FAMILINESS IN TOURISM FAMILY FIRMS

Pilar Presas Maynegre

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DOCTORAL THESIS

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2013

PhD Programme "Tourism, Law and Business"

Supervisors:

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Thesis delivered to obtain the doctoral degree by the University of Girona

Universitat de Girona

El Dr. Jaume Guia i la Dra. M. Dolors Muñoz del departament d'Organització, Gestió Empresarial i Disseny del Producte, de la Universitat de Girona,

DECLAREM:

Que el treball titulat "Familiness in Tourism Family Firms", que presenta Pilar Presas Maynegre per a l'obtenció del títol de doctora, ha estat realitzat sota la nostra direcció i compleix els requisits per poder optar a Menció Internacional.

I, perquè així consti i tingui els efectes oportuns, signem aquest document.

Dr. Jaume Guia   Dra. M. Dolors Muñoz

Girona, 10 d'octubre de 2013

AGRAÏMENTS

En començar a escriure aquest agraïment és quan una s'adona que aquesta tesi que fins al moment només semblava un somni, es comença a esvair. Fins al punt que aquest somni es converteix en una realitat. Per arribar fins aquí, he necessitat endinsar-me en un llarg viatge per un món totalment desconegut, però per sort no he estat sola. He tingut la sort d'estar envoltada de persones que m'han ajudat sempre que ho he demanat, o fins i tot, sense demanar-ho. Uns m'han guiat quan em perdia, altres m'han agafat de la mà quan estava desorientada, uns altres m'han animat quan estava desmoralitzada, els altres han celebrat els meus petits triomfs com si fossin grans victòries, i els també hi ha els que no han dit res però han estan sempre allà. A tots ells, els hi vull donar el més sincer i etern agraïment per haver-me acompanyat en aquest llarg viatge i fer que aquesta tesi sigui una realitat.

En primer lloc, vull donar les gràcies als meus directors de la tesi, en Jaume Guia i la Dolors Muñoz. Sense ells no m'hauria embarcat en aquest llarg viatge. Durant aquests anys m'han guiat, acompanyat, recolzat i animat en tot moment, i m'he pogut amarar del seu coneixement i experiència fruit dels seus consells, comentaris i crítiques. Però sobretot, gràcies per la seva dedicació i paciència, així com de la confiança dipositada en mi.

En segon lloc, vull agrair l'ajut que m'ha brindat la Càtedra Cambra de l'Empresa Familiar, especialment, a la Pilar Marquès, amb qui he compartit viatges, experiències, però sobretot, ha aportat molt de coneixement en l'àmbit empresarial i acadèmic.

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M'agradaria destacar que la present tesi doctoral es presenta com a un compendi de publicacions, els quals han estat publicats, acceptats i/o enviats en revistes indexades en bases de dades internacionals:

Presas, P; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2011). Branding familiness in tourism family firms. Journal of Brand Management, 18 (4/5): 274–284. doi:10.1057/bm.2010.41

- SJR (2012): 0,836. 1r quartil (40 de 183) de la categoria: Strategy and Management.

Presas, P.; Guia, J. and Muñoz, M.D. (2014). Customer's perceptions of familiness in travel experiences. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 31 (2). doi:10.1080/10548408.2014.873307

- SJR (2012): 0,430. 2n quartil (22 de 52) de la categoria: Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management.

Presas, P.; Guia, J. and Muñoz, M.D. (submitted). Family-owned hotels and guest satisfaction in online reviews: the role of familiness. International Journal of Hospitality Management. Manuscript number HOSMAN-D-13-00404

- JCR (2012): 1,692. 1r quartil (8 de 35) de la categoria: Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism.

