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The Influence of Family Long Term Strategic Commitment on the Sustainability of Family Owned Enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon

Placide Noumssi Nguala Djouongha Epse Ngam[1*], Fomba Emmanuel Mbebeb[2], Napoleon Arrey Mbayong[3]

[1]Department of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, the University of Bamenda, Bambili, Cameroon
[2]Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education, The University of Bamenda, Cameroon
[3]Department of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, the University of Bamenda, Bambili, Cameroon

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***Corresponding author:** Placide Noumssi Nguala Djouongha Epse Ngam
Department of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, the University of Bamenda, Bambili, Cameroon

Abstract

This study seeks to examine the influence of family long term strategic commitment on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. The study made use of primary data obtained through self-administered structured questionnaires. A total of 313 questionnaires were administered to the founders and managers of the family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. Data collected was entered into SPSS. The study used the Generalised Linear Model (GLM) technique to test the hypotheses. Particular focus was on organisational culture, the involvement of family members and entrepreneurial risk-taking as determinants of the sustainability of family owned enterprises. The results from the GLM regression showed a negative coefficient in the overall sample which indicated that an increase in family long-term strategic commitment predicted a decrease in sustainability of family-owned enterprises. Specifically, organisational culture has a positive coefficient of 0.0862 significant at 10%; the involvement of family members has a negative coefficient of -0.0642 and significant at 10%; and entrepreneurial risk taking has a negative coefficient of -0.00155. This meant that there was a no effect of family long term strategic commitment on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon; since only organisational culture positively influenced sustainability in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. This study was limited to the Western Highlands of Cameroon by not considering the other ecological zones (Southern rain forests, Central savannah and Northern arid region) of Cameroon. From the findings, the study recommended that founders and managers should engage in calculative risk taking and specify the degree of involvement of family members that could not jeopardised the continuity of the business. The research questions and methods used in this research are new in the aspect of investigating the influence of family long term strategic commitment on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon.

Keywords: Family long term strategic commitment, organisational culture, involvement of family members, entrepreneurial risk-taking, sustainability of family owned enterprises.

1. INTRODUCTION

For decades the issue of sustainability of enterprises has been a pressing issue in the world of business and especially the sustainability of family owned enterprises. The issue of sustainability is becoming more and more pressing, interesting and keep on evolving in the business research field. Researchers through times have been brainstorming to come out with suitable models and insights that could help founders of this special type of enterprise continue and stay sustainable across generations. According to Rovelli *et al*. (2021), sustainability is emerging as a crucial and a well established topic in the field of family business research. Despite this pressing issue of sustainability, family owned enterprises have been proven to be the commonly found type of enterprises and have been considered to be cornerstones of both developed and developing countries' economies (D'Angelo *et al*., 2016). This is due to their long term vision established by their founders and a strong sense of legacy. According to Osunde (2017), about 90% of enterprises are family owned enterprises and they contribute about 70% to global domestic product (GDP). The European Commission, Enterprise & Industry Directorate-General, (2008) stipulated that the majority of family enterprises generated most employments in the local and international economies. It has been observed that most of these family owned enterprises close up, are sold off or change their legal status immediately after the death of the first generation founders. Many founders and managers of family owned enterprises failed to educate their family members on their unconditional and intentional sacrifice towards the survival of the family business. Furthermore, they have failed to ignite a sense of commitment of the family members to the strategies of the business and lastly, they have not made a clear cut between the family and the family owned business. All these have lead to disruptions in operations, leadership failure and further death of family enterprises. Researchers like Poutziouris *et al*. (2004), have been shifting from attributing sustainability of family owned enterprises to family successors or potential successors which focused on their training, development and interest in the business. This was due to the fact that the expectations of keeping the family business alive and sustainable over generation have been partially met. They rather proposed a new framework of insight which has to do the sustainability of family owned enterprises being dependent on nurturing cross generational entrepreneurial talent, a sense of faithfulness to business success, long term strategic commitment and corporate independence. From the suggestion of Poutziouris *et al*. (2004), this study seeks to examine the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the light of the family long term strategic commitment. Specifically, it seeks to examine the influence of family long term strategic commitment having as components organisational culture (Manuel Carlos Vallejo-Martos, 2011), the involvement of family members (Qingmei *et al*., 2020) and entrepreneurial risk taking (Ellouze and Mnasri, 2020) on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the western highlands of Cameroon.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Literature Related to Research Variables

