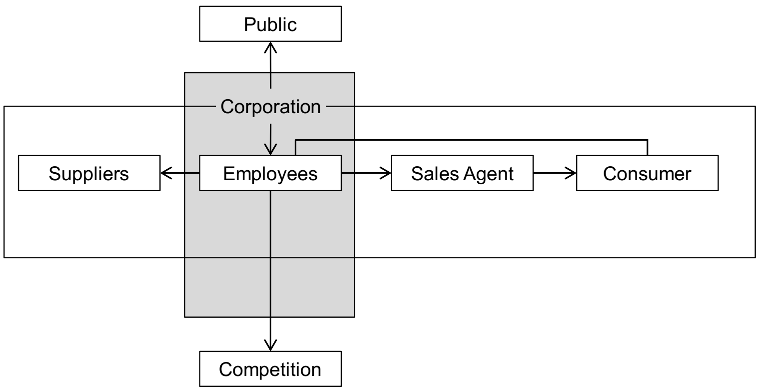

Figure 1: Marketing's stakeholders[45]

[40] c.f. Das (2009)
[41] see Sin, Tse, and Yim (2005)
[42] Ryals and Payne (2001); Sin, Tse, and Yim (2005)
[43] c.f. Gummesson (1994); Mitussis, O'Malley, and Patterson (2006); Hunt, Arnett, and Madhavaram (2006)
[44] Sin, Tse, and Yim (2005)
[45] Bruhn (2004-2005); Meffert (2000)

2.2 Conceptualization and definition of relationship quality

For the purpose of this work, relationship quality plays a fundamental role as a relevant success measure. Relationship quality is a higher order construct with independent, yet interlinked dimensions.[46] It can be regarded as a meta construct but has no universally accepted definition. Generally, it reflects the overall nature of relationships between a buyer and a seller.[47] The relationship quality approach is the most promising approach in relationship marketing.[48] Also noteworthy is the relational benefits approach.[49] Nevertheless, this work focuses on the relationship quality approach and lays out its dimensions in chapter 2.3. The core variables most often used are satisfaction, commitment, and trust. Further dimensions of relationship quality are trust, commitment and reciprocity[50], mutual value for all members of the relationship[51], level of involvement[52], communication quality[53], power or dependence of the relationship partners[54], longevity of the relationship[55] and shared technology[56].

The research direction's starting point can be seen in the work by Dwyer & Oh (1987). The topic was firmly established by the landmark study of Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07), and virtually all relationship quality studies published since then refer to it. Following this study a stream of research within the relationship marketing field can be identified. This stream increased slowly at first, but after 1995 a vast number of different approaches to the topic of relationship quality were developed. Few definitions of relationship quality exist. Hennig-Thurau & Hansen (2000) point out that researchers

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[46] c.f. Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Dwyer and Oh (1987); Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp (1995)
[47] c.f. Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, and Gremler (2002)
[48] see Crosby et al. 1990, Dorsch et al. 1998, Smith 1998a
[49] see Bendapudi and Berry (1997); Gwinner, Gremler, and Bitner (1998); Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, and Gremler (2002)
[50] Morgan and Hunt (1994); Berry (1995a); Palmer, Barrett, and Ponsonby (2000)
[51] Payne and Holt (2001)
[52] Gummesson (2002)
[53] Menon, Bharadwaj, and Howell (1996///Fall96); Menon, Bharadwaj, Adidam, and Edison (1999); Roberts, Varki, and Brodie (2003)
[54] Wilson (1995)
[55] Lagace, Dahlstrom, and Gassenheimer (1991); Ganesan (1994); Gummesson (2002)
[56] Wilson (1995)

tend to assume that everyone has some kind of intuitive understanding of what relationship quality involves and that, as a consequence, sophisticated discussion of this issue is rare. In this chapter information regarding characteristics of relationship quality is provided and determinants are introduced to provide a comprehensive picture. As a logical result, the cited attributes are not mutually exclusive, especially when compared across different models, which follow different approaches.

For this dissertation, relationship quality is considered a higher order construct made up of several distinct, but related dimensions. This is in line with past research.[57] Dwyer & Oh (1987) suggest that high levels of satisfaction, trust and minimal opportunism reflect a quality relationship. Satisfaction therefore is the overall satisfaction with the relationship being focused on. Minimal opportunism is related to low tendencies to shirk obligations and distort information. And thirdly, satisfaction is conceptualized as expectations that the other desires coordination and will meet the relevant obligations. Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) conceptualize relationship quality in terms of trust and satisfaction. They provided one of the first definitions of relationship quality: "The customer is able to rely on the salesperson's integrity and has confidence in the salesperson's future performance because the level of past performance has been consistently satisfactory." Accordingly, trust, in a relational sales context, can be defined as "a confident belief that the salesperson can be relied upon to behave in such a manner that the long-term interest of the customer will be served." Satisfaction is described as "an emotional state that occurs in response to an evaluation of the interaction experience with the salesperson".[58] It is centered on the roles assumed and performed by the individual parties.[59] For Kumar, Scheer, & Steenkamp (1995) relationship quality consists of conflict, trust, commitment, willingness to invest and expectation of continuity. Conflict is seen as behavior that has hindering characteristics in terms of goal accomplishment of the firm or directly blocks these. Further on perceived conflict is an acknowledged or perceived degree of present conflict. Trust has a dual meaning, first regarding the honesty of the partner, expecting him to stand

[57] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Dwyer and Oh (1987); Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp (1995)
[58] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Westbrook (1981)
[59] Murstein (1977)

by its word, fulfill the role obligations and be sincere. The second dimension of trust within this piece of research is the trust in a partner's benevolence – the belief that the partner is interested in the firm's welfare and unexpected actions with negative effect are not anticipated. In summary, the trust is expected to be present when a firm believes in honesty and benevolence on the partner's side. Commitment is related to the willingness to invest. Affective commitment means the actual desire to continue the relationship. Willingness to invest is reflected by a desire to do more than just continue the relationship, investing and becoming more deeply involved by spending either effort or capital or increasing the identification with the relationship with which each is associated to a certain degree of risk taking. By comparison, Hennig-Thurau & Klee's definition of relationship quality is more focused on the customer (1997): "…the degree of appropriateness of the relationship to fulfill the needs of the customer associated with the relationship." Relationship quality there is a construct consisting of the product or service quality, the customer's trust and his or her commitment to the seller side. This work follows the definitions by Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07).

Many factors may contribute to the quality of a buyer-seller relationship. Different compositions of the relationship quality dimensions are advocated for in literature. In the context and the very special approach of this work, taking a strict focus on family firms, RQ is conceptualized as a high-order construct composed of two dimensions, relationship trust and relationship satisfaction. Therefore, I later hypothesize that both relationship trust and relationship satisfaction have a positive impact on relationship quality, which follows existing opinion. Trust is often cited as a critical ingredient for determining relationship success.[60] Trust is believed to alleviate risk and to increase cooperation in exchange relationships.[61] Generally, trust is considered to be a catalyst for various business transactions.[62]

Satisfaction refers to the degree to which interactions between the buyer and the seller meet expectations for performance; this can be based on evaluations of the tangible

[60] Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987); Morgan and Hunt (1994); Wilson (1995); Schurr and Ozanne (1985)
[61] Schurr and Ozanne (1985); Swan and Nolan (1985)
[62] Nooteboom (2002); Williamson (1993)

product or non-product related attributes such as delivery, service, or communication.[63] Relationship quality may depend on the nature of the organizations involved, the individuals in the organizations, and the nature of the situation.[64] A literature analysis delivers strong support for the chosen dimensions. Over 160 studies have analyzed the dimensions of trust and satisfaction. Among the constructs developed to define relationship marketing, more than 50 separate constructs exist; nevertheless, no other construct is cited half as often as the two named ones.[65]

Table 1 Dimensions of Relationship Quality[66]

Author (Year)	Dimension of Relationship Quality
Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07);Morgan & Hunt (1994);Berry (1995b); Palmer, Barrett, & Ponsonby (2000)	trust, commitment and reciprocity
Jamal & Getz (1995)	common vision, goals and objectives
Payne & Holt (2001)	mutual value for all members of the relationship
Gordon, McKeage, & Fox (1998); Gummesson (2008)	level of involvement in the relationship
Thunman (1992); Wilson (1995)	the existence and strength of bonds

[63] Wilson (1995)
[64] Parsons (2002)
[65] c.f. Agariya and Singh (2011)
[66] c.f. Athanasopoulou (2006)

Author (Year)	Dimension of Relationship Quality
Menon, Bharadwaj, & Howell (1996///Fall96); Roberts, Varki, & Brodie (2003); Menon, Bharadwaj, Adidam, & Edison (1999)	communication quality
Zineldin (1995)	the environment of the relationship (economic, legal/political, technical, and competitive)
Zineldin (1995); Wilson (1995)	power/dependence of relationship partners
Lagace, Dahlstrom, & Gassenheimer (1991); Ganesan, Brown, Mariadoss, & Ho (2010); Ganesan (1994); Gummesson (2008)	longevity of the relationship
Wilson (1995)	shared technology
Wilson (1995); Gummesson (2008)	adaptation
Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07); Anderson & Narus (1990/01)	satisfaction with the relationship

Gummesson (2008)	the degree of collaboration versus competition of partners, the importance of the relationship for each partner, risk and uncertainty, attraction, formality, informality and transparency, routinization, content, closeness and remoteness

2.3 Literature analysis on the dimensions and antecedents of relationship quality

The unit of analysis within this work is a specific customer-supplier relationship, in other words the relationship between a specific buyer and a specific seller. Within this dissertation, I developed a framework that identifies variables that influence the relationship quality between a buyer and a seller. This framework builds on existing studies regarding the relationship quality and takes those considerations into account.[67] Furthermore, it makes it possible to derive new findings about family business relationships and provides a starting point for further research on family business stakeholder relationships.

To develop a reliable and robust framework, a structured review of the existing literature was undertaken. The methodology of the analysis followed approved structures and a hands-on approach.[68]

The goal was to find relevant literature that contributes theoretical or empirical results with regard to customer-supplier relationships and relationship quality in dyadic (no network studies) business-to-business customer-supplier relations, and further, existing and applicable customer relationship constructs. Additionally, any of the mentioned aspects or relevant foundations with regard to family businesses were of

[67] c.f. Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4); Gummesson (1999)
[68] Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003); David and Han (2004)

great interest and were included in the focus of the literature search. To start the broad review I selected 21 journals[69] and 10 relevant keywords.[70] These decisions were based on existing literature reviews[71] and on the author's prior research experience in the field. An early decision was made to include only journal articles and no book chapters or unpublished works; those articles went through a certain review process that should guarantee a level of methodological and conceptual rigor. The referred journals do show relevant requirements and minimum standards for publications. Furthermore, this allows for a consistent approach in terms of systematic search through completely available electronic abstracts; this as well is favorable in terms of output quality. It is important to notice that an availability bias at this point does not need to be considered. Consideration of published works only may lead to an overestimation of effects due to biases towards the publishing of only significant results. Nevertheless, the results of published and unpublished works can be considered "essentially identical" and therefore no problem with an availability bias is to be expected.[72] Furthermore, Cooper, p. 58 (1989) argue that the general directions are, if several dozen and more research works are considered, fundamentally correct and only the magnitude of effects could be questioned if anything. It becomes clear when applied to the context of this dissertation here that the approach is adequate as the review is intended to provide basic direction and not precisely work out single effects. In view of the special positioning of this dissertation at the intersection of two fields of research, relevant journals in the family business domain were taken into account as well. Regarding the family business branch of the search, Family Business

[69] Academy of Management Review, Die Betriebswirtschaft DBW / Business Administration Review – BARev, Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice, European Journal of Marketing, Family Business Review, Industrial Marketing Management, International Journal of Consumer Studies, International Journal of Market Research, Journal für Betriebswirtschaft, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Business to Business Marketing, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Family Business Strategy, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Relationship Marketing, Journal of Small Business Management, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft, Zeitschrift für betriebswirtschaftliche Forschung, Zeitschrift für KMU und Entrepreneurship

[70] Relationship Quality, Relationship Marketing, Customer Relations, Relationship Duration, Supplier Relationship, Buyer-Supplier Relations, Customer Loyalty, Stakeholder Relationships, Family Firm, Family Business, Trust

[71] Samiee and Walters (2003); Athanasopoulou (2009); Ngai (2005); Das (2009); Frank, Lueger, Nosé, and Suchy (2010)

[72] Hunter and Schmidt (2004, pp. 507–509)

Review (FBR), Entrepreneurship, Theory & Practice (ET&P), Journal of Business Venturing (JBV) and Journal of Small Business Management (JSBM) have been included. These journals are regarded to be "the most appropriate outlets for family business studies"[73] and are recognized to account for a major portion of family business research.[74]

After completing the preparation, venues and keywords were reviewed, discussed and confirmed with an experienced scholar in the field. The search itself was carried out by entering the combined search strings to the EBSCO host (Business Source Complete). Combined search strings are, for example, [AB ("Relationship Quality") AND SO (Academy of Management Review)]. The keywords were always searched for in title, keywords, and abstracts. A total of 210 search strings were performed. The combination of search strings in the various journals produced a combined 1151 hits in total; for example, the keyword "trust" produced 258 hits (22% of the total hits). Nevertheless, many of these are double hits as a journal article might appear within the results of distinct search terms. Double hits had to be eliminated while scanning, analyzing and categorizing the remaining works. First, by reading the title and selectively scanning the abstract, once more substantively irrelevant articles were excluded. The author excluded e.g. non-relevant business-to-consumer articles; generally speaking, there had to be a substantive relevance at this point, meaning that keywords were mentioned in a relevant context in the abstract and that the research context of the individual article had to be promising in light of the given context. Afterwards, the remaining results were consolidated and it was ensured that substantial relevance was given. After this first review, 260 individual articles were exported to a reference management program, including the related citation information and abstracts. Further on, this allowed for a precise review and inclusion or exclusion of the remaining articles. In a next step the works were individually categorized. This included selective reading of the article and ensured the relevance of the remaining articles. This categorization took into account several characteristics.

[73] Chrisman, Kellermanns, Chan, and Liano (2010, p. 10)
[74] Chrisman, Chua, Kellermanns, Matherne III, and Debicki (2008); Chrisman, Kellermanns, Chan, and Liano (2010)

Among these was the differentiation between family firm, and non-family firm context, categorization according to the theoretical base and categorization according to the methodological approach of each paper. Empirical works, as well as those which provided existing frameworks of relationship quality and its antecedents, were expected to be of the greatest importance for this dissertation.

A further qualitative analysis of the articles was done by the author, relating to the initial goal of the literature analysis, to find relevant literature that contributes theoretical or empirical results with regard to customer relationships and relationship quality in dyadic business-to-business customer relations. Irrelevant articles, which could not further contribute to the model development or creation of additional insight, were excluded and the relevant articles were further categorized according to the relevance and the applicability to this research's context. The literature review ultimately provided a strong foundation for the presentation and discussion of the framework of relationship quality. The procedure of the analysis ensures that the approach of this thesis is generally in line with the state of the art research and that the framework developed is based on solid fundamentals.

2.4 Conceptual Relationship Quality Framework

This chapter introduces a framework of relationship quality and the relevant related antecedents. The relationship quality framework has a fundamental role within this dissertation. Furthermore, it is in line with the conducted literature search and analysis and reflects the current state of existing literature as described in section 2.3.

Agreeing with and building upon existing literature, the analysis showed that relational selling behaviors are the most important antecedents to relationship quality and that they influence the relational success.[75] Therefore, the analysis of those relational selling behaviors on the seller side, in the context of this study, are the most suitable and most promising. The seller side is essentially the supplier in a customer-supplier

[75] Smith (1998); Woo and Cha (2002/12); Athanasopoulou (2009); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)

relationship; however, the term seller is more intuitive in discussions of the relational selling behaviors and relationship marketing literature tends to use the terms seller- and buyer-side. That said, the dimensions and conceptualizations of relationship quality found in literature vary. The dimensions cited most often are trust, commitment, and satisfaction. In addition to these, dimensions such as cooperation, opportunism, power, and conflict are also found frequently.[76] In the study at hand they are expressed in the seller side's self-disclosure and cooperative intentions and in the interaction intensity. These and related constructs have frequently been used in past research.[77] Relational selling behaviors are the main influential factors with regard to perceived relationship quality and the increase in the relationship quality of the buyer.[78]

The framework uses three sub constructs for the relational selling behaviors, each focused on the seller side; this is also in line with this study's research design. These are (a) *self-disclosure*, (b) *cooperative intentions,* and (c) *interaction intensity*. Generally speaking, the relational selling behaviors are intended to cultivate the buyer-seller relationship. Seller side's self-disclosure describes the degree to which a selling party opens up towards the buyer side and offers information about, for example, their own company or their personal career or views, or even private information. Cooperative intentions express the selling side's interest in a long-lasting relationship as perceived by the buyer. The buyer judges whether the relationship itself is more important than a single transaction to the seller and if the seller would be willing to help without a directly related personal benefit. The interaction intensity measures the frequency of interaction and the occasions used to interact with each other. For the mentioned sub constructs (a-c), there is no precise definition provided in literature. Besides the explanation, one best understands each sub construct when looking into the items it is measured with. These are provided in chapter 5, in Table 9, Table 10

[76] Athanasopoulou (2009)
[77] c.f. Smith (1998/03); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4); Doney and Cannon (1997/04); Zineldin (1995); Leuthesser (1997); Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[78] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Doney and Cannon (1997/04); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)

and Table 11. Furthermore, the dependent variable's items are listed in Table 12 and Table 13. And they are part of the questionnaire provided in the appendix.

The impact is, among others, seen in a closer relationship leading to more personal and needs-related information sharing, and in the expression of cooperative intentions and long-term interest. Personal and needs-related information sharing can be seen in terms of frequency but more specifically in the type of information shared between the acting individuals. Private information and professional background information can be shared in varying degrees. Cooperative intentions relate to the buyer's perception of the long-term interest the seller side has. Reduced uncertainty applies from the buyer perspective and is favorable with regard to transaction costs. Uncertainty means the potential failure of products and services and other related negative outcomes.[79] Furthermore, time investment is perceived as something valuable and reciprocity plays an important role in relationships. Several theories, such as the trust-attraction theory and the social exchange theory provide explanations for the reciprocity of self-disclosure. Social exchange theory suggests that it is rewarding to receive a disclosure. When a person receives something of value, he feels obligated to return something of similar value in the form of a similar disclosure; it is similar with time spent.[80]

The model developed here finds strong support in the fact that the initial business to consumer oriented study of Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) was replicated in a business-to-business environment by Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4). This suggests that the initial model has a good generalizability and the results of Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4) indicate that relationship quality is even more important for business-to-business customers in rating a salesperson than it is for consumers. Furthermore, the study extends the relationship quality model by Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07). With a data set of approximately 1,000 customers in a business-to-business setting, they replicate and extend the original study. A major finding is that the study they replicated shows a good replicability (indicated by fit indices); the model

[79] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Zeithaml (2000)
[80] Archer (1979); Shamdasani and Jung (2011)

suggested shows high degrees of generalizability to different sales settings. Six out of eight hypotheses within the work of Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4) were closely related to the work of Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) and were supported; the two other hypotheses were related as well, but did not find support in the related data. The study is extended by equity as an antecedent to relationship quality. Equity in this context is regarded as a measure of equality from the customers' perspective. The authors follow the suggestion that fairness is regarded as the dominant dimension of equity and that equity is a key component in the maintenance of customer relationships. Therefore, they build upon an existing three-item scale addressing whether the customer feels fairly treated.[81]

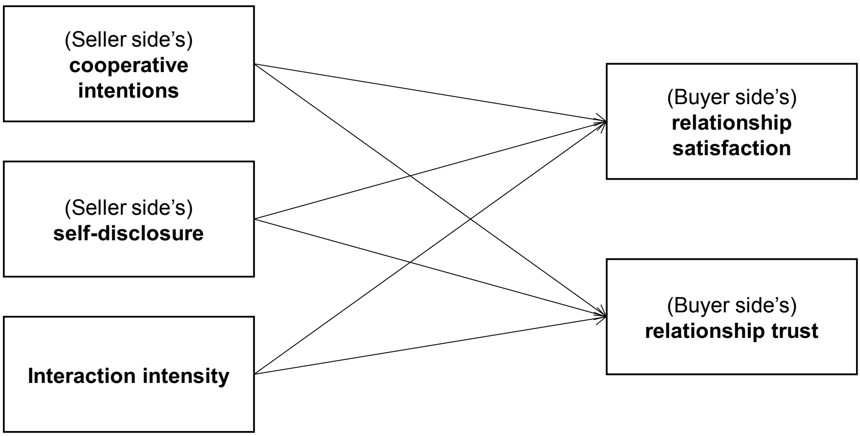

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Other factors aside from the mentioned sub constructs of cooperative intentions, self-disclosure and interaction intensity were not included in this dissertation's conceptual framework. None of the potential additional dimensions indicated a relevant interaction with the unique characteristics of family firms based on the underlying theoretical

[81] Oliver and Swan (1989)

expectations. At the same time, no other relevant dimensions that would have been interesting in terms of the family firm characteristic demonstrated the necessary methodological or conceptual rigor in the existing literature from the marketing field. Those relevant family firm characteristics and the underlying theories are discussed in the following chapter. This work focuses on the intersection between two research areas and in this consequence the chosen dimensions are expected to be of relevance. Other dimensions, such as conflict or communication within a relationship, based on their theoretical foundation, do not offer the expectation of relevant interaction.[82]

[82] Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp (1995); Myhal, Kang, and Murphy (2008)

3 Family business research and stakeholder relations

This chapter provides an introduction to the topic of family business research, which forms the main pillar of this research project as a whole. As an introduction, the question of different defining approaches towards family firms as well as the main theoretical approaches to studying family firms are explored. This allows for a thorough understanding of the topic. Thereafter, a literature based review of the existing overlap between the two areas of family firm and customer relationship research is provided.

3.1 Introduction to family business research

Family firm research is a relatively young area of interest within the research community. The family firm's role in the corporate world was ignored until the 1980s. Scholars started focusing on the special traits and demands of family owned and controlled businesses in the 1980s, but before that scant attention was paid to them.[83] Phenomenological research focused on problems such as succession and business governance and research was in large part based on descriptive analysis of anecdotal or stereotypical evidence.[84] Consequently, the descriptive theory of family-owned and managed firms can be considered underdeveloped.[85] The fact that the scholarly focus is so relatively young is surprising. Although there are some unique aspects of family firms, they make up the dominant organizational form and several studies emphasize this.[86] Family firms account for the majority of business organizations in world economies.[87] The number of family-owned companies is huge in both absolute and relative terms; nevertheless, the consequences of their special ownership structures

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[83] Heck, Hoy, Poutziouris, and Steier (2008)
[84] Hack (2009)
[85] Schulze, Lubatkin, and Dino (2002/06//Jun-Aug2002)
[86] Burkart, Panunzi, and Shleifer (2003); Claessens, Djankov, Fan, and Lang (2002); Villalonga and Amit (2006)
[87] Astrachan and Shanker (2003) estimate that in the US family businesses account for 49% of GDP and 78% of new job creation. Klein (2004) shows that around 60% of German companies with turnover above one million Euro are family owned. International Family Enterprise Research Academy (2003)

C. Rose, *Supplier Relationships to Family Firms*,
Familienunternehmen und KMU, DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-19048-4_3

and often distinctive management styles are still poorly understood. In terms of GDP share and share of total tax returns, as well, family firms play a major role in global economies. Astrachan & Shanker (2003) determine that in the U.S., 89% of total tax returns, 64% of GDP and 62% of employed labor are accounted for by family firms. These astonishing results are backed by other studies[88] in a variety of countries such as the UK[89] or Spain[90]. In Germany family firms play a very significant role. The country is well-known for, and proud of, its “Mittelstand” and the many “Hidden Champions.” Most of them are market leaders in their niche.[91] Around 70% of those successful small and medium-sized enterprises are family firms.[92] Fortunately, today researchers are paying more attention to the topic and in the past decades have begun to closely investigate the field.[93] The large number of family firms inevitably leads to a vast amount of variation within this group. This provides a special challenge to the theoretical basis and especially the definitional approach towards family firms. The following section 3.2 provides an introduction to definitional approaches.

3.2 Definitional approaches to family firms

This section provides an introduction to the main definitional approaches in the field of family firm research. As the definition is often the focus of controversial debate, this chapter provides a thorough introduction to multiple definitional approaches. Most definitions of family firms, both operative and conceptual, build upon the differentiation of family firms from non-family firms. This can be considered the traditional approach for the definition of family firms. An example used by several researchers is: “Family firms are unique organizational forms as a result of the interactions between family members, the family, and the business.”[94] Later approaches start to focus on the

[88] Morck and Yeung (2004); Neubauer and Lank (1998)
[89] Westhead, Cowling, and Storey (1997)
[90] Jaskiewicz, González, Menéndez, and Schiereck (2005)
[91] Simon, Ford, and Butscher (2002); Simon (2009)
[92] Simon (2009)
[93] Craig, Howorth, Moores, and Poutziouris (2009); Heck, Hoy, Poutziouris, and Steier (2008); Moores (2009); Sharma (2004)
[94] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005); Chrisman, Chua, and Steier (2005)

heterogeneity within the group of family firms; the homogeneity of the group is substantially questioned and thorough research is demanded.[95] The different approaches will be introduced and discussed. In the contemporary research literature, no single definition of family businesses has gained universal acceptance, even though "researchers in family business believe that family involvement makes a family business distinct from a nonfamily business."[96] Different approaches continue to exist and the "development of a rigorous theory of the family firm is just beginning."[97] Usually, definitional approaches consider a business to be a "family business" when members of one (business-) family control and typically manage the business. These family members can be part of different generations. Other definitions do exist and account for a family firm when more than 5% of the equity is held by one family[98] or when the business was handed over at least once from one generation to the other. The comparability within the different definitional approaches is very low. The only relatively large consensus exists around the ownership dimension in family firms. From among the existing definitions of the family business, two particularly important definitions will be discussed here. They appear to be the dominant theoretical approaches to the family business definition.[99] These are (1) the *components of involvement approach*[100] and (2) the *essence approach*[101]. These are rather different in nature but more recently "appear to be converging."[102]

Early *components of involvement* definitions took a functional approach and were often fragmented, with each definition focused on some combination of the components of a family's involvement in the business. For this definition, it is sufficient that some kind of family involvement exists to qualify as a family business. This involvement can be ownership, management, governance, or succession. Unfortunately, this definition lacks precision and, more importantly, lacks "a theoretical basis for explaining why and

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95 Hack (2009)
96 Chua, Chrisman, and Steier (2003)
97 Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005)
98 Anderson and Reeb (2003)
99 Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005); Hack (2009)
100 Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999///Summer99)
101 Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999///Summer99); Habbershon, Williams, and MacMillan (2003)
102 Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005); Astrachan, Klein, and Smyrnios (2002); Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999///Summer99)

how the components matter, or in other words, why family involvement in a business leads to behaviors and outcomes that might be expected to differ from nonfamily firms in nontrivial ways."[103] The approach is open and furthermore even dependent on individual interpretation, as no precise threshold levels exist.

The *essence approach* addresses the described limitations; in this definition, family involvement is taken as a necessary condition. It incorporates the observation "that firms with the same extent of family involvement may or may not consider themselves family firms, and that their views may change over time."[104] The resulting definition is based on the "essence" of the family business. This definition is based on four factors: "(1) a family's influence over the strategic direction of a firm; (2) the intention of the family to keep control; (3) family firm behavior; and (4) unique, inseparable, synergistic resources and capabilities arising from family involvement and interactions."[105] It includes the fact that the family's involvement must be "directed toward behaviors that produce certain distinctiveness before it can be considered a family firm."[106]

A clear difference between the two approaches exists. As a result, it is possible for the same company to be seen as both a family and a non-family firm, depending on the chosen approach. What constitutes the difference is the implicit sufficiency condition. "The components of involvement approach is based implicitly on the belief that family involvement is sufficient to make a firm a family business. The essence approach, on the other hand, is based on the belief that family involvement is only a necessary condition."[107] As mentioned above, according to the essence approach, "family involvement must be directed toward behaviors that produce certain distinctiveness, before it can be considered a family firm. Thus, two firms with the same extent of family involvement may not both be family businesses if either lacks the intention, vision, familiness, and/or behavior that constitute the essence of a family business."[108]

[103] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005)
[104] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005, p. 556)
[105] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005)
[106] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005, p. 557)
[107] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005)
[108] Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005, p. 557)

As this research builds upon two research areas - family businesses and customer-supplier relationships - it does not adhere to one single definition of family firms. Applying one single definition would not reflect the research purpose. One research goal is the identification of differentiating characteristics. Consequently, it is not advisable to follow a single definition that would subdivide companies into family- and non-family firms. Rather than applying a bipolar definition, various potentially distinctive characteristics, e.g. share of ownership, family share within management, or family generation(s) within management, are applied and later tested for their impact or relevance with regard to the research questions under discussion. This is also in line with the direction taken by other researchers, moving away from strictly dichotomous approaches towards multidimensional scales.[109] Astrachan, Klein, & Smyrnios (2002) introduced the Family Power Experience Culture scale (F-PEC), in which family influence is measured as a metric variable, not dichotomously. Further on, Klein, Astrachan, & Smyrnios (2005) developed and validated the F-PEC scale of family influence.

F-PEC has been both tested and validated as well as challenged by other authors.[110] F-PEC has been successfully applied in different studies.[111] The main contribution is not in offering a “precise or all-encompassing definition of family business”, but rather a scale that supports the convergence of the above-mentioned definitional approaches.[112] For this dissertation, the relevant parts of the F-PEC scale are applied as well within the measurement and precise analysis of the customer-supplier relationship. A more thorough introduction of this is provided in section 4.1.3.

A special role within the recent family business research uses the paradigm of socioemotional wealth (SEW), introduced by Gómez-Mejia, Haynes, Núñez-Nickel, Jacobson, & Moyano-Fuentes (2007) regarding the noneconomic utilities that family members receive from their businesses. It is introduced in more detail in section 3.3.2.

[109] Astrachan, Klein, and Smyrnios (2002)
[110] Rutherford, Kuratko, and Holt (2008)
[111] Jaskiewicz, González, Menéndez, and Schiereck (2005); Rutherford, Kuratko, and Holt (2008)
[112] Astrachan, Klein, and Smyrnios (2002, p. 51)

3.3 Theoretical Dimensions of Family Firm Research

Despite the described shortcomings, the area of family firm research is generally dynamic in its development and the body of literature is growing quickly. An impressive example is the growing number of family business articles that are published in top tier management journals.[113] This chapter provides an overview of the central and dominant theoretical pillars of family business research. These are principal agent theory, agency theory, and the resource-based view.[114] Furthermore, the socioemotional wealth paradigm is introduced. This section also provides an introduction to stakeholder theory and its relevance in the family business context. This is a necessary and important fundamental with regard to this work. Other theories relevant to the family business research in general but which do not provide additional insights in this context are not provided in detail here. Amongst those is, for example, social identity theory.

3.3.1 Principal agent theory

The largest share of family business literature is grounded in *principal-agent theory*.[115] Principal-agent or agency theory (also agency paradigm) is rooted in potential conflicts of owner (principal) and manager (agent); these conflicts arise because the manager is acting on behalf of the owner and conflicts of interest as well as information asymmetries exist or arise. Under the assumption of opportunistic behavior, diverging interests, asymmetric information, bounded rationality and incomplete contracts, and problems such as adverse selection or moral hazard arise.[116] In other words, the PA theory assumes that an agent acts in its own interest instead of the principal's interest. For example, an employed manager takes decisions according to his personal preferences and does not fully focus on the relevant corporation’s interest in long term.