També vull realçar que la present tesi doctoral m'ha permès, en primer lloc, dur a terme una estada de recerca de tres mesos de durada a la Sheffield Hallam University, Anglaterra. En segon lloc, també m'ha permès obtenir un conjunt de publicacions, així com presentacions en congressos internacionals, i que es relacionen a continuació:

1. Altres publicacions:

Presas Maynegre, P.; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2010). Family Branding en las empresas turísticas, Les cahiers européens des sciences sociales, 55-75.

Presas, P; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2010). The Mas de Torrent Group: A case study of "family branding" in tourism firms. In Family Business Casebook 2008-2009. Cox Family Enterprise Center, Georgia – USA. (ISBN: 0-9753893-6-X)

2. Participacions a congressos internacionals:

Ifera World Family Business Research Conference:

Presas, P.; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2009). Family branding in tourism firms. Global perpectives on family Business Developments Theory- Practice- Policy 9th Annual IFERA World Family Business Research Conference Conference Proceedings. Limassol, Cyprus. (ISBN: 978-9963-9665-0-9)

Presas, P.; Muñoz, M. D. and Guia, J. (2009). A Systematic classification of family firms in the hotel industry: criteria and categories. Global perpectives on family business Developments Theory-

Practice- Policy 9th Annual IFERA World Family Business Research Conference: Conference Proceedings. Limassol, Cyprus. (ISBN: 978-9963-9665-0-9)

Presas, P.; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2010). The role of familiness in family and non-family businesses websites: the case of the tourist sector. Long term perspectives on family business Theory- Practice- Policy 10th Annual IFERA World Family Business Research Conference: Conference Proceedings. Lancaster, United Kingdom. (ISBN: 978-1-86220-275-7)

Presas, P.; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2011). Consumers' perception of familiness. Intelligence and Courage for the Development of Family Business Theory-Practice-Policy 11th Annual IFERA World Family Business Research Conference: Conference Proceedings. Palermo, Italy. (ISBN: 978-88-95272-99-3)

International Conference of the Academy of Marketing

Presas, P.; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2009). Family branding in tourism firms. Branding and society: the social, cultural and financial impacts of brands in the 21st century. 5th International conference of AM's brand, Identity & Corporate Reputation SIG. Cambridge, United Kingdom. (ISBN: 0-9549730-4-6)

EuroMed Conference

Presas, P.; Guia, J. and Muñoz, M.D. (2011). Branding family businesses in the tourism sector. Business Research Challenges in a Turbulent Era 4th Annual EuroMed Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business. Elounda, Greece. (ISBN: 978-9963-711-01-7) Included in Conference Proceedings Citation Index — an integrated index within Web of Science

Presas, P.; Guia, J. and Muñoz, M.D. (2011). Familiness in tourism consumption: a consumers' perspective. Business Research Challenges in a Turbulent Era 4th Annual EuroMed Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business. Elounda, Greece. (ISBN: 978-9963-711-01-7) Included in Conference Proceedings Citation Index — an integrated index within Web of Science.

International Network of Business and Management Journals

Presas,P.; Guia, J. and Muñoz, M.D (2012). Consumer's perception of familiness in travel experiences. INBAM (International Network of Business & Management Journals). Valencia, Spain.

Workshop on Family Firms Managment Research

Presas, P.; Muñoz, M.D. and Guia, J. (2010). The role of the family in family and non-family businesses websites: the case of the tourist sector. 6th Workshop on Family Firms Management. Barcelona, Spain.

Finalment, cal mencionar que durant la realització de la tesi he pogut explorar altres àmbits de recerca aplicats a l'empresa familiar, com són la responsabilitat social corporativa, i l'emprenedoria lligada al gènere femení. D'aquesta recerca en deriven un conjunt de publicacions i presentacions en congressos nacionals i internacionals, dels quals vull destacar els següents:

- Marquès, P.; Presas, P. and Simon, A. (Resubmitted). Family business heterogeneity in CSR engagement. Family Business Review. JCR (2012): 2,622. 1r quartil (19 de 116) de la categoria: Business.
- Marquès, P.; Presas, P. and Simon, A. (2013). Family business heterogeneity in CSR engagement. Estrategia Empresarial y sostenibilidad: un compromiso con la Sociedad. XXIII Congreso Nacional de la asociación científica de economia y dirección de la empresa (ACEDE). Málaga, Spain. Además nos fue otorgada la distinción de comunicación ganadora del Premio de la Sección de Empresa Familiar.
- Marquès, P. and Presas, P. (2012). The CSR Experience in Girona. In CSR and Competitiveness in the Euro Med area. Nicosia, Xipre.(ISBN: 978-9963-9835-3-7)
- Muñoz, M.D. and Presas P. (2011). Emprenedoria en femení: 12 històries de dones 'crack', Emprenedoria en femení: 12 històries de dones 'crack'. Girona, Espanya. (ISBN13:978-84-694-9373-1) Llibre-Publicació que forma part del projecte Xarxa d'Emprenedoria Universitària de les Universitats catalanes (XEU), en el qual la UdG va estar representada per la Fundació de la Universitat de Girona: Innovació i Futur.

Cal destacar que la tesi doctoral està escrita en diferents idiomes.

En primer lloc, es pot veure el resum d'aquesta tesi està escrit en català, castellà i anglès tal com marquen els criteris de format de les tesis doctorals a la Universitat de Girona i de presentació de tesis en format electrònic.

El cos de la tesi, conté dos idiomes oficials. La introducció i les conclusions finals s'han redactat en la llengua catalana. En canvi, el cos central de la tesi doctoral que està constituït per una còpia dels articles publicats, acceptats o enviats per ser publicats en les revistes científiques, mencionades anteriorment, s'han redactat en llengua anglesa.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

viii

x

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

RESUM

L'empresa familiar té una capacitat de produir un avantatge competitiu que no resideix en les estratègies adoptades, sinó en la naturalesa dels seus recursos i capacitats generades a partir de la interacció entre la família i l'empresa, conegut com a *familiness*. La present tesi vol contribuir en la conceptualització del *familiness* i dels elements que el componen, en el context de les empreses familiars turístiques, centrant la investigació des de la perspectiva del consumidor i com un aspecte fonamental per incrementar la satisfacció dels clients.

Les dades per a realitzar l'estudi han estat obtingudes mitjançant diverses tècniques qualitatives i quantitatives com un estudi de cas, un conjunt de grups focals i l'anàlisi estadístic de comentaris publicats a la xarxa, amb la finalitat d'explorar i poder trobar una resposta adequada a les preguntes de recerca.

Els resultats mostren que el *familiness* contribueix a la satisfacció dels clients, però no ha de ser vist com una única construcció sinó com una sèrie de quatre dimensions diferents: el reconeixement, la relació, la recepció i el caràcter real. També s'ha observat que la integració del *familiness* en la creació d'una marca corporativa és un element eficaç per tal que l'empresa familiar pugui obtenir un avantatge competitiu.

L'originalitat d'aquesta investigació és l'aprofundiment en l'anàlisi de les relacions entre la família i els turistes, així com en la recerca dels atributs del *familiness* que tenen un major impacte en la satisfacció dels clients, i per tant poden ser la causa de la creació d'experiències memorables proporcionades pels propietaris dels establiments i les seves famílies.

RESUMEN

La empresa familiar tiene una capacidad de producir una ventaja competitiva que no reside en las estrategias adoptadas sino en la naturaleza de sus recursos y capacidades, generadas a partir de la interacción entre la familia y la empresa, conocida como *familiness*. La presente tesis pretende contribuir en la conceptualización del *familiness* y los elementos que lo componen, en el contexto de las empresas familiares turísticas, centrando la investigación en la perspectiva del consumidor y como un aspecto fundamental para incrementar la satisfacción de los clientes.