2.1.1 Family long term strategic commitment

Strategy is as an integrated set of options showing what a company is doing or intends to do in other to achieve its performance goals (Asoh, 2004). Commitment refers to the binding forces that push an individual to a particular course of action with the purpose of achieving a certain goals (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Family commitment has to do with a strong willingness to commit resources, time and effort to the family enterprise. Thus, family long term strategic commitment in family owned enterprises is a critical factor that differentiates them from the non-family owned enterprises. Firstly, strategy gives the direction and scope of an organisation for a long period of time. Secondly, strategy outlines how the resources need to be arranged to satisfy the needs of the markets and stakeholders. According to Sharma & Rao (2000), commitment to the family business has been repeatedly identified as one of the most desirable characteristics in next generation family members. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) identified four types of commitment in family business namely the affective commitment which is based the successor or family members' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the enterprise to see that the goals of the family business are accomplished; the normative commitment which is based on the successor or family members' feeling of obligation to pursue their career in the family enterprise and by This, they will strive to foster and maintain healthy relationships with the founder generation; the calculative commitment based on the successor and family members' perception of substantial opportunity costs and loss of investment if they were not to make a career in the family enterprise. The imperative commitment is based on the sentiment of uncertainty of the capability of building a career outside the family enterprise that is the successors and family members see no alternative to a career in the family enterprise, they are just focused on making a career in the family enterprise.

2.1.1.1 Organisational Culture

According to Alvesson and Berg (1992), culture is a collection of shared norms, beliefs and value structures. In other words, culture is contextually bound and there is a high degree of sharedness amongst the members. Dyer (1988) outlined the cultural patterns of the family business namely the paternalistic culture, the laissez-faire culture, the participative culture and the professional culture. Paternalistic culture is the most common culture in family business. In this type, the leaders who possess all authority and powers are family members. The family has no trust in outsiders and the employees are supervised closely. Employees do what they are asked to do without asking questions or giving suggestions. The challenge with thus type of culture is that the business relies more on the leader and when he dies there is a greater probability that the business dies too. In the laissez-faire culture, the employees are expected to accomplish the family business' goals, the relationships are hierarchical and the family members have preferential treatment. Their orientation around time and environment is similar to that of the paternalistic culture. Employees here are trusted and are given opportunity to make decisions though the ultimate truths related to the firm's mission and goals are held by the family. The main challenge with this type of culture is that the employees may at one time, no more aligning to the family basic values and assumptions. The participative culture is rarely used by family enterprises. Relationships are more egalitarian and more groups focused. It is present focus and is oriented towards the future. Employees are trustworthy and the family offers them chances to portray and develop their talents. The work must be well performed by the employees thus making others to queue in and creating personal growth and development. The main challenge here is that there is a delay in decision making process because there is a difficulty in differentiating the decisions that need to be made rapidly with little discussion and the decisions that must receive more time and employee participation. Lastly, the professional culture is the type whereby the owning family decides to give the management of the business to non family that is to professional managers. Relationships are more individualistic; that is, each employee focuses on individual achievement and career advancement. A firm that uses this type of culture is that new ideas and management techniques are brought on board. These professional managers often improve the enterprise operating systems and make them more efficient. Furthermore, these enterprises have minimal ties with the past, thus are able to see opportunities and grab them to move the enterprise in new directions. The main weakness of this culture is that it alienates the employees who used to work for the family under a different set of assumptions thus leading to absenteeism, turnover, unhealthy competition among individuals and among departments, low morale and low commitment.

Empirically, researchers like Manuel Carlos Vallejo-Martos (2011) in his study built and tested a model for the analysis and management of the organisational culture of family enterprises based on the main arguments of neo-institutional theory and transformational leadership theory. This study pinpointed the advisability and usefulness for family enterprises to use a management based on values not traditional management. This will give them diverse opportunities to achieve competitive advantage. Furthermore, from a managerial perspective, moving from an autocratic to a more participatory value-based mode, the enterprise's leadership can concentrate on the enterprise strategic needs.