[113] Miller, Le Breton-Miller, Lester, and Cannella, JR. (2007); Cruz, Gómez-Mejia, and Becerra (2010)
[114] Siebels and Knyphausen-Aufseß (2012)
[115] Ross (1973)
[116] Simon (1957); Alchian and Woodward (1988)

Moral hazard[117] and adverse selection[118] are direct consequences of this. Following this logic, increased agency costs are expected. These are costs arising due to the necessity of agency problem prevention. Practically this is about control or incentive systems and governance structures. Furthermore, the economic damage resulting from opportunistic managerial behavior is included.[119] More detailed agency theory has its roots in the financial research within economic theory.[120] The major problems focused on are cooperation problems associated with asymmetric information, uncertainty in outcomes, incentive systems and levels of risk in decision-making. The theory is built around the key problem in contracting between an agent (employee) and a principal (i.e. a business owner) and the consequences of the separation between ownership and management. Generally, agents such as employees or managers control the firm's resources. This is why the separation of ownership and control, occurring with an eminent conflict of preferences, leads to agency costs. Those costs are rooted in necessary actions to prevent the conflicts of interest between principal and agent, in the monitoring of agents and the necessity for contractual agreements for interest alignment. In the opposite case it is then argued that with the unification of ownership and management, the mentioned agency costs are avoided resulting in a noticeable increase in the value of the underlying firm.[121]

In reality, the goal congruence between an agent and the principal is increased with several measures. Amongst those are information, monitoring systems and contractual agreements to ensure that the incentives of all related actors are aligned with the principal's interests. Of note is that the described information asymmetries are oftentimes associated with the term moral hazard. This is exactly the case when an agent works towards his personal goals before reaching the principal's goals. The agent has more relevant information than the principal and the principal can hardly control or even judge the agent's decisions in terms of appropriateness for the principal's own interest. There is no complete monitoring by the principal and the agent

[117] c.f. Hölmstrom (1979)
[118] Eisenhardt (1989); Jensen and Meckling (1979)
[119] Jensen and Meckling (1979)
[120] Jensen and Meckling (1976)
[121] Jensen and Meckling (1976)

might have an incentive for actions that are inappropriate from the principal's perspective. A second associated problem is the problem of adverse selection. Adverse selection is centered on the fact, that an agent might hide information or not tell the truth in relation to a contract or interests he or she has. Due to adverse selection, a principal faces uncertainty when choosing an agent or closing a contract with him or her, leading him to necessarily rely only on available information.[122]

As stated by Eisenhardt (1989), Table 2 offers an overview and specifications of principal agent theory and lists seven relevant characteristics. First is the principal agent theory's key idea of the way to understand problems in the principal-agent relationship. Key problems are the efficient organization of information and the cost of risk. Second is the unit of analysis, which consist of a principal and an agent. As already mentioned, agents in this context are typically referred to as employees or managers and the principal refers to the owner or the owners of the firm. Third is the assumption regarding the main drivers of human behavior. Humans are expected to be self-interested, act under bounded rationality and generally are considered to be risk averse. Fourth are the necessary organizational assumptions. As the primary interests of principals and agents are different – the principals focusing on the wellbeing of the firm and agents focusing on personal interests – conflicts of interest in their goals are to be expected. Efficiency is regarded as a corporation's main interest and information is asymmetrically spread between agents and principals. Information itself is the fifth assumption as it is seen as a commodity that can be traded. Sixth is moral hazard and adverse selection resulting from the existing information asymmetries. Seventh and last is the assumption of the problem's locus that is the relationship between principals and agents, for example, the work contracts that are signed.

[122] Eisenhardt (1989); Jensen and Meckling (1976)

Table 2 Overview of principal agent theory[123]

Key idea	Principal-agent relationships should reflect efficient organization of information and risk-bearing costs
Unit of analysis	Contract between principal and agent
Human assumptions	Self-interest Bounded rationality Risk aversion
Organizational assumptions	Partial goal conflict among participants Efficiency as the effectiveness criterion Information asymmetry between principal and agent
Information assumptions	Information as purchasable commodity
Contracting problems	Agency (moral hazard and adverse selection) Risk sharing
Problem domain	Relationship in which the principal and agent have partly differing goals and risk preferences (for example compensation, leadership, and so on.)

When adapted to the family business context, one unique assumption needs to be considered – the unification of ownership and management within one family. Family firms are less affected by transaction costs and conflicts of interest; as compared to

[123] Eisenhardt (1989, p. 59)

others, the described examples of conflicts of interest do not apply. Likewise, the key assumption of PA theory – that agency costs arise due to the separation of ownership and control – does not apply.[124] In the concrete context of family businesses, it is argued that family firms save on investing in control systems and other costs of prevention mechanisms described above.[125] Despite general agreement, some researchers argue that family firms are exposed not to *lower agency costs*, but rather to *different types of agency costs*, such as shortcomings with regard to altruistic behavior and management entrenchment and shareholder expropriation.[126] (Asymmetric) altruism and opportunistic behavior in particular expose family firms to agency costs.[127]

Nevertheless, criticism of assessments based purely on principal agent theory does arise, and some researchers challenge the explanatory power of this approach.[128] The main point is that the implicit assumption of an (economic) goal set defined a priori is problematic. Family firms often show more complex goal systems that include value and utility derived from non-economic goals and socio-emotional returns apart from economic incentives.[129]

Major contributions of principal agent theory in family business research exist. This part presents an overview and review of relevant articles. The intent is not to provide an exhaustive literature review, but rather to highlight the most important works with regard to the context of this work. Anderson & Reeb (2003) based on principal agent theory, suggest that family firms, especially those with family members as CEO, perform better than non-family firms. The work empirically investigates the relationship between the founding family ownership and firm performance based on a large sample of secondary data from Standard & Poor’s 500 firms. The results suggest that family ownership is an effective organizational structure; it reduces agency problems and

[124] Fama and Jensen (1983)
[125] Daily and Dollinger (1992)
[126] Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino, and Buchholtz (2001)
[127] Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino, and Buchholtz (2001)
[128] Corbetta and Salvato (2004); Jaskiewicz and Klein (2007)
[129] Astrachan and Jaskiewicz (2008); Zellweger and Astrachan (2008)

does not lead to severe losses in decision making authority.[130] Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino, & Buchholtz (2001) in their study "Agency relationships in family firms: Theory and Evidence," a quantitative study on 1,367 US American family firms, investigate whether owner management truly eliminates the agency costs of ownership/principal agent. They suggest that family firms face many of the subsequently described agency problems, amongst which are moral hazard, adverse selection, altruism and self-control. Advantages of family firms are the alignment of ownership and management and the higher levels of commitment. Nevertheless, the authors suggest that the disadvantages may offset the advantages mentioned.[131] Gómez-Mejia, Núñez-Nickel, & Gutierrez (2001) focus on the analysis of family ties in an agency context using a quantitative approach focusing on secondary data from the entire population of Spanish newspapers over 27 years (1966-1993). The findings suggest that emotional rather than rational criteria govern the terms of exchange. Furthermore, family contracting is more likely to increase agency costs as a result of executive entrenchment.[132] Daily & Dollinger (1992) use a different approach towards performance differences between family and non-family firms. The authors use a mixed sample (family and non-family firms) from the US manufacturing industry to compare family and non-family firms with regard to structural, process and performance dimensions. They argue that family firms' investment needs for control mechanisms are comparatively lower. All compared dimensions are different between family- and non-family firms with advantages and performance advantages on the side of family firms.[133] Chrisman, Chua, & Litz (2004) provide another comparison of agency costs from family and non-family firms. They use a sample from a survey of 1,241 US firms. Their findings suggest that the overall thread from agency costs is lower to family firms, and they act more efficiently in that manner. Furthermore, they point out that non-economic goals of family firms need to be considered when estimating the overall agency costs. Control mechanisms for agency problems are more positively correlated with success within non-family firms than family firms. [134] The last work to mention is a

[130] Anderson and Reeb (2003)
[131] Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino, and Buchholtz (2001)
[132] Gómez-Mejia, Núñez-Nickel, and Gutierrez (2001)
[133] Daily and Dollinger (1992)
[134] Chrisman, Chua, and Litz (2004)

conceptual piece by Miller & Le Breton-Miller (2006). The authors use both agency and stewardship theory perspective and reflect on particularities of firm performance and family governance. They use four characteristics for family firms: ownership dispersion, leadership, the involvement of family members and the generational perspective. Their results suggest the encouragement of family manager's stewardship behavior and they suggest lowering agency costs in family firms by the minimization of free-riding. Too much control and too much dispersion are both found to be negatively correlated to performance.[135] Table 3 offers an aggregated overview of the research discussed, generally following an overview by Nordqvist, Melin, Waldkirch, & Kumeto (2015).

Table 3 Overview of papers on principal agent theory in family businesses[136]

Author(s) / year	Journal	Purpose	Method / sample	Key findings / conclusions
Anderson and Reeb (2003)	Journal of Finance	Investing the relation between founding-family ownership and firm performance	Quantitative (secondary data)/Standard & Poor's 500 firms (family and non-family)	Family firms perform better than non-family firms, especially when family members serve as CEO. This is due to efficiency of family ownership
Schulze et al, (2001)	Organization Science	Study whether owner management necessarily eliminates the agency costs of ownership	quantitative (survey) / 1.376 US family firms	Family firms face problems of self-control, adverse selection, altruism and moral hazard. These may offset family firm advantages such as the alignment of ownership and management or commitment.

[135] Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2006)
[136] Nordqvist, Melin, Waldkirch, and Kumeto (2015, pp. 65–67)

Author(s) / year	Journal	Purpose	Method / sample	Key findings / conclusions
Gómez-Mejía et al. (2001)	Academy of Management Journal	Analyze the role of family ties in agency contracts	Quantitative (longitudinal secondary data)/ 276 Spanish newspapers (family and non-family firms)	Emotional rather than rational criteria govern the terms of exchange. Family contracting is more likely to increase agency costs as a result of executive entrenchment.
Daily and Dillinger (1992)	Family Business Review	Empirically examine the ownership structure in family ad non-family firms.	Quantitative (survey)/186 US manufacturing firms (family and non-family)	Performance advantages of family firms result from the alignment of ownership and control
Chrisman et al. (2004)	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	Compare the agency costs of family and non-family firms	quantitative (survey) / 1.241 US firms (family and non-family)	Due to less necessity of control mechanisms in family firms, overall agency threats are less serious than those in non-family firms. Also, non-economic performance goals of family firms need to be considered.
Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2006)	family Business Review	Reflect on peculiarities of governance and firm performance from agency and stewardship perspectives	Conceptual	Family firms are characterized by ownership dispersion, leadership, involvement of family members and generational perspective. Goals should be to avoid free-riding, too much control and too much dispersion. This all causes agency costs and a negative impact on performance.

3.3.2 Socioemotional wealth paradigm in family firm research

Socioemotional Wealth is an emerging theoretical perspective within the family business research that is experiencing significant growth. The idea is that family members do not strive for the maximization of financial returns, but rather try to preserve or increase the socioemotional endowments they derive.[137] The perspective of SEW is based on behavioral agency theory.[138] This argues that preferences are shaped by existing endowments. In the case of existing endowments, e.g. in the form of a firm controlled by a family, the family may work against the interest of other stakeholders in order to preserve their personal endowment. For example, this endowment can be of socioemotional wealth and preserving it can potentially be linked to skipping profitable investment opportunities thereby preserving the family control.[139] SEW-related literature, which includes some critics, is considered diverse and disjointed. A positive theory of SEW has yet to be developed.[140]

The SEW construct is arguably the direct application of the behavioral agency theory in the family business context. Behavioral agency theory in more detail states that companies' strategic choices are represented by manager's personal choices and at this point are judged and influenced by the manager's personal loss potential and manager's personal reference points. The manager's reference points lead to the relevant comparison for decision making, and managers can act according to varied risk preferences; risk neutrality, risk seeking or risk aversion can occur under different circumstances. The core assumption of behavioral agency theory is that agents are self-interested individuals whose risk preferences change relative to how they frame their decision problems. Whether a decision is framed as a gain or loss scenario depends entirely on the agent's personal perspective on the decision and further on, this leads to varying risk preferences of the decision taker.[141] In more detail, the theory predicts that the likelihood of personal losses, depending on the framing in the decision context, predicts the risk appetite of an agent. When a personal loss is possible or expected (future payment from the firm for example), riskier decisions are preferred as compared to scenarios in which no personal losses are to be expected or future gains

[137] Gómez-Mejia, Cruz, Berrone, and Castro (2011)
[138] Wiseman and Gomez-Mejia (1998)
[139] Miller, Le Breton-Miller, Lester, and Cannella, JR. (2007)
[140] Schulze and Kellermanns (2015)
[141] Kahneman and Tversky (1979)

are even to be protected by the agent – these are scenarios in which less risky decisions are preferred.[142]

The concepts of behavioral agency theory and the socioemotional wealth approach are similar to a very high degree; the differentiation, nevertheless, is at the level of the objects to which the concepts are applied. In the SEW context the family's the socioemotional endowment of the family in the family business is the relevant reference point. This pattern of SEW preservation consequently also holds true for the cases of individual risk preferences or loss aversion.

The concept of SEW today is a relevant part of the family business research landscape. Most of the time scholars employ it as an explanation of certain family business behaviors. Amongst others are financial performance[143], environmental and social performance[144], inter-firm cooperation[145], entrepreneurial orientation[146], stakeholder engagement[147] and firm exit[148]. The construct is well-accepted to increase the understanding of decision-making dynamics within family enterprises.[149] Berrone, Cruz, & Gómez-Mejia (2012) argue that SEW is the most important differentiator for the explanation of family firms unique behaviors. In other words, SEW might distinguish the family-owned from non-family enterprises. Furthermore, it is well-accepted as a potential main building block in an emerging theory of the family firm.[150] This dissertation is partly built upon the differentiating characteristics of the SEW approach. Berrone, Cruz, & Gómez-Mejia (2012) offer a measurement approach, the so-called FIBER dimensions. They are also referred to as the FIBER model and it stands for the **F**amily control and influence, the **I**dentification of the family members with the firm, **B**inding social ties, the **E**motional attachment of family members and the **R**enewal of family bonds to the firm through dynastic succession. They are also used to measure

[142] Martin, Gomez-Mejia, and Wiseman (2013); Wiseman and Gomez-Mejia (1998)
[143] Stockmans, Lybaert, and Voordeckers (2010)
[144] Cennamo, Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[145] Deephouse and Jaskiewicz (2013)
[146] Schepers, Voordeckers, Steijvers, and Laveren (2014)
[147] Kellermanns, Eddleston, and Zellweger (2012)
[148] DeTienne and Chirico (2013)
[149] Schulze and Kellermanns (2015)
[150] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejía (2014); Schulze and Kellermanns (2015)

the SEW within this research as certain items for the constructs operationalization are proposed. Section 4.1.3 provides an introduction of the FIBER scales that are employed.

3.3.3 Stewardship theory

Stewardship theory states that agents (stewards) behave socially, in a self-actualizing manner and with an attitude postulating psychological ownership.[151] This theory is an alternative view of agency theory, which - as discussed above - postulates that managers act on their own behalf rather than on their principal's behalf. It is rooted in the scientific fields of sociology and psychology and was originally developed to investigate situations in which executives are motivated to act in the best interest of their principals.[152] A core belief of stewardship theory regards the steward's opportunity set. This is constrained such that the steward's perspective that the utility to be gained from a behavior in line with the principal's goals is higher than the utility to be gained from self-oriented actions. This aligns the agent's interests with the principal's.[153] Miller, Le Breton-Miller, & Scholnick (2008) find three forms of stewardship that could be relevant in the form of family businesses: continuity, community, and connection. Continuity refers to the intention to ensure the longevity of the firm, which in the long run allows various family members to benefit.[154] Further on, at a later stage, this special aspiration of continuity leads to a form of community, or the direct creation of a collective corporate culture, populated by competent and motivated staff members.[155] Thirdly, connection is the result of strong relationships with external stakeholders that might assist in sustaining the business in times of economic struggle.[156]

Several scholars use stewardship theory as a comparison to the principal agent theory (see section 3.3.1) and argue in favor of both theories contributing major insights and

[151] Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks (2001)
[152] Donaldson and Davis (1991)
[153] Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson (1997)
[154] Gómez-Mejia, Haynes, Núñez-Nickel, Jacobson, and Moyano-Fuentes (2007)
[155] Arregle, Hitt, Sirmon, and Very (2007); Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006)
[156] Gómez-Mejia, Núñez-Nickel, and Gutierrez (2001); Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006)

knowledge gains for the field of family business research.[157] Still, the central question- whether family agents behave more like agents or more like stewards – remains unclear and under debate among several colleagues.[158] According to Siebels & Knyphausen-Aufseß (2012), some colleagues suggest firm culture and goal sets of the business-owning family are the relevant source of influence and determine the manager's and owner's behavior.[159] Furthermore, Corbetta & Salvato (2004) make a clear distinction by arguing, that extrinsic financial motivation promotes agency behavior whereas the opposite is true for intrinsic and non-financial motivation which is to promote stewardship behavior. Overall, they find the stewardship behavior to be the prevalent way within family firms.[160] Chrisman, Sharma, & Taggar (2007), by contrast, empirically demonstrate an "agent-principal" behavior amongst family firms, meaning that monitoring mechanisms and incentive compensation are used to control the family agents.

3.3.4 Resource based view perspective

The theory of the *resource-based view* has a unique perspective, seeing a firm as a bundle of resources and capabilities. Based on the work of Barney (1991), it became and is today one of the most relevant paradigms in strategic management research. It shares most implicit assumptions such as high levels of goal alignment and trust, consideration of repeated social interaction and the advisory task of the board with stewardship theory. In contrast to principal agent theory or stewardship theory, it is not primarily focused on transaction cost; rather, it complements them by considering the heterogeneity of firms and especially of their resources.[161] The key assumption of the resource-based view is that a firm achieves returns based on its resources.[162] These resources are the source of sustainable and competitive advantage. It further assumes

[157] Chrisman, Sharma, and Taggar (2007); Corbetta and Salvato (2004); Eddleston and Kellermanns (2007); Le Breton-Miller, Miller, and Lester (2011)
[158] Chrisman, Sharma, and Taggar (2007); Nicholson and Kiel (2007)
[159] Corbetta and Salvato (2004); Eddleston and Kellermanns (2007)
[160] Corbetta and Salvato (2004)
[161] Barney (1991)
[162] Penrose (1995)

the resources fulfill the cumulative attributes of being valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable (inimitable) and non-substitutable.[163] "The Theory of the Growth of the Firm", presented by Penrose in 1959, can be considered the foundation of today's resource-based view or resource-based theory. For Penrose, firms were nothing but a combination of resources each of which was seen to be interchangeable. The term "resource-based view" was introduced by Wernerfelt (1984). There the perspective was of firms as resources. He developed a perspective on the relationship between the resources and the firm's profitability. This was developed further towards a perspective on the relationship between the internal resources and the firm's competitive advantage.[164]

Regarding the resource-based view perspective, family firms are expected to hold distinguishing resources, due to the unique interplay of the family and the firm.[165] Examples of the application of the theory with regard to family firms are works on entrepreneurship[166], organizational social capital[167], corporate governance[168], franchising[169], wealth creation[170] and organizational culture[171]. In this context these characteristics are referred to as "familiness". Habbershon & Williams (1999) introduced the term "familiness" for these unique resources; their influence is widely discussed and assumed to affect the management and the structure of family firms within areas like human resource management,[172] innovation management,[173] and stakeholder management.[174] Furthermore, they even argue that the family itself – being rare, inimitable and valuable – is a source of value in itself. In combination with the mentioned areas, "familiness" creates a special long-term horizon for family

[163] Penrose (1995); Barney (1991); Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997)
[164] Barney (1986)
[165] Habbershon and Williams (1999); Eddleston, Kellermanns, and Sarathy (2008); Habbershon, Williams, and MacMillan (2003)
[166] Aldrich and Cliff (2003)
[167] Arregle, Hitt, Sirmon, and Very (2007)
[168] Carney (2005)
[169] Chirico, Ireland, and Sirmon (2011)
[170] Sirmon and Hitt (2003)
[171] Zahra and Sharma (2004)
[172] Sirmon and Hitt (2003); Cabrera-Suárez, La Cruz Déniz-Déniz, and Martín-Santana (2011); Habbershon and Williams (1999)
[173] Carney (2005)
[174] Carney (2005); Morck and Yeung (2003)

businesses in managing their resources. This shows some form of altruistic behavior directed towards a future generation.[175] Similarly, Miller & Le Breton-Miller (2005) assume that family managers are more dedicated, loyal, and in possession of deeply rooted firm-specific knowledge, which allows them to positively affect the company's performance. The most comprehensive application of the resource-based view perspective on family firms is arguably delivered by Sirmon & Hitt (2003). They distinguish among four discrete resources of family firm capital and one unique attribute: human capital, patient capital, social capital, and survivability capital, combined with the attribute of governance structure.[176] The most promising and relevant of these resources is social capital. Family firms are more long-term oriented and this orientation helps to establish long-term relations of a family firm with its suppliers, external financiers and other stakeholders, as a valuable resource.[177] Miller, Le Breton-Miller, & Scholnick (2008) show empirically that family firms invest comparatively more in stakeholder relationships. Consequently, several researchers assume that family firms achieve a competitive advantage over non-family firms by the accumulation of social capital and better customer orientation.[178]

3.3.5 Introduction to stakeholder relationships to family firms

Since Freeman published his landmark book on stakeholder theory ("Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach") in 1984, stakeholder theory has become central to management scholarship as well as to managers' thinking, and the field and practice of stakeholder theory has achieved enormous popularity.[179] This theory advocates seeing an organization as "a grouping of stakeholders"[180] with the objective of managing "their interests, needs and viewpoints."[181] This leads to a very holistic management approach and represents the idea that companies should not only focus

[175] Miller, Le Breton-Miller, and Scholnick (2008)
[176] Sirmon and Hitt (2003)
[177] Aldrich and Cliff (2003); Carney (2005); Das and Teng (1998); Haynes, Walker, Rowe, and Hong (1999)
[178] Aldrich and Cliff (2003); Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006)
[179] Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997/10)
[180] Friedman and Miles (2006)
[181] Friedman and Miles (2006)

on their shareholders, but also be responsive to the needs of their various other constituents, e.g. employees, customers or suppliers.[182]

Friedman & Miles summarize fifty-five definitions of a stakeholder, dated from 1963 to 2003.[183] A graphic representation of their strategic and normative dimensions can help to gain a general perspective on the various definitions that have appeared over time. The definitions are characterized as being either rather broad or rather narrow. The second dimension of the definitions is that they can be either normative or strategic. “Normative definitions tend to be broader in that they are more likely to be de-centered from the organization and because they aim to draw attention to categories of potential stakeholders that may be overlooked in current organizational practice."[184]

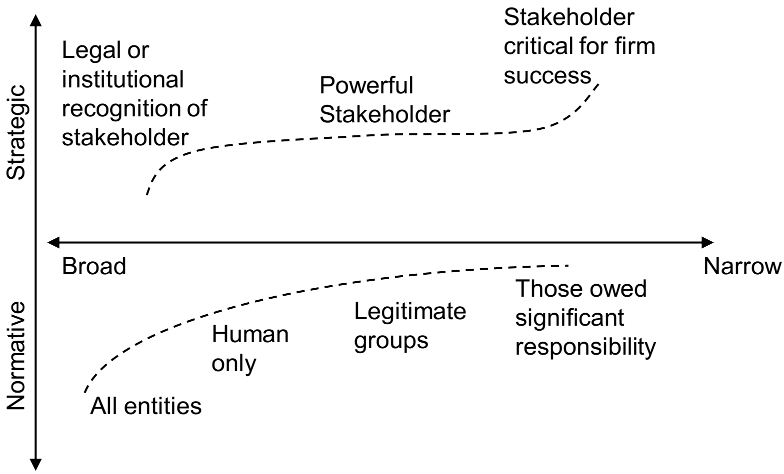

Figure 3: Representation of strategic and normative dimensions to the narrowing of stakeholder definitions[185]

[182] Freeman (1984)
[183] Friedman and Miles (2006)
[184] Friedman and Miles (2006)
[185] Friedman and Miles (2006)

Stakeholders are by definition “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organizations objectives”.[186] Based on Freeman (1984), Clarkson (1995) introduces a more precise definition, including primary and secondary stakeholders. Employees, customers, suppliers and distributors are part of the primary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders are directly involved in, or necessary for, the organization's production of goods or services. Their support is necessary to ensure the company’s survival.[187] Primary stakeholders voluntarily take on some form of risk, as they are generally willing to invest (e.g. human or financial capital) in the company.[188] Secondary stakeholders, in contrast, include a wider group: for example, governments, competitors, consumer advocates, environmentalists, special interest groups or the media.[189]

Stakeholder theory suggests that winning the support and resources of stakeholders is critical to organizational performance. Those resources are the basis for stakeholders' influence on the company, which at this point shows high similarity to resource dependence theories, e.g. the resource based view. Resources are considered to be scarce and valuable; consequently, the development of stable, low-cost resource relations is essential to a company’s survival over time.[190] From an organizational perspective, the management of stakeholders and the acquisition of their resources is consequently a very important task.

A firm can actively work towards the development of positive relationships with its stakeholders, explicitly by adhering to their goals and expectations, which is summarized by the concept of stakeholder management.[191] The building of trust and the absence of opportunistic behavior are furthermore considered to be main building blocks for stakeholder support.[192] Common corporate practices for gaining stakeholder

[186] Freeman (1984)
[187] Clarkson (1995)
[188] Choi and Shepherd (2005)
[189] Laplume, Sonpar, and Litz (2008)
[190] Pfeffer and Salancik (2003)
[191] Laplume, Sonpar, and Litz (2008)
[192] Jones (1995)

support include charitable contributions,[193] employee stock option programs,[194] reputation management, impression management, rhetoric and organizational images.[195]

The existence of strong stakeholder relations is considered one of the most important competitive advantages of family firms.[196] Family firms can be expected to have an advantage with regard to the development of beneficial stakeholder relationships because there the long term orientation and continuity in leadership come into play.[197] Furthermore, members of the business owning family often personally represent the company. Empirical evidence demonstrates that family businesses have a greater tendency to invest more in stakeholder relations and in their personal relationships.[198]

3.4 Customer relationship research in a family business context

Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 provided an overview of customer relationship research and especially a thorough introduction to relationship quality. The previous parts of chapter 0 described family business research and particularly provided insights into its definition and theory base. The following section, 3.4, now discusses the current state of the research intersection and provides a critical analysis of the state of the art customer relationship research in family firms. Chapter 4 further builds upon these and develops hypotheses. The thorough review of the current literature (chapter 3.4) is a necessary part of thoroughly grounding this research.

193 Adams and Hardwick (1998); Brammer and Millington (2004); Godfrey (2005); Haley (1991)
194 Marens and Wicks (1999)
195 Carter (2006); Snider, Hill, and Martin (2003); Ulmer and Sellnow (2000)
196 Habbershon, Williams, and MacMillan (2003)
197 Carney (2005); Morck and Yeung (2003)
198 Miller, Le Breton-Miller, and Scholnick (2008)

3.4.1 Introduction

The lack of research focusing on this particular feature of family businesses was one of the primary reasons for interest in this topic; in particular, it is an extraordinary promising research gap. This introduction provides a summary of the existing literature.

The intersection between family-owned businesses and customer relationships has, so far, only been the subject of a very few research studies. To date, very little attention has been paid to this particular topic. Three relevant studies, with a focus on customer relationships with family firms, were identified. This is surprising given the vast amount of existing marketing-related literature with a focus on customer relationships.

3.4.2 Family firms and their customers – current research

Here three research studies are presented. They reflect the current state of literature regarding customer relationships within a family firm context.

The first study is "Consumer loyalty to family versus non-family business: The roles of store image, trust and satisfaction".[199] In this study, customers' perceptions of grocery retail stores are analyzed and family versus non-family owned and operated stores are compared. The interest is in comparing stores that differ in ownership status, not in comparing individual stores. The study uses a critical-incident approach, which means respondents were exposed to generic store information and asked to recall specific stores fitting that image. Within the analysis they focus on satisfaction, being the affective state resulting from the overall appraisal of a customer's relationship[200] and loyalty. Data was collected by 138 student participants who had prior experience with both store types and who were randomly assigned to one type. Orth & Green (2009) show that compared to non-family businesses, consumers evaluate family businesses more positively in terms of service, frontline employee benevolence and problem-solving orientation, but at the same time more negatively in terms of selection and price/value. Their results suggest that there is a higher level of trust in family business

[199] Orth and Green (2009)
[200] Anderson and Narus (1990/01)

management policies and practices, frontline employee trust, and satisfaction - but no differences in loyalty. While the study itself is highly interesting, it focuses exclusively on the retail industry and the related customer perception of store types. Results cannot be expected to be applicable to general terms or the business-to-business environment considered in this work. It follows that, compared with the two other papers, this is the least relevant for the purpose of this work. I explicitly do not look at a retail context; thus, these findings are not applicable.

Secondly there is "'What's so special about family business? An exploratory study of UK and Irish consumer experiences of family businesses".[201] The paper takes a consumer behavior approach and examines consumers' perception of family firms and especially the meaning of "familiness" in consumers' minds. The study follows the tradition of consumer research for developing an in-depth analysis, and it performs an interpretive analysis based on a small number of respondents. Interviews were between 30-60 minutes per participant and had a semi-structured discussion schedule. Carrigan & Buckley (2008) examine consumers' ideas of "familiness" and explore the respondents' relationships and experiences with family firms. The interviews and discussions they had were around shopping habits, the how and why of consumer shopping and about their encounters with family firms. The topic of "familiness" is an interesting one within the context of this work. Findings include the fact that more attention should be paid to the positive effects of family firms and how these effects materialize. The authors deliver valuable results. Nevertheless, their study was very limited: as they state, "our analysis was interpretive and based on a small number of respondent views".[202] Both this study and that of Orth & Green focus on the retail industry and retail customers. Noteworthy and interesting conclusions are drawn, but the applicability is still limited and not given in this work's context.

Thirdly, "Customer Relationship Management: A Comparative Analysis of Family and Nonfamily Business Practices" is relatively closely related.[203] Cooper, Upton, & Seaman (2005) focus on customer relationship management (CRM) practices and

[201] Carrigan and Buckley (2008)
[202] see Carrigan and Buckley (2008)
[203] Cooper, Upton, and Seaman (2005)

examine the implementation of these practices among a set of family and nonfamily firms. They interview 82 family and 370 non-family firms, a total of 452 business executives. Measures they focused on were the importance of CRM, the knowledge of CRM, the CRM success, the stage in CRM implementation and the specific CRM initiatives. As a result, there are no significant differences between family and nonfamily businesses when considering the importance of CRM to the success of the company, their knowledge of CRM, or the overall success of their CRM initiatives. Differences do exist with regard to the stages of the CRM implementation. Knowing that previous research indicated that family firms put more effort into personal relationships, one would have expected to find this result here as well. However, there is no difference between family business and non-family business executives. Noteworthy is the fact that the authors always consider the perceptions of the interviewees. Although the work focuses on actual practices of CRM, which is actually a marketing- and operations-related topic, it can make the largest contribution to this work.

All three works mentioned above address related topics, but none of them answers any of the questions raised here. Generally speaking, a tendency towards favorable customer perceptions, in relation to the family firm status, is given. The underlying conditions, e.g. the retail context, are, however, substantially different, though not applicable.

4 Supplier relationships to family firms

4.1 Hypothesis development

In chapter 2 of this work, the foundations of relationship marketing and especially relationship quality in business-to-business customer-supplier relationships are explained. Furthermore, chapter 0 introduces the topic of family business research to the reader and provides a solid foundation for the following parts. Central to this work is the investigation of the business-to-business relationship quality of family businesses. This chapter unites the theoretical expectations and develops the hypotheses that are the subject of the empirical investigation of my research topic.

In this work I developed a core model of relationship quality. This is provided in section 4.2 and provides a general application to relationship quality and rather general factors investigated. The core model relates to an analysis of the existing literature on relationship quality provided earlier on. Furthermore, section 4.2 shows the moderating hypotheses postulating the moderating influence of the family firm specific influential factors on the core model. In other words, the core of this work is introduced.

4.1.1 Introduction to Hypotheses 1-6 – core model

Relational selling behaviors have been shown to positively influence relationship satisfaction and trust, both of which are closely tied to relationship quality.[204] The main influential factors[205] are the buyer's perceived relationship quality as influenced by relational selling behaviors of the seller side. Relational selling behaviors increase the buyer's perceived relationship quality and thereby positively influence future sales.[206] Relational selling behaviors are part of a relationship partner's general orientation towards relationships, that is, the tendency to promote relationships. This is conceptualized by various colleagues with different terminology: Woo & Cha (2002/12)

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[206] Athanasopoulou (2006); Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Doney and Cannon (1997/04)

C. Rose, *Supplier Relationships to Family Firms*,
Familienunternehmen und KMU, DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-19048-4_4

term it relationship orientation, Smith (1998/03) uses the term relationalism, and the term relational selling behavior, including information sharing and mutual disclosure, was developed by Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4) and further used by Doney & Cannon (1997/04), Leuthesser (1997) and Ling & Ding (2006). Examples of relational selling behaviors are information sharing and mutual disclosure[207], interaction frequency[208], courtesy and cooperative intentions[209].

Future sales opportunities depend upon the relationship quality, and the buyer-seller relationships are said to create a strong buyer-seller bond.[210] Relationship quality is measured by a well-established scale[211] using relationship quality as a higher order construct that consists of both trust and satisfaction. Both are expected and hypothesized to be influenced by the relational selling behaviors. Figure 4 summarizes the hypotheses derived in this chapter. Relational selling behaviors are accessed by three subscales, which have also proved applicable in a business-to-business environment.[212] Those are self-disclosure on the seller side, interaction intensity, and the seller's cooperative intentions. Self-disclosure describes the degree to which the seller side opens towards the buyer side and shares information. The interaction intensity is related to the frequency of the interaction, the time spent and the types of occasions to interact. Third is the seller's cooperative intentions, which is the degree to which a seller is interested in an interaction and is willing to continue the relationship. All three are highly promising in terms of the research focus of this dissertation and represent established scales from highly relevant research. Each of these behaviors is described in more detail within the hypothesis development.

