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**Business succession of medium and small entrepreneurs in the Metropolitan Region of Belém: correlation of social exchanges in the succession of family businesses.**

*Business succession of medium and small entrepreneurs in the Metropolitan Region of Belém: correlation of social exchanges in the succession of family enterprises*

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**Summary**

Family succession is a natural and fundamental process in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with turbulent and conflicting phases because the continuity of the company is truly at stake with the passing of the baton. We will observe how social exchanges influence potential conflicts due to high succession expectations and how this relationship can affect the succession of a small or medium-sized company within the metropolitan region of Belém. Furthermore, we will explore strategies that can be used to mitigate conflicts caused by succession in relation to social expectations. This study is justified by the relevance of the topic to the field of administration, especially considering the large number of family businesses present in the Brazilian economy. Conflicts can significantly affect the sustainability and continuity of these companies, which, with the accelerated growth of the society and community in which they are located, exacerbate business continuity. The methodology employed in the study involves a literature review on the topic, as well as case studies to better understand the specific dynamics of family relationships in business succession processes. The results found contribute to the understanding of the challenges involved in succession in small and medium-sized enterprises and suggest strategies that can help mitigate conflicts in this process. Therefore, this work aims not only to contribute academically to the field of Administration studies, but also to offer practical methods for medium and small entrepreneurs facing the challenge of family succession.

**Keywords:** Family succession. Conflict management. Social exchange. Small and medium-sized enterprises. Administration

**Abstract**

Family succession is a natural and fundamental process in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), often marked by turbulent and conflicting phases, since the continuity of the business is at stake during the intergenerational leadership transition. This study analyzes how social exchanges influence conflicts arising from high succession expectations and how these relationships affect the succession process in a small/medium-sized family firm located in the metropolitan region of Belém. In addition, it identifies strategies that can be used to mitigate conflicts triggered by succession in light of social expectations. The relevance of this research lies in the importance of family businesses to the Brazilian economy and in the impact of succession conflicts on their sustainability and continuity. The methodology combines a literature review with a qualitative case study, based on a semi-structured interview and thematic analysis of the data. The findings show that high levels of mutual trust, respect and cooperation among family members, together with open communication and formal succession planning (including structures such as a family holding), help reduce tensions and promote a smoother transition. It is concluded that the strategic management of social exchanges is a key element for the continuity of small and medium-sized family businesses, offering practical insights for entrepreneurs facing the challenges of family succession.

**Keywords:** Family succession. Conflict management. Social exchange. SMEs. Business Administration.

**1. Introduction**

Family succession in small and medium-sized enterprises is a topic of increasing relevance.



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In the field of Administration, since the transition can directly influence permanence.

of business. The correlation of social exchanges between family members plays a role.

crucial in this process, and can lead to conflicts and tensions arising from expectations.

succession.

Evidence suggests that family businesses are considered the foundation of development.

economic in all countries (Soleimanof et al., 2018). Although family organizations are

flexible and able to adapt to change (Santos et al., 2017; Soleimanof et al.,

2018) the mortality rate in these ventures is high (Couto et al., 2017).

Therefore, understanding the mechanisms that govern succession in these companies is fundamental to to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

In the metropolitan region of Belém, many entrepreneurs support the domestic market of...

The region, with its services and commerce, ends up not being developed due to informality and disorganized growth.

prioritizing succession planning. As discussed by Handler (1994), the tensions

Family tensions can intensify during the succession process, especially when there are...

Discrepancies between the expectations of the members of the business-owning family.

In this sense, social interactions become essential for dealing with impasses, focus, and...

to analyze the exchanges and potential conflicts that may occur during the succession and return to

The most promising plan is for the company's continued presence in the market.

The importance of social interaction in family business environments is highlighted by Eddleston.

and Killermanns (2007), that "social exchange is a vital process for the continuity of business

"Family dynamics, as it directly influences family relationships." Therefore, understanding the dynamics

This can help minimize conflicts within small to medium-sized companies.