Los datos para realizar el estudio han sido obtenidos mediante diversas técnicas cualitativas y cuantitativas como un estudio de caso, un conjunto de grupos focales y el análisis estadístico de comentarios publicados en la red, con el fin de explorar y poder encontrar una respuesta adecuada a las preguntas de investigación.

Los resultados muestran que el familiness contribuye a la satisfacción de los clientes, pero no debe ser visto como una única construcción sino como una serie de cuatro dimensiones diferentes: el reconocimiento, la relación, la recepción y el carácter real. También se ha observado que la integración del *familiness* en la creación de una marca corporativa es un elemento eficaz para que la empresa familiar pueda obtener una ventaja competitiva .

La originalidad de esta investigación es la profundización en el análisis de las relaciones entre la familia y los turistas, así como en la búsqueda de los atributos del familiness que tienen un mayor impacto en la satisfacción de los clientes, pudiendo ser ello, la causa de la creación de experiencias memorables proporcionadas por los propietarios de los establecimientos y sus familias.

ABSTRACT

The family firm have the ability to generate a competitive advantage which lies on the nature of its resources and capabilities arising from the interaction between the family and the business, known as familiness. This thesis aims to contribute to the conceptualization of familiness and its components, in the context of family businesses in the tourism sector, focusing the research on the perspective of the consumer as a fundamental aspect to increase customer's satisfaction.

Data were obtained and analyzed through various qualitative and quantitative techniques as a case study, focus groups and stadistical analysis of online reviews, in order to explore and find an appropriate answer to the research questions.

The results show that familiness contributes to customer satisfaction, but should not be seen as a single structure but a series of four different dimensions: recognition, relation, reception and realness. We also found that the integration of familiness in creating a corporate brand is an effective way to ensure that family businesses can gain a competitive advantage.

The originality of this research lies on the focus on the relationships analysis between families in family firms and tourists, as well as finding the familiness attributes that have a higher impact on customer satisfaction, and therefore it can be the reason of creating memorable experiences provided by the owners of the establishments and their families.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCCIÓ

Aquesta introducció pretén presentar l'objecte de l'estudi, el concepte de *familiness*, i la necessitat d'analitzar aquest tema des d'una perspectiva conceptual. Mitjançant la revisió dels estudis previs i més estretament relacionats amb el concepte assenyalat, el *familiness*, l'objectiu és proporcionar una visió general dels diferents aspectes de les empreses familiars que són motiu d'anàlisi en la present tesi, així com, assenyalar la perspectiva que s'adopta en l'actual investigació.

En primer lloc, s'exposen els principals arguments que motiven aquesta recerca. Concretament, es mostra la importància de les empreses familiars en la societat i en la economia en general, així com les seves peculiaritats de les quals se'n deriva l'element diferenciador respecte les empreses no familiars, que poden ser un avantatge competitiu de les primeres respecte les segones. A continuació, es documenta el concepte de *familiness* fent un recorregut teòric per la literatura existent fins el moment

En segon lloc, s'analitza l'empresa familiar en el sector turístic, a nivell teòric, per tal d'observar les singularitats que la fan especial i diferent a empreses familiars d'altres sectors, i és motiu d'estudi de la tesi que es presenta. Finalment, en detectar possibles buits en la recerca del tema que ens ocupa, es passa a la investigació i formulació d'objectius, per tal de poder fer aportacions a obrir noves vies de recerca en el tema d'empresa familiar i sector turístic.

Finalment, es detalla l'objectiu general que es pretén defensar en la present tesi, així com els objectius específics que es pretenen assolir en els següents capítols.