[207] Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4); Doney and Cannon (1997/04); Leuthesser (1997)
[208] Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)
[209] Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)
[210] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[211] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[212] Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4); Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)

4.1.2 Hypotheses 1-6

A seller's cooperative intentions are part of the relational selling behaviors. Cooperative intentions relate to cooperative behavior, which is the direct opposite of competitive behavior.[213] The cooperative behavior of the seller side directly influences a buyer side's way of dealing with that party, and the buyer's expectation of future conflict or prevention measures providing a strong signal to the buyer. A buyer perceiving cooperative behavior from a seller has less need to invest in security measures like detailed contracts or monitoring systems and profits from ongoing decreased control efforts on the buyer's side. Lower control efforts furthermore relate to decreased transaction costs and increase the economic benefits from the relationship. Perceived risk also shows a significant mediating influence on the product- or service quality-value for money relationship.[214] In a negotiation context, as well, cooperative behavior leads to satisfaction[215] and is further linked to satisfactory problem resolution.[216] It improves the interaction experience and leads to a higher perceived relationship quality; at the same time, it decreases the risk of conflict and increases the level of confidence. The definitional perspective on satisfaction shows that it is related to the expectations of the buyer side.[217] Consequently, it can be assumed that a buyer expects and rewards a cooperative approach more than a competitive partnership. In conclusion, cooperative intentions can be expected to increase the satisfaction and can be hypothesized as follows:

> *Hypothesis 1: Seller's <u>cooperative intentions</u> have a positive influence on buyer's <u>relationship satisfaction</u>.*

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[213] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[214] Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson (1999)
[215] Pruitt (2013)
[216] Evans and Beltramini (1987)
[217] Wilson (1995); Westbrook (1981); Murstein (1977)

The seller side's self-disclosure is one aspect of relational selling behaviors. These behaviors have a positive influence on the buyer's perceived relationship quality.[218] Self-disclosure refers to the amount of information sharing and the openness of the selling party towards the customer.[219] The buyer's level of anticipated future interaction is strengthened when the seller side is more open to the buyer side.

Self-disclosure is a reciprocal concept and plays a central role in the development and maintenance of relationships.[220] It is defined as a person's voluntary revelation of personal information that a receiver could not learn from any other source.[221] Amongst others, trust, attraction, and social exchange theory provide strong explanations for the underlying context.[222] The trust-attraction theory postulates that the disclosure of intimate information to a recipient indicates that this recipient is liked and trusted by the sender. Thus, the liked and trusted recipient is likely reciprocate by disclosing information, an indicator of the recipient's liking and trust for the original sender.[223] The social exchange theory postulates a different logic, but a similar outcome. The key assumption is that a person feels rewarded when he or she receives something valuable, such as a disclosure discussed here. Additionally, the recipient of a valuable disclosure feels obligated to return something of similar value, such as a similar disclosure.[224] Collins & Miller (1994) provide a meta-analysis of the effect of disclosure and liking, and discuss and support three distinct effects. First, people engaging in intimate disclosure tend to be liked more than people who disclose at lower levels. Second, people disclose more to those whom they initially like; and third, people like others as a result of having disclosed to them.

In summary, self-disclosure is a strong signal to the buyer. It creates a tendency to mutual disclosure and allows the seller side to receive more needs-related information, as well. As discussed above, a buyer is typically willing to share more information with

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[218] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)
[219] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)
[220] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[221] Archer (1979)
[222] Archer (1979)
[223] Archer (1979); Shamdasani and Jung (2011)
[224] Archer (1979)

a seller who discloses more information. This allows the seller to better act in favor of the buyer, to better adapt, and to offer more needs related and adapted services or products. This can be expected to increase the level of satisfaction. In conclusion I recognize a positive influence of seller's self- disclosure and hence hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Seller's <u>self-disclosure</u> has a positive influence on buyer's <u>relationship satisfaction</u>.

A seller's interaction intensity is part of the relational selling behaviors and refers to the interaction frequency and intensity (both face-to-face and indirectly) within the relationship. It gives the buyer side an impression about the commitment and the investment that the seller side is willing to make. It reflects the efforts a seller is ready to take and allows a buyer to evaluate the seller's commitment. Time investment is generally considered to be valuable, and a sign of appreciation. Moreover, social exchange theory (see Hypothesis 2) applies. Social exchange theory suggests that it is rewarding to receive something of value and that the rewarded person feels obliged to return something valuable as well. Time is generally considered valuable and so the time spent with regard to the interaction intensity in these terms is considered valuable.[225] The buyer feels rewarded when he receives a continuous time investment from the seller. If the buyer side then returns a similar proportion of his valuable time, an exchange with mutual gains can be created.[226]

This higher degree of intensity allows the seller side to better take care of the buyer side and to be better informed about their needs and demands. Changing needs are noticed earlier and therefore promptly taken care of. Additionally, it is advantageous for trust building when the buyer side can observe the seller side's behavior in various situations.[227] The fulfillment of needs creates higher satisfaction. Further on, the seller

[225] Shamdasani and Jung (2011)
[226] Archer (1979)
[227] Shamdasani and Jung (2011)

side with higher communication intensity keeps the existing communication channels open and usable in the mutual interest.[228] In conclusion I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: <u>*Interaction intensity*</u> ***has a positive influence on buyer's*** <u>*relationship satisfaction*</u>*.*

By analogy with Hypothesis 1 and the described relationship quality sub-construct of trust as a dependent variable, a positive relationship between the seller's cooperative intentions and the buyer's trust can be expected. Cooperative intentions relate to cooperative behavior as the opposite of competitive behavior.[229] It provides the buyer with a strong signal of trustworthiness and decreases the expected likelihood of relational conflicts. This enhances the level of trust a buyer perceives in the relationship. Risk has an important meaning in this context. Risk can be considered the perceived probability of loss for a decision maker.[230] If all action could be undertaken under complete certainty, neither a buyer nor a seller would need trust. Additional support for the hypothesized relationship can be found in the perspective of game theory. Game theory is a collection of rigorous models attempting to understand and explain situations in which individuals as decision makers interact with one another.[231] Game theory is widely used in the social sciences to formalize, structure, analyze, and understand decisions. It assumes rational individuals acting in strategic interactions. The individual's success when making choices always depends on the choices of other participants. Similarly, the decisions of one individual affects the payoffs of another. A game is described by its players; each player's choices, called strategies, and by the resulting payoffs for the players depend on the outcome. Key in applying the game theory, is finding an equilibrium in games. Equilibrium states that the participating players each use a strategy that is superior and unlikely to be

[228] Williamson (1983)
[229] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[230] Chiles and McMackin (1996)
[231] Kreps (1990)

changed. The most famous equilibrium concept is the Nash equilibrium.[232] It has been show that in a theoretical game context, cooperation precedes trust.[233] Hence, in conclusion I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4: Seller's <u>cooperative intentions</u> have a positive influence on buyer's <u>relationship trust</u>.

By analogy with Hypothesis 2 and the described relationship quality sub-construct of trust as a dependent variable, a similar positive relationship with the independent variable of self-disclosure can be expected. Trust is defined as "a confident belief that the salesperson can be relied upon to behave in such a manner that the long-term interest of the customer will be served." The trust construct is described in more detail in section 2.2. Self-disclosure refers to the seller's amount of information sharing and the openness toward the customer. Trust is formed if a truster perceives a trustee to be trustworthy (perception of trustworthiness).[234] The buyer's level of trust in a seller is increased when the selling party shows a high degree of openness. This is a strong signal in terms of the seller's future interaction intention and an important indicator for the buyer side. This perception of long-term interest decreases the buyer side's perceived uncertainty and creates a higher tendency of trust in the relationship. Trust is formed through information that is available for the truster.[235] Self-disclosure is a reciprocal concept and plays a central role in the development and maintenance of relationships.[236] Amongst others, trust-attraction and social exchange theory provide strong explanations for the underlying context.[237] The trust-attraction theory postulates that the disclosure of intimate information to a recipient indicates that this recipient is liked and trusted by the sender. Furthermore, the liked and trusted recipient is likely to

[232] Nash (1950); Nash (1951)
[233] Axelrod and Hamilton (1981)
[234] Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995)
[235] Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998)
[236] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[237] Archer (1979)

disclose in response; this is an indicator of the recipient's liking and trust for the original sender.[238] The social exchange theory postulates similar outcomes, albeit derived from a different logic. The key assumption is that a person feels rewarded when he receives something valuable, such as the disclosure discussed here. Self-disclosure is about information shared that would otherwise not be shared or known to the receiver. In that way the recipient of self-disclosure feels obligated to return something of similar value, e.g. a similar disclosure.[239] With both sides of the relationship disclosing information, an additional and better interchange is assumed. In conclusion I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5: Seller's self-disclosure has a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.

By analogy with Hypothesis 3 and the described relationship quality sub-construct of trust as a dependent variable, a positive relationship between the interaction intensity and trust is expected. The seller's interaction intensity refers to the interaction and contact frequency in the relationship. Face-to-face as well as indirect communication is included.[240] This gives the buyer an impression of the commitment and the investment the seller side is willing to make. It reflects the efforts a seller is willing to make and allows a buyer to evaluate the seller's commitment.

A perception of high commitment supports the creation of trust. According to Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) and Westbrook (1981), trust is related to the long-term interest of the customers within the relationship that need to be met by the seller side. The more a buyer side expects the customer to fulfill these needs, the higher is the level of trust within the relationship. Relational trust furthermore also derives from repeated interactions over time between truster and trustee.[241] A second important

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[238] Archer (1979); Shamdasani and Jung (2011)
[239] Archer (1979)
[240] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)
[241] Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998)

relation is with regard to communication channels and their importance for the trust building. High interaction intensity helps the seller side to keep communication channels open and usable.[242] This is extraordinarily important in the context of trust. Relational parties cannot be expected to trust each other in critical moments if those are the only points of interaction.[243] Hence I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 6: *Interaction intensity has a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.*

4.1.3 Introduction to Hypotheses 7-22 – Moderation Analysis

The main research gap that this theses focuses on is the family's influence on customer-supplier relationships. To measure the degree of family influence, or the "familiness" of family firms, literature provides two relevant approaches. Those are the F-PEC scale and the socio-emotional wealth perspective's FIBER dimensions.[244]

Klein, Astrachan, & Smyrnios (2005) provide the F-PEC approach for the measurement of the extent and quality of family influence. F-PEC is a scale that assesses the extent and the quality of family influence via three dimensions with validated scales. The leading idea is that the extent to which any firm is a family firm is reflected in the involvement and the influence of the family in the business and the ongoing operations. This family influence on Power, Experience and Culture is commonly referred to as F-PEC scale. Important to note is that the scale measures on a continuous basis making it possible to precisely measure the quality of any family influence and not in a dichotomous way.

[242] Williamson (1983)
[243] Swinth (1967)
[244] Astrachan, Klein, and Smyrnios (2002); Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005); Cennamo, Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012); Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)

The three scales are power, experience and culture. The Power subscale takes into account ownership, governance and management. To be precise, it is “the percentage of family members on each Board level, as well as the percentage of members who are named through family members on the management and governance Boards.”[245] It is important to note that the influence or power is not only accounted for when direct family members represent it, but also when represented by others appointed by the family. Second is the experience subscale, which is related to the number of family members who contribute to the business and to succession. Succession intentions are oftentimes seen as crucial for the definition of family firms and each succession is considered to add significant and valuable experiences to the family and its company.[246] Culture is the third dimension and with regard to that, the “F-PEC scale seeks the views of participant CEO/owner-managers on the extent to which their family and business values overlap, as well as a family’s commitment to the business.”[247]

The second approach to identify and measure family firm specifics is the socioemotional wealth perspective. Berrone, Cruz, & Gómez-Mejia (2012) argue that “SEW is the most important differentiator of the family firm as a unique entity and, as such, helps explain why family firms behave distinctively.” They propose a set of dimensions and accordingly the operationalization for its measurement. These dimensions are referred to as FIBER dimensions. Regarding the socioemotional wealth approach section 3.3.2 provides an overview. The FIBER dimensions stand for family control and influence, identification of family members with the firm, binding social ties, emotional attachment of family members, and renewal of family bonds to the firm through dynastic succession.[248]

Family businesses are expected to invest in intense and long-term relationships which is expected to provide the family firm with competitive advantages primarily because the long-term relationships are a source of stability and sustainability for the business. All of this helps the family business to sustain itself in times of crisis. Based on the

[245] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005)
[246] Cabrera-Suárez, Saá-Pérez, and García-Almeida (2001)
[247] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005, p. 326)
[248] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)

existing literature, I hypothesize that family influence moderates the influence of relational selling behaviors.[249] Earlier research attempts show that family firms have a tendency to strategically focus on customer relationships,[250] are advantageous with regard to consumer trust and satisfaction,[251] and family are expected to take special care of their stakeholders, particularly customers.[252] Furthermore, it is emphasized that a focus on stakeholder relationships is key for family businesses, and thus it can be reasoned that customer relationships are a main focus within family firms.[253]

Literature offers more than the applied scales. Nevertheless, when having a detailed look at each of the subscales, not all of them are theoretically or practically applicable to the research questions posed. To wit, the scales of power and experience from F-PEC are not applicable. Neither dimension shows relations to external (or internal) stakeholder relationships. The dimension of power relates to the internal management of a corporation and following the argument of Klein, Astrachan, & Smyrnios (2005) neither relation to an external stakeholder, nor customer nor supplier is given or to be expected. Furthermore, the dimension of experience is examined from the internal-oriented perspective and similarly no relations to any external stakeholders are suggested or to be expected. [254] The FIBER dimension of family control and influence shows some similarity to the mentioned power dimension. It does not offer any relation to external stakeholders either. It is an inward oriented dimension that measures the extent of family members' control over strategic decisions.[255] Lastly, the family members' emotional attachment is also a dimension that one cannot hypothesize, as its theoretical foundation does not allow a connection to external stakeholders. The dimension describes the family members’ behavior toward and assessment of each other.[256] None of these dimensions is used in a moderating context. Thus, the lack of

[249] Aldrich and Cliff (2003); Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006)
[250] Craig, Dibrell, and Davis (2008), Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2003)
[251] Orth and Green (2009)
[252] Krappe, Goutas, and Schlippe (2011); Orth and Green (2009);
[253] Cennamo, Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[254] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005)
[255] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[256] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)

theoretical foundation combined with a consideration of the practical and real-life applicability failed to lead to promising results.

The moderations are applied to the independent variables of seller-side's cooperative intentions and seller-side's self-disclosure, which are provided within section 4.1.1. No moderation is applied to the independent variable of interaction intensity. The interaction intensity is a measurement of the interaction frequency and the occasions for the interaction between the two relationship parties. Theory does not offer any links between the earlier described measures of family influence in a family firm and the interaction intensity of the family firm with its suppliers. Neither Klein, Astrachan, & Smyrnios (2005) nor Berrone, Cruz, & Gómez-Mejia (2012) provides an explanation or any potential theoretical link for the expectation or justification of those moderating effects. In other words, there is no indication that the influence of the personal interaction frequency is moderated in any comparable way as the other relationships are. Nevertheless, in this dissertation project, this independent variable is considered an important part of the core model, especially with regard to relationship satisfaction.

The following chapter develops additional hypotheses based on the moderating influences of the family firms on customer-supplier relationships. It uses the measurement approaches outlined above, namely parts of the well-known F-PEC scale and parts from the FIBER dimensions. Each of them is explained in detail below.

4.1.4 Hypotheses 7-22

FIBER – "Family Members' Identification with the firm," describes the unique identity of a family firm as the result of the intermeshing of the family and the firm. As a consequence, the owner's identity is inextricably tied to the firm, and internal and external stakeholders see the firm as an extension of the owner.[257] This creates a unique identity that is exclusively found within family firms.[258] Family firms with high FIBER-I values are therefore seen by external stakeholders as an extension of the

[257] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[258] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012); Dyer and Whetten (2006)

family itself.[259] This is in line with Krappe, Goutas, & Schlippe (2011) who confirm that family firms can be regarded as a brand of their own. Their ability to create strong bonds is, amongst others, reflected in the perception of external stakeholders.[260] Consequently, the family firm is sensitive about the image they project to their suppliers.[261] They can be expected to care more about their stakeholder relationships and specifically to take care of their supplier relationships. Furthermore, the empirical evidence suggests a relevant relation for this context and shows consistently that family firms take particular care to perpetuate a positive family image and reputation.[262] They do so because of the strong identification with the family's name and because of the potential public condemnation that would be emotionally divesting for family members.[263]

Cooperative intentions are expected to show a positive impact on the level of buyer's satisfaction, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 1. Cooperative intentions relate to cooperative behavior, which is the direct opposite of competitive behavior.[264] Cooperative intentions provide a strong signal to the buyer. Besides the still valid argumentation presented in the conceptualization of Hypothesis 1, the signaling effect provides relevant feedback to the buyer side. Assuming the buyer side has high FIBER-I values, it cares about the image that it projects to others. The cooperativeness of the relationship party (the seller side) here is a sign of appreciation and of a favorable assessment of the buyer side's image by the seller side. Buyer sides with high FIBER-I values are expected to be more sensitive to cooperative behavior of a relationship party. As a consequence, the buyer's FIBER-I is expected to increase the positive relationship of seller side's cooperative intentions on satisfaction. Hence I hypothesize:

[259] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[260] Krappe, Goutas, and Schlippe (2011)
[261] Micelotta and Raynard (2011); Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[262] Sharma and Manikutty (2005); Westhead, Cowling, and Howorth (2001)
[263] Westhead, Cowling, and Howorth (2001)
[264] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07)

Hypothesis 7: The degree of family member's identification with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Binding social ties" describes the social relationships of a family firm. Firstly, they are considered to include the internal relationships between family members. Secondly, they are also expected to be extended to a wide set of external stakeholders, including suppliers.[265] These bonds are reciprocal and potentially result in external stakeholders being seen like family members.[266] In other words, binding social ties also extend to the family firm's surroundings, and even suppliers may be viewed as part of the family.[267] The described sense of belonging and identity is shared by non-family employees.[268] This ensures that external stakeholders are affected by the described effects, as the family firm's ability to create strong stakeholder bonds is also reflected in the public's perceptions of family firms.[269]

Cooperative intentions are expected to increase the buyer side's satisfaction, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 1. It is the family firm's objective to have good stakeholder relationships. High FIBER-B values indicate a high relationship interest of the family firm. This openness and interest in relationships on the buyer side are expected to influence the relevance of cooperative intentions for the buyer's perception of relationship quality. It can be expected that high FIBER-B values make the buyer side more sensitive to cooperative relationships with the seller side, and additionally reward those efforts more.

Hence I hypothesize:

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265 Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012); Miller, Lee, Chang, and Le Breton-Miller (2009)
266 Uhlaner (2006)
267 Uhlaner (2006)
268 Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2005)
269 Krappe, Goutas, and Schlippe (2011)

Hypothesis 8: The degree of binding social ties on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between the seller's cooperative intentions and the buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession" refers to the family firm's intention of handing down the business to the next generation. This aspect of transgenerational sustainability has an important implication for the time horizon in decision making.[270] It is one of the most central aspects of SEW.[271] A long-time horizon is a typical trait of family businesses, especially in comparison to non-family businesses. Family members typically show longer term planning horizons[272] and handing over the business is oftentimes a key goal within family firms.[273] The FIBER-R dimension measures the degree to which these traits are present in a family business.

The positive relationship between cooperative intentions and satisfaction is conceptualized in Hypothesis 1. In addition, long-term stakeholder relationships are known to provide family firms with rare and valuable resources.[274] The longer the time horizon, the more one expects the family business to invest in their stakeholder relationships. Investments in stakeholder relationships are more valuable and offer better returns to family firms when the seller side offers a high degree of cooperative behavior. Cooperative behavior signals a higher tendency for problem solution and is a basis for long-term cooperation. The seller side's desire for long-term relationships is part of the cooperative intentions. The more long-term oriented the family firm is (higher FIBER-R values) and the more it invests in supplier relationships, the more

[270] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[271] Zellweger and Astrachan (2008); Zellweger, Kellermanns, Chrisman, and Chua (2012)
[272] Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006); Miller, Le Breton-Miller, and Scholnick (2008); Sirmon and Hitt (2003)
[273] de Vries, Manfred FR Kets (1994); Zellweger, Kellermanns, Chrisman, and Chua (2012)
[274] Das and Teng (1998)

important the seller's cooperative intentions become to the buyer sides relationship satisfaction. In conclusion I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 9: The degree of <u>renewal of family bonds</u> on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's <u>cooperative intentions</u> and buyer's <u>relationship satisfaction</u>, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

The F-PEC culture subscale assesses, first, the extent to which family and business values overlap and, second, the family's commitment to the business.[275] The seller's cooperative intentions are expected to positively influence the buyer side's satisfaction, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 1.

High values of F-PEC culture indicate that families are highly committed to the business and are likely to have a higher impact. The culture of a family business is formed by values rooted in the organization, and those are primarily the core values of key people in the company.[276] The family's commitment includes three main factors: the personal belief in and support of the organization's goals and vision, a willingness to contribute to the organization, and a desire for a relationship with the organization itself.[277] The commitment of the family to the business also increases the likelihood that the family will have a large impact on the business.

Cooperative intentions on the seller side show a seller's willingness to cooperate, the opposite of competitive behavior. They are part of the relational selling behaviors. They are directly related to the buyer side's expectations of future conflict and the potential problem solution mechanisms. Those are in favor of buyer's relationship satisfaction. Cooperative behavior relates to the level of perceived risk. This shows a mediating

[275] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005)
[276] Klein (1991)
[277] Carlock and Ward (2001)

significant influence on the product- or service quality-value for money relationship.[278] Similarly, in a general negotiation context, cooperative behavior leads to higher levels of satisfaction for the participating parties[279] and this cooperative behavior is linked to satisfactory problem resolution in relationships[280].

The definitional perspective on relationship satisfaction provides a strong argument in favor of the initial relationship of cooperative intentions and relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, this also strongly favors the hypothesized moderating relationship, with F-PEC Culture being the moderator. The degree of satisfaction in a buyer-seller relationship is directly linked to the buyer side’s expectations.[281] Those expectations are formed, among others, by the business-owning family’s cultural influence on the business. This influence leads to an overlap of values between the business and the family values. The stronger the family value’s influence in the business is, the more sensitive the buyer-side is to the cooperative behaviors of business partners, which increases their relevance within business relationships.

Subsequently, it can be assumed that a buyer expects and rewards a cooperative approach more than a competitive partnership, and that this effect strengthens with increasing values of F-PEC culture on the buyer side. A family firm can be expected to be more receptive to this cooperative behavior when they are more committed to their own business. In other words, the family’s desire for a relationship with their own business organization is expected to extend to the external seller side’s organization. This is in line with the expectation that family firms are advantageous in terms of stakeholder relationships.[282] In conclusion I hypothesize:

[278] Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson (1999)
[279] Pruitt (2013)
[280] Evans and Beltramini (1987)
[281] Wilson (1995); Westbrook (1981); Murstein (1977)
[282] Le Breton-Miller and Miller (2006)

Hypothesis 10: The degree of buyer's F-PEC culture moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Family Members' Identification with the Firm" describes the unique identity of a family firm as the result of the intermeshing of the family and the firm. As a consequence, the owner's identity is inextricably tied to the firm and as stated in earlier hypotheses, the firm is seen by internal and external stakeholders as an extension of the owner.[283] A more detailed description of the concept of FIBER – "Family Members' Identification with the Firm" can be found in the conceptualization of Hypothesis 7.

Furthermore and analogous to Hypothesis 2, the buyer's level of satisfaction is positively impacted by self-disclosure. Relationship satisfaction is centered on the roles assumed and performed by the individual parties involved in the relationship.[284] Cases with high FIBER-I values on the buyer side are expected to be more sensitive to the amount of personal and professional information shared by a seller side. This is a buyer side that is extraordinarily tied to its business, who then is more sensitive to the amount of information shared by the seller side he is interacting with. The buyer's professional and personal lives are closely tied and the buyer expects the seller to have a similar commitment, which is, among others, represented by the information shared with each other. In line with this expectation on the buyer side, high FIBER-I values at a buyer-side are expected to increase the positive relationship of the seller side's self-disclosure on satisfaction. Hence I hypothesize:

[283] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[284] Murstein (1977)

Hypothesis 11: The degree of family members' identification with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Binding social ties" describes the social relationships of a family firm. Firstly, they are considered internal relationships, but are also expected to be extended to a wide set of external stakeholders as suppliers.[285] Within the conceptualization of Hypothesis 8, a more detailed description of the concept of FIBER – "binding social ties" can be found. Self-disclosure is expected to increase the buyer's satisfaction, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 2. Binding social ties also extend to the family firm's surroundings, and even suppliers may be viewed as part of the family.[286] It is a family firm's objective to have good stakeholder relationships, and higher FIBER-B values can be expected to increase this. Similarly, it is expected that higher FIBER-B values increase the positive impact of self-disclosure on satisfaction. Hence I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 12: The degree of binding social ties on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession" describes the intention of handing down the business to the next generation and shows strong implications for the time horizon in decision making.[287] A long time horizon is a typical trait of family businesses, especially in comparison to non-family businesses. Long-

[285] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[286] Uhlaner (2006)
[287] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)

term stakeholder relationships are known to provide family firms with rare and valuable resources.[288]

Relationship satisfaction is centered on the roles assumed and performed by the individual parties.[289] The longer the time horizon, the more one expects the family business to invest in their stakeholder relationships. Family firms that are used to high relationship investments value a seller's activity and especially openness more than those companies that are less invested in relationships. In conclusion, a high FIBER-R value is expected to positively moderate the influence of self-disclosure on satisfaction. I hence hypothesize:

Hypothesis 13: The degree of <u>renewal of family bonds</u> to the firm and dynastic succession on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's <u>self-disclosure</u> and buyer's <u>relationship satisfaction</u>, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

The F-PEC culture subscale assesses, first, the extent to which family and business values overlap and, second, the family's commitment to the business.[290] A more detailed description of the concept of F-PEC culture can be found within the conceptualization of Hypothesis 10. The seller side's self-disclosure is expected to positively influence the buyer side's satisfaction, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 2. High values of F-PEC culture indicate families that are highly committed to the business and which are likely to have a higher impact. The family's commitment shows three main factors: a personal belief in and support of the organization's goals and vision, a willingness to contribute to the organization, and a desire for the relationship with the organization.[291] Following Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) the relational

[288] Das and Teng (1998)
[289] Murstein (1977)
[290] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005)
[291] Carlock and Ward (2001)

exchange and the disclosure is a reciprocal process. Relationship satisfaction can be considered to be found within the roles that are assumed and performed by the individual parties.[292] Consequently, a more committed family is receptive to the commitment of the seller in terms of higher disclosure. In conclusion, I expect this to increase the buyer side's satisfaction, and hence hypothesize:

Hypothesis 14: The degree of <u>F-PEC culture</u> on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between the seller's *<u>self-disclosure</u> and the buyer's <u>relationship satisfaction</u>, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.*

FIBER – "Family Members' Identification with the firm" describes the unique identity of a family firm, as the result of the intermeshing between the family and the firm. As a consequence, the owner's identity is inextricably tied to the firm. Internal and external stakeholders see the firm as an extension of the owner.[293] A more detailed description of the concept of FIBER – "Family Members' Identification with the firm" can be found in the conceptualization of Hypothesis 7. Cooperative intentions on the seller's side are expected to show a positive impact on the level of buyer's trust, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 4. Buyers with high FIBER-I values are expected to be more sensitive to trusting other stakeholders, as their professional and personal lives are closely tied. Those family firms are sensitive about the image they project to their suppliers.[294] The more intense the intermeshing of personal and private life is, the more sensible the buyer becomes to the cooperative (versus competitive intentions) of the side. In conclusion I hypothesize:

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292 Murstein (1977)
293 Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
294 Micelotta and Raynard (2011)

Hypothesis 15: The degree of <u>family members' identification</u> with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's <u>cooperative intentions</u> and buyer's <u>relationship trust</u>, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Binding social ties" describes the social relationships of a family firm. As described in Hypothesis 12, they are firstly considered to be internal relationships, but are also expected to be extended to a wide set of external stakeholders as suppliers.[295] A more detailed description of the concept of FIBER – "Binding social ties" can be found within the conceptualization of Hypothesis 8. The seller side's cooperative behavior increases the level of trust of the buyer side, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 4. Binding social ties also extend to the family firm's surroundings, and even suppliers may be viewed as part of the family.[296] A family firm that is more open to social relationships is also more reactive towards the cooperative intentions that a seller side is demonstrating and values them more; this results in a higher the FIBER-B value. Hence I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 16: The degree of <u>binding social ties</u> on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's <u>cooperative intentions</u> and buyer's <u>relationship trust</u>, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession" is about the intention of handing down the business to the next generation and thus has strong implications for the time horizon in decision making.[297] As described before in

[295] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[296] Uhlaner (2006)
[297] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)

Hypothesis 13, a long time horizon is a typical trait of family businesses, especially in comparison to non-family businesses. These resulting long-term stakeholder relationships are known to provide family firms with rare and valuable resources.[298]

Cooperative intentions on the seller side are expected to positively influence the buyer side; this is conceptualized in Hypothesis 4. Long-term stakeholder relationships are known to provide family firms with rare and valuable resources.[299] Cooperation precedes trust.[300] High levels of cooperative intentions decrease the level of expected conflict. As this is the goal of the buyer side, the impact of cooperative intentions on trust in a relationship is expected to be increased by high FIBER-R values. Hence I hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 17: The degree of renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between the seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.*

The F-PEC culture subscale assesses, first, the extent to which family and business values overlap and, second, the family's commitment to the business.[301] Within the conceptualization of Hypothesis 10, a more detailed description of the concept of F-PEC culture can be found. Cooperative intentions on the seller side are expected to increase the buyer side's trust, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 4. High values of F-PEC culture indicate families that are highly committed to the business and are likely to have a greater impact on the business. The family's commitment shows three main factors: personal belief in and support of the organization goals and vision, a willingness to contribute to the organization and a desire for the relationship with the

[298] Das and Teng (1998)
[299] Das and Teng (1998)
[300] Axelrod and Hamilton (1981)
[301] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005)

organization.[302] Cooperative behavior decreases the likelihood of future conflict and precedes trust in a relationship.[303] The higher the family's commitment to the firm is, the more they are expected to be sensible about trustworthy relationships and cooperative behaviors. Therefore, in conclusion I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 18: The degree of F-PEC culture on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Family Members' Identification with the firm" describes the unique identity of a family firm as the result of the intermeshing between the family and the firm. As stated in an earlier hypothesis, the owner's identity is inextricably tied to the firm; the firm is seen by (internal and external) stakeholders as an extension of the owner.[304] Within the conceptualization of Hypothesis 7, a more detailed description of the concept of FIBER – "Family Members' Identification with the firm" can be found. Self-disclosure is expected to show a positive impact on the level of buyer's trust; this is conceptualized in Hypothesis 5. Buyers with high FIBER-I values are expected to be more sensitive to trusting other stakeholders as their professional and personal life is closely tied. Those family firms are sensitive about the image they project to their suppliers.[305] Similarly, I expect them to be receptive to the amount of personal and professional information shared by their relationship counterpart. As this self-disclosure is expected to increase the level of trust, high FIBER-I values are expected to strengthen this effect. Hence I hypothesize:

[302] Carlock and Ward (2001)
[303] Axelrod and Hamilton (1981)
[304] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[305] Micelotta and Raynard (2011)

Hypothesis 19: The degree of family members' identification with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between the seller's self-disclosure and the buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

FIBER – "Binding social ties" describes the social relationships of a family firm. As described in the earlier Hypothesis 12 and Hypothesis 16, they are firstly considered internal relationships, but are also expected to be extended to a wide set of external stakeholders as suppliers.[306] Within the conceptualization of Hypothesis 8, a more detailed description of the concept of FIBER – "Binding social ties" can be found. The seller side's self-disclosure increases the level of trust of a buyer side, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 5. Binding social ties also extend to the family firm's surroundings and even suppliers may be viewed as part of the family.[307] Those companies invest effort into their relationships; consequently, they are expected to be more open to stakeholder relationships and are expected to act in a favorable manner when confronted with high levels of agent disclosure. In conclusion I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 20: The degree of binding social ties on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between the seller's self-disclosure and the buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.