2.1.1.2 The Involvement of Family Members

According to Gomez-Mejia *et al.,* (2007), involvement has to do with firstly the socio-emotional wealth which according to Chrisman *et al.,* (2012) helps in enhancing and perpetuating family image and reputation, maintaining family control over ownership and management , sustaining the family's dynastic aspirations and ensuring the sustainability of the family owned enterprises across generations (Evert *et al*.,2018). According to Sirmon and Hitt (2003), the family involvement also enables the family owned enterprise to be motivated strategically in the long term, build a positive environment and attract reliable and unique resources thus promoting innovation. In family owned enterprises, ownership and management are the main and essential features that measure the involvement of family members (La Porta *et al.,* 1999). The family involvement in ownership has to do with the proportion of shares possessed by the family members in the business (Sciascia and Mazzola, 2008) and the family involvement in management refers to the family members' participation in decision making process which is measured by the number of family members in the top management, the number of family employees and managers who are family members (Yan *et al*., 2019). According to Chen and Chen (2014), the high concentration of family ownership gives way to the family members to act discretionally due to their position as owners of the business and can eventually portray a strong influence over any strategic proposals made to the top management due to their voting power (Evert *et al*., 2018). To Ettlie (1998), more involvement of family members in management fortified the influence of family members on penetration of the enterprise and promotes the capability to develop enterprise innovation decisions.

Indeed, authors like Qingmei *et al*. (2020) examined the impact of family involvement on enterprise innovation and the moderating effect of family member composition. They found that family involvement affected the innovation efficiency negatively which lead to a reduction in innovation input and output. Marinelli and Huybrechts (2023) examined the impact of family involvement on family firms' sustainability. They found that there is a negative relationship between family involvement and organisational sustainability.

2.1.1.3 Entrepreneurial Risk-Taking

Entrepreneurial risk-taking refers to diverse entrepreneurial activities established by a family owned enterprise which are essential to its sustainability and growth (Zahra, 2018). In other words, it has to do with the family owned enterprises' entrepreneurial activities that are focused on exploiting new opportunities related to growth and value creation. The activities are namely creation of enterprises, mergers and acquisitions, subsidiaries creation, sale of enterprise's investments and enterprise shut downs (Dredge, 2019). Carney *et al.*

(2015) outlined that family owned enterprises are mostly risk averse; that is they are mostly concerned with centralised decision making, losing control of the business and feel so reluctant to invest in new ventures or embark on entrepreneurial activities. This risk aversion can emerge on one hand from owner-managers conflicts whereby principals and owners have divergent views as far as risk taking is concerned and the other hand, from principal-principal conflict (Young *et al.*, 2008) whereby the majority (controlling family) and minority shareholders (family and non-family members) have contrary view on risk preferences related to the enterprise' future growth expectations. According to Gomez-Mejía *et al*. (2007) family owned enterprises take risk when they are faced with the risk of loss since family members are often emotionally involved in the family owned enterprise. This situation motivates them to have a long term vision which contributes in the overall enterprise performance.