1. Importància i singularitat de les empreses familiars

Actualment, la literatura acadèmica ha posat un gran èmfasi en l'estudi de les empreses familiars per la seva rellevància i perseverança en l'economia i de la seva contribució social a nivell mundial, tal com mostren els estudis (Carrigan, i Buckley, 2008; Chrisman, Chua, i Steier, 2005b). Malauradament, les estadístiques sobre l'abast i la importància de les empreses familiars, com per exemple en el producte nacional brut, ocupació, etc., són poques o inexistents, això ve donat per la dificultat d'entendre el concepte d'empresa familiar. Segons el Instituto de la Empresa Familiar (2013), per exemple, als Estats Units, un 80% de les empreses són familiars, a la Unió Europea

disminueix fins a un 60%, però en el cas espanyol, el nombre d'empreses familiars augmenta fins a un 85% del total de les empreses i aportant un 70% del PIB espanyol.

En els darrers anys, als diferents països i/o regions s'han consolidat un seguit d'estructures organitzatives per tal de ser interlocutors entre empreses familiars, administracions, institucions, mitjans de comunicació i la societat en general, amb l'objectiu de transmetre la importància d'aquestes empreses en la creació de riquesa i de llocs de treball. En el cas espanyol, i coordinades pel Instituto de la Empresa Familiar, trobem la major xarxa de Càtedres d'Empresa Familiar i Associacions Territorials d'empresa familiar formades per empreses familiars líders en diferents sectors i regions. Al mateix temps, i juntament amb els acadèmics, són els encarregats d'analitzar la situació de cada regió i país aportant més informació quantitativa i qualitativa sobre l'empresa familiar de la zona en particular.

La societat sol associar les empreses familiars amb una mida reduïda d'aquestes, altrament dit, com a petites o mitjanes empreses dirigides per una unitat familiar (Simon, Bikfalvi, Marquès i Muñoz, 2008). Encara que la realitat va en aquest sentit, això no respon a la imatge global, doncs la mida no és un factor determinant per ser una empresa familiar, es poden veure exemples d'empreses que s'han transformat en multinacionals, i no deixen de ser familiars. Un altre clixé de les empreses familiars, és que aquestes són menys formals, racionals i estandarditzades que les empreses no familiars (Stewart i Hitt, 2012).

Malauradament, a causa d'aquests estereotips i altres contradiccions, la definició i/o delimitació del concepte d'empresa familiar ha tingut una gran complexitat. És per aquest motiu que no existeix una definició generalment acceptada d'empresa familiar (Littunen i Hyrsky, 2000). Tot i això, una de les darreres conceptualitzacions de l'empresa familiar va ser desenvolupada per la Unió Europea (2008) i verificada pel International Family Business Network, definint-la com: "la que pertany d'una manera continuada en el temps a membres d'una família i que és governada o dirigida per un o més membres d'una família. La majoria del capital, amb els seus corresponents drets de vot, pertany a membres d'una família, de manera que governen el destí de l'empresa". D'aquesta definició es poden extreure els elements primordials per diferenciar les empreses familiars de les no familiars, i els quals esdevenen també els factors, els elements o les variables més utilitzades en la resta de les definicions que ens proporciona la literatura, i són: la propietat, el poder i la continuïtat. Concretament, la propietat de l'empresa és d'una o diverses famílies; la direcció o gestió de l'empresa en forma part alguns membres d'una família; i finalment una continuïtat en la propietat i direcció de l'empresa per part de les futures generacions.

Però la veritable importància de la recerca i l'estudi de les empreses familiars recau en què aquesta tipologia d'empreses té unes característiques concretes que fan que siguin úniques, degut a la influència de la família en el negoci, i que moltes vegades poden generar un avantatge competitiu (Chua, Chrisman i Sharma, 1999).

En primer lloc, es troba la influència de la família en el negoci degut a la interacció o la combinació de dos unitats: la familiar i la empresarial (Davis i Tagiuri, 1996). La influència familiar a l'empresa té dos enfocaments en la literatura segons Chua *et al.* (1999): la implicació i l'essència de la família. S'ha d'entendre la implicació de la família com la participació de la família en el negoci i l'abast d'aquesta implicació (per exemple: Miller, Le Breton-Miller, Lester i Cannella, 2007; Sciascia i Mazzola, 2008). Pel que fa el segon enfocament, és l'essència centrada en les aspiracions de la família tant en la unitat familiar com en la unitat empresarial (per exemple: Holt, Rutherford i Kuratko, 2010; Klein, Astrachan i Smyrnios, 2005).