FIBER – "Renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession" refers to the intention of handing down the business to the next generation and shows strong implications for the time horizon in decision making.[308] As described before in

[306] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)
[307] Uhlaner (2006)
[308] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)

Hypothesis 13 and Hypothesis 17, a long time horizon is a typical trait of family businesses, especially in comparison to non-family businesses. Long-term stakeholder relationships are known to provide family firms with rare and valuable resources.[309] The longer the time horizon, the more one expects the family business to invest in their stakeholder relationships. A positive relationship between self-disclosure and the buyer side's level of trust can be expected and is conceptualized in Hypothesis 5. Self-disclosure is a sign of commitment by the seller side. Family firms with a high interest in long-term relationships are more reactive toward the described openness by the seller. Hence it can be expected that a positively moderating influence of FIBER-R towards the relationship of self- disclosure on trust does exist. In conclusion I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 21: The degree of <u>renewal of family bonds</u> to the firm and dynastic succession moderates the positive relationship between seller's <u>self-disclosure</u> and buyer's <u>relationship trust</u>, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.

The F-PEC culture subscale assesses first the extent to which family and business values overlap and second the family's commitment to the business.[310] Within the conceptualization of Hypothesis 10, a more detailed description of the concept of F-PEC culture can be found. Self-disclosure, as conceptualized in Hypothesis 5, positively influences the level of trust the buyer side perceives. High values of F-PEC culture indicate families that are highly committed to the business and which are likely to have a higher impact within the business.[311] The family's commitment shows three main factors. Those are the personal belief and support of the organizations goals and its vision, a willingness to contribute to the organization and a desire for the relationship

[309] Das and Teng (1998)
[310] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005)
[311] Klein, Astrachan, and Smyrnios (2005)

with the organization.[312] Self-disclosure of the seller side shows a seller's future interaction intensity and commitment to the relationship. A family firm can be expected to be more receptive to this long-term orientation, the more committed they are to their own business. Hence I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 22: The degree of buyer's F-PEC culture moderates the positive relationship between seller's self- disclosure and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.

4.2 The model in focus

Section 4.2 offers an aggregated overview of the research model and the hypotheses discussed earlier on. It is subdivided into the core study, introduced via Hypotheses 1 to 6 in chapter 4.1.2 and the moderating effects under analysis, introduced by Hypotheses 7-22 in chapter 4.1.4. For more detailed explanations of the Hypotheses see chapter 4.1.1 and 4.1.3. The dependent variables satisfaction and trust represent the relationship quality. Furthermore, the independent variables self-disclosure, cooperative intentions, and interaction intensity are part of the relational selling behaviors of the seller. The owning family's influence, representing the unique characteristics of the family business, is represented via the four moderating effects. Figure 4 shows the relationship between the relational selling behaviors and the aggregated overview of the core study. All hypotheses are also included in the appendix in a tabular form for a more comprehensive overview.

[312] Carlock and Ward (2001)

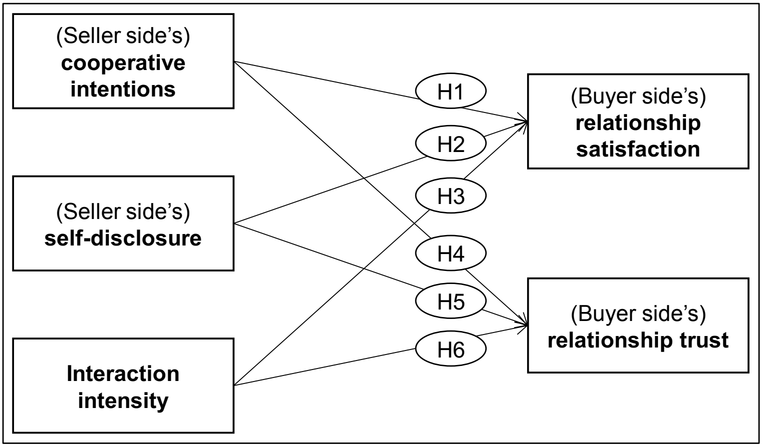

Figure 4: Graphic Representation of Core Study

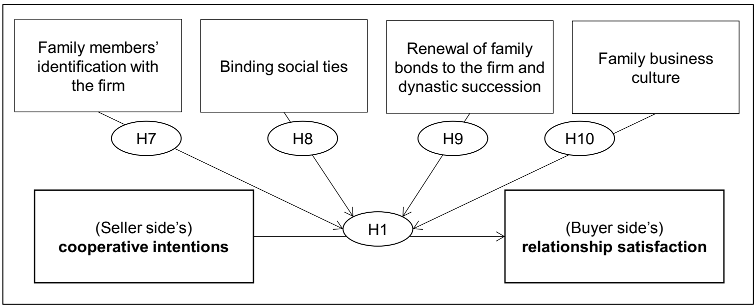

Figure 5: Graphic Representation of Moderation Hypotheses 7-10

Figure 5 to Figure 8 shows the moderation hypotheses within the extended model. The hypothesized moderations are each family firm characteristic on the relationships of self-disclosure and cooperative intentions and each on relationship satisfaction and relationship trust. The family firm characteristics are the family members' identification with the firm, binding social ties, renewal of family binds to the firm, dynastic succession, and family business culture.

One of this study's aims is to explore the presence of typical relationship quality antecedents within the family firm context and, building on this, to explore the moderating influences of family firm traits. This search for moderations is part of the motivation for the Hypotheses shown in Figure 5 to Figure 8.

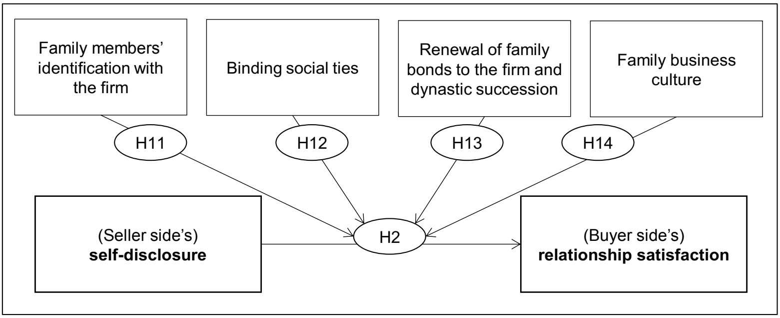

Figure 6: Graphic Representation of Moderation Hypotheses 11-14

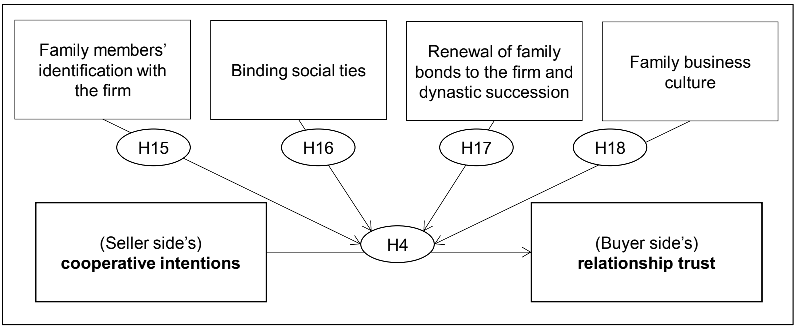

Figure 7: Graphic Representation of Moderation Hypotheses 15-18

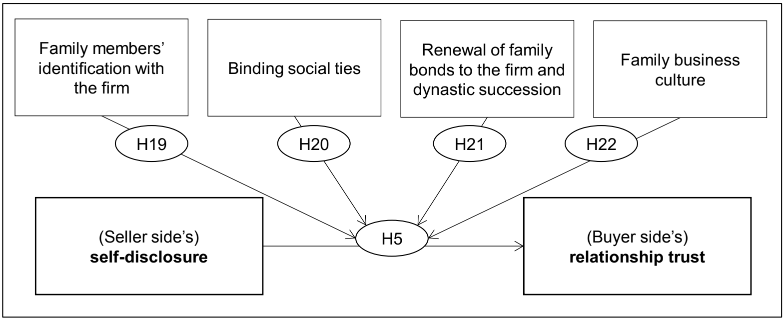

Figure 8: Graphic Representation of Moderation Hypotheses 19-22

5 Research methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this dissertation. Section 5.1 provides an introduction to the research context and describes the author's data collection methods. Section 5.2 describes the collected data and provides the descriptive statistics necessary for a deeper understanding. The concrete measures which were used are provided and explained in section 5.3 and the data analysis itself is found in section 5.4.

5.1 Setting and data collection

A web-based questionnaire was used to collect the data necessary for a regression analysis for this empirical study. The starting point of the data collection was a combined database of more than 10,000 small and medium- sized German companies. The database was composed of multiple sources of potential questionnaire recipients. 96 potential participants were alumni of WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management and could be accessed directly via personal contacts of the author. Furthermore, the author collected relevant recipients via the Bureau van Dijk Markus database.[313] This led to 2,130 potential recipients. Additionally, a database from the Institut für Organisation und Personal, University of Bern was used. This provided another 8,081 potential recipients for a total of 10,211 companies. After composition the database was checked for duplicate entries and those were removed. The database contains general contact information and a further 5,062 personal mailing addresses of the CEO or equivalent could be identified and were finally used for the mailing. When necessary contact data was not directly available, it was checked against the Markus database or company websites to obtain personal mailing addresses of the CEO or an equivalent. Only family-owned businesses were supposed to be contacted and surveys introduction emphasized the family business context. Nevertheless, within the survey design control variables regarding the ownership

[313] The Markus database is provided by the German credit agency Creditreform and contains comprehensive information on over 1.3 million companies in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg.

C. Rose, *Supplier Relationships to Family Firms*,
Familienunternehmen und KMU, DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-19048-4_5

status were included to ensure that only family-owned businesses were part of the sample. All potential participants received an individual invitation and no direct referrals leads to participants that were not approved by the author.

Company representatives were contacted individually via e-mail with an explanation of the study and a direct link to the web-based survey. IF potential participants had any questions or remarks regarding the study or their participation, those could be answered thoroughly within less than one business day. After the initial invitation, non-respondents received one additional reminder. This was sent one and a half weeks after the invitation and was directly related to the initial individual e-mail to which they did not react.

5.2 The sample – descriptive statistics

A total of 352 participating family firms, with a response rate of 7.9% with regard to the contacted total of 4,456, were the subject of this analysis.[314] In total, I received 407 questionnaires from participating companies. Of these, 54 had to be excluded because they, for example, failed to confirm their status as a family firm. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4 to Table 7. Figures such as the number of employees are for the year 2013. The median number of employees is 141 and the average is 613. Most firms (51%) employ between 51 and 250 employees.

Companies were asked to provide their year of foundation. The oldest companies are more than 250 years old, and the single oldest company in the sample was founded in 1352. However, the median is 67 years, and most companies are between 25 and 100 years old.

[314] Considered typical for research on top executives according to Koch and McGrath (1996) and Hambrick, Geletkanycz, and Fredrickson (1993)

Table 4 Firm size

Firm Size		Number of Firms
Employees (no. of employees) Median 2013:141 Average: 613 N=352	<10	14
	10-50	33
	51-250	190
	251-500	46
	500-1000	32
	1001-5000	28
	>5000	9

Table 5 Firm age

Firm Age		Number of Firms
(in years) Median=67 Average=78.90	<10	5
	10-25	36
	26-50	75
	51-75	74
	76-100	69
	101-125	47
	126-150	25
	151-175	7
	176-200	6
	201-225	0
	226-250	0
	>250	8

Table 6 Firm sector

Firm Sector		Number of Firms
	Services	136
	Production	209
	others	7
		352

As the study data is relatively broad in terms of related industries and sectors, one of the control variables was whether the company's main focus was production or service oriented. Most participating companies were more production oriented.

Table 7: Firm industry

Industry	Number of Firms
Chemicals and chemical products	21
Construction industry and real estate	17
Computer, electronics and optical products	21
Automotive	26
Trade	63
Machinery and equipment	42
Basic metals	10
Food products	46
Transport and Logistics	7
Others	99

Participants were asked for the industry in which they operated. Several options were made available according to existing research practice[315] and the remaining answers were categorized ex post.

The survey participants were mostly (57%) family members, and 84% were either the CEO or part of the company's management team. With regard to certain items with close relation to the business-owning family, such as the FIBER dimensions, the participation of non-family members can be regarded as being critical. Control variables were used to precisely check for the family status of the questionnaire participant and were later thoroughly analyzed to control for potential biases.

5.3 Measures

The unit of analysis within this work is a specific buyer's relationship with a specific seller. The analysis is conducted by examining the buyer's perspective. It was decided to collect customer data because the customer (buyer side) ultimately decides whether to purchase from the supplier (seller side), and the customer's perception of the relationship is the predominant determiner of the relationship's development and performance.[316]

This dissertation proposes that the owning family's influence within the family firm also influences its stakeholder relationships, especially the buyer-seller relationship to their suppliers. Thanks to the rich literature base on relationship quality and relational selling, as well as the recently emerging discussion about the distinction and definition of family firms, all measures used here could be adapted from published research papers. With regard to the measures described in chapter 2, which are related to the marketing literature, all constructs and items used were adapted from existing scales that had been previously validated. All constructs, related items, and anchors of the scales used are outlined in more detail in the following paragraphs. Constructs and related items regarding the measurement of the family influence within the firm and the

[315] Kraiczy (2013)
[316] Cannon and Perreault, Jr. (1999)

FIBER items had been only partly validated, but nevertheless represent the latest development and best alternative within the related field of research. All items were measured on five point Likert-type scales.

Construct reliability and validity

In order to control for construct reliability and validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Cronbach's alpha, and item-to-total correlation were applied, as suggested by literature.[317] Reliability describes the degree to which a measure is free of measurement errors, through the shared variance of the measure and the concept.[318] Validity reflects the degree to which a measurement instrument accurately measures what it should measure.[319] More precisely, "Construct validity can and should be viewed broadly as referring to the degree to which inferences legitimately can be made from measures used in a study to the theoretical constructs on which those operationalizations are based".[320]

EFA – Exploratory factor analysis

EFA investigates the underlying factor structure of a larger group of items (measurement model). EFA tries to condense all reflective indicators to the smallest possible number of factors in order to identify the underlying relationships between the measured variables. This can be used to demonstrate discriminant and convergent validity, considered subtypes of construct validity, both of which are necessary to establish construct validity.

Convergent validity shows that measures of constructs that theoretically should be related to each other are, in fact, observed to be related to each other. Convergent validity is given when all items within a single factor are highly correlated to each other, evidenced by the factor loadings. A related cut-off value for the factor loadings is 0.33.[321]

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[317] Hair, Tatham, Anderson, and Black (2006)
[318] Bollen (1998, pp. 206–207); Peter and Churchill Jr, Gilbert A (1986)
[319] Peter (1981)
[320] Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma (2003, p. 71)
[321] Dahling, Whitaker, and Levy (2009); Tabachnick and Fidell (2001)

Discriminant validity is the degree to which operationalizations of distinct concepts differ, which is the extent to which factors are distinct and uncorrelated.[322] The relation of the items to their own factors should be stronger than they are to another factor.

Construct validity is shown when both convergent and discriminant validity are evident. Convergent validity can be evidenced if all items load on one factor that has an eigenvalue greater than one.[323] This one factor should explain at least 50 percent of the variance.[324] Additionally, the estimation of communalities, which indicates the common variance in each variable that is accounted for by all factors,[325] should be higher than .40 for moderate results and higher than .70 for good results.[326]

Cronbach's alpha

Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) is a measure of the reliability of the composites of a latent construct. It measures the internal consistency of a construct. The scores range from zero to one; higher scores represent more reliable scales.[327] A common and generally accepted cut-off value is .70.[328]

[322] Bagozzi and Phillips (1982, p. 469)
[323] Hayton, Allen, and Scarpello (2004)
[324] Hair, Tatham, Anderson, and Black (2006)
[325] Ford, MacCallum, and Tait (1986)
[326] Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, and Strahan (1999)
[327] Cortina (1993)
[328] Nunnally, Bernstein, and Berge (1967)

Table 8: Control measures for construct validity and reliability

Control Measure	Cut-off values
EFA: Factor Loadings	≥ .33
EFA: Eigenvalue	≥ 1.0
EFA: Explained Variance	≥ .50
EFA: Communalities	≥ .40
Cronbach’s alpha	≥ .70
Item-to-total correlation	≥ .50
CFA: NFI	≥ .90
CFA: CFI	≥ .90
CFA: RMSEA	≤ .08

Item-to-total correlation

The item-to-total correlation describes the degree of correlation of a particular item to the sum of the other items, all related to the same factor. It detects items contributing to a low Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The higher the item-to-total correlation for all indicators, the higher the reliability of the construct measurement. Literature suggests values of at least .50.[329] Table 8 summarizes previously described control measures and related cut-off values.

In order to control for construct reliability and validity, previous measures are applied to the constructs used in this dissertation. In the next subsections, all variables used in this dissertation are described and results of reliability and validity tests are presented.

[329] Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1989)

5.3.1 Independent variables

Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure describes the degree to which a selling side is open and oriented towards the customer and the relationship. It is part of the relational selling behaviors, a behavioral tendency exhibited by some sales representatives to husband/cultivate the buyer-seller relationship and to further ensure its maintenance and growth. Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) introduced the term as part of their relational selling behaviors, and Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4) successfully repeated the study in a business-to-business environment. Generally speaking, many researchers take similar or related approaches, e.g. referred to as "orientation towards relationships" or "relationalism".[330] Table 9 shows the construct and related items.

[330] Woo and Cha (2002/12); Zineldin (1995); Leuthesser (1997)

Table 9: Self-disclosure - Construct, items and scale

Variable	Item
Self-disclosure	[1 very inaccurate … 5 very accurate] My person of contact… 1. ... has confided in me a lot of information about his/her own situation and dealings. 2. ... has confided in me a lot of information about his/her own goals and objectives, even hopes and dreams for the future. 3. ... has confided in me a lot of information about his/her background, personal life, and family situation. 4. ... has told me about financial mistakes he/ she made in the past. 5. ... has told me a lot about his/her job.

The anchors of the five-point Likert-type scale reached from “1 very inaccurate” to “5 very accurate”. Reliability analysis showed a good internal consistency of the measure with a Cronbach’s alpha of .899. All item-to-total correlations exceeded the suggested .50 cut-off, the lowest values of the corrected item-to-total correlation at .630. EFA (varix rotation) showed that all items loaded on one factor (eigenvalue=4.000) with factor loadings ranged from .880 to .733. The one factor explained 66.67 percent of the variance. Communalities ranged from .538 to .774 and showed moderate to good results.

Cooperative Intentions

Cooperative intentions are a dimension of relational selling behavior and can be considered to be the opposite of competitive intentions of a sales agent versus the customer. It is a critical part of the relationship as the salesperson is often the customer's first advisor. Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) introduced the term as part of their analysis of relational selling behaviors and Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4) successfully repeated the study in a business-to-business environment. Only minor adaptions were made to a few items to make them more perfectly applicable to this dissertation's broader scope. For example, the items were initially designed to fit a life-insurance agent context; the wording had to be adapted from insurance specific to a general context. In the adaptation I followed the approach by Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4).

The anchors of the five-point Likert-type scale ranged from "5 very accurate" to "1 very inaccurate". Reliability analysis showed a good internal consistency of the measure with a Cronbach's alpha of .777*.* All item-to-total correlations exceeded the suggested .50 cut-off, the lowest being at .560. EFA (varix rotation) showed that all items loaded on one factor (eigenvalue=2.095) with factor loadings ranging from .888 to .798. The one factor explained 69.84 percent of the variance. Communalities ranged from .789 to .637 and showed moderate to good results.

Table 10: Cooperative Intentions – Construct, items and scale

Variable	Item
Cooperative Intentions	[1 very inaccurate … 5 very accurate] My person of contact… 1. ... treats every business deal, independent of the monetary value, the same. 2. ... has expressed a willingness to help me even if there's nothing in it for him/her.

Seller's Interaction Intensity

Interaction Intensity is also a dimension of relational selling behaviors. It describes the frequency and depth of interactions between a sales agent and the customer. Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) introduced the term as part of their relational selling behaviors and Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4) successfully repeated the study in a business-to-business environment.

The anchors of the five-point Likert-type scale ranged from "5 very accurate" to "1 very inaccurate". Reliability analysis showed a good internal consistency of the measure with a Cronbach's alpha of .809. All but one item-to-total correlation exceeded the suggested .500 cut-off values; only one value is at .464 and slightly below the suggested cut-off value. EFA (varimax rotation) showed that all items loaded on one factor (eigenvalue=3.29) with factor loadings ranging from .720 to .600. The one factor explained 46.97 percent of the variance. Communalities ranged from .770 to .620 and showed moderate to good results. All items are listed in Table 11.

Table 11: Interaction Intensity - Construct, items and scale

Variable	Item
Interaction Intensity	[1 very seldom or never … 5 very often] Was contacted by my person of contact who wanted to… 1. ... stay "in touch" and make sure I was still satisfied. 2. ... keep abreast of changes in my company and product or service needs. 3. ... make changes in this cooperation to better serve my needs. 4. ... restructure our cooperation to better serve my needs. 5. ... hand over something of a personal nature (e.g. birthday card, holiday gift, etc.).

6. ... sell me more products or services.

5.3.2 Dependent variables

Buyer's Satisfaction

Satisfaction is one of the major dimensions in relationship quality research and is among the most frequently used conceptualizations. The precise role of satisfaction varies. Most researchers see satisfaction as a dimension of relationship quality[331], while others see satisfaction as an antecedent of good relationship quality[332] or even a consequence thereof.[333] I follow the first interpretation and conceptualize relationship satisfaction as an outcome (dependent) variable. The adaptation of the satisfaction constructs follows Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07) as well as Boles, Johnson, & Barksdale (2000/4). Table 12 gives an overview of the three items used, as well as the three related scales.

The anchors of the five-point Likert-type scales were individually set for each item. Reliability analysis showed a good internal consistency of the measure with a Cronbach's alpha of .751. All item-to-total correlations exceeded the suggested .500 cut-off, the lowest values of the corrected item-to-total correlation at .530. EFA (varimax rotation) showed that all items loaded on one factor (eigenvalue=2.000) with factor loadings ranging from .858 to .779. The one factor explained 66.79 percent of the variance. Communalities ranged from .607 to .753 and showed moderate to good results. All items are listed in Table 12.

[331] Dwyer and Oh (1987); Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Storbacka, Strandvik, and Grönroos (1994); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4); Lages, Lages, and Lages (2005)
[332] Hennig-Thurau and Klee (1997)
[333] Fynes, Búrca, and Marshall (2004); Sanzo, Santos, Vázquez, and Álvarez (2003)

Table 12: Satisfaction - Construct, items and scale

Variable	Item
Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction …
	[1 satisfied … 5 dissatisfied]
	[1 pleased … 5 displeased]
	[1 favorable … 5 unfavorable]

Trust

Athanasopoulou (2009) lists more than 50 works on relationship quality that use trust as a dimension or antecedent. Next to commitment and satisfaction, trust is one of the most established dimensions of relationship quality. This dissertation focuses on the trust conceptualization by Crosby, Evans, & Cowles (1990/07). Following this work, an established and validated construct was used, but could not be confirmed. To achieve an acceptable construct reliability and validity, two items (below the dashed line in Table 13) had to be excluded from our analysis.

The anchors of the five-point Likert-type scale ranged from “1 very inaccurate” to “5 very accurate”. Reliability analysis of the remaining seven items showed a good internal consistency of the measure with a Cronbach’s alpha of .788. Four out of seven item-to-total correlations exceeded the suggested .500 cut-off. Three out of seven items are slightly below the cut-off with corrected item-to-total values of .424 to .454. Nevertheless they are equal to or above 0.300 which is the criterion for the elimination of an item.[334] EFA (varimax rotation) showed that all items loaded on one factor (eigenvalue=3.180) with factor loadings ranging from .757 to .572. The one factor explained 45.43 percent of the variance. Communalities ranged from .327 to .583 and showed moderate to good results. All items are listed in Table 13.

[334] Homburg and Giering (1996, p. 13)

Table 13: Trust - Construct, items and scale

Variable	Item
Trust	[1 strongly agree … 5 strongly disagree]
	1. My person of contact can be relied upon to keep his/her promises.
	2. There are times when I find my person of contact to be a bit insincere. (reverse coded)
	3. I find it necessary to be cautious in dealing with my person of contact. (reverse coded)
	4. My person of contact is trustworthy.
	5. My person of contact and I are in competition – he/she is trying to sell me a lot and I am trying to avoid buying it. [reverse coded]
	6. My person of contact is dishonest. (reverse coded)
	7. I suspect that my person of contact has sometimes withheld certain pieces of critical information that might have affected my decision-making. (reverse coded)
(excluded)	8. My person of contact puts the customer's interests before his/her own.
(excluded)	9. Some people, including my person of contact, are not above "bending the facts" to create the impression they want. (reverse coded)

5.3.3 Control variables

Within the sample, control variables were collected and are part of the calculated models. Those variables can influence the investigated relation between dependent and independent variables and therefore should be controlled for.[335] Entrepreneurship as a field of research can be considered appropriate as an orientation guideline. Within this field, company size, company age and company industry are considered appropriate.[336] Further control variables were included as well. This was based on comparable research studies that the author analyzed throughout the literature research.[337] Those variables control for the participant's age and gender. Regarding the company, control variables control for the company size (measured by the number of employees as of 2013), age, expected future revenue growth, and expected development of the company compared to its main competitors. Furthermore, one control variable takes into account whether the company is focused more on services or production. The company's industry was also taken into account. Regarding the supplier and its product or service, the supplier's reputation, the product or service quality, and the product or service price were taken into account.

5.4 Data analysis technique

In order to test the relationship between one or more independent variables and a dependent variable linear, (multiple) regression analysis (ordinary least squares) can be applied. In this study a stepwise linear regression analysis approach was utilized. First, all control variables were entered into the model, followed by the main effect, moderators, and interaction effects.[338] Several assumptions are necessary in the context of regression analysis. Specifically, homoscedasticity and the independence of residuals as well as independent variables are important assumptions. Furthermore, the normality of the variables investigated in the regression models is assumed. If

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335 Hughes and Morgan (2007, p. 234)
336 Murphy, Trailer, and Hill (1996)
337 Doney and Cannon (1997/04); Meyer (2012); Kraiczy (2013)
338 Eddleston, Kellermanns, and Sarathy (2008); Kellermanns, Eddleston, Sarathy, and Murphy (2012)

these criteria are not met, estimation quality would decrease and results would be biased.

A test for multicollinearity is important in empirical research. In order to test for multicollinearity, I assessed the correlation matrix, the variance inflation factor (VIF), and condition index (CI). Condition indexes are another way of expressing Eigenvalues. They represent the square root of the ratio of the largest Eigenvalue to the Eigenvalue of interest.[339]

The correlation matrix showed only modest levels of correlations between the variables. Furthermore, both VIFs (all<6.266) and CIs (all <29.119) were below the critical values suggested by Hair, Tatham, Anderson, & Black (2006). Although CI is only slightly below the cut-off value it still does not suggest any multicollinearity. Thus multicollinearity was not a concern in this study.

The responses were controlled for non-response bias. Non-respondents tend to be similar to late respondents.[340] Based on this, the first third of respondents can be compared to the last third of respondents to investigate for differences. An independent sample t-test was used to test for the differences between the early and the late respondents. Statistical differences were not discovered, which indicates that a non-response bias is not a problem in this study.

Common method bias can be a problem in research when a participant influences both the dependent and the independent variables, which, due to social desirability, can lead to the problem of multicollinearity.[341] All items of independent, control, and moderation variables were entered into a factor analysis. I identified eight factors with eigenvalues above 1.000, which accounted for 66.58 percent of variance. If no single factor accounts for the majority of the variance, common method bias is unlikely to occur.[342] The first factor accounted for 27.23 percent of the variance and the remaining

[339] Field (2013)
[340] Kanuk and Berenson (1975); Armstrong and Overton (1977)
[341] Podsakoff and Organ (1986)
[342] Eddleston, Kellermanns, and Sarathy (2008)

seven factors accounted for another cumulative 39.30 percent. Hence I conclude that common method bias is not a problem in this study.

6 Research results

This chapter provides the reader with the results of the statistical analysis. Section 6.1 provides these results and subdivides them into the core model and the moderation effects. Later on, section 6.2 provides a thorough analysis and discussion of the statistical results presented earlier on.

6.1 Presentation of results

Core Model

Table 14 presents the correlations, means, and standard deviations of all model parameters. The significant correlation coefficients are low and thus clearly indicate discriminant validity. A critical value would be >.90.[343] None of the significant values is close to this threshold. The obtained results confirm this study's central assumptions. First, the core model supports the existing way of measuring the relationship quality and the adaptation of the relational selling behavior framework to the family firm context.

The hypotheses are tested using multiple regression analysis,[344] presented in Table 15 and Table 16. The first focuses on the dependent variable relationship satisfaction and the latter on relationship trust. In both cases the control variables are entered first into model one and are followed by each independent variable entered into a model of its own (model two to four). Model five combines the three independent variables. This structure applies for both dependent variables in the above-discussed tables. Model one of Table 15 shows that there are slight correlations between product quality and relationship satisfaction ($ß=.13$, $p<0.05$) as well as between product price and relationship satisfaction ($ß=.10$, $p<0.1$). The significance of the correlation of product quality decreases in the following models and the correlation is non-significant in models two, three and five. The slightly significant correlation of product price and

[343] Huber, Herrmann, Meyer, Vogel, and Vollhardt (2007, p. 38)
[344] Stinchcombe (1965)

C. Rose, *Supplier Relationships to Family Firms*,
Familienunternehmen und KMU, DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-19048-4_6

relationship satisfaction is maintained in models one, two and three, but is non-significant in models four and five. Besides product price and product quality there are no other significant controls with regard to satisfaction. In models two, three and four of Table 15 the main effects are introduced each separately one at a time and each with only the control variables. All single main effects are highly significant on the individual level and lead to high delta R^2 values. Self-disclosure shows a beta value of .33 at a significance level of $p<.001$. Cooperative intentions show a beta value of .41 at a similar significance level of $p<.001$ and interaction intensity shows a beta value of .24 similarly at $p<.001$. Model five offers the combined approach, leading to a significant correlation of both self-disclosure (ß=.22, $p<.001$) and cooperative intentions (ß=.33, $p<.001$).

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Table 14: Descriptive statistics and correlation

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Age participant (year of birth)	63,90	13,95																			
2. Participant's gender	1,09	0,39	,08																		
3. No. employees	612,51	1925,02	,04	-,02																	
4. Exp. future revenue growth	2,24	0,80	,00	,02	-,03																
5. Competitive development	2,38	0,65	-,06	-,06	,00	,48 ***															
6. Age of cooperation	24,63	21,23	-,14 **	,02	-,02	-,02	,01														
7. Product quality	3,87	0,87	,10 +	,04	,00	,03	-,05	,19 ***													
8. Supplier reputation	3,34	1,09	,11 *	-,01	,05	-,01	-,09 +	,20 ***	,54 ***												
9. Product price	3,21	0,96	,10 *	-,03	-,11 *	,02	,01	,03	,07	,03											
10. Product or service	1,37	0,52	,07	,03	,01	,06	,04	,07	,08	,106* *	,02										
11. Industry (chemicals and chemical products)	0,06	0,23	,01	,06	-,04	-,02	,00	-,03	,04	,04	,01	-,17 ***									
12. Industry (computer, electronics and optical products)	0,06	0,24	-,05	,06	-,01	-,09 +	-,03	-,02	,00	-,03	,02	-,11 *	-,06								
13. Industry (automotive)	0,07	0,26	-,03	-,09 +	,08	,05	,05	-,06	-,14 **	-,13 **	-,03	-,05	-,07	-,07							
14. Industry (Trade)	0,18	0,38	-,07	,04	-,03	-,02	,04	,24 ***	-,03	,03	,02	,49 ***	-,12 *	-,12 *	-,13 *						
15. Industry (Machinery and equipment)	0,12	0,32	-,06	-,02	,03	,01	,01	-,03	-,05	-,13 *	-,01	-,22 ***	-,09 +	-,09 +	-,10 +	-,17 **					
16. Industry (Food products)	0,13	0,34	-,02	,10 +	-,07	,04	,03	,03	,09 +	,10 +	,08	-,15 **	-,10 +	-,10 +	-,11 *	-,18 ***	-,14 **				
17. Self-disclosure	0,00	1,00	,07	,11 *	-,07	-,15 **	-,16 **	,12 *	,18 ***	,16 **	,04	,13 *	-,07	-,02	-,12 *	,08	,03	,02			
18. Cooperative intentions	0,00	1,00	-,06	,09 +	-,10 +	-,06	-,09 +	,11 *	,30 ***	,20 ***	,05	,01	-,06	-,01	-,11 *	-,07	,04	,07	,36 ***		
19. Interaction intensity	0,00	1,00	,02	-,04	-,04	-,12 *	-,13 *	,17 ***	,17 **	,22 ***	,11 *	,17 **	-,13 *	-,02	-,02	,10 *	,03	-,01	,47 ***	,33 ***	
20. Satisfaction	4,11	0,48	,04	,06	-,01	-,07	-,13 *	,09 +	,20 ***	,18 ***	,11 *	,06	,01	,02	-,08	-,01	-,02	,00	,36 ***	,43 ***	,26 ***

Pearson's Correlation - 2-tailed, N=352, + p<0,1, * p<0,05, ** p<0,01, *** p<,001

Table 15: Multiple regression analysis – relationship satisfaction

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Controls					
Age participant (year of birth)	.00	-.02	.03	.00	.02
Gender	.05	.02	.01	.06	.00
No. employees	.00	.02	.04	.01	.05
Exp. future revenue growth	-.03	.01	.00	-.01	.03
Competitive development	-.09	-.06	-.08	-.08	-.06
Age cooperation	.06	.03	.04	.03	.02
Product quality	.13 *	.08	.02	.12 +	.01
Supplier reputation	.08	.06	.05	.04	.03
Product price	.10 +	.09 +	.09 +	.08	.08
Product or service	.05	.01	.04	.01	.00
Industry (chemicals and chemical products)	-.01	.02	.03	.02	.04
Industry (computer, electronics and optical products)	.00	.01	.01	.00	.02
Industry (automotive)	-.04	-.02	-.02	-.05	-.01
Industry (trade)	-.07	-.06	-.02	-.06	-.02
Industry (machinery and equipment)	-.01	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.04
Industry (food products)	-.04	-.04	-.04	-.04	-.04
Main Effect					
Self-Disclosure		.33 ***			.22 ***
Cooperative Intentions			.41 ***		.33 ***
Interaction Intensity				.24 ***	.05
R²	.079	.175	.221	.126	.265
Adjusted R²	.035	.133	.182	.083	.224
Delta R²	.079 *	.096 ***	.142 ***	.048 ***	.187 ***
F	1.808 *	4.205 ***	5.636 ***	2.878 ***	6.387 ***

Dependent variable: Relationship satisfaction
Standardized coefficients, N = 352, + p<0,1, * p<0,05, ** p<0,01, *** p<,001

Table 16 offers a similar approach but for the dependent variable of relationship trust. Within it there are five models. Again, model one introduces the control variables only. Out of those, three show significant correlations. The age of the participant (ß= -.10, p<.1) (measured by the year of birth) and the number of employees (ß= -.11, p<.05) show a negative correlation and product quality (ß=.18, p<.01) shows a positive correlation. All three control variables that are significant show these significant correlations in models one, two and four only. Models three and five do not show any significant correlations between any control variables and the dependent variable of relationship trust.