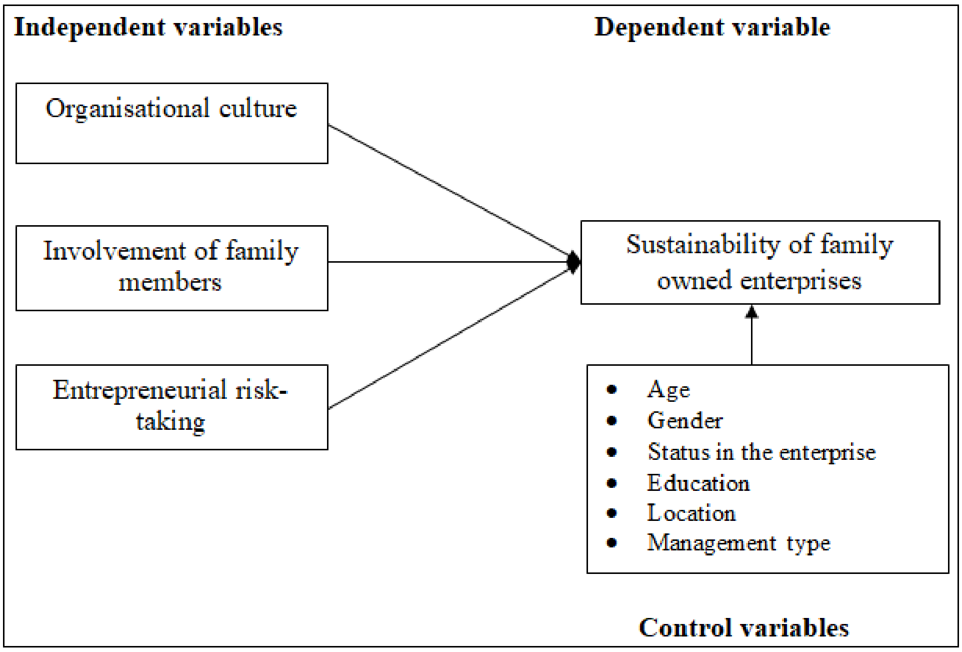
In the empirical light, Ellouze and Mnasri (2020) investigated risk-taking behaviour in some Tunisian family enterprises. They found that family enterprises are very much risk averse than non family enterprises; this is due to their desire to maintain their socio emotional wealth and to make survival strategies to ensure better performance. Memili *et al*. (2010) investigated how family ownership and family expectations impact family enterprise image and entrepreneurial risk taking, and ultimately the enterprise performance. Their findings revealed that family enterprise image and entrepreneurial risk taking were related to family enterprise performance in regards to relative growth in sales and market share.

2.1.2 Concept of Sustainability

According to the World Commission for Environment and Development (1987), sustainability is defined as the ability of utilization of resources by organisations or business to meet their present time requirements and without sacrificing the future requirements. In the context of family owned enterprise, sustainability refers to the ability of a business to exist beyond without compromising the capacity of their successors. Sustainability is crucial whenever a business wants to increase its sales, investment and financial assistance, talent, workforce diversity and productivity, business visibility and goodwill (Dyllick and Muff, 2016). For Shillaci *et al.*, (2013), family enterprise sustainability has to do with the persistence of the family over time, added to the continuity of the family myth with social responsibility while making a whole of values and intentions. For the purpose of this study, economic and social sustainability has been considered namely economic sustainability and social sustainability. Economic sustainability refers to the reduction of costs, the safeguard of important resources for future generations and the better management of resources (Roca-Piug, 2019). It is portrayed through personal instruments that enable the family owned enterprise to growth and be sustainable. The financial decisions in family owned enterprises are often influenced by issues related to the duality of goals rather than only profitability, the ever presence of family members, the enterprise financial demands and the preferential satisfaction of family members' needs over the pressing needs of the family owned enterprise (Csakne *et al.*, 2016). Found and Rich (2006) emphasize that economic sustainability depends on making profit and successful investments that ensure business survival. Social sustainability has to do with the diversity and maintenance of social values, social identities, social relationships, social equity and social institutions (Dempsey *et al.*, 2011). Vallance *et al*. (2011) view social sustainability as maintaining or preserving preferred ways of living or protecting particular socio-cultural traditions. Furthermore, they argue that the maintenance aspect of social sustainability refers to the way in which social preferences and characteristics are sustained over time. According to McKenzie (2004), Social dimension of sustainability is attained by adding value to organisational activities related to the health support activities, preserving skills creativity activities and capabilities for future and current resources. Cespa and Cestone (2007) outline the fact that social responsibilities can be used as a tool by management in order to build up better relationship among stakeholders and shareholders thus reducing the chance of unwanted replacements and takeovers.

2.1.3 Linking Family Long Term Strategic Commitment and Sustainability

Studies have shown that there is a direct link between family long term strategic commitment and the sustainability of family owned enterprises. According to Georges and Jones (2006), since factors influencing organisational culture like values of the founder, socialisation, ceremonies and rites, stories and language, organisations should know the strength of their culture because of the influence it can exert on the economical entity like performance, effectiveness, ethics and competitive advantage. According to Fink (2010), opined that the owners of family owned enterprises apply their family values, develop a trustworthy relationship with employees, customers, community in order to ensure the continuity of their businesses. Family long term strategic commitment has the ability to generate benefits to the family business by establishing an arena in which the owners feel a sense of collaboration and further take pertinent decisions oriented towards long term objectives of the enterprise and the family (Debicki *et al.*, 2016).