Seeking to understand and effectively maximize this succession for small and medium-sized businesses.

Entrepreneurship becomes crucial to the region's domestic market.

This article is made possible through the collaboration of a service company located in the region.

The metropolitan area of Belém, identified as medium-sized, currently has a mixed workforce.

of employees being hired and family members hired, operating in the regional market for over

40 years old. Succession planning is still underway.

Based on the question of how family relationships can affect the succession of a

What are the strategies that can be used to mitigate conflicts caused by succession within a company?

With regard to social expectations, the data collected will reveal decisive processes in

Succession planning. As noted by Gersick et al. (1997), "tense relationships between members

Family issues can create significant obstacles to a successful business transition.

Understanding relationships can facilitate the selection and effective management of transitions within a given environment.

to mitigate the turbulence, so that these processes can lead to better administrative management and reduction.



conflicts during critical processes.

## **2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Family businesses and succession**

Family succession has been one of the most discussed topics in the field of entrepreneurship, especially when it comes to small and medium-sized enterprises. With technological advancements, Commerce, industry, and services have seen significant growth thanks to new entrepreneurs, as well as... The demand for accelerated growth has brought new concepts and ways of managing its operations. assets.

Understanding the processes that occur during this process and the succession of the administration of Business presents relevant concepts and ideas within the social context. According to Handler (1994), the Leadership transition in a family business is a complex process that involves not only the transfer of administrative control, but also the transfer of values, knowledge and social relationships.

These social interactions can have a significant impact on how things are conducted. succession and the planning of that execution. According to Chua, Chrisman and Sharm (2003), the The succession process in family businesses takes place within a social network that includes members. from family, non-family employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders.

### **2.2 Conflicts and social relations in family businesses**

Barnes and Hershon (1976) highlight that social relations in the family business are generally The transitions between family businesses are more intense and emotional than in non-family businesses. This can make the succession process more challenging. This is more challenging, since emotional ties can hinder rational decision-making.

Social exchange also plays an important role in the transfer of knowledge. During the succession process, the exchange of values, culture, and company mission occurs when there is alignment. Having a successor facilitates the continuity of company management. As highlighted by Le Breton-Miller, Miller and Steier (2004) argue that social relationships can facilitate open communication and transparent between the current generation and the future leadership of the company.

Social exchanges can be perceived as a continuous flow of interactions related to Transfer of power and control of the business. According to Sharma, Chrisman and Chua (1997), the Family succession is a transition process that involves several complex interactions between the family members and the business.



**Year VI, v.1 2026 | Submission: 06/02/2026 | Accepted: 08/02/2026 | Publication: 10/02/2026**

Family relationships, personal interests, and expectations about the future of the business; perspectives

The successors and the owner's willingness to retire are some of the factors that can...

impact these exchanges (Ibrahim, Soufani & Lam, 2001).

Furthermore, Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2005) argue that family succession in

Small and medium-sized enterprises are often characterized by a strong emotional connection.

of the owners with the business. Potentially making social exchanges in the succession process more

complex and potentially conflicting.

Understanding how social dynamics affect the succession process can ensure its success.

In short, social exchange plays a critical role in family succession in small businesses.

and medium-sized. However, there is a continued need for research to explore more.

To deeply understand these dynamics and develop effective strategies for managing the exchange during the succession process.

### **2.3 Theory of social exchange and family succession**

Succession in the context of family businesses is defined as an important phenomenon.

which will influence the business and make it very different for different companies, as emphasized by Handler (1990).

In small and medium-sized enterprises, it's a complicated issue involving the transfer of

Power, tasks, and resources. Social relationships make the phenomenon of family succession difficult because

There are conflicts between older and younger members involving differing views and

approaches to business (De Massis et al., 2008).

External factors can also affect the succession process, in addition to: changes in

The market or the economy can alter family expectations and planning regarding the future.

of the organization (Miller et al., 2003).