Table 16: Multiple regression analysis – relationship trust

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Controls					
Age participant (year of birth)	-.10 +	-.11 *	-.06	-.10 +	-.06
Gender	.03	.01	-.02	.03	-.02
No. employees	-.11 *	-.10 +	-.06	-.10 +	-.06
Exp. future revenue growth	-.02	.01	.02	.00	.03
Competitive development	.00	.01	.01	.00	.01
Age cooperation	-.01	-.02	-.03	-.02	-.03
Product quality	.18 **	.16 *	.05	.18 **	.05
Supplier reputation	.01	.00	-.03	-.02	-.03
Product price	.03	.03	.01	.02	.01
Product or service	.00	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.03
Industry (chemicals and chemical products)	.00	.01	.04	.01	.04
Industry (computer, electronics and optical products)	-.03	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.01
Industry (automotive)	-.02	-.01	.00	-.03	.01
Industry (trade)	-.02	-.02	.04	-.02	.04
Industry (machinery and equipment)	.05	.03	.02	.03	.02
Industry (food products)	.07	.07	.08	.07	.08
Main Effect					
Self-Disclosure		.19 ***			.05
Cooperative Intentions			.50 ***		.49 ***
Interaction Intensity				.14 *	-.02
R^2	.074	.104	.287	.092	.289
Adjusted R^2	.031	.059	.251	.047	.249
Delta R^2	.074 *	.030 **	.213 ***	.018 *	.214 ***
F	1.704 *	2.134 **	8.010 ***	2.022 *	7.180 ***

Dependent variable: Relationship trust
Standardized coefficients. N = 352. + $p<0.1$. * $p<0.05$. ** $p<0.01$. *** $p<.001$

Introduced individually, each with the control variables only, all main effects show significant correlations, although on clearly different levels of significance. Self-disclosure (ß=.19, p>.001) and cooperative intentions (ß=.50, p<.001) show highly significant correlations, whereas interaction intensity shows only a moderately significant correlation (ß=.14, $p<.05$). Remarkable as well is model number five, which provides the combined approach of three main effects. In the combined approach, only cooperative intentions (ß=.49, $p<.001$) have a significant correlation on trust. Self-disclosure and interaction intensity are no longer significant.

Moderation Effects

Of the sixteen moderating hypotheses, twelve could be tested and four lacked the moderator's validity. Table 17 and Table 18 build upon the former regression analysis on relationship satisfaction and incorporate the hypothesized moderation effects. Table 19 and Table 20 similarly present the moderations on the dependent variable of relationship trust. Models two, three and four in all four Tables show one moderation effect each. Furthermore, model one in each Table integrates the moderators into the regression.

The interaction term of family culture x cooperative intentions (ß=.18, $p<.001$) is highly significant and positively correlates with the positive relationship between cooperative intention and relationship satisfaction. Family's identification with the firm x cooperative intentions (ß=.16, $p<.01$) shows comparable results at only slightly lower levels of significance. This nevertheless also strengthens the positive effect of cooperative intentions on satisfaction. The third moderation effect is renewal of family bonds x cooperative intentions (ß=.14, $p<.01$), which shows similar results in the same directions. In summary, each of the three moderation effects on its own leads to significant increases in the respective model's explained variance R^2. Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11 visualize the interaction effects. They are plots of the significant interactions between the degree of cooperative intentions and the degree of family renewal as predictors of the relationship satisfaction. They plot the interaction effects such that two lines are shown, each representing the estimated relationship between the two variables under analysis. The two lines are differentiated from each other by the related values of the moderator. In other words, the lines show the relation between two variables at two different stages of the moderators; they combine high and low W values. Usually the moderators are considered at plus and minus one standard deviation.[345] The plots within this dissertation show that there is, in each case, a positive relationship between cooperative intentions on the seller side and relationship satisfaction on the buyer side. That is, the more cooperative intentions the seller side demonstrates, the higher the buyer side's satisfaction. Furthermore, the generally positive relationships between cooperative intentions and relationship satisfaction are increased in intensity by high values of the collected family influence scales. Precisely Figure 9 shows that the straight line – which represents the relation between satisfaction and cooperative intentions at high levels of the moderating variable of renewal of family bonds – has a steeper slope compared to the dashed line. The comparison of the slopes leads to similar results in Figure 10 and Figure 11 as well. Figure 10 provides the comparison at low and high levels of Family Identification.

Table 18 provides the results for the moderating effects of the collected family influence scales on the positive relationship between seller side's self-disclosure and the buyer side's relationship satisfaction. Model one of Table 18 introduces the control variables, the main effects and the moderators. This is done in a procedure similar to Table 17. Models two, three and four introduce the moderating effects each one at a time. However, none of the introduced effects shows significant correlations.

Table 19 and Table 20 provide results from multiple regression analysis with the moderating effects for the dependent variable of relationship trust. In Table 19, model one introduces the control variables, the main effects and the moderators on their own. Two significant correlations are part of model one. Participant's age, one of the control variables, shows significant results ($ß=.10$, $p<.05$). Furthermore, cooperative intentions, a main effect, shows highly significant correlation ($ß=.47$, $p<.001$) over all four models of Table 19. The correlation of the participant's age is significant in models two to four of Table 19 as well. Nevertheless, the level of significance is lower in these cases at p<0, 1. In models two, three and four the moderating effects of family's identification with the firm, renewal of family bonds and dynastic succession and family business culture on cooperative intentions are each introduced individually. None of

[345] Aiken and West (1991)

the three moderating effects shows either a significant correlation or significant increases in delta R^2.

By analogy, Table 20 provides four models. Model one introduces the control variables, main effects and moderators to the regression analysis. Similar to Table 19, the control variable of participant's age shows a significant correlation (ß=.10, $p<.05$) and this is present throughout the other models two, three and four as well. Cooperative intentions show a highly significant correlation (ß=.47, $p<.001$) with the dependent variable of relationship trust. None of the moderators shows a significant correlation value. Models two, three and four introduce the moderation effects. These interaction terms are the interactions between self-disclosure and family identification with the firm, renewal of family bonds and family business culture. None of the three interaction terms shows significant results in the analysis. Furthermore none of models two, three or four show significant values for delta R^2.

Table 17: Multiple regression analysis – moderation effects (1)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Controls								
Age participant	.06		.05		.05		.05	
Gender	.03		.02		.03		.02	
No. employees	.05		.05		.05		.05	
Exp. future revenue growth	.03		.03		.03		.03	
Competitive development	-.07		-.08		-.07		-.08	
Age cooperation	.03		.01		.02		.01	
Product quality	.01		.04		.03		.04	
Supplier reputation	.08		.09	+	.09	+	.09	+
Product price	.02		.01		.01		.02	
Product or service	.01		.02		.01		.02	
Industry (Chemicals and chemical products)	.07		.06		.06		.05	
Industry (Computer, electronics and optical products)	.05		.05		.05		.05	
Industry (Automotive)	.01		.01		.00		.01	
Industry (Trade)	-.03		-.03		-.03		-.03	
Industry (Machinery and equipment)	-.01		-.01		-.01		-.01	
Industry (Food products)	.06		.06		.06		.06	
Main Effect								
Self-disclosure	.23	***	.24	***	.24	***	.24	***
Cooperative intentions	.35	***	.36	***	.36	***	.36	***
Interaction intensity	.04		.03		.04		.03	
Moderators								
Family's Identification	.01		-.01		.00		-.01	
Renewal of Family Bonds	.08		.10		.09		.10	
Family Culture	-.11		-.10		-.10		-.10	
Interaction Terms								
Cooperative intentions x Family's Identification			.16	**				
Cooperative intentions x Renewal of Family Bonds					.14	**		
Cooperative intentions x Family Culture							.18	***
R^2	.281		.303		.297		.309	
Adjusted R^2	.231		.252		.247		.259	
Delta R^2	.002		.022	**	.017	**	.028	***
F	5.656	***	6.005	***	5.855	***	6.178	***

Dependent variable: Relationship satisfaction
Standardized coefficients. N = 352. + p<0.1. * p<0.05. ** p<0.01. *** p<.001

Table 18: Multiple regression analysis – moderation effects (2)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Controls								
Age participant	.06		.06		.06		.06	
Gender	.03		.03		.03		.03	
No. employees	.05		.05		.05		.05	
Exp. future revenue growth	.03		.03		.03		.03	
Competitive development	-.07		-.07		-.07		-.07	
Age cooperation	.03		.03		.03		.03	
Product quality	.01		.01		.01		.01	
Supplier reputation	.08		.08	+	.08		.08	+
Product price	.02		.03		.02		.02	
Product or service	.01		.02		.01		.02	
Industry (Chemicals and chemical products)	.07		.07		.07		.07	
Industry (Computer, electronics and optical products)	.05		.05		.05		.05	
Industry (Automotive)	.01		.02		.01		.02	
Industry (Trade)	-.03		-.03		-.03		-.03	
Industry (Machinery and equipment)	-.01		.00		-.01		-.01	
Industry (Food products)	.06		.06		.06		.06	
Main Effect								
Self-disclosure	.23	***	.22	***	.23	***	.23	***
Cooperative intentions	.35	***	.36	***	.35	***	.36	***
Interaction intensity	.04		.04		.04		.04	
Moderators								
Family's identification	.01		.00		.01		.01	
Renewal of family bonds	.08		.09		.08		.08	
Family culture	-.11		-.12		-.11		-.11	
Interaction Terms								
Self-disclosure x family's identification			.06					
Self-disclosure x renewal of family bonds					.02			
Self-disclosure x family culture							.04	
R^2	.281		.284		.281		.282	
Adjusted R^2	.231		.232		.229		.230	
Delta R^2	.002		.003		.000		.002	
F	5.656	***	5.475	***	5.405	***	5.434	***

Dependent variable: Relationship satisfaction
Standardized coefficients. N = 352. + p<0.1. * p<0.05. ** p<0.01. *** p<0.001

Table 19: Multiple regression analysis – moderation effects (3)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Controls								
Age participant	.10	*	.10	+	.10	+	.10	+
Gender	-.01		-.01		-.01		-.01	
No. employees	-.06		-.06		-.06		-.06	
Exp. future revenue growth	.02		.02		.02		.02	
Competitive development	.00		.00		.00		.00	
Age cooperation	-.03		-.03		-.03		-.03	
Product quality	.05		.05		.05		.05	
Supplier reputation	.01		.01		.01		.01	
Product price	-.01		-.01		-.01		-.01	
Product or service	-.04		-.04		-.04		-.04	
Industry (Chemicals and chemical products)	.03		.03		.03		.03	
Industry (Computer, electronics and optical products)	-.04		-.04		-.04		-.04	
Industry (Automotive)	-.02		-.02		-.02		-.02	
Industry (Trade)	-.04		-.03		-.03		-.03	
Industry (Machinery and equipment)	.03		.03		.03		.03	
Industry (Food products)	-.05		-.05		-.05		-.05	
Main Effect								
Self-disclosure	.07		.07		.07		.07	
Cooperative intentions	.47	***	.47	***	.47	***	.47	***
Interaction intensity	-.02		-.02		-.02		-.02	
Moderators								
Family's identification	-.06		-.06		-.06		-.06	
Renewal of family bonds	.00		.01		.01		.01	
Family culture	.12		.12		.12		.12	
Interaction Terms								
Cooperative intentions x family's identification			.04					
Cooperative intentions x renewal of family bonds					.02			
Cooperative intentions x family culture							.03	
R^2	.296		.297		.296		.296	
Adjusted R^2	.247		.246		.245		.246	
Delta R^2	.002		.001		.000		.001	
F	6.092	***	5.847	***	5.816	***	5.827	***

Dependent variable: Relationship trust
Standardized coefficients. N = 352. + p<0.1. * p<0.05. ** p<0.01. *** p<.001

Table 20: Multiple regression analysis – moderation effects (4)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Controls								
Age participant	.10	*	.10	*	.10	*	.10	*
Gender	-.01		-.01		-.01		-.01	
No. employees	-.06		-.06		-.06		-.06	
Exp. future revenue growth	.02		.01		.02		.01	
Competitive development	.00		.00		.00		.00	
Age cooperation	-.03		-.03		-.03		-.03	
Product quality	.05		.04		.05		.05	
Supplier reputation	.01		.01		.01		.01	
Product price	-.01		-.01		-.01		-.01	
Product or service	-.04		-.04		-.04		-.04	
Industry (Chemicals and chemical products)	.03		.03		.03		.03	
Industry (Computer, electronics and optical products)	-.04		-.04		-.04		-.04	
Industry (Automotive)	-.02		-.02		-.02		-.02	
Industry (Trade)	-.04		-.03		-.04		-.03	
Industry (Machinery and equipment)	.03		.03		.03		.03	
Industry (Food products)	-.05		-.05		-.05		-.05	
Main Effect								
Self-disclosure	.07		.07		.06		.07	
Cooperative intentions	.47	***	.47	***	.46	***	.47	***
Interaction intensity	-.02		-.02		-.02		-.02	
Moderators								
Family's identification	-.06		-.06		-.05		-.06	
Renewal of family bonds	.00		.01		.00		.00	
Family culture	.12		.12		.12		.12	
Interaction Terms								
Self-disclosure x family's identification			.02					
Self-disclosure x renewal of family bonds					-.06			
Self-disclosure x family culture							.00	
R^2	.296		.296		.299		.296	
Adjusted R^2	.247		.245		.248		.245	
Delta R^2	.002		.000		.003		.000	
F	6.092	***	5.817	***	5.891	***	5.810	***

Dependent variable: Relationship trust
Standardized coefficients. N = 352. + p<0.1. * p<0.05. ** p<0.01. *** p<.001

Figure 9: Interaction effect – renewal of family bonds

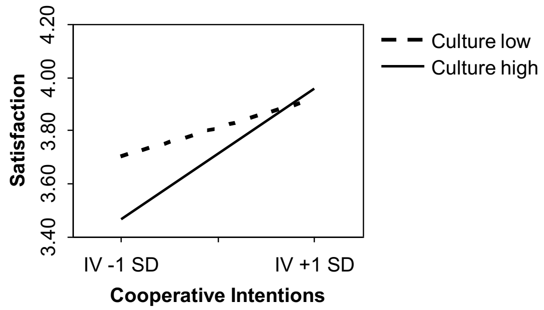


Figure 10: Interaction effect – identification of family members

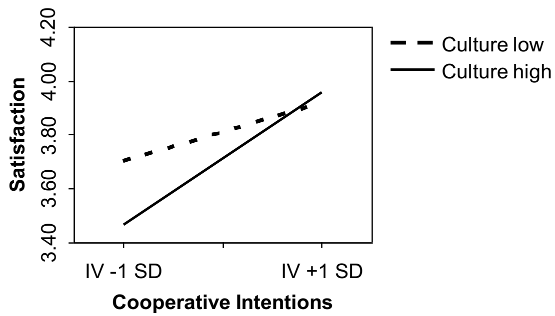
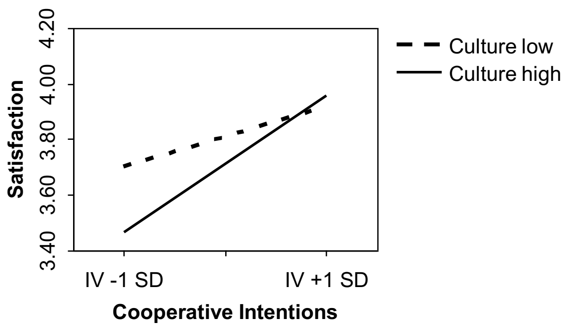


Figure 11: Interaction effect – family culture in the firm



6.2 Discussion of results

The results section 6.1 presented the statistical analysis of the data collected within this dissertation project. This analysis is related to the Hypotheses developed in section 4.1.2 and 4.1.4. Of the twenty-two hypotheses in this dissertation, six were supported and sixteen were not supported by the results obtained. Table 21 provides an aggregated overview of the hypotheses and their results.

The analysis was performed on two dependent variables. First was the dependent variable of buyer side's relationship satisfaction and second the dependent variable of buyer side's relationship trust. Analyzed on the individual level, self-disclosure, cooperative intentions, and interaction intensity all have a positive and significant relation to relationship satisfaction. In a combined approach (Table 15 model five) it is shown that, with regard to the dependent variable of satisfaction, self-disclosure and cooperative intentions have a significant influence. In conclusion, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported and Hypothesis 3 is not supported. The results show that interaction intensity has a significant and positive relation on its own (Table 15 model four), but not in the combined model. The core assumptions of this research are widely supported by this. It is intuitive that, when both self-disclosure and cooperative intentions are given, the importance of the interaction intensity, which can – looking at the single item level – also be understood as interaction frequency, is of less importance. Nevertheless, it is surprising given the earlier research results discussed in this thesis.[346] When thoroughly considering potential differences, it appears to be a differentiation between qualitative and quantitative criteria, which is represented as well in the items used. Table 11 offers the employed items of interaction intensity. Generally those are about the contact frequency with regard to different occasions, though very much related to the frequency of interactions. All items were rated in terms of frequency with a scale from "very seldom or never" to "very often".

With regard to the dependent variable of buyer side's relationship trust, comparable results are obtained, and support the overall concept. Table 16 shows the significant

[346] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)

results of each main effect (model two to four). In a combined approach, only cooperative intentions show a significant influence on relationship trust. Self-disclosure and interaction intensity do not show a significant correlation and the related Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 6 are therefore not supported. They link cooperative intentions and interaction intensity to the buyer's perceived relationship trust. Hypothesis 5 is supported by the results of Table 16 model five. Summarizing the main effects towards relationship quality, composed of relationship satisfaction and relationship trust, the buyer's perceived relationship quality is influenced by cooperative intentions, via both trust and relationship satisfaction and via self-disclosure which is correlated with satisfaction only. The core results provide strong support for the key assumptions of this research. At the same time the non-supported hypotheses offer room for additional thought.

In light of the fact that family firms are receptive to certain types of relational selling behavior, it is important to consider the role that family firms' unique characteristics might play. These unique characteristics were measured using established scales, and Hypotheses 7 to 22 represent the moderation effects of these characteristics. The moderation analysis thereby clearly states that the degree of influence of the family within the family firm interacts with the impact of cooperative intentions on relationship satisfaction. The higher the degree of family influence, the more prone the family firm is to cooperative intentions, and the greater is the influence of cooperative intentions on buyer side's relationship satisfaction. The moderation analysis revealed that the family's influence within a family firm positively influences the firm's relationship satisfaction with regard to a supplier's cooperative intentions. In other words, family firms, depending on the individual degree of family influence, are more receptive to relational selling behaviors of their suppliers. Nevertheless, this influence was not supported with regard to the influence of the seller side's self-disclosure on relationship trust (Hypothesis 4). Hypothesis 19, Hypothesis 20 and Hypothesis 22 are not supported. Also, none of the moderating effects on cooperative intentions with regard to the dependent variable of relationship trust, could be supported. As Hypothesis 4 from the basic research model was not supported, the non-support of the abovementioned is a consistent confirmation of the earlier finding. For the creation of relationship trust, the degree of self-disclosure is not significantly relevant. This is especially in line with the earlier mentioned differentiation between qualitative and quantitative measures and will be discussed later in this section.

The presented research makes use of existing constructs and scales for the measurement of customer relationship quality. Relationship quality is considered a higher order construct consisting of trust and satisfaction. Relational selling behaviors, such as self-disclosure, cooperative intentions, and interaction intensity, are antecedents to relationship quality; empirically tested scales are provided in section 5.3.1. Relational selling behaviors have a significant positive influence on relationship satisfaction and trust; this proved true in the tested group of family firms. A moderating relationship exists between the degree of familiness within a buying company and its satisfaction within a buyer-seller relationship. The impact of the level of self-disclosure and cooperative intentions on satisfaction is increased by a high degree of family influence as compared to a low degree of family influence. Family firms are receptive to the relational selling behaviors of their suppliers, and they increase family firm's perceived relationship quality. As the family's identification with the firm, its dynastic intentions, or its cultural influence within the firm increase, the impact of the seller's relational selling behaviors on relationship quality increases. Generally speaking, the family's influence within a firm makes it more receptive to a supplier's efforts regarding the mutual relationship and thus leads to better customer-supplier relationships.

This work shows that cooperative intentions provide the best and most authentic part of the relational selling behaviors as with their influence on the perceived relationship quality. The basic hypotheses of this work are the first six hypotheses. They provide the groundwork and to a large extent adapt existing research to the underlying unique content. The analysis provides results that are generally in line with previous colleagues' works about relationship quality and its antecedents.[347] Nevertheless, the reader will note that cooperative intentions and self-disclosure in the case of relationship satisfaction, in particular, provide significant results. As opposed to this, interaction intensity does not provide significant results; the related hypotheses are not

[347] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)

supported. This is not consistent with earlier results; nevertheless, when closely approaching it, one realizes that the interaction intensity is a heavily quantitative measure, analyzing the degree of interactions and the occasions used to interact. Those, in spite of the more qualitative measures of cooperative intentions and also the relatively more qualitative self-disclosure, do not provide robust results. Intuition allows for an easy understanding with relationship trust being such a sensitive measure that the building process cannot be undertaken based only on the interaction frequency. Rather more qualitative actions, and in this context more valuable inputs by the seller side, have to be present and realized by the buyer side. One must not forget, that it is the buyer side which has to be trust giving according to the research setting. Furthermore, the hypothesized indirect benefits of better needs- related knowledge and care taking appear to be less relevant. Also, in the context of trust generation, the pure intensity appears to be less important in comparison. Trust generation is less influenced by the interaction intensity, so to say the time spent, and more by the openness, information sharing and expression of long-term interest. In other words, these are of higher value in terms of demonstration of trustworthiness. For future research, the individual principals of judgment may be of high interest. Cooperative intentions appear to be the inevitable requirement for the creation of trust, and so they are more important than every other concept. This is in line with earlier research.[348]

Within this work, some hypotheses were not supported. Nevertheless, those offer insights as well and the non-findings offer potential new directions for research and thoughts. Hypotheses 3, 5, 6 and 10-22 were not supported by the data. Regarding the non-supported hypotheses, patterns can be observed. None of the moderations with regard to the dependent variable of relationship trust is supported, e.g. Hypothesis 15 to Hypothesis 22. Furthermore, the degree of family culture does not lead to any supported moderating hypotheses; those are the non-supported Hypotheses 10, 14, 18 and 22.

The moderating Hypotheses 19 to 22 are a special case. They build upon Hypothesis 5, which has already been rejected as a main effect. Hypothesis 5 suggests that the

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[348] Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990/07); Boles, Johnson, and Barksdale (2000/4)

seller's cooperative intentions have a positive influence on the buyer's relationship trust. Taking the non-support into account, it is not surprising that the moderation hypotheses show neither any significant results nor significant moderation; rather, this is a welcome confirmation of the non-supported hypotheses. All three are with regard to moderation effects on the relationship between self-disclosure of the seller side and the buyer side's perceived relationship trust. Hypothesis 19, which was not supported, can likely be interpreted by the degree of identification of the family with the firm having no moderating effect on the positive influence of seller's self-disclosure on the buyer's level of trust. Further on, this might be seen as an indication of the independence of the trust-building process from family firm related characteristics. This furthermore indicates that the trust relationships are not moderated in this manner and are not subject to other moderations either. Similarly, the non-support of Hypothesis 20 supports this line of thinking as well. This non-support suggests questions regarding the extension of the social ties to external stakeholders in the given context of trust. And lastly, Hypothesis 22 is not supported, which begs a question on the hypothesized relation between the family's degree of commitment and its moderation on the positive relationship of the seller side's self-disclosure on buyer's trust. Overall, this is in line with earlier research as moderated influences on trust do not appear, but it leaves room for further investigations.

Hypothesis 10 argues that the degree of F-PEC Culture positively moderates the relationship of the seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship trust and is not supported. The hypothesis is based upon the assumption that a high degree of F-PEC Culture also increases a family's desire for relationships with their suppliers. It increases a family's commitment to the firm and this is expected to be extended to related stakeholder contacts. As it turns out, the family's degree of commitment to the firm does not provide it with a special sensitivity towards cooperative – being the opposite to competitive – behavior. F-PEC Culture turns out to be a fully inward-oriented characteristic of family firms.

Hypotheses 11, 12 and 14 are moderating hypotheses regarding the relationship between the seller side's self-disclosure and the buyer side's satisfaction. Hypothesis

11 suggests that the relation between self-disclosure and satisfaction is positively moderated by the degree of the family members' identification with the firm. The hypothesis is not supported. It is hypothesized that the intermeshing between the family and the firm does lead to an expectation on the part of the family firm towards its suppliers and towards the degree of information they disclose. High degrees of family member's identification with their firm indicate that their private and professional lives are closely tied together. Nevertheless, they may not expect their counterparts to view this intermeshing similarly. It is extraordinarily interesting because Berrone, Cruz, & Gómez-Mejia (2012) argue that this leads to external stakeholders seeing the firm as an extension of the family itself. Nevertheless, there is no empirical support for the importance of the influence of family members' identification on their behavior towards externals stakeholders, such as their suppliers. Hypothesis 12 suggests that the degree of binding social ties positively increases the relationship between the seller's degree of self-disclosure and the buyer's relationship satisfaction. The data does not support this hypothesis. The result can be considered surprising as binding social ties are directly associated with social relationships with internal and external stakeholders.[349] In conclusion, the degree of social relations does not influence the positive relation between self-disclosure on the seller side and the buyer side's satisfaction. Hypothesis 12 was extraordinarily promising as binding social ties and the degree of self-disclosure are related to the intersection between private and professional lives. Nevertheless, when examining it closer, additional questions arise. Thus, the discussed relationship may not hold towards directly economically motivated relationships as they might exist with suppliers. Berrone, Cruz, Gómez-Mejia, & Larraza-Kintana (2010) argued that family firms are often embedded in their communities and support local activities. This may or may not expand to supplier relationships which when closely considering can be of local character but do not have to be of such local character. Hypothesis14 suggests that the degree of F-PEC culture on the buy side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and the buyer's satisfaction. It was assumed that the degree of commitment the family shows, as accessed by the F-PEC Culture subscale, also has an influence on their

[349] Berrone, Cruz, and Gómez-Mejia (2012)

commitment to the business. Still, it turns out that this commitment does not moderate the existing positive relation between self-disclosure and satisfaction. Carlock & Ward (2001) argue that the family's desire for a relationship with the organization is part of their commitment. As it turns out this does not apply to the relationships with suppliers and those are to be regarded separately. Potentially a further analysis needs to take this finding into account.

Hypotheses 15, 16 and 18 hypothesize moderating effects towards the positive relation of cooperative intentions on the perceived level of trust. Hypothesis 15 suggests that the degree of family member's identification with the firm positively moderates the influence of cooperative intentions on the seller side on the buyer's level of trust. It is not supported. This suggests that the cooperative behaviors, as opposed to competitive behaviors, do not influence family members in the degree of their intermeshing of private and professional life. Hypothesis 16 suggests a positively moderating influence of binding social ties of the family towards the influence of cooperative behaviors of the sell side towards satisfaction. As it is not supported, there is a question as to whether the social ties truly extend towards external stakeholders like suppliers and in this manner whether cooperative intentions are a necessary condition. Hypothesis 18 describes the positively moderating influence of the family culture on the effect of the seller's cooperative intentions towards the buyer's perception of trust. There is no moderation and the hypothesis is thus not supported. This non-support suggests that the trust building process is potentially not moderated at all, and that family firms may build their trust levels just as non-family firms do. A closer investigation of this trust building might be a promising future research topic.

Table 21: List of Hypotheses and results

	Hypothesis	Result
Hypothesis 1:	Seller's cooperative intentions have a positive influence on buyer's relationship satisfaction.	Hypothesis supported
Hypothesis 2:	Seller's self-disclosure has a positive influence on buyer's relationship satisfaction.	Hypothesis supported
Hypothesis 3:	Interaction intensity has a positive influence on buyer's relationship satisfaction.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 4:	Seller's cooperative intentions have a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.	Hypothesis supported
Hypothesis 5:	Seller's self-disclosure has a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 6:	Interaction intensity has a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 7:	The degree of family member's identification with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis supported
Hypothesis 8:	The degree of binding social ties on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis supported
Hypothesis 9:	The degree of renewal of family bonds on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis supported
Hypothesis 10:	The degree of buyer's F-PEC culture moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 11:	The degree of family members' identification with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported

Hypothesis 12:	The degree of binding social ties on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s self-disclosure and buyer’s relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 13:	The degree of renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s self-disclosure and buyer’s relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 14:	The degree of F-PEC culture on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s self-disclosure and buyer’s relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 15:	The degree of family members’ identification with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s cooperative intentions and buyer’s relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 16:	The degree of binding social ties on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s cooperative intentions and buyer’s relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 17:	The degree of renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s cooperative intentions and buyer’s relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 18:	The degree of F-PEC culture on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s cooperative intentions and buyer’s relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 19:	The degree of family members’ identification with the firm on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s self-disclosure and buyer’s relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 20:	The degree of binding social ties on the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller’s self-disclosure and buyer’s relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.	Hypothesis not supported

Hypothesis 21:	The degree of renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.	Hypothesis not supported
Hypothesis 22:	The degree of buyer's F-PEC culture moderates the positive relationship between seller's self- disclosure and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.	Hypothesis not supported

7 Concluding discussion

7.1 Summary

This dissertation project is about family businesses' supplier relationships and the related impact of the family firm's unique characteristics. In a business-to-business context, it analyses the effect of a business owning family's influence and relates this to the family businesses' supplier relationship, while taking relevant supplier characteristics into account. The study in hand is the first attempt to understand the relationships of family firms to their suppliers and thereby takes a step in a new direction of generally understanding family firms, their uniqueness and potential success factors. The study proceeds by focusing on the intersection between two fields of research, first family firm research and second the business-to business marketing research. Within family firm research, one of the competitive advantages with which family firms are associated is their stakeholder relationships and the concrete relationship with suppliers, a topic being directly analyzed here. Business-to-business marketing analyzes success factors for buyer-supplier relationships. The buyer-supplier dyad has been researched by various colleagues and offers comparable and adaptable contexts. A robust foundation to build upon is offered. Within the study, an empirical analysis with 352 participants was undertaken to explore the hypotheses.

The study shows that a family firm's satisfaction with its suppliers is influenced by the supplier's self-disclosure and even more by the cooperative intentions the supplier shows towards the family firm. Self-disclosure is the degree to which a seller discloses information to a buyer and cooperative intentions are the opposite of the competitive intentions a seller shows a buyer. A family firm's trust in a supplier is even more influenced by cooperative intentions alone. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the degree of the family's influence within the firm is related to the family firms' sensitivity towards supplier's cooperative intentions. The higher the family's influence, the more sensitive is the company towards individual suppliers' cooperative intentions and the more those are related to the family firm's given trust and perceived satisfaction.