2.2 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are:

H01: Organisational culture does not have a significant influence on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon

H02: The involvement of family members has no significant influence on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon

H03: Entrepreneurial risk-taking does not have a significant influence on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon.

2.3 Theoretical Literature

The Three-Circle Model of the Family Business System by Tagiuri and Davis (1982)

This model developed by Tangiuri and Davis in 1982 showed how the different components (family, business and ownership) of the business formed the pillar of any family business. This model provides interconnected circles each representing the components.

- The family: the first circle encompasses the emotional and interpersonal relationships among family members involved in the business. It recognises the influence of the family in decision making, communication and conflict resolution with the context of business. Issues like rivalry among siblings, succession planning and implementation of business practices are part of this circle. Tangiuri and Davis (1982) advised that there should be a real balance between maintaining family harmony and effectively managing the business.
- The business: the second circle has to do with the operational aspects of the business. The focus is on the strategy, performance and competitiveness. Market dynamics, innovation and the general health of the business are the major concern in this circle. So family business struggles with the need for managing the business professionally to ensure sustainability through generations.
- Ownership: the third circle portrays the ownership structure and the financial aspects of the family business. It has to do with issues like equity distribution, ownership agreements and wealth management. Within this circle, there are often divergent expectations among family members relating to dividends, reinvestment and exit strategies. The stakeholders should effectively align the interests of family members with the long term financial goals of the business.

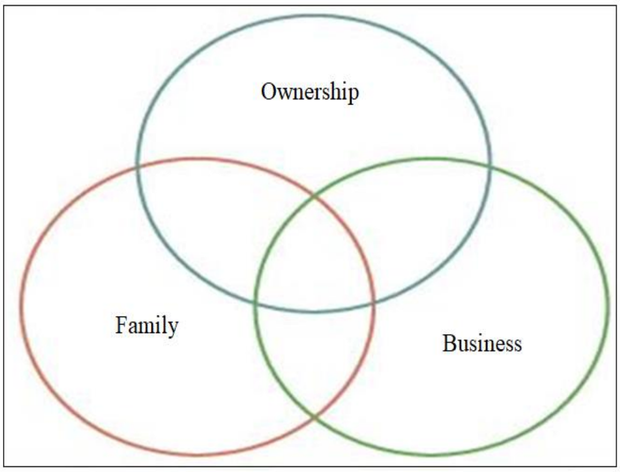


Figure 1: Three- Circle Model
Source: Tangiuri and Davis (1982)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study site and design

The study was carried out in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. The Western Highlands of Cameroon are located in the North West and West region of Cameroon between the 4°54'to 6°36' N and 9°18'to 11°24'E. The population density of the Western Highlands is 128.5 inhabitants per square kilometer and most of the population is rural and involved in agriculture. The North West is on the two English speaking regions while the West region is one of the eight French speaking regions of Cameroon. In the urban areas of the western highlands, citizens are involved in informal and formal sector. Those in the formal sector are mostly involved in the tertiary sector which has to do with service provision (in transportation, hospitality and education). There is a wild proliferation of schools and higher institutions of learning showing the importance the population placed on education; theses institutions of learning are mostly private establishments and some owned by families.

The research study type was descriptive. This research design was used because it provides a more accurate sample to gather that would enable us make conclusions and take crucial decisions. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires. These questionnaires were used to ensure the standardization of data collection such that all respondents have the same questions in the same format.

3.2 Population and sample

The study used the stratified random sampling. The researchers choose Western highlands (North West and West regions) from the four ecological zones (Southern rain forests, central savannah and northern arid region) in Cameroon. Then from the three (3) sectors in Cameroon, the study chose the service sector; in the service sector, they choose the education sector and family owned enterprises that are into education. Finally the study used the convenient sampling technique to administer the questionnaires to the founders and managers of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands (North West and West regions) of Cameroon.