According to the theory of social exchange, social relations are governed by a system of

rewards and punishments, so that the parties involved try to maximize their benefits.

while doing their best to minimize their costs (Homans, 1958). In other words, Sharma and

Rao (2000) states that building relationships between members of family businesses is vital to smoothing out the shift in power.

This can be achieved through open and honest communication, and the establishment of

Clear expectations and fair treatment of all family members. Processes of social exchange.

They can play a significant role in facilitating the smooth transfer of power in companies.

family members.



### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1 Type of research and approach

The methodology used to address the topic will be a qualitative approach of a qualitative nature. Exploratory, using an inductive approach. Inductive research is used in order to understand the meaning that individuals attribute to events, behaviors, and social interactions, as pointed out by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). This method will allow us to analyze the relationship of social exchanges in family succession planning for medium and small-sized entrepreneurs.

In the sampling stage, a non-probabilistic and intentional sample will be used. According to Patton (2002), this sampling strategy is useful when one wants to understand to delve deeply into a specific phenomenon. In this case, data collection will be carried out through semi-structured interview with the company owner, without involving other members of the company. The family, at his request, is still considering finding a successor, as the search for one is still underway.

#### 3.2 Sampling and data collection

According to Yin (2014), semi-structured interviews allow for greater flexibility for To explore the participants' responses more deeply. In the data analysis, the following will be used thematic analysis technique. Braum and Clarke (2006) state that this technique allows the identification of themes or patterns that emerge from the dataset. Being useful in the study to identify patterns related to social exchanges and conflicts in the succession process.

#### 3.3 Data Analysis

A test script was developed based on the semi-structured interview to guide the research. This creates a closer relationship with the interviewee and familiarizes them with the context of the topic. Like the... The research addresses a topic that is still ongoing at the company; the owner granted the interview through confidentiality of names so that there would be no interference in the process, thus the The interviewee will be addressed using a fictitious name. Participation was by consent. Free and informed, guaranteeing the anonymity of the respondent and the organization.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Company context and succession process

The research results reveal interesting and complex aspects of succession.



**Year VI, v.1 2026 | Submission: 06/02/2026 | Accepted: 08/02/2026 | Publication: 10/02/2026**

as well as the social relations and exchanges in this process. Based on the application of the questionnaire and Through the interview, it was possible to identify that social exchanges play a crucial role in facilitation. or in hindering the family succession process.

The relationships between family members, their levels of mutual trust, respect and Cooperation was observed as a fundamental element in the dynamics of succession. According to According to Schulze et al. (2003), family businesses are characterized by an overlap between Family and business often lead to conflicts related to succession. These conflicts These problems can intensify if social interactions between family members are not well managed.

It was observed that there was a high level of mutual trust and cooperation among family members. It tends to be more favorable in the succession process.

According to Mr. Silva, the family understands that the succession process must be carried out in a way... In a cooperative, all active members of the company perform functions that are essential to the business continuity.

The study also revealed that those who have been succeeded often have difficulty moving on from their past. family business, especially when there is no clear agreement or well-defined plans for the succession (Miller et al., 2003).

This can be mitigated by creating a family council that allows for dialogue. and negotiation that allows for the expression of expectations and fears related to succession. One Family councils allow family interests to be aligned with those of the company.

#### **4.2 Social exchanges, trust and involvement of successors**

The results obtained confirm the importance of social exchanges in the succession process. familiar. An environment characterized by trust, respect, and cooperation can facilitate a A smooth and successful transition to the next generation of company leaders.

The research revealed that effective and open communication within the family business contributes for a smooth transmission of leadership. As stated by Sharma et al. (2003), dialogue allows family members to discuss their expectations, fears, and ambitions regarding business, thereby reducing conflicts during the succession process.

It was possible to observe from the interview that the fact that potential successors are working in areas different, but with significant leadership that encouraged them to perform good service within the The company is making the relationship with non-family members more acceptable.