C. Rose, *Supplier Relationships to Family Firms*,
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Overall, the work takes a solid approach in a new direction within family firm research. The continuing sections describe the existing limitations and outline the theoretical and managerial implications of the work.

7.2 Limitations

This study is subject to some limitations and at the same time suggests promising new research directions. The limitations are, first, that the sample only includes small- and medium sized German enterprises. This may raise concerns regarding the generalizability and adaptability of the results in an international context. Future research is encouraged to replicate this study in an even broader international context.

Second, the study uses cross-sectional data. Cross-sectional data cannot reveal causal relationships. Improved results could be obtained by collecting data with a longitudinal research design. This would be extraordinarily promising, as the customer lifecycle approach could be included. How new customer relationships can be turned into long-lasting relationships with mutual benefits would be an especially interesting focus.

Third, in this study the relationship between customer and supplier was rated only by the customers. Although the customer's perception is considered more important in this context, a dyadic data collection would be very promising. Collecting data from both parties would allow for a more detailed understanding of the crucial mechanisms and influences within the relationship. The understanding of the seller side’s role especially would be increased. Furthermore, the longitudinal dataset with dyadic data would be a superb approach to the presented research context and be most promising for the creation of additional insights.

7.3 Implications for current and future research

When addressing the limitations discussed earlier on, current and future research could profit accordingly. The most promising field can be expected in longitudinal data collection with regard to supplier relationships. Improving the data is the most promising additional research direction.

When taking a longitudinal approach, certain aspects can be incorporated. Among those are the cycles of family firms, e.g. a period of succession in family firms can be analyzed. Even economic cycles or industry development, as well as the customer-supplier relationship and the inclusion of the stage of a customer lifecycle can be considered very promising. Furthermore, this could offer great potential with regard to investigations of other stakeholder relationships as well. Data with regard to this would be extraordinarily promising for the development of the research topic.

For future research, the individual principals of judgment within family firms can be of high interest. We now know that family values and the family's influence within the cooperation, relate to the cooperation's judgment of satisfaction within a relationship. Future research has the potential of starting at this point to deepen the understanding of this relationship. Understanding the individual parameters and criteria would be the next step in supplier-relationships research within family firms.

Last but not least, this dissertation sheds light on the yet underdeveloped understanding of a trust building process. None of the expected moderations with regard to the level of trust on the buyer side proved to be supported by the data. A further investigation with a detailed analysis of the trust formation process towards external stakeholders is highly promising and potential insights will be valuable.

7.4 Managerial implications

This work and especially the empirical analysis provide important managerial implications and practitioners' takeaways as well. Sometimes, this can be considered a general claim of research; nevertheless, in this case of family firm research it is a central argument for research to assist and inform practitioners of the field.[350]

This thesis demonstrates that family firms' relationship satisfaction and relationship trust are determined by the seller side's cooperative intentions and by the seller side's self-disclosure. Both concepts can be of value with regard to practical relationships. Takeaways can be distinguished between the buyer- and the seller-side. From the seller's perspective it is clear that being in a relationship with a family firm, the qualitative measures like cooperative intentions and self-disclosure are by far more important than the frequency of interaction. Family firms are very sensitive to the cooperative intentions of a seller-side. Whenever possible in a concrete business case, the selling company has towards their customers. In addition to customer acquisition, existing relationships can also be strengthened when the seller side puts effort into the cooperative intentions and shows these signals to its family firm customer. Furthermore, in practice one can also question whether the success of these measures is limited to family firms or whether it can be considered a general improvement of the sales and marketing activities. Self-disclosure on the seller-side is a clear hint for the selling company that family firms demand information and want to be doing their business among equals rather than with an anonymous counterpart. As a supplier to a family firm, one clearly needs to thoroughly analyze the counterpart's information demand and needs to meet it. Extraordinarily important are the results achieved with regard to the creation of trust. In industries where trust is a key determinant to sales relationships, the special character of the trust creation is worked out. The seller-sides or suppliers take away the lesson that only cooperative intentions lead to the creation of relationship trust. If relationship trust is the key determinant, the suppliers need to heavily invest in their capacity of bringing cooperative intentions to the table and to effectively communicate with them.

The second potential perspective within the relationship is that of a company on the buying side. Especially when the family firm is one with a high degree of family influence, the results of this research might allow challenging the firm's own business

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[350] Zahra and Sharma (2004); Sharma (2004)

practices. Potentially it is not the best suppliers or the best products that are in the focus of the business relationships, but rather the “feel good factors”. From the perspective of this research there is no conflict per se in this; nevertheless an important task of science is to formulate provoking thoughts and to question established practices. More generally, this work helps the buying-side to better understand itself and generally offers family firms an additional perspective on the understanding of their own unique business practices. Furthermore, the results can be used to challenge and question other business relationships as well and help the managers in charge to better understand their surroundings. Corporations that are non-family firms but do business with family-firms can draw valuable insights from this analysis. It shows how the family firm status is reflected in buyer-supplier relationships, and how non-family firms might adapt their way of doing business to better serve the family firm’s needs and be more successful over time. For example, the explicit demonstration of cooperative behavior and a certain degree of self-disclosure should be highly encouraged in those business relations.

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Appendix: List of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Seller's cooperative intentions have a positive influence on buyer's relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Seller's self-disclosure has a positive influence on buyer's relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Interaction intensity has a positive influence on buyer's relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Seller's cooperative intentions have a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.

Hypothesis 5: Seller's self-disclosure has a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.

Hypothesis 6: Interaction intensity has a positive influence on buyer's relationship trust.

Hypothesis 7: The degree of family member's identification with the firm at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 8: The degree of binding social ties at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between the seller's cooperative intentions and the buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 9: The degree of renewal of family bonds at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 10: The degree of buyer's F-PEC culture moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

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Hypothesis 11: The degree of family members' identification with the firm at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 12: The degree of binding social ties at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 13: The degree of renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 14: The degree of F-PEC culture at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship satisfaction, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 15: The degree of family members' identification with the firm at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 16: The degree of binding social ties at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 17: The degree of renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 18: The degree of F-PEC culture at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's cooperative intentions and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

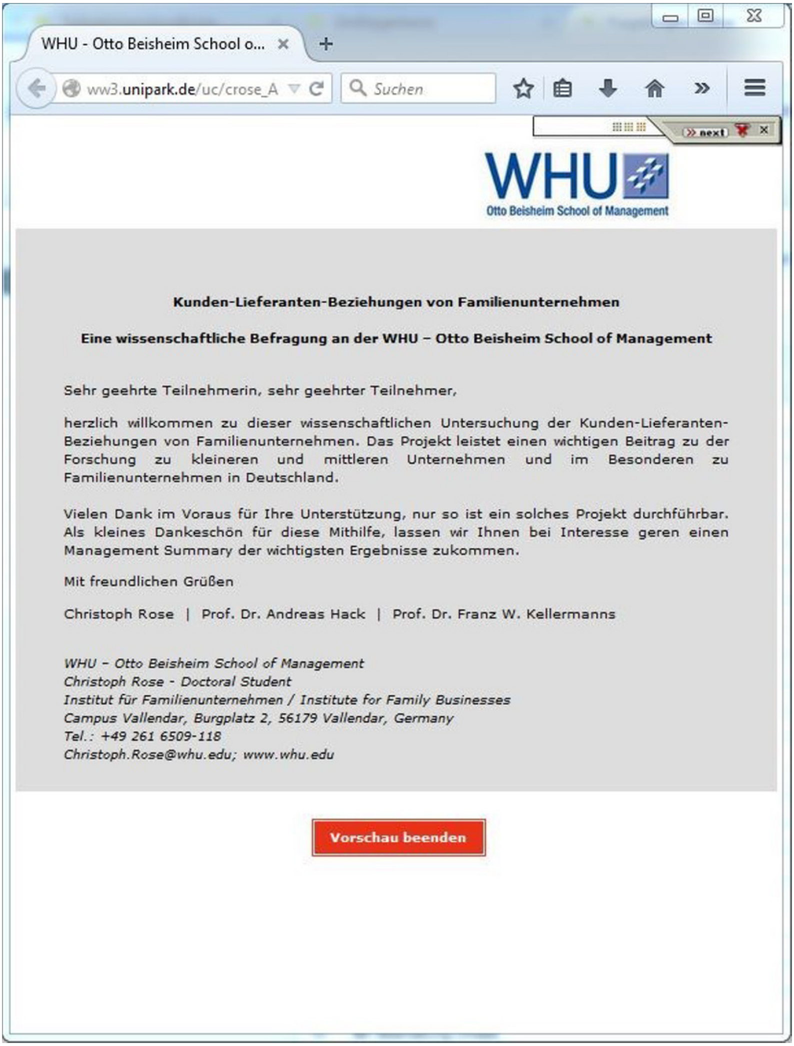
Hypothesis 19: The degree of family members' identification with the firm at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the moderator values increase.

Hypothesis 20: The degree of binding social ties at the buyer side moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.

Hypothesis 21: The degree of renewal of family bonds to the firm and dynastic succession moderates the positive relationship between seller's self-disclosure and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.

Hypothesis 22: The degree of buyer's F-PEC culture moderates the positive relationship between seller's self- disclosure and buyer's relationship trust, such that the positive relationship becomes stronger as the renewal values increase.

Appendix: Questionnaire



Kunden-Lieferanten-Beziehungen von Familienunternehmen

Eine wissenschaftliche Befragung an der WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management

Sehr geehrte Teilnehmerin, sehr geehrter Teilnehmer,

herzlich willkommen zu dieser wissenschaftlichen Untersuchung der Kunden-Lieferanten-Beziehungen von Familienunternehmen. Das Projekt leistet einen wichtigen Beitrag zu der Forschung zu kleineren und mittleren Unternehmen und im Besonderen zu Familienunternehmen in Deutschland.

Vielen Dank im Voraus für Ihre Unterstützung, nur so ist ein solches Projekt durchführbar. Als kleines Dankeschön für diese Mithilfe, lassen wir Ihnen bei Interesse geren einen Management Summary der wichtigsten Ergebnisse zukommen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Christoph Rose | Prof. Dr. Andreas Hack | Prof. Dr. Franz W. Kellermanns

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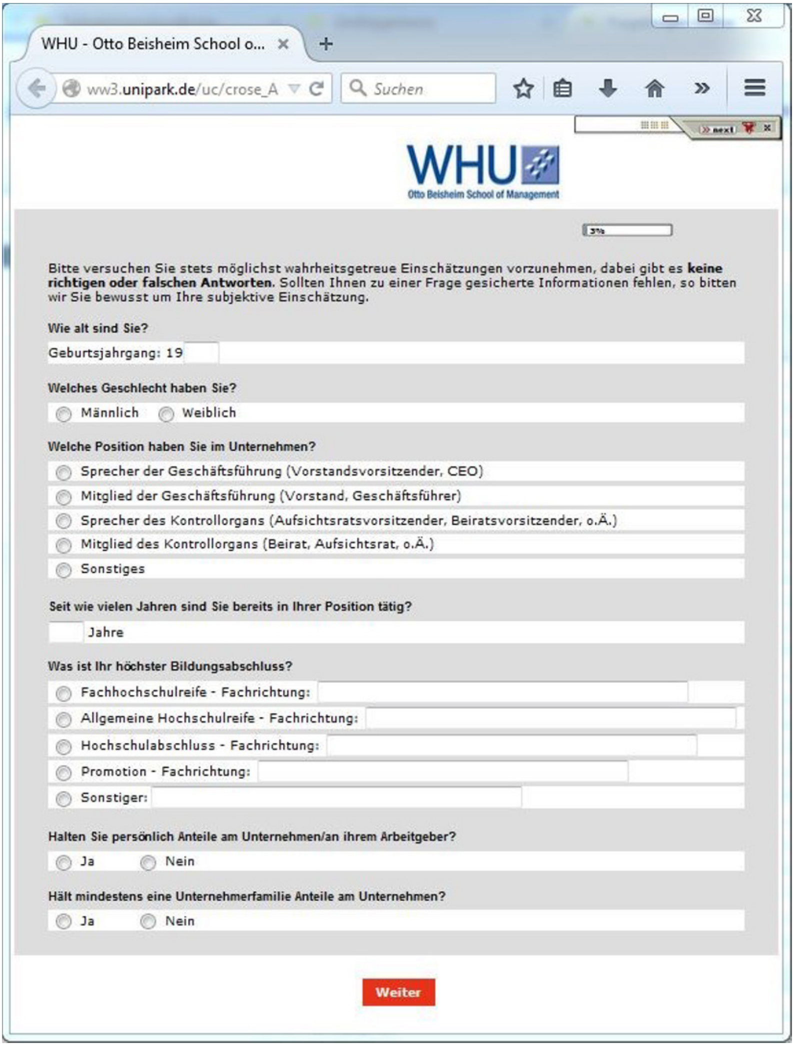

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Suchen

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3%

Bitte versuchen Sie stets möglichst wahrheitsgetreue Einschätzungen vorzunehmen, dabei gibt es **keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten**. Sollten Ihnen zu einer Frage gesicherte Informationen fehlen, so bitten wir Sie bewusst um Ihre subjektive Einschätzung.

Wie alt sind Sie?

Geburtsjahrgang: 19

Welches Geschlecht haben Sie?

- Männlich
- Weiblich

Welche Position haben Sie im Unternehmen?

- Sprecher der Geschäftsführung (Vorstandsvorsitzender, CEO)
- Mitglied der Geschäftsführung (Vorstand, Geschäftsführer)
- Sprecher des Kontrollorgans (Aufsichtsratsvorsitzender, Beiratsvorsitzender, o.Ä.)
- Mitglied des Kontrollorgans (Beirat, Aufsichtsrat, o.Ä.)
- Sonstiges

Seit wie vielen Jahren sind Sie bereits in Ihrer Position tätig?

Jahre

Was ist Ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

- Fachhochschulreife - Fachrichtung:
- Allgemeine Hochschulreife - Fachrichtung:
- Hochschulabschluss - Fachrichtung:
- Promotion - Fachrichtung:
- Sonstiger:

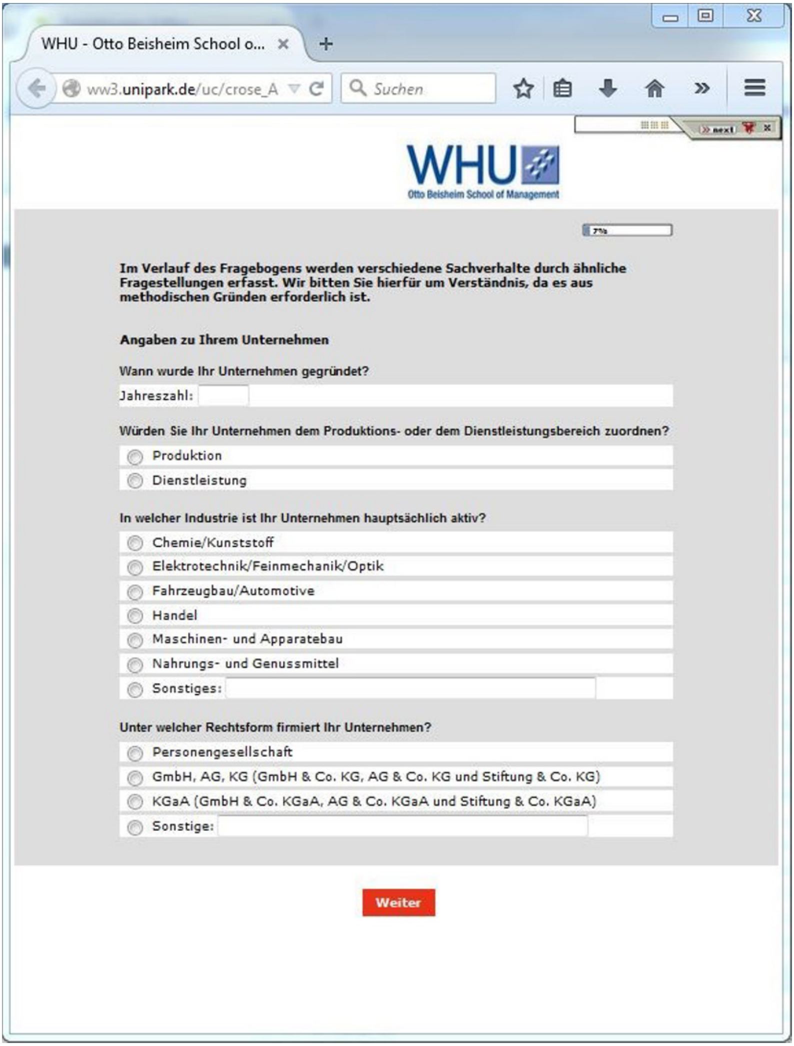
Halten Sie persönlich Anteile am Unternehmen/an ihrem Arbeitgeber?

- Ja
- Nein

Hält mindestens eine Unternehmerfamilie Anteile am Unternehmen?

- Ja
- Nein

Weiter



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Im Verlauf des Fragebogens werden verschiedene Sachverhalte durch ähnliche Fragestellungen erfasst. Wir bitten Sie hierfür um Verständnis, da es aus methodischen Gründen erforderlich ist.

Angaben zu Ihrem Unternehmen

Wann wurde Ihr Unternehmen gegründet?

Jahreszahl:

Würden Sie Ihr Unternehmen dem Produktions- oder dem Dienstleistungsbereich zuordnen?

- Produktion
- Dienstleistung

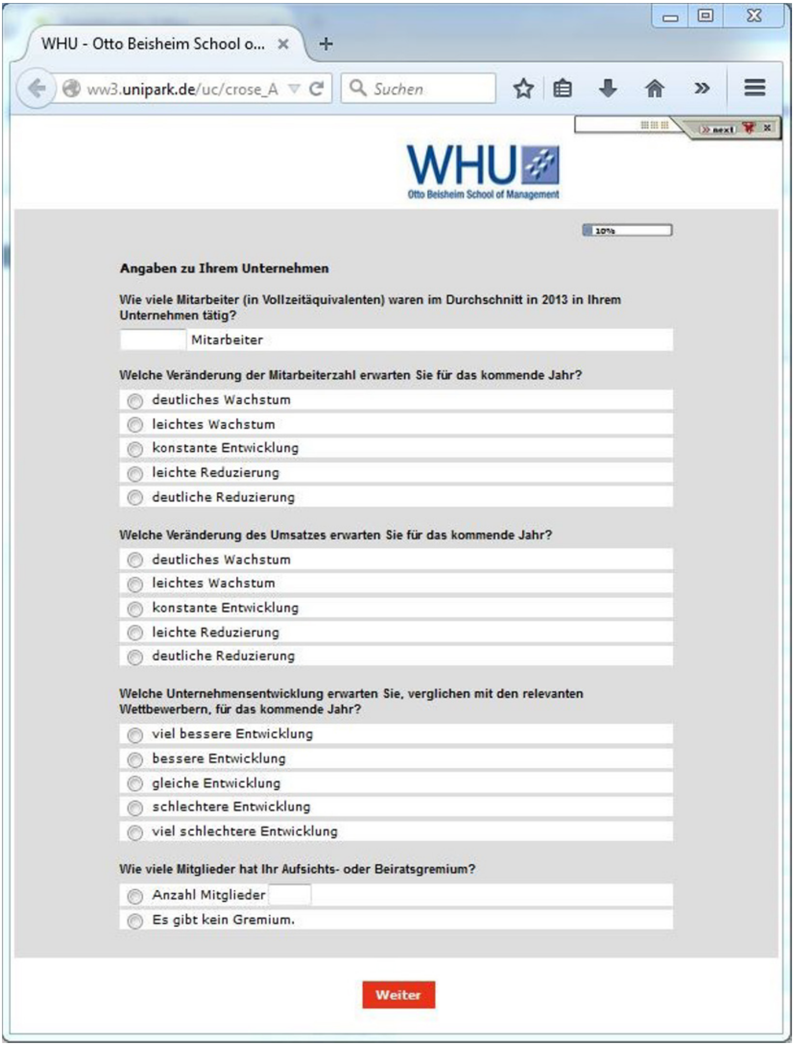
In welcher Industrie ist Ihr Unternehmen hauptsächlich aktiv?

- Chemie/Kunststoff
- Elektrotechnik/Feinmechanik/Optik
- Fahrzeugbau/Automotive
- Handel
- Maschinen- und Apparatebau
- Nahrungs- und Genussmittel
- Sonstiges:

Unter welcher Rechtsform firmiert Ihr Unternehmen?

- Personengesellschaft
- GmbH, AG, KG (GmbH & Co. KG, AG & Co. KG und Stiftung & Co. KG)
- KGaA (GmbH & Co. KGaA, AG & Co. KGaA und Stiftung & Co. KGaA)
- Sonstige:

Weiter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10%

Angaben zu Ihrem Unternehmen

Wie viele Mitarbeiter (in Vollzeitäquivalenten) waren im Durchschnitt in 2013 in Ihrem Unternehmen tätig?

Mitarbeiter

Welche Veränderung der Mitarbeiterzahl erwarten Sie für das kommende Jahr?

- deutliches Wachstum
- leichtes Wachstum
- konstante Entwicklung
- leichte Reduzierung
- deutliche Reduzierung

Welche Veränderung des Umsatzes erwarten Sie für das kommende Jahr?

- deutliches Wachstum
- leichtes Wachstum
- konstante Entwicklung
- leichte Reduzierung
- deutliche Reduzierung

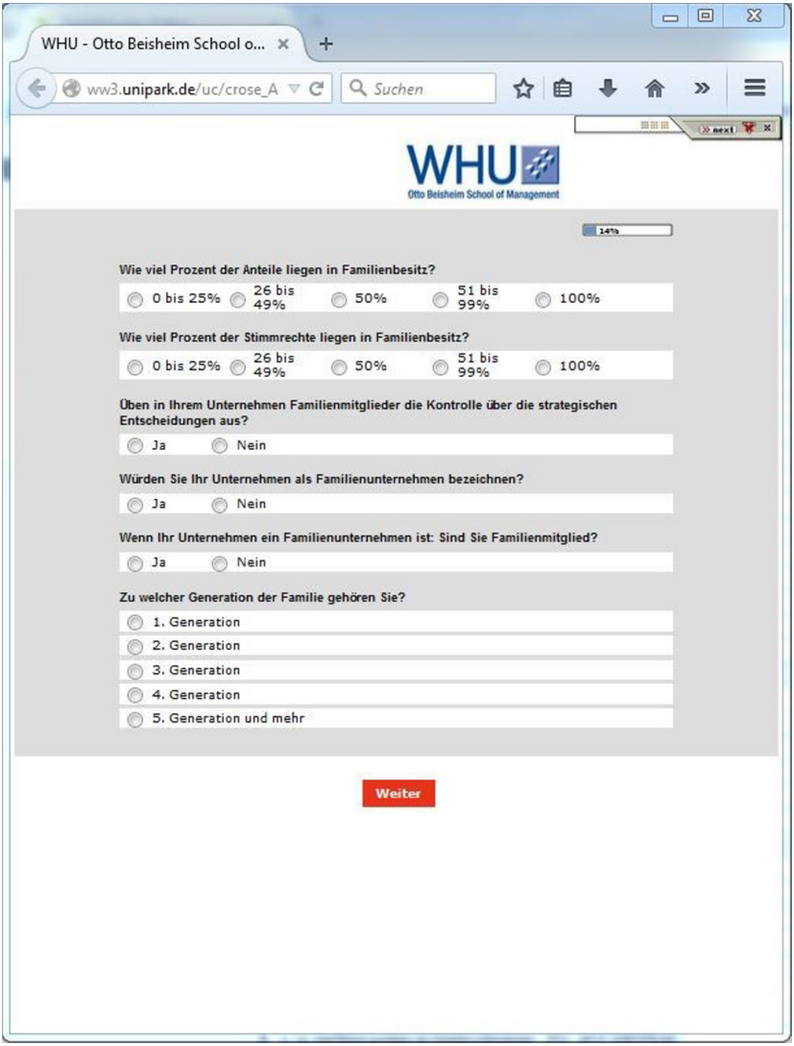
Welche Unternehmensentwicklung erwarten Sie, verglichen mit den relevanten Wettbewerbern, für das kommende Jahr?

- viel bessere Entwicklung
- bessere Entwicklung
- gleiche Entwicklung
- schlechtere Entwicklung
- viel schlechtere Entwicklung

Wie viele Mitglieder hat Ihr Aufsichts- oder Beiratsgremium?

- Anzahl Mitglieder
- Es gibt kein Gremium.

Weiter



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Wie viel Prozent der Anteile liegen in Familienbesitz?

- 0 bis 25%
- 26 bis 49%
- 50%
- 51 bis 99%
- 100%

Wie viel Prozent der Stimmrechte liegen in Familienbesitz?

- 0 bis 25%
- 26 bis 49%
- 50%
- 51 bis 99%
- 100%

Üben in Ihrem Unternehmen Familienmitglieder die Kontrolle über die strategischen Entscheidungen aus?

- Ja
- Nein

Würden Sie Ihr Unternehmen als Familienunternehmen bezeichnen?

- Ja
- Nein

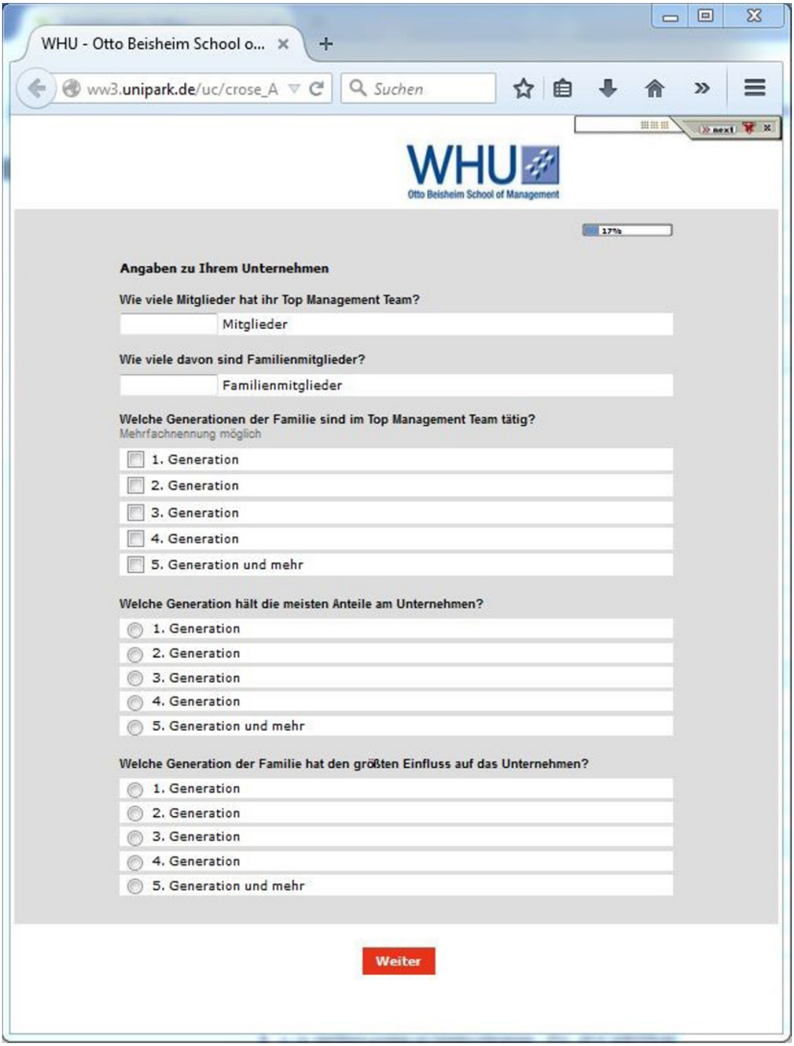
Wenn Ihr Unternehmen ein Familienunternehmen ist: Sind Sie Familienmitglied?

- Ja
- Nein

Zu welcher Generation der Familie gehören Sie?

- 1. Generation
- 2. Generation
- 3. Generation
- 4. Generation
- 5. Generation und mehr

Weiter



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Angaben zu Ihrem Unternehmen

Wie viele Mitglieder hat ihr Top Management Team?

Mitglieder

Wie viele davon sind Familienmitglieder?

Familienmitglieder

Welche Generationen der Familie sind im Top Management Team tätig?
Mehrfachnennung möglich

- 1. Generation
- 2. Generation
- 3. Generation
- 4. Generation
- 5. Generation und mehr

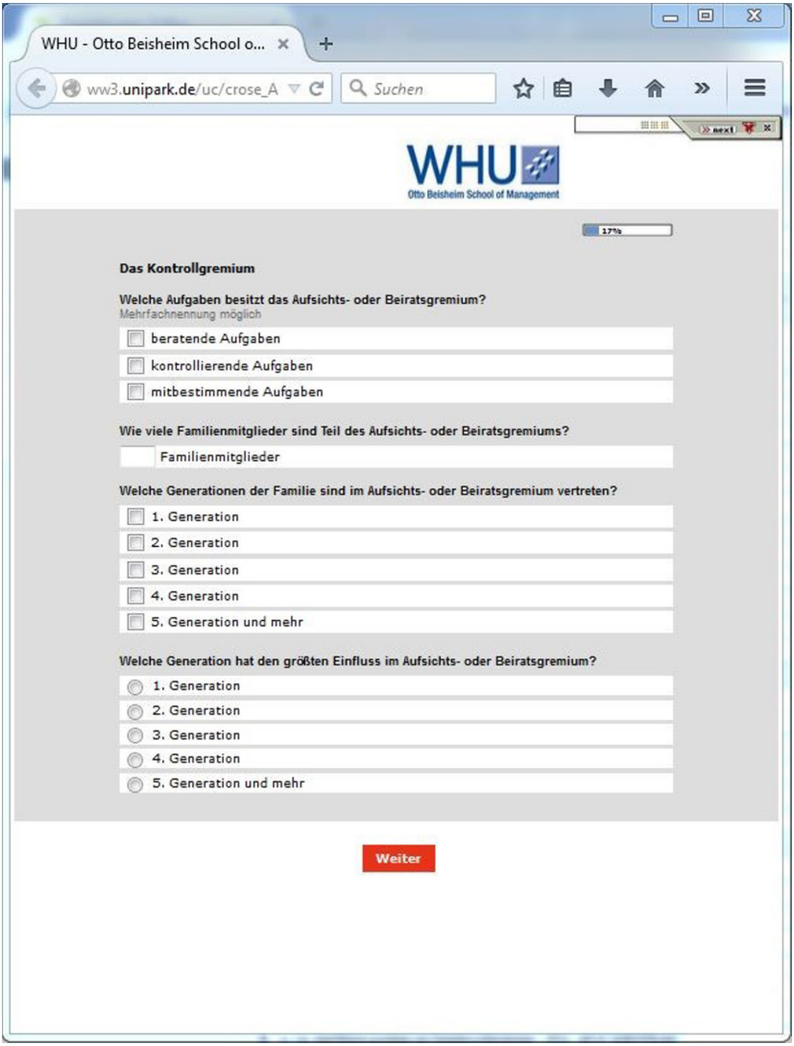
Welche Generation hält die meisten Anteile am Unternehmen?

- 1. Generation
- 2. Generation
- 3. Generation
- 4. Generation
- 5. Generation und mehr

Welche Generation der Familie hat den größten Einfluss auf das Unternehmen?

- 1. Generation
- 2. Generation
- 3. Generation
- 4. Generation
- 5. Generation und mehr

Weiter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Das Kontrollgremium

Welche Aufgaben besitzt das Aufsichts- oder Beiratsgremium?
Mehrfachnennung möglich

- [ ] beratende Aufgaben
- [ ] kontrollierende Aufgaben
- [ ] mitbestimmende Aufgaben

Wie viele Familienmitglieder sind Teil des Aufsichts- oder Beiratsgremiums?