The population of this study was the founders and managers of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. The participants were both male and female as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Repartition of institutions in the Western Highlands of Cameroon

Nursery schools	618
Primary schools	537
Secondary schools	286
Total	**1441**

Source: MINEDUB statistical manual 2021/2022
MINESEC statistical manual 2021/2022

To ensure the determination of accurate sample size, the statistical formula derived by Taro Yamane (1964) was employed. The formula stated thus:

$$n=\frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where the parameters;

n = represents the sample size

N= represents the total number of family owned enterprises in the North West and West regions

e = is the margin of error (usually 0.05)

From the target population of 1441, below is the sample size:

N=1441

$$n=\frac{1441}{1+1441(0.05^2)}$$

= 1441/4.6025

= 313.090

<u>n=313</u>

3.3 Estimation Framework

This study made use of the Generalised Linear Model (GLM) regression technique. The GLM framework encompasses three key components: a random component that specifies the distribution of the response variable, a systematic component that describes the linear predictor, and a link function that connects the random and systematic components (Moran *et al*., 2007). This technique has several advantages such as it flexibility GLM can accommodate various response variable distributions, including normal and binomial. The GLM can model non-linear relationships between the response variable and predictor variables, capturing complex patterns in the data. Further, GLM are less sensitive to violations of assumptions like normality and homoscedasticity, making them more robust to data irregularities. The GLM can equally handle outliers and other anomalies in the data better than typical linear regression models. The model specification addressing the main objective seeking to evaluate the effect of family long term strategic commitment on sustainability of family owned enterprises. To this effect, we specify a microcosmic model wherein sustainability of family owned enterprises is the main dependent variable and family long term strategic commitment. The functional form of the said model is given as below.

SUFOE = *f*(FLTSC, X)

Where FLTSC stands for family long term strategic commitment and X denotes the set of control variables. From the functional relation above, we proceed to present the econometric model as observed below.

$$SUFOE_i = \delta_0 + \delta_1 OC_i + \delta_2 IFM_i + \delta_3 ERT_i + \delta_4 AGE_i + \delta_5 SEX_i + \delta_6 ST_i + \mu_i$$

Where $\boldsymbol{\mu}$ is the error term while i denote the individual units which are the different enterprises examine.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Results of descriptive statistics The descriptive statistics of Table 2 below shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for various variables after normalization.

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics for independent variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Sustainability of family owned enterprises index	309	0.915	0.151	0	1
Family long term strategic commitment (FLTSC) index					
Organisational culture index	309	0.414	0.155	0	1
Involvement of family members index	309	0.143	0.203	0	1
Entrepreneurial risk taking index	309	0.05	0.447	0	1

Source: Compiled by the authors from field data, 2024

Table 3: Summary of descriptive statistics for demographic variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Sustainability of family owned enterprises index	309	0.915	0.151	0	1
Demographic variables Gender (1 = male, 0 = female)	309	0.592	0.492	0	1
Age [20 – 30]	309	0.029	0.168	0	1
Age [31 – 40]	309	0.214	0.411	0	1
Age [41 – 50]	309	0.476	0.05	0	1
Age [51 – 60]	309	0.252	0.435	0	1
Education (FLSC)	309	0.019	0.138	0	1
Education (O/L)	309	0.026	0.159	0	1
Education (A/L)	309	0.146	0.353	0	1
Education (Degree)	309	0.644	0.48	0	1
Education (Postgraduate)	309	0.165	0.372	0	1
Status in the enterprise = founder	309	0.385	0.487	0	1
Status in the enterprise = manager	309	0.615	0.487	0	1
Location = North West Region	309	0.443	0.498	0	1
Location =West Region	309	0.557	0.498	0	1
Management = owner-manager	309	0.528	0.5	0	1
Management = non family manager	309	0.081	0.273	0	1
Management = co-managed by family and non-family members	309	0.392	0.489	0	1