La unió d'aquests dos enfocaments és el resultat d'un comportament i un desenvolupament específic de l'empresa familiar. Aquests dos enfocaments s'han usat en la literatura com a base per definir aquesta influència i diferenciar-la d'altres models empresarials (Sharma, Chrisman i Gersick, 2012).

L'origen de les especificitats que s'han assenyalat anteriorment, es pot trobar en bona part en la influència del fundador que mitjançant una cultura i uns valors molt distintius, així com compartits per la resta de la família, té l'objectiu de què perdurin al llarg de les generacions. Des de la perspectiva de la teoria del *stewardship*, els fundadors poden veure l'empresa com una part d'ells mateixos, i per tant el benestar de l'empresa va connectat directament amb el seu propi benestar, anant més enllà de les motivacions econòmiques (Poza, 2010). Per aquest motiu, tal com marquen Simon, Marquès, Bikfalvi i Muñoz (2012) el *stewardship* va associat a un millor rendiment (Miller i Le Breton-Miller, 2006) i a una actitud basada en els valors (Corbetta i Salvato, 2004; Davis, Schoorman i Donaldson, 1997), fent que els membres de la família i els empleats s'identifiquin amb l'empresa i els seus valors (O'Boyle, Rutherford i Pollack, 2010). Així s'aconsegueix una implicació socioemocional amb l'empresa familiar (Arregle, Hitt, Sirmon i Very, 2007). Aquest és un aspecte que facilita la supervivència de les empreses familiars, ja que la preocupació per les generacions futures i el benestar de l'empresa va estretament lligat a un benestar per a la família.

Recentment ha sorgit una nova teoria anomenada *Socioemotional Wealth* (SEW) amb l'objectiu d'explicar el comportament distintiu de les empreses familiars (Berrone, Cruz i Gomez-Mejia , 2012; Berrone, Cruz, Gomez-Mejia i Larraza-Kintana, 2010; Gomez-Mejia, Cruz, Berrone i De Castro, 2011; Gomez-Mejia, Haynes, Núñez-Nickel, Jacobson i Moyano-Fuentes, 2007; Gomez-Mejia, Makri i Larraza-Kintana, 2010). Aquesta conducta és el resultat de la influència i el poder de la família en el negoci, i fins i tot la pròpia identificació amb ell (Gomez-Mejia *et al.*, 2007). Berrone *et al.* (2012) identifiquen les cinc dimensions que configuren el SEW: el control i la influència de la família, la identificació, els lligams emocionals i socials, i la renovació dels llaços familiars a través de la successió dinàstica. En canvi, altres autos suggereixen que el SEW està més basat amb el lligam amb l'empresa familiar degut als vincles emocionals entre els propietaris i la tradició familiar (Miller, Steier i Le Breton-Miller , 2003; Sharma i Irving, 2005; Zellweger, Siegen i Halter, 2011) .

Quan les interaccions entre la família i l'empresa van més enllà del propi negoci, iniciant un conjunt de relacions amb tots els *stakeholders* restants, el resultat és la creació del capital social d'una empresa. La literatura ha observat com les empreses familiars tenen avantatges específics en la construcció de relacions amb els clients i els altres grups d'interès més amplis (Ward, 1997; Stone, 2000; Biberman, 2001; Carrigan i Buckley, 2008), les quals proporcionen a l'empresa familiar un caràcter distintiu i un avantatge competitiu (per exemple: Calantone, Cavusgil i Zhao, 2002; Camps i Marquès, 2011; Hult, 2002; Hult, Hurley i Knight, 2004; Lu i Shyan, 2004; Song i Thieme