[ ] Familienmitglieder

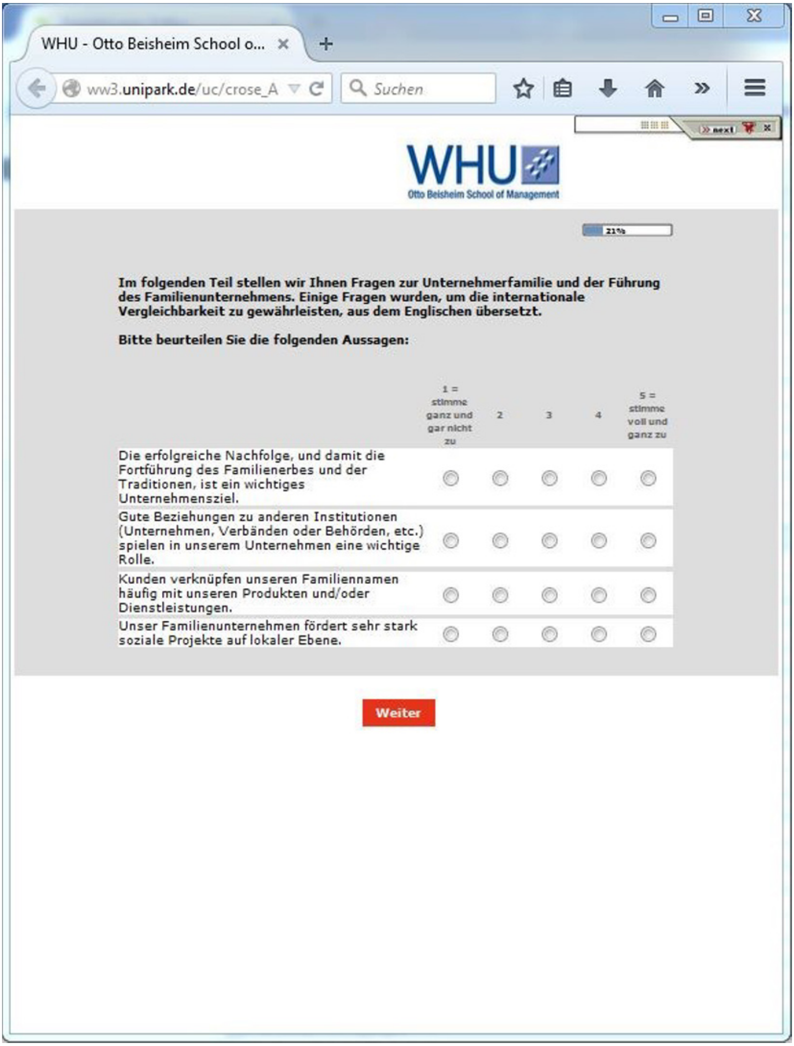
Welche Generationen der Familie sind im Aufsichts- oder Beiratsgremium vertreten?

- [ ] 1. Generation
- [ ] 2. Generation
- [ ] 3. Generation
- [ ] 4. Generation
- [ ] 5. Generation und mehr

Welche Generation hat den größten Einfluss im Aufsichts- oder Beiratsgremium?

- ○ 1. Generation
- ○ 2. Generation
- ○ 3. Generation
- ○ 4. Generation
- ○ 5. Generation und mehr

Weiter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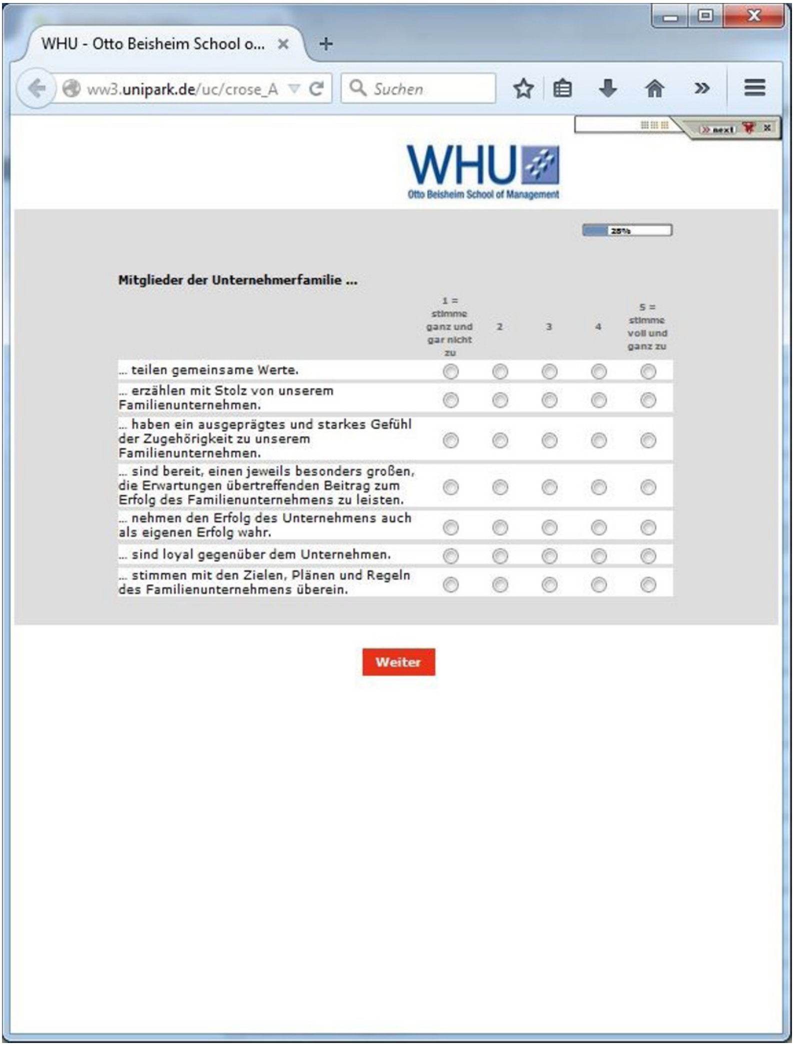
Im folgenden Teil stellen wir Ihnen Fragen zur Unternehmerfamilie und der Führung des Familienunternehmens. Einige Fragen wurden, um die internationale Vergleichbarkeit zu gewährleisten, aus dem Englischen übersetzt.

Bitte beurteilen Sie die folgenden Aussagen:

	1 = stimme ganz und gar nicht zu	2	3	4	5 = stimme voll und ganz zu
Die erfolgreiche Nachfolge, und damit die Fortführung des Familienerbes und der Traditionen, ist ein wichtiges Unternehmensziel.	○	○	○	○	○
Gute Beziehungen zu anderen Institutionen (Unternehmen, Verbänden oder Behörden, etc.) spielen in unserem Unternehmen eine wichtige Rolle.	○	○	○	○	○
Kunden verknüpfen unseren Familiennamen häufig mit unseren Produkten und/oder Dienstleistungen.	○	○	○	○	○
Unser Familienunternehmen fördert sehr stark soziale Projekte auf lokaler Ebene.	○	○	○	○	○

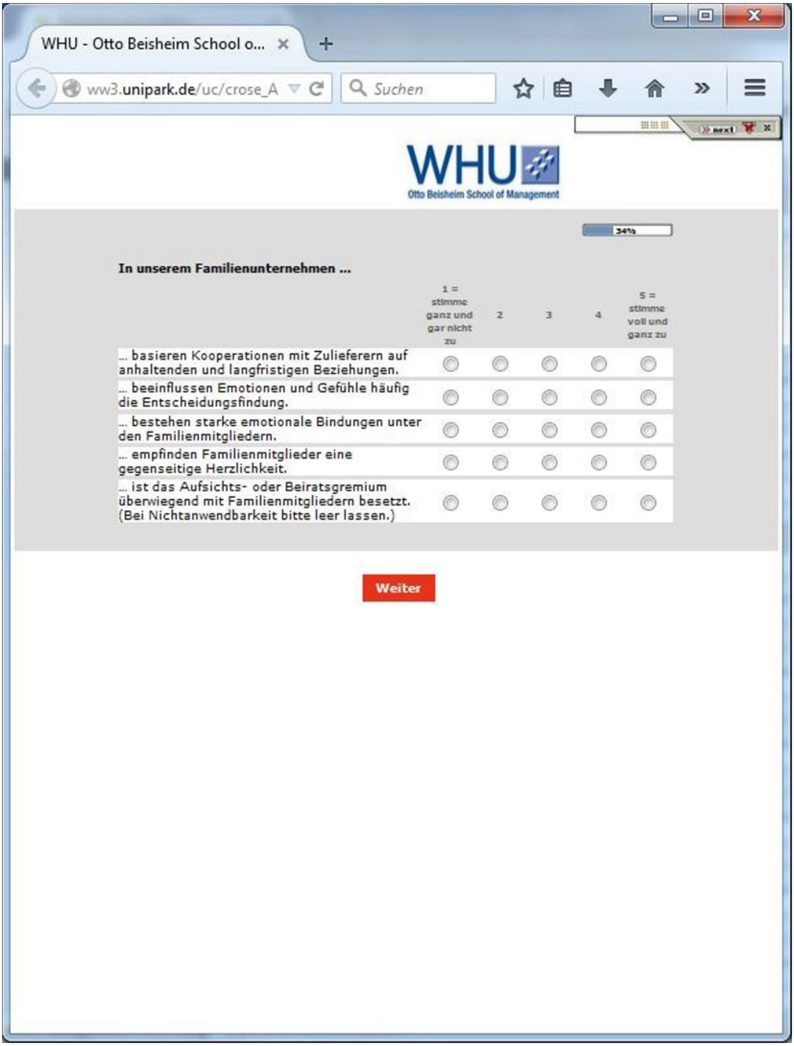
Weiter



Mitglieder der Unternehmerfamilie ...

	1 = stimme ganz und gar nicht zu	2	3	4	5 = stimme voll und ganz zu
... teilen gemeinsame Werte.	○	○	○	○	○
... erzählen mit Stolz von unserem Familienunternehmen.	○	○	○	○	○
... haben ein ausgeprägtes und starkes Gefühl der Zugehörigkeit zu unserem Familienunternehmen.	○	○	○	○	○
... sind bereit, einen jeweils besonders großen, die Erwartungen übertreffenden Beitrag zum Erfolg des Familienunternehmens zu leisten.	○	○	○	○	○
... nehmen den Erfolg des Unternehmens auch als eigenen Erfolg wahr.	○	○	○	○	○
... sind loyal gegenüber dem Unternehmen.	○	○	○	○	○
... stimmen mit den Zielen, Plänen und Regeln des Familienunternehmens überein.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



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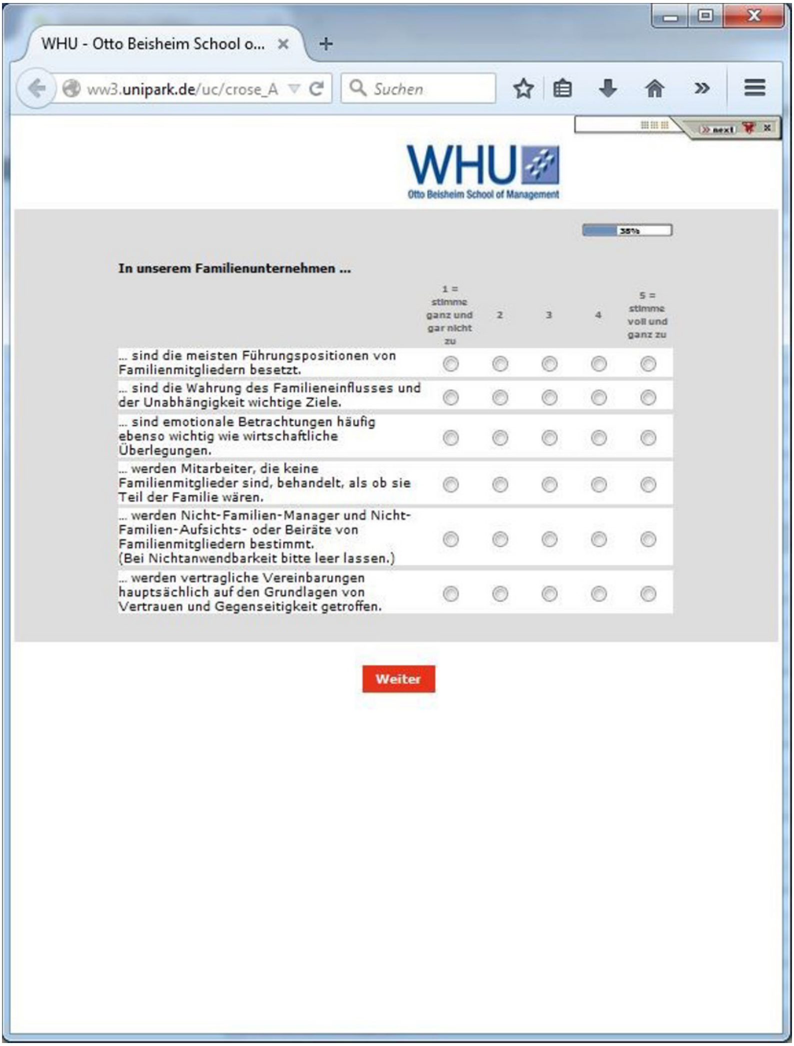
34%

In unserem Familienunternehmen ...

	1 = stimme ganz und gar nicht zu	2	3	4	5 = stimme voll und ganz zu
... basieren Kooperationen mit Zulieferern auf anhaltenden und langfristigen Beziehungen.	○	○	○	○	○
... beeinflussen Emotionen und Gefühle häufig die Entscheidungsfindung.	○	○	○	○	○
... bestehen starke emotionale Bindungen unter den Familienmitgliedern.	○	○	○	○	○
... empfinden Familienmitglieder eine gegenseitige Herzlichkeit.	○	○	○	○	○
... ist das Aufsichts- oder Beiratsgremium überwiegend mit Familienmitgliedern besetzt. (Bei Nichtanwendbarkeit bitte leer lassen.)	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



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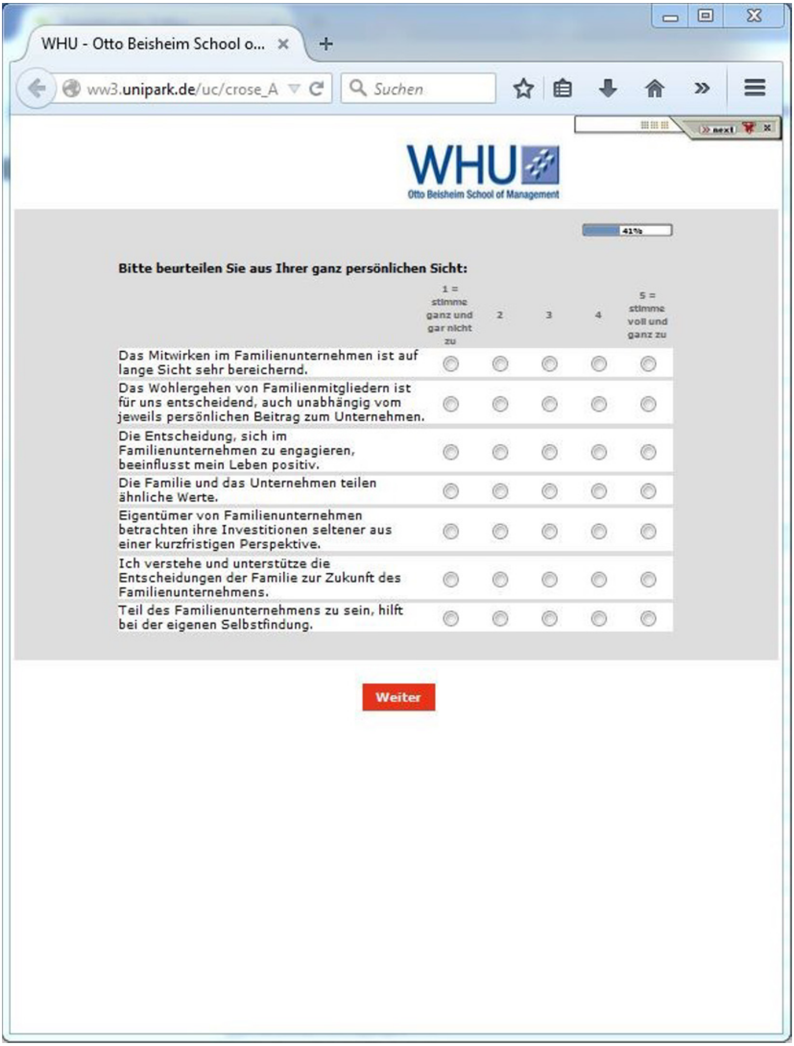
35%

In unserem Familienunternehmen ...

	1 = stimme ganz und gar nicht zu	2	3	4	5 = stimme voll und ganz zu
... sind die meisten Führungspositionen von Familienmitgliedern besetzt.					
... sind die Wahrung des Familieneinflusses und der Unabhängigkeit wichtige Ziele.					
... sind emotionale Betrachtungen häufig ebenso wichtig wie wirtschaftliche Überlegungen.					
... werden Mitarbeiter, die keine Familienmitglieder sind, behandelt, als ob sie Teil der Familie wären.					
... werden Nicht-Familien-Manager und Nicht-Familien-Aufsichts- oder Beiräte von Familienmitgliedern bestimmt. (Bei Nichtanwendbarkeit bitte leer lassen.)					
... werden vertragliche Vereinbarungen hauptsächlich auf den Grundlagen von Vertrauen und Gegenseitigkeit getroffen.					

Weiter



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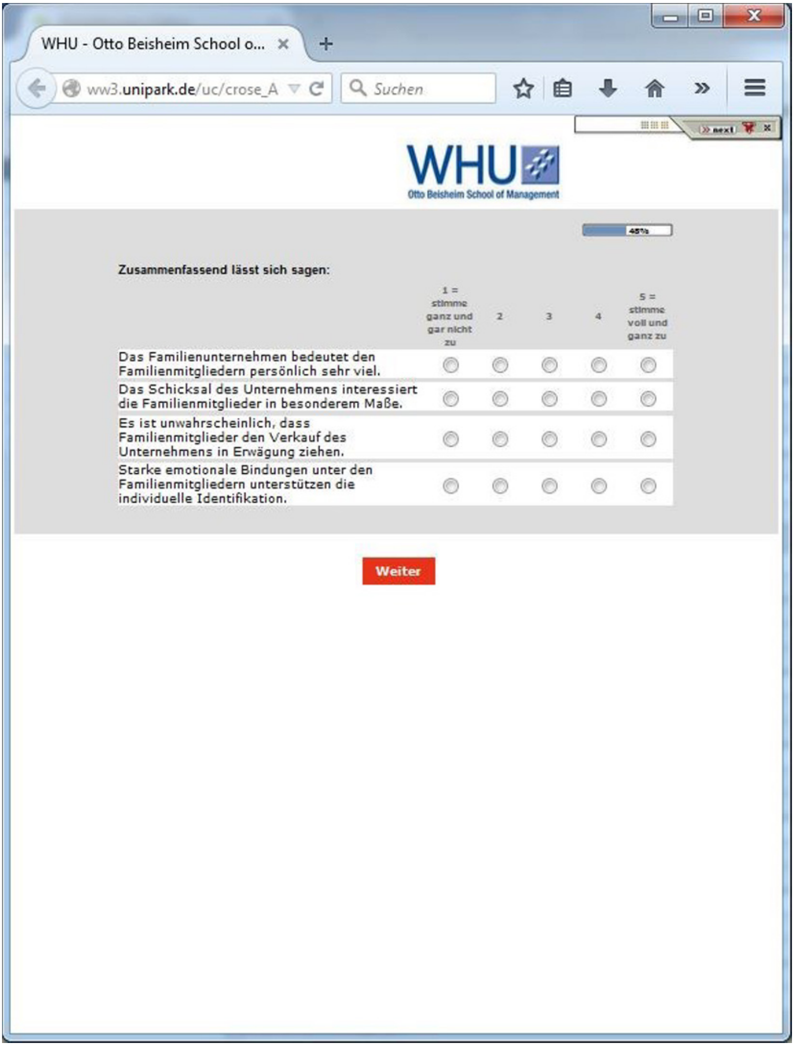
Bitte beurteilen Sie aus Ihrer ganz persönlichen Sicht:

	1 = stimme ganz und gar nicht zu	2	3	4	5 = stimme voll und ganz zu
Das Mitwirken im Familienunternehmen ist auf lange Sicht sehr bereichernd.					
Das Wohlergehen von Familienmitgliedern ist für uns entscheidend, auch unabhängig vom jeweils persönlichen Beitrag zum Unternehmen.					
Die Entscheidung, sich im Familienunternehmen zu engagieren, beeinflusst mein Leben positiv.					
Die Familie und das Unternehmen teilen ähnliche Werte.					
Eigentümer von Familienunternehmen betrachten ihre Investitionen seltener aus einer kurzfristigen Perspektive.					
Ich verstehe und unterstütze die Entscheidungen der Familie zur Zukunft des Familienunternehmens.					
Teil des Familienunternehmens zu sein, hilft bei der eigenen Selbstfindung.					

Weiter



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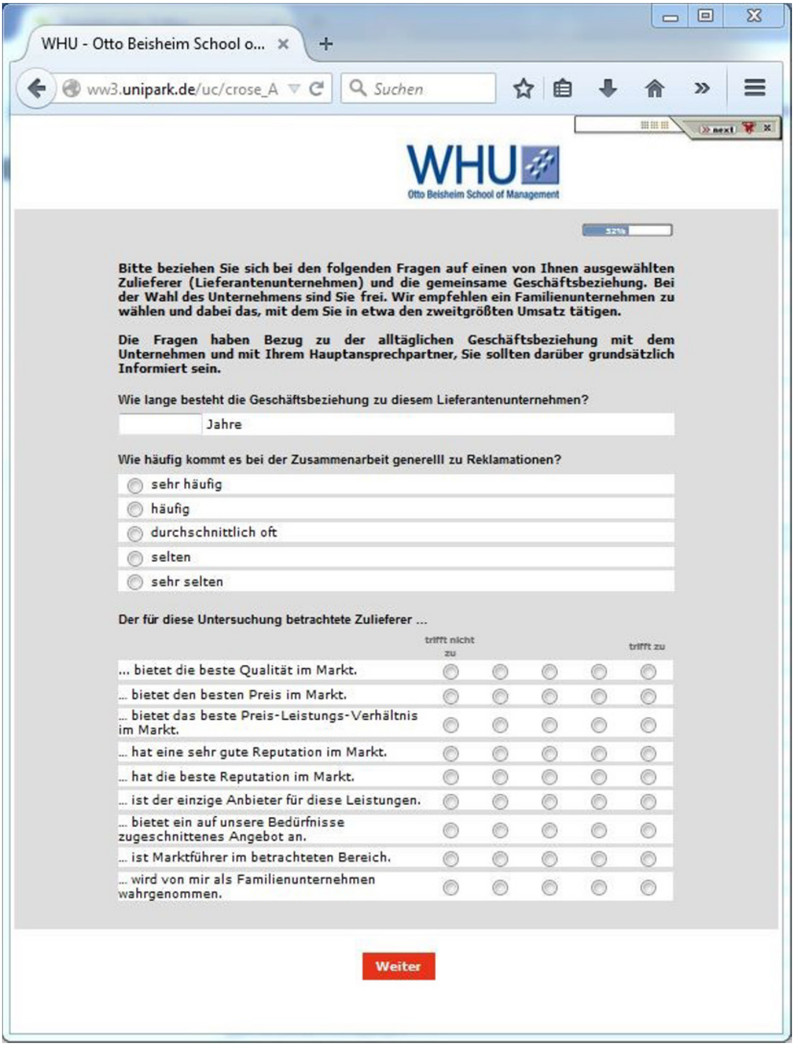
Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen:

	1 = stimme ganz und gar nicht zu	2	3	4	5 = stimme voll und ganz zu
Das Familienunternehmen bedeutet den Familienmitgliedern persönlich sehr viel.	○	○	○	○	○
Das Schicksal des Unternehmens interessiert die Familienmitglieder in besonderem Maße.	○	○	○	○	○
Es ist unwahrscheinlich, dass Familienmitglieder den Verkauf des Unternehmens in Erwägung ziehen.	○	○	○	○	○
Starke emotionale Bindungen unter den Familienmitgliedern unterstützen die individuelle Identifikation.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter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Bitte beziehen Sie sich bei den folgenden Fragen auf einen von Ihnen ausgewählten Zulieferer (Lieferantenunternehmen) und die gemeinsame Geschäftsbeziehung. Bei der Wahl des Unternehmens sind Sie frei. Wir empfehlen ein Familienunternehmen zu wählen und dabei das, mit dem Sie in etwa den zweitgrößten Umsatz tätigen.

Die Fragen haben Bezug zu der alltäglichen Geschäftsbeziehung mit dem Unternehmen und mit Ihrem Hauptansprechpartner, Sie sollten darüber grundsätzlich Informiert sein.

Wie lange besteht die Geschäftsbeziehung zu diesem Lieferantenunternehmen?

___ Jahre

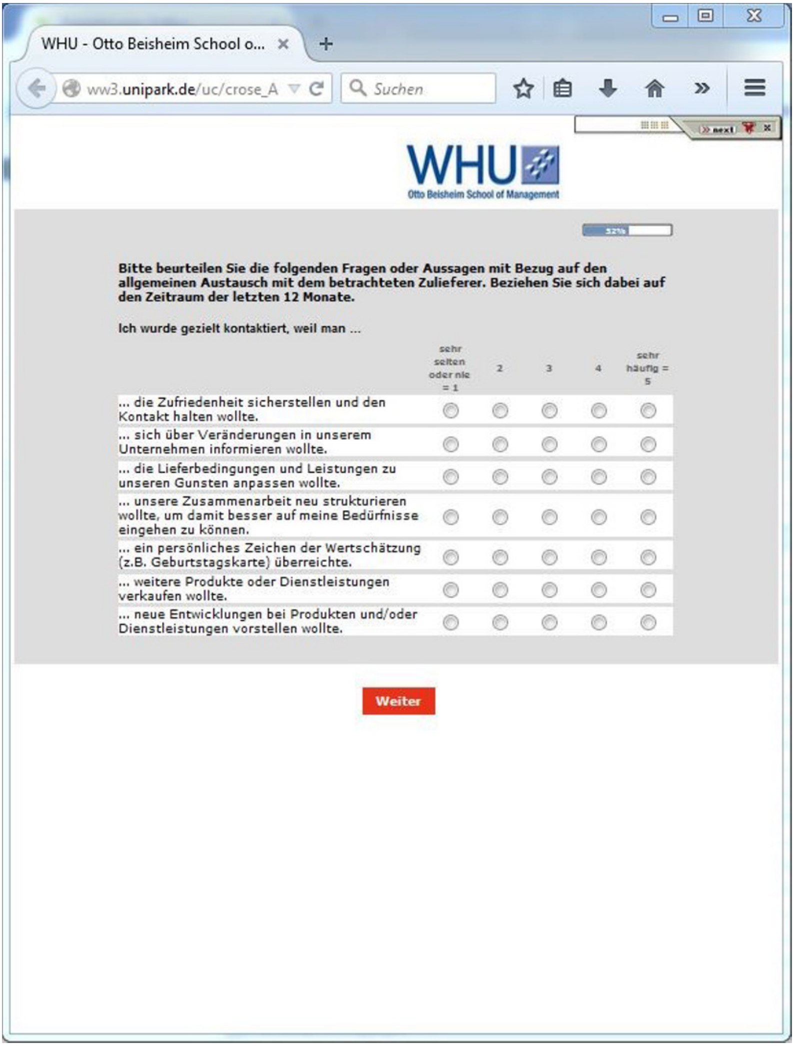
Wie häufig kommt es bei der Zusammenarbeit generelll zu Reklamationen?

- sehr häufig
- häufig
- durchschnittlich oft
- selten
- sehr selten

Der für diese Untersuchung betrachtete Zulieferer ...

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
... bietet die beste Qualität im Markt.	○	○	○	○	○
... bietet den besten Preis im Markt.	○	○	○	○	○
... bietet das beste Preis-Leistungs-Verhältnis im Markt.	○	○	○	○	○
... hat eine sehr gute Reputation im Markt.	○	○	○	○	○
... hat die beste Reputation im Markt.	○	○	○	○	○
... ist der einzige Anbieter für diese Leistungen.	○	○	○	○	○
... bietet ein auf unsere Bedürfnisse zugeschnittenes Angebot an.	○	○	○	○	○
... ist Marktführer im betrachteten Bereich.	○	○	○	○	○
... wird von mir als Familienunternehmen wahrgenommen.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



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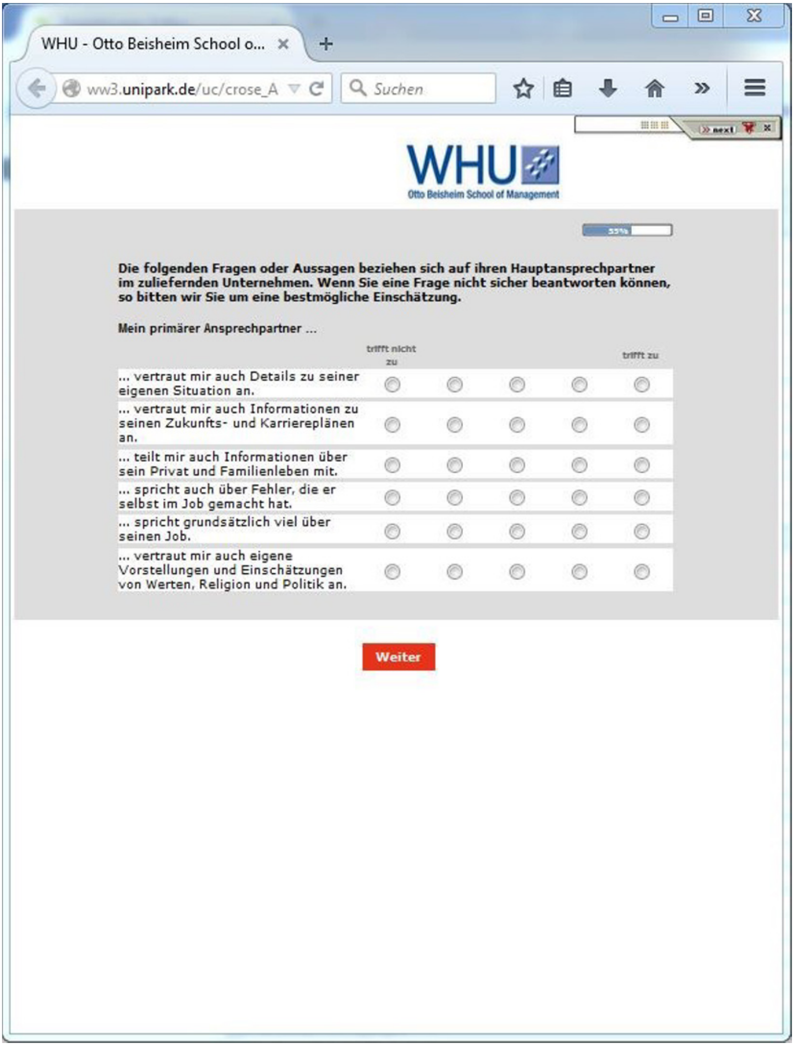
Bitte beurteilen Sie die folgenden Fragen oder Aussagen mit Bezug auf den allgemeinen Austausch mit dem betrachteten Zulieferer. Beziehen Sie sich dabei auf den Zeitraum der letzten 12 Monate.

Ich wurde gezielt kontaktiert, weil man ...

	sehr selten oder nie = 1	2	3	4	sehr häufig = 5
... die Zufriedenheit sicherstellen und den Kontakt halten wollte.	○	○	○	○	○
... sich über Veränderungen in unserem Unternehmen informieren wollte.	○	○	○	○	○
... die Lieferbedingungen und Leistungen zu unseren Gunsten anpassen wollte.	○	○	○	○	○
... unsere Zusammenarbeit neu strukturieren wollte, um damit besser auf meine Bedürfnisse eingehen zu können.	○	○	○	○	○
... ein persönliches Zeichen der Wertschätzung (z.B. Geburtstagskarte) überreichte.	○	○	○	○	○
... weitere Produkte oder Dienstleistungen verkaufen wollte.	○	○	○	○	○
... neue Entwicklungen bei Produkten und/oder Dienstleistungen vorstellen wollte.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



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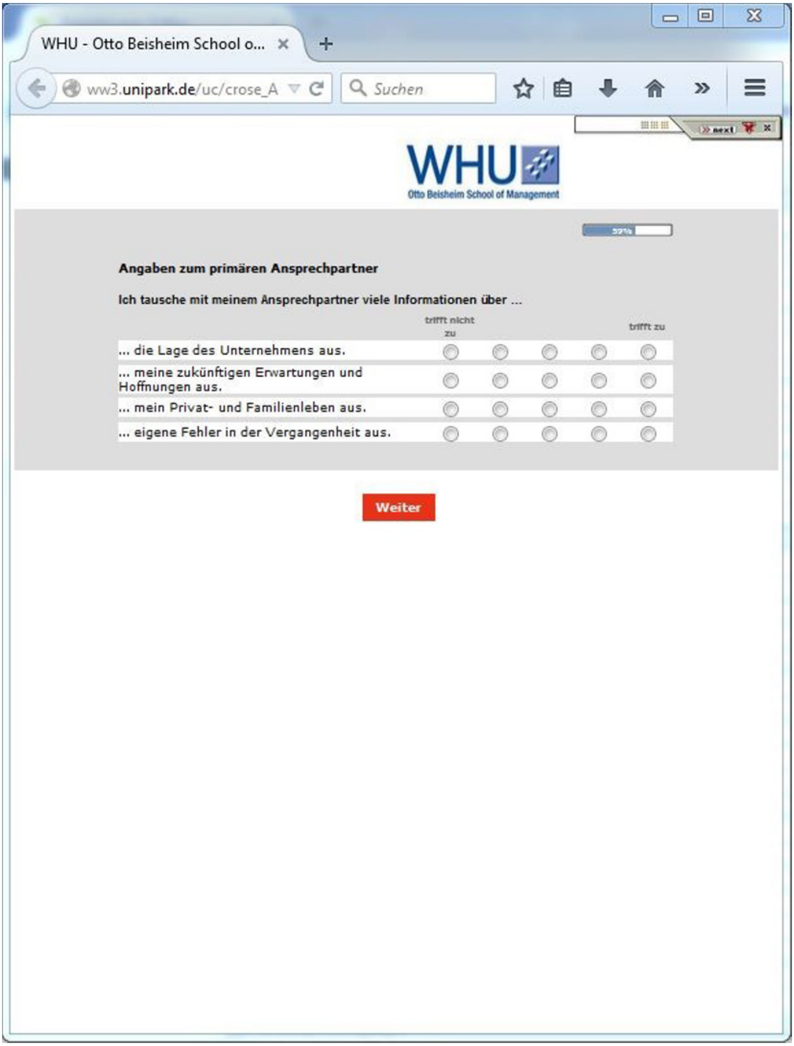
Die folgenden Fragen oder Aussagen beziehen sich auf ihren Hauptansprechpartner im zuliefernden Unternehmen. Wenn Sie eine Frage nicht sicher beantworten können, so bitten wir Sie um eine bestmögliche Einschätzung.