Source: Compiled by the authors from field data, 2024

The variables included in the analysis are Sustainability of the Family Owned Enterprises (SUFOE), Family Long-Term Strategic Commitment (FLTSC) broken into Organisational culture (OC), involvement of family members (IFM) and Entrepreneurial risk taking (ERT) Gender, Age, Status in the Enterprise (StatusE), Management type, Education and Location. The variable sustainability of family owned enterprises has a mean of 0.915 and a standard deviation of 0.151, indicating that, on average, family-owned enterprises score high in terms of sustainability. Organisational culture (OC) has a mean of 0.414 and a standard deviation of 0.155; involvement of family members (IFM) has a mean of 0.143 and a standard deviation of 0.203 and entrepreneurial risk taking (ERT) has a mean of 0.05 and a standard deviation of 0.447. The values of Sustainability of the Family Owned Enterprises indexes range between 0 and 1 given that these indexes were normalised. Regarding the demographic variables, the data includes information on gender (SEX) and age groups (20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60. The variable MALE has a mean of 0.592, indicating that approximately 59% of the respondents identified as male, while FEMALE has a mean of 0.408, indicating that around 41% identified as female. The age groups show varying proportions, with the highest mean in the 41-50 age group (0.476), followed by 51-60 (0.252), and the lowest mean in the 20-30 age groups (both at 0.029). The descriptive statistics also cover other variables related to the enterprise, such as status (Founder or Manager), management type, education level, and location. Each variable provides information on the proportions or means within different categories.

4.2 Regression Analysis Results

Table 3 presents the results of the Generalised Linear Model (GLM)

Table 4: GLM results for family long term strategic commitment for the independent variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	**GLM all**	**GLM NWR**	**GLM WR**
Family long term strategic commitment (FLTSC)			
OC	0.0862*	-0.0115	0.0967
	(0.0499)	(0.0447)	(0.0865)
IFM	-0.0642*	-0.131***	0.126**
	(0.0375)	(0.0381)	(0.0641)
ERT	-0.00155	0.0239	-0.0250
	(0.0163)	(0.0166)	(0.0240)
Observations	309	137	172
chi2	233.4	42.25	249.0

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Source: Compiled by authors from field data, 2024

Table 5: GLM results for family long term strategic commitment for the demographic variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	**GLM all**	**GLM NWR**	**GLM WR**
Demographic variables			
2.SEX	-0.0266*	-0.0167	-0.00730
	(0.0144)	(0.0135)	(0.0219)
2.Management	0.00307	0.00159	-0.0770
	(0.0298)	(0.0248)	(0.0579)
3.Management	0.0335*	-0.0106	0.0531*
	(0.0180)	(0.0205)	(0.0274)
2.AgeOfEnterprs	0.00544	0.0746***	-0.0273
	(0.0169)	(0.0155)	(0.0286)
3.AgeOfEnterprs	0.0247	0.0123	0.0130
	(0.0308)	(0.0554)	(0.0416)
4.AgeOfEnterprs	-0.00276	0.0625	-0.00555
	(0.0479)	(0.0430)	(0.0805)
5.AgeOfEnterprs	0.0528	0.126	0.0337
	(0.0932)	(0.0838)	(0.145)
2.Age	0.496***	0.00399	0.664***
	(0.0433)	(0.0571)	(0.0556)
3.Age	0.513***	-0.0126	0.714***
	(0.0425)	(0.0553)	(0.0564)
4.Age	0.492***	-0.0183	0.693***
	(0.0435)	(0.0549)	(0.0603)
5.Age	0.460***	-0.0540	0.719***
	(0.0592)	(0.0622)	(0.139)
2.StatusE	-0.0547***	-0.0142	-0.0603**
	(0.0197)	(0.0192)	(0.0299)
Constant	0.428***	0.921***	0.229***
	(0.0490)	(0.0561)	(0.0716)
Observations	309	137	172
chi2	233.4	42.25	249.0

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Source: Compiled by authors from field data, 2024

The regression results in table 4 and 5 above focus on investigating the influence of family long-term strategic commitment (FLTSC) broken into organisational culture (OC), involvement of family members (IFM) and entrepreneurial risk taking (ERT) and the sustainability of family-owned enterprises in the western highlands (North West (NWR) and West (WR) regions) of Cameroon. Organisational culture presented a positive impact whereas involvement of family members and entrepreneurial risk taking presented a negative impact on sustainability. In the overall sample, the coefficient for OC is 0.0862 with 10% level of significance; the involvement of family members has as coefficient -0.0642 with 10% level of significance and entrepreneurial risk taking's coefficient is -0.00155. With two variables (IFM and ERT) negative, it indicated that their effect is more felt leading to a negative effect of family long term strategic commitment on sustainability of family-owned enterprises. In the NWR model, two coefficients are negative with 1% level of significance indicating that family long term strategic commitment has a negative impact on sustainability; in the WR model, two coefficients are positive with 5% level of significance; indicating that family long term strategic commitment has a positive impact on sustainability. These results suggest that a strong commitment to long-term strategic planning by family-owned enterprises contributes to their sustainability. Results from the GLM reveal that there is a negative and significant effect of family long term strategic commitment on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. Thus, an increase in family long term strategic elements will lead to a decrease in sustainability of family owned enterprises. This means that organisational culture, the involvement of family members and entrepreneurial risk-taking which measured family long term strategic commitment does not influence the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon.