The level of involvement of the heirs in the management of the business prior to succession and the success of transition process. This supports the theory proposed by Handler (1992) which suggests that a greater Involving heirs in the family business before succession improves the chances of success.



**Year VI, v.1 2026 | Submission: 06/02/2026 | Accepted: 08/02/2026 | Publication: 10/02/2026**  
transfer.

Another important aspect revealed by the study is the need for adequate planning.  
for succession. According to Morris et al. (1997), a formal succession plan is significant for  
To reduce uncertainty and eliminate misunderstandings with family members.

In conclusion, the study highlighted that social exchanges are fundamental to facilitating the  
Succession process in medium and small-sized family businesses. But each family and company...  
It is different, and successful succession strategies may depend on specific contexts.

Mr. Silva said that the strategy followed for the succession was the reorganization of the business.  
transforming it into a holding company allowed the assets to be protected and future successors to be safeguarded.  
They had positions and shares in the company. Thus, the work that individual people do continues.  
to exist with the company.

#### **4.3 Power conflicts, status and succession strategies**

Furthermore, the results showed that power and status conflicts likely play a role.  
as major obstacles to a successful succession. Consistent with the findings of  
Lansberg (1988), there may be conflicting elements in family structures that may be  
exacerbated during the transition, when poorly conceived and poorly managed.

The main findings of the study show that family succession in medium-sized companies  
Small-scale development is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, which implies that a holistic approach...  
A complete and systematic approach is necessary.

One of the most remarkable findings of the research is the crucial role of knowledge and...  
experience in facilitating a smooth transition to the new generation. As proposed by Sharma et al.  
al. (2001), the effective transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge is an essential component for  
The success of business succession.

However, despite the challenges presented, it was observed that effective planning and  
Building relationships based on trust can alleviate many of the problems associated with  
Family succession in business. Some facets of the social changes occurring during the process of  
Succession processes were recognized: exchanges of information, knowledge, experience, status, and power.

Based on the work of Le Breton-Miller et al. (2004), a gradualism between the transition of  
Creating clearer roles and responsibilities can help stakeholders adjust to their new roles.  
changes. Thus, the findings of this study underscore the complexities of social transactions in  
Family succession for medium and small-sized entrepreneurs.

The importance of succession strategy is also underscored by the numerous facets of  
Social exchanges that need to be considered as part of succession planning. The results





**Year VI, v.1 2026 | Submission: 06/02/2026 | Accepted: 08/02/2026 | Publication: 10/02/2026**

obtained in research on the relationship between social exchanges and family succession in medium and small-sized businesses. Entrepreneurs revealed a complex and multifaceted scenario.

Using interviews and case studies, we discovered that social exchanges are crucial for the process of family succession and the preparation and transition of power to their successors.

However, these social exchanges are not always positive, and can also generate conflicts and tensions. According to Sharma et al. (2001), family succession is a highly intricate process, which includes layers of emotion, relationship, and infrastructure. The results corroborate this view, by demonstrating that social interactions between members of the business-owning family directly influence all these dimensions.

For example, we found evidence that open and effective communication can facilitate the preparation of the successor and the transition of power are crucial, whereas poor communication can lead to problems, conflicts and resistance.

However, the results also highlight the ambiguous role of social exchanges in succession, familiar. As pointed out by Lansberg (1988), family relationships can be both a source of strength as well as a source of vulnerability for family businesses.

In line with this perspective, we observe that while some social exchanges may promote family cohesion and commitment to the business, others may exacerbate the family rivalries and conflicts of interest.

In practical terms, our findings suggest that medium and small entrepreneurs should pay special attention to social exchanges within their family businesses. As emphasized by Dyer (1986), effective management of family relationships is a critical success factor for these companies.

Therefore, entrepreneurs should seek to promote positive social exchanges through open and effective communication, and minimizing negative social exchanges, through the establishment of clear and fair rules.