Mein primärer Ansprechpartner ...

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
... vertraut mir auch Details zu seiner eigenen Situation an.	○	○	○	○	○
... vertraut mir auch Informationen zu seinen Zukunfts- und Karriereplänen an.	○	○	○	○	○
... teilt mir auch Informationen über sein Privat und Familienleben mit.	○	○	○	○	○
... spricht auch über Fehler, die er selbst im Job gemacht hat.	○	○	○	○	○
... spricht grundsätzlich viel über seinen Job.	○	○	○	○	○
... vertraut mir auch eigene Vorstellungen und Einschätzungen von Werten, Religion und Politik an.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



Angaben zum primären Ansprechpartner

Ich tausche mit meinem Ansprechpartner viele Informationen über ...

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
... die Lage des Unternehmens aus.					
... meine zukünftigen Erwartungen und Hoffnungen aus.					
... mein Privat- und Familienleben aus.					
... eigene Fehler in der Vergangenheit aus.					

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Angaben zum primären Ansprechpartner

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
Ich tausche mit meinem Ansprechpartner viele Informationen über meinen Job im Allgemeinen aus.	○	○	○	○	○

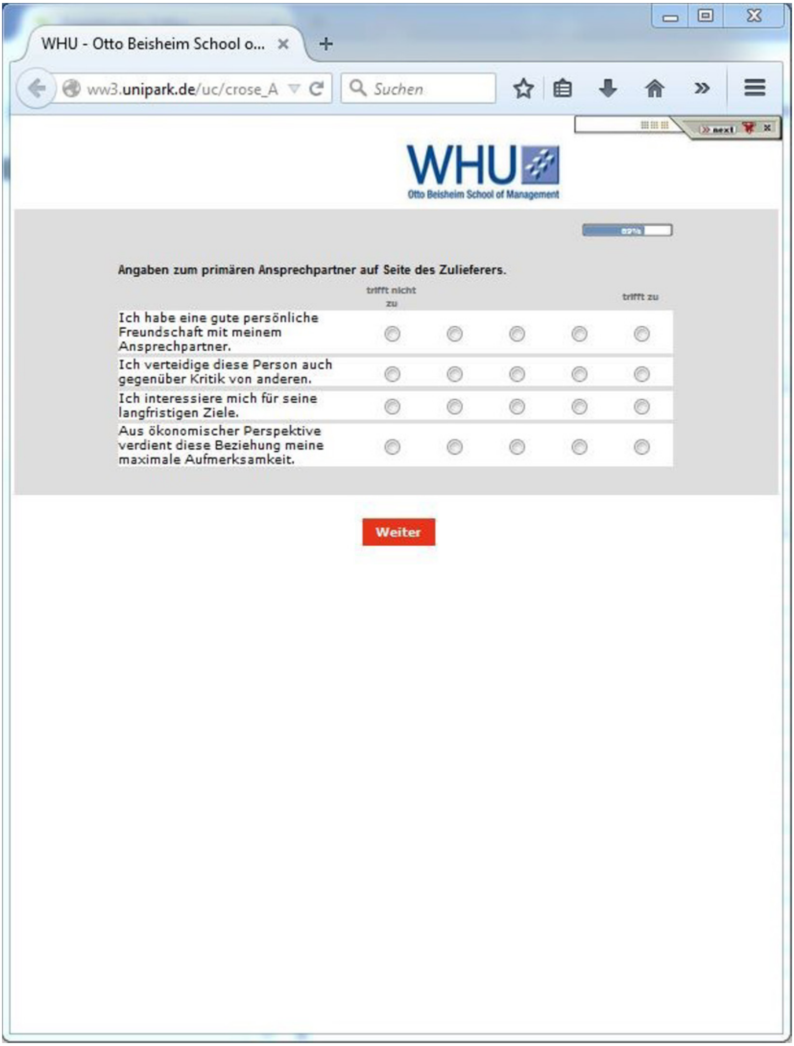
Ich habe gegenüber meinem Ansprechpartner ...

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
... meinen Respekt vor seiner Person zum Ausdruck gebracht.	○	○	○	○	○
... viele persönliche Einschätzungen zu Werten, Religion und Politik zum Ausdruck gebracht.	○	○	○	○	○
... meine Unzufriedenheit mit anderen Kooperationspartnern zum Ausdruck gebracht.	○	○	○	○	○

Mein Ansprechpartner ...

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
... behandelt jedes Geschäft, also unabhängig vom monetären Wert, gleich.	○	○	○	○	○
... bietet auch Unterstützung, ohne selbst daraus einen direkten Nutzen zu ziehen.	○	○	○	○	○
... bringt sein Interesse an einer langfristigen Beziehung zum Ausdruck.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



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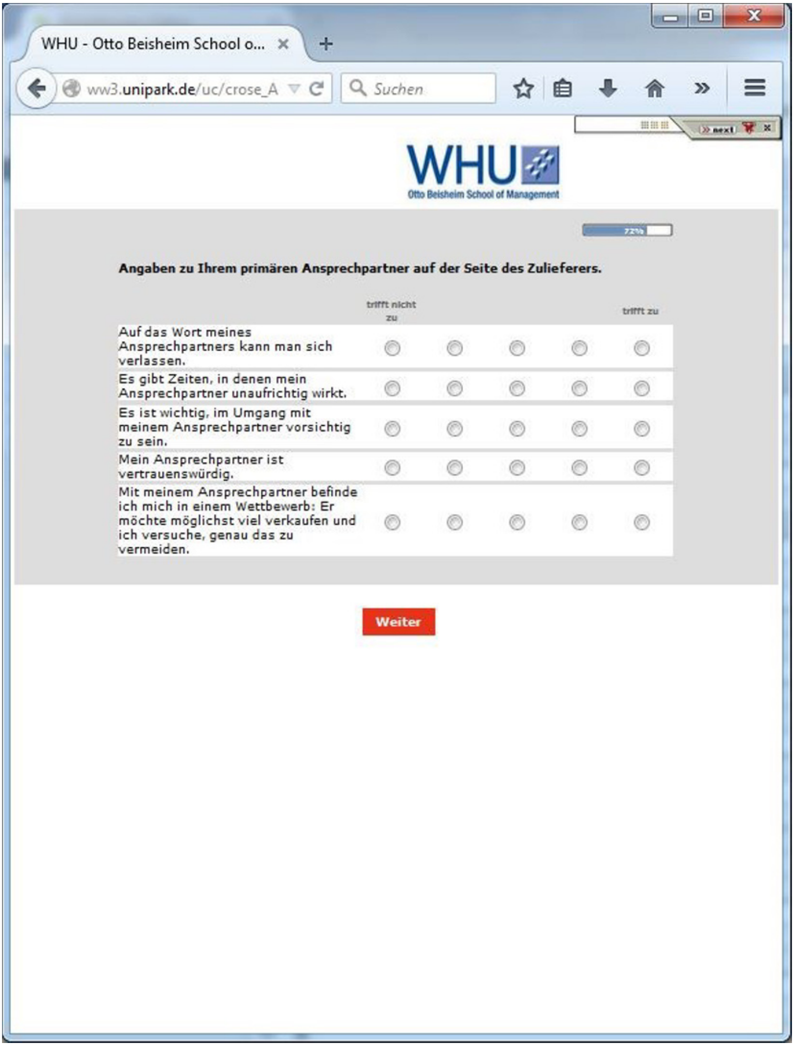
Angaben zum primären Ansprechpartner auf Seite des Zulieferers.

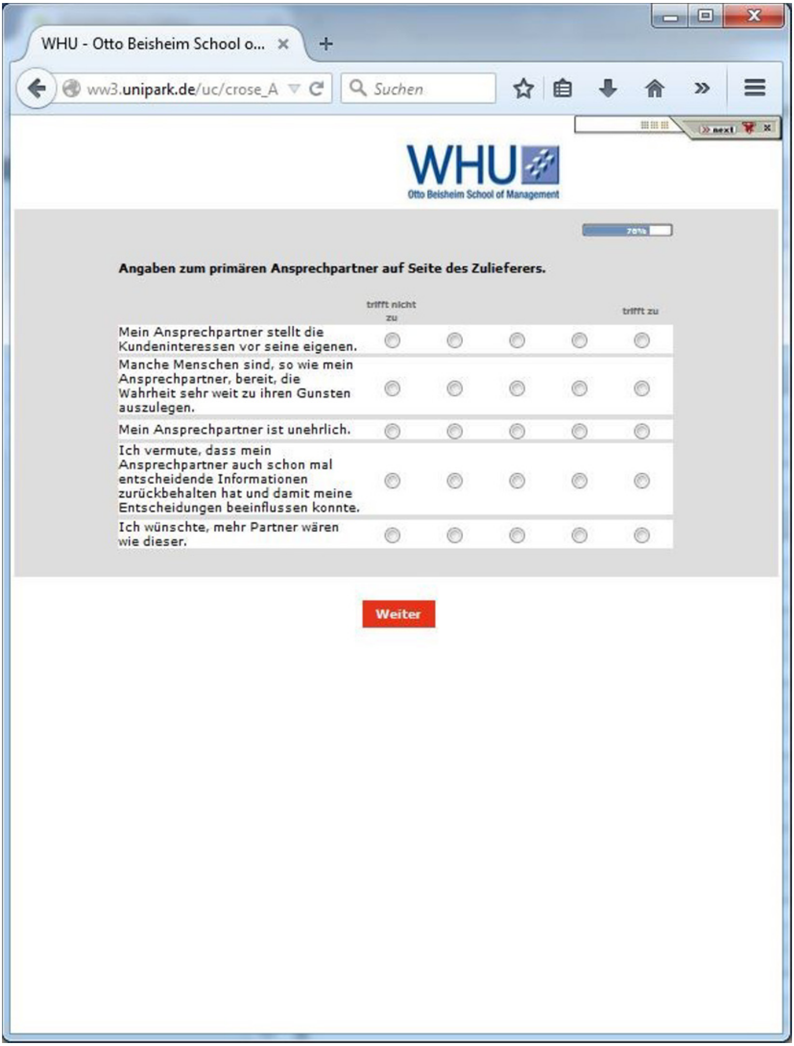
	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
Ich habe eine gute persönliche Freundschaft mit meinem Ansprechpartner.	○	○	○	○	○
Ich verteidige diese Person auch gegenüber Kritik von anderen.	○	○	○	○	○
Ich interessiere mich für seine langfristigen Ziele.	○	○	○	○	○
Aus ökonomischer Perspektive verdient diese Beziehung meine maximale Aufmerksamkeit.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



Angaben zu Ihrem primären Ansprechpartner auf der Seite des Zulieferers.

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
Auf das Wort meines Ansprechpartners kann man sich verlassen.	○	○	○	○	○
Es gibt Zeiten, in denen mein Ansprechpartner unaufrichtig wirkt.	○	○	○	○	○
Es ist wichtig, im Umgang mit meinem Ansprechpartner vorsichtig zu sein.	○	○	○	○	○
Mein Ansprechpartner ist vertrauenswürdig.	○	○	○	○	○
Mit meinem Ansprechpartner befinde ich mich in einem Wettbewerb: Er möchte möglichst viel verkaufen und ich versuche, genau das zu vermeiden.	○	○	○	○	○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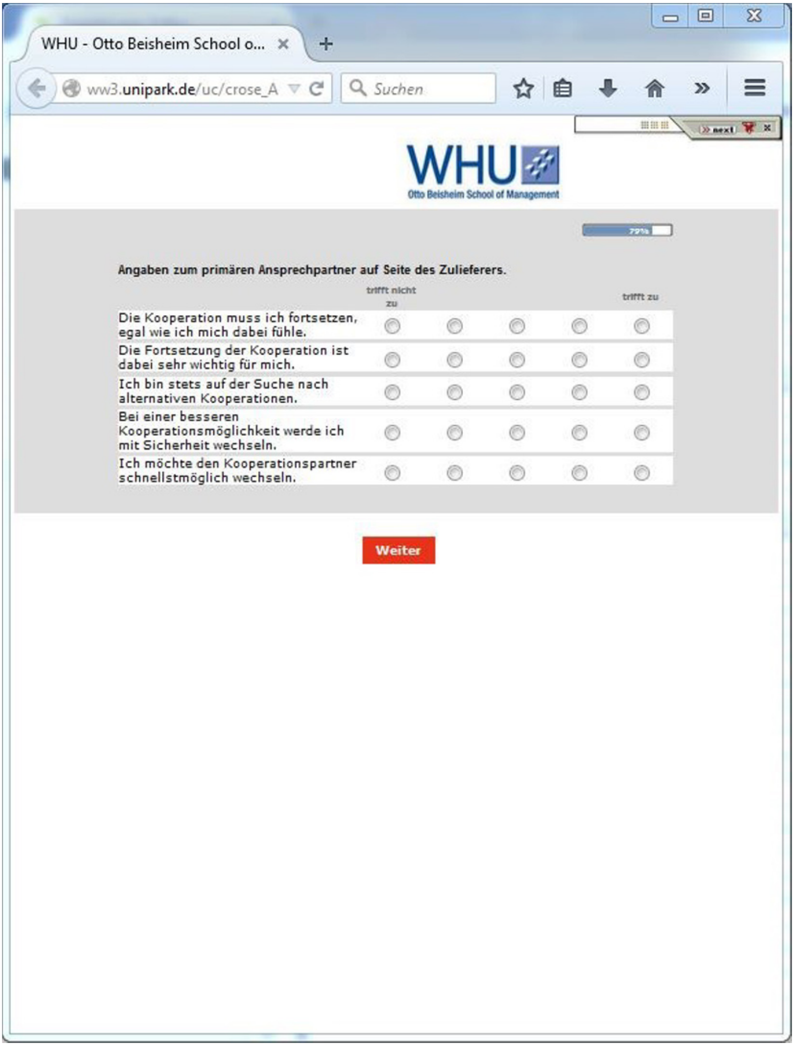
70%

Angaben zum primären Ansprechpartner auf Seite des Zulieferers.

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
Mein Ansprechpartner stellt die Kundeninteressen vor seine eigenen.	○	○	○	○	○
Manche Menschen sind, so wie mein Ansprechpartner, bereit, die Wahrheit sehr weit zu ihren Gunsten auszulegen.	○	○	○	○	○
Mein Ansprechpartner ist unehrlich.	○	○	○	○	○
Ich vermute, dass mein Ansprechpartner auch schon mal entscheidende Informationen zurückbehalten hat und damit meine Entscheidungen beeinflussen konnte.	○	○	○	○	○
Ich wünschte, mehr Partner wären wie dieser.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



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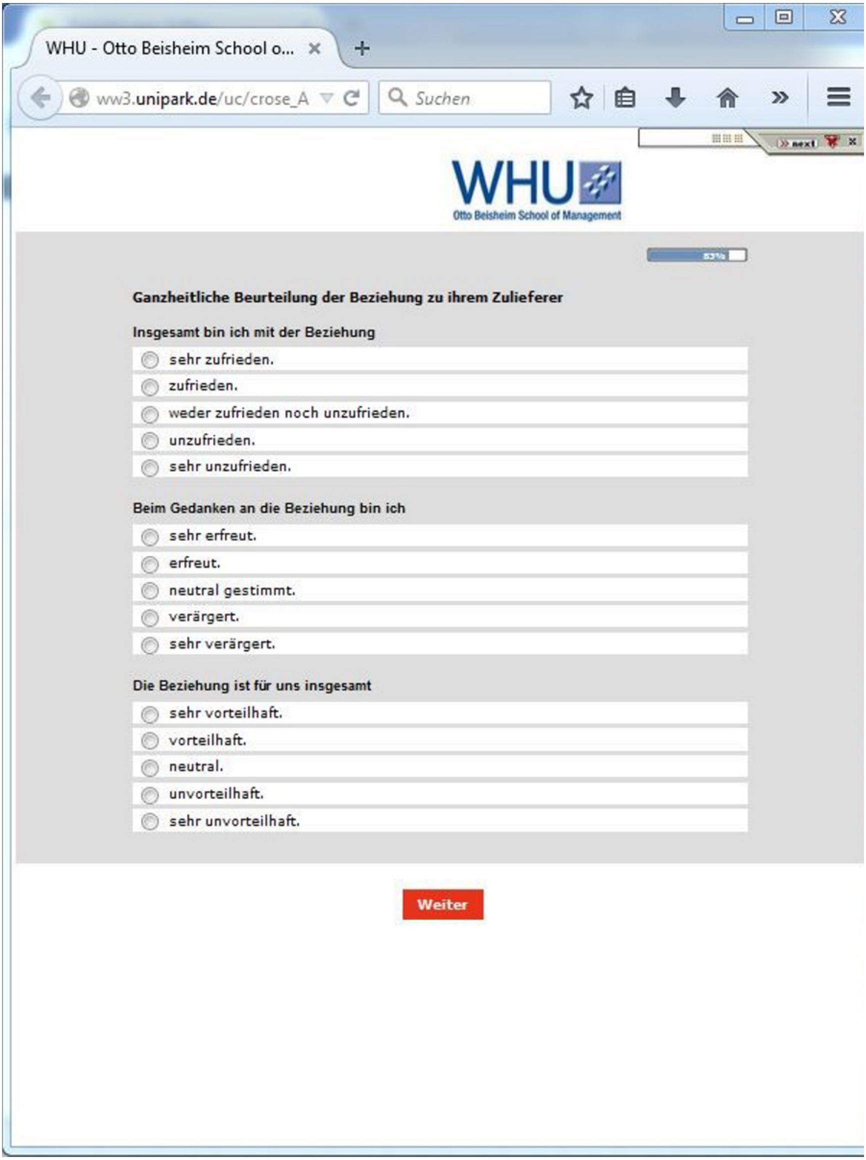
Angaben zum primären Ansprechpartner auf Seite des Zulieferers.

	trifft nicht zu				trifft zu
Die Kooperation muss ich fortsetzen, egal wie ich mich dabei fühle.	○	○	○	○	○
Die Fortsetzung der Kooperation ist dabei sehr wichtig für mich.	○	○	○	○	○
Ich bin stets auf der Suche nach alternativen Kooperationen.	○	○	○	○	○
Bei einer besseren Kooperationsmöglichkeit werde ich mit Sicherheit wechseln.	○	○	○	○	○
Ich möchte den Kooperationspartner schnellstmöglich wechseln.	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter



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Ganzheitliche Beurteilung der Beziehung zu ihrem Zulieferer

Insgesamt bin ich mit der Beziehung

- sehr zufrieden.
- zufrieden.
- weder zufrieden noch unzufrieden.
- unzufrieden.
- sehr unzufrieden.

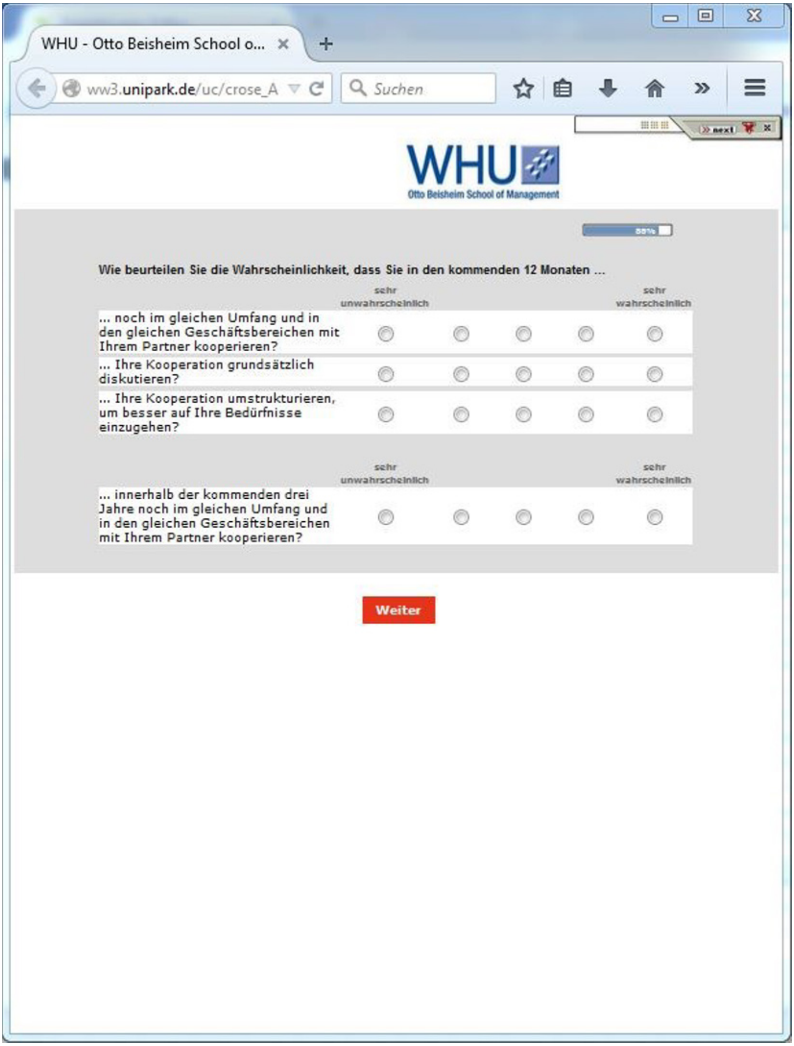
Beim Gedanken an die Beziehung bin ich

- sehr erfreut.
- erfreut.
- neutral gestimmt.
- verärgert.
- sehr verärgert.

Die Beziehung ist für uns insgesamt

- sehr vorteilhaft.
- vorteilhaft.
- neutral.
- unvorteilhaft.
- sehr unvorteilhaft.

Weiter



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Suchen

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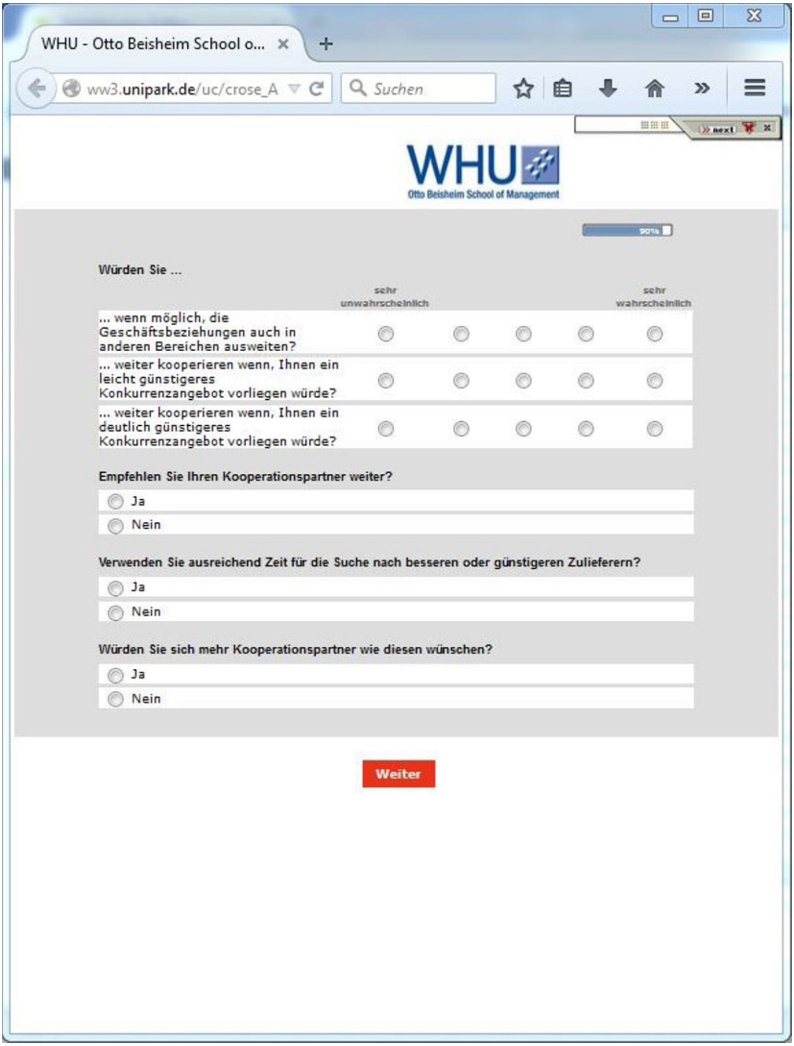
Wie beurteilen Sie die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass Sie in den kommenden 12 Monaten ...

	sehr unwahrscheinlich				sehr wahrscheinlich
... noch im gleichen Umfang und in den gleichen Geschäftsbereichen mit Ihrem Partner kooperieren?	○	○	○	○	○
... Ihre Kooperation grundsätzlich diskutieren?	○	○	○	○	○
... Ihre Kooperation umstrukturieren, um besser auf Ihre Bedürfnisse einzugehen?	○	○	○	○	○

	sehr unwahrscheinlich				sehr wahrscheinlich
... innerhalb der kommenden drei Jahre noch im gleichen Umfang und in den gleichen Geschäftsbereichen mit Ihrem Partner kooperieren?	○	○	○	○	○

Weiter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Suchen
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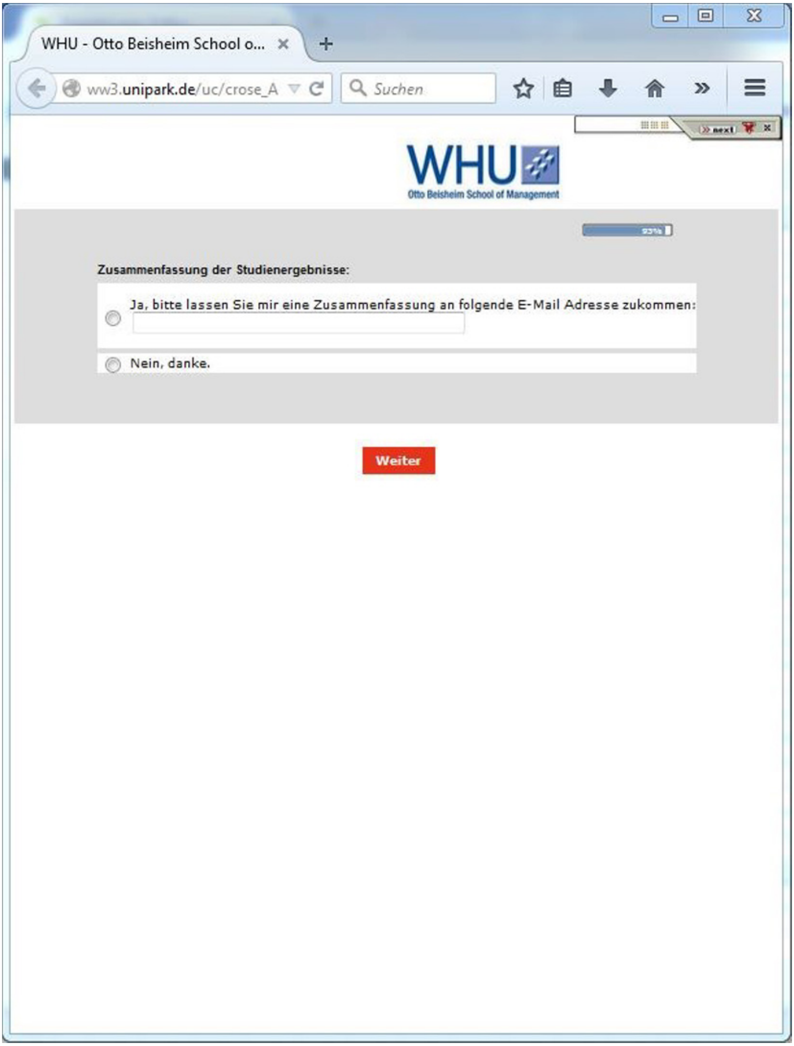
90%
Würden Sie ...
sehr unwahrscheinlich
sehr wahrscheinlich
... wenn möglich, die Geschäftsbeziehungen auch in anderen Bereichen ausweiten?
... weiter kooperieren wenn, Ihnen ein leicht günstigeres Konkurrenzangebot vorliegen würde?
... weiter kooperieren wenn, Ihnen ein deutlich günstigeres Konkurrenzangebot vorliegen würde?
Empfehlen Sie Ihren Kooperationspartner weiter?
Ja
Nein
Verwenden Sie ausreichend Zeit für die Suche nach besseren oder günstigeren Zulieferern?
Ja
Nein
Würden Sie sich mehr Kooperationspartner wie diesen wünschen?
Ja
Nein
Weiter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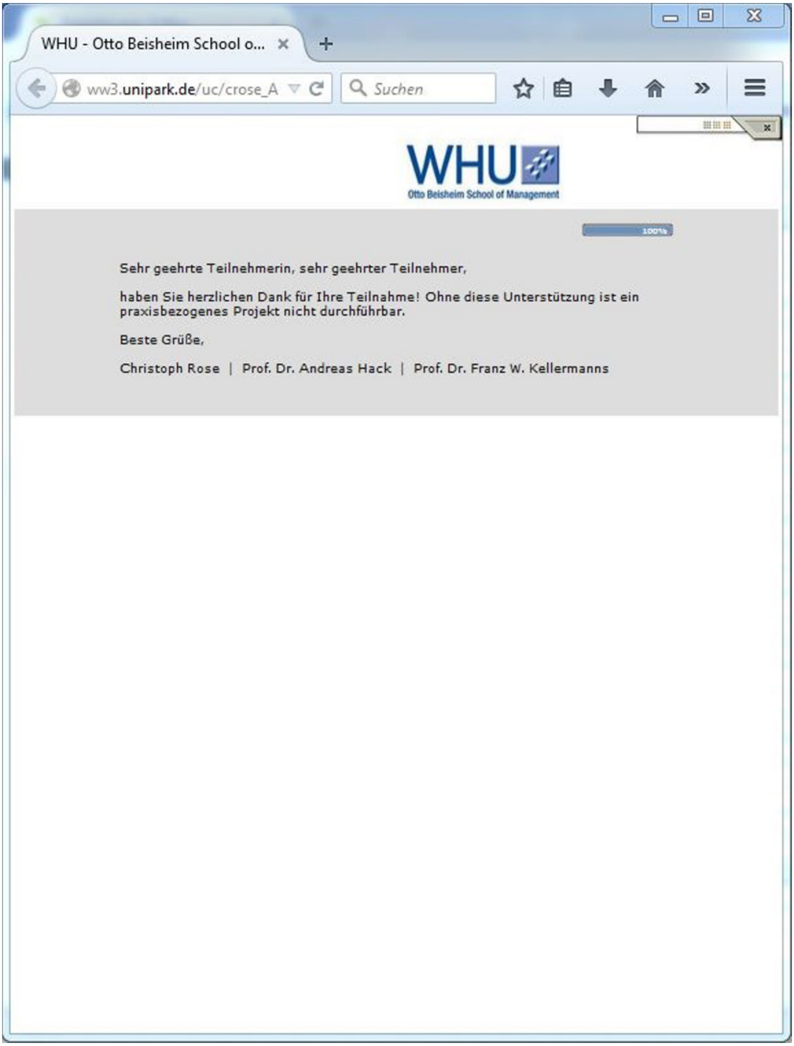
Suchen
WHU
Otto Beisheim School of Management
Zusammenfassung der Studienergebnisse:
Ja, bitte lassen Sie mir eine Zusammenfassung an folgende E-Mail Adresse zukommen:
Nein, danke.
Weiter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Suchen
WHU
Otto Beisheim School of Management
100%
Sehr geehrte Teilnehmerin, sehr geehrter Teilnehmer,
haben Sie herzlichen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme! Ohne diese Unterstützung ist ein praxisbezogenes Projekt nicht durchführbar.
Beste Grüße,
Christoph Rose | Prof. Dr. Andreas Hack | Prof. Dr. Franz W. Kellermanns