These results contradict the study of Vallejo-Martos (2011) who built a model that portrayed the existence of a positive relation between the values defining the second level of organisational culture namely commitment, harmony, long term orientation and customer service and performance, measured through variables, such profitability, survival and group cohesion. Furthermore, the study of Pastapra *et al.* (2007) contradict these results whereby the study revealed that successful family businesses are more inclined to encourage their children to get involved in the family business and consequently get prepared for the succession and continuation of the family businesses in future. Furthermore, these results contradict the study of Memili *et al*. (2010) who found out that family enterprise image and entrepreneurial risk taking were related to family enterprise performance and that family expectations were linked to both risk taking and family enterprise image. Therefore, high family expectations push the family to involve in higher level of risk taking, thus leading to growth and sustainability.

5. CONCLUSION

After investigating the influence of family long term strategic commitment on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon, we noticed that the strategic commitment of family members to the business long term goals is crucial for its survival and sustainability. Many economies in the world boosted by family owned enterprises have experienced great regression due to the death of these same family owned enterprises. The findings revealed that family long term strategic commitment does not influenced the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. Components such as organisational culture, involvement of family members and entrepreneurial risk-taking jeopardize the sustainability of family owned enterprises in these two regions under study. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are proposed. Firstly, for organisational culture; family values are fundamental in family relationships and family businesses. It is rare to find a family enterprise which functions without the influence of family norms and values. Since the founders and managers of family owned enterprises tend to be more traditionalist and conservative than innovative, they should while being conservative endeavour to apply organisational cultures that are more centered on growth, sustainability and innovation. Secondly, for the involvement of family members; the founders and the managers of family owned enterprises should make sure that family members know their depths and heights of their involvement into the family business. This process should be done through open communication with the family members. The family members involve children of the founders, wives and relatives. Drawing the boundaries of family involvement though not welcomed by majority of family members who consider family business as business of the family will enable the family owned enterprise to be sustainable and successful. Thirdly, for entrepreneurial risk-taking; the founders and the managers of family owned enterprises should consider risk as part of doing business in a complex business world. Risk is part of business thus one of the keys to success in business. The founders and the managers should consider taking calculated risk in entrepreneurial ventures. They should be ready to involve into profitable partnerships with other business firms be it family or non-family firms.

5.1 Research Limitations

It is noted that this study can be best assessed using face to face interviews with the founders and managers of family owned enterprises in the western highlands of Cameroon rather than putting on emphasis on questionnaires which sometimes limit the insights and contributions to be made by the participants. Furthermore, this study could have measured the moderating effect of either age or gender of the respondents which in many studies have proven to be having great influence on the relationship between family long term strategic commitment and the sustainability of family owned enterprises.

5.2 Suggestions for Future Research Endeavours

Since this study is the product of human effort, the study acknowledges its limits. While this research provides valuable insights, there are opportunities for further exploration. It should be noted that the study has narrowed the scope of this study to two regions of Cameroon namely the Western Highlands (North West and the West regions) of Cameroon. The study recommends a replica of the study to be conducted in the other remaining ecological zones of Cameroon namely Southern rain forests, central savannah and northern arid region to establish how family long term strategic commitment and its impact on the sustainability of family owned enterprises vary in those regions. Furthermore, only a single sector was considered in this study (the educational sector). This study recommends that a replica of the study can be conducted in the other sectors and also make a comparative analysis across the sectors. Equally, examining the moderating effect of some demographic variables like age and gender on the influence of family long term strategic commitment on the sustainability of family owned enterprises in the Western Highlands of Cameroon.

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