The results obtained in the research reveal that social exchanges play a crucial role in the family succession of medium and small entrepreneurs. According to exchange theory, in social contexts, human relationships are sustained by reciprocity and the perception of justice (Blau, 1964).

In this context, the findings suggest that adherence to these principles is essential to ensure the continuity of family businesses across generations.

The evaluation of the evidence gathered suggests that the successful transition in the succession process occurs most effectively when a harmonious social exchange is established between the parties involved.

Research conducted by Sharma and other researchers in 2003 shows how trust, the support of those around us and the respect among everyone help ensure the continuity of the family.





**Year VI, v.1 2026 | Submission: 06/02/2026 | Accepted: 08/02/2026 | Publication: 10/02/2026**

confirming the statement. The results show that strategic planning is necessary.

aimed at improving relationships between people during periods of change.

The findings show that it is important to have a strategy to encourage social interactions.

These events occur when people meet. They help to mediate succession situations, that is, the

to pass responsibilities or roles from one person to another. Handler (1994) argues that a

Proper planning has the ability to prevent family conflicts and facilitate the transition of power.

The findings of this study could significantly influence business managers.

Family relationships. Social exchanges also need to be taken into account in the context of succession.

#### **4.4 Implications for medium and small entrepreneurs**

The results obtained indicate that the relationship of social exchanges in family succession is a

A crucial aspect for the continuity of medium and small businesses. The study also

He argues that proper strategic planning would be a useful tool for these exchanges.

According to the data obtained, social interactions favor the transmission of knowledge.

and fundamental skills for the company's operation. This statement supports the idea of

Sharma et al. (2001) state that a successful succession is crucial for continuity and growth.

family businesses.

The finding that social interactions drive the formation of lasting bonds between

The family members who are involved in the business coincide with the observations of Chua et al.

(2004) regarding the relevance of family ties in the effective management of the enterprise

familiar.

Another important finding is the role played by social exchanges in resolving

Conflicts during the succession process. This reinforces what Handler (1994) highlighted as essential.

For a successful transition in family businesses: effective communication and negotiation.

In practice, this shows that family entrepreneurs must dedicate themselves, in a way...

In particular, social interactions during the succession process. Establishing an environment that promotes

Social interaction can be crucial to ensuring a smooth leadership transition and for the

continuity of business operations.

However, when analyzing the results, it is essential to consider the study's limitations. Studies

Subsequent studies could analyze this phenomenon in various sectors and cultural contexts, with the

The objective is to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of how social interactions work.

They affect family succession in the business context.



## Final Considerations

The study showed that social interactions play a central role in the succession of Small and medium-sized family businesses. Communication, knowledge sharing and Building trust has been identified as an essential component for the continuity of Family business activities, while their absence tends to foster disagreements. Unsatisfactory performance and, in extreme cases, the unviability of the business.

It was also found that adequate preparation of the successor, involving technical training, Training in management and the development of social skills are important conditions for success. of the succession process. The tensions arising from the intertwining of professional expectations and Family dynamics proved to be a recurring challenge, with a direct impact on the quality of life. social relations in the context of the company.

In practical terms, the results reinforce that the efficient management of interpersonal relationships This can be a powerful strategy for the maintenance and success of family businesses. Strategies such as open communication, clear definition of roles, and the creation of opportunities for dialogue. (such as family councils) and the use of appropriate legal structures, such as a family holding company, They contribute to mitigating conflicts and promoting a planned transition.

It is recommended that medium and small entrepreneurs devote systematic attention to social exchanges in their businesses, adopting succession planning practices that value both both technical and relational aspects. A limitation is the focus on a single study of... This case limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research may expand the number of to cover different sectors and regional contexts, deepening the understanding of how... Social interactions influence family succession in various organizational arrangements.

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**Year VI, v.1 2026 | Submission: 06/02/2026 | Accepted: 08/02/2026 | Publication: 10/02/2026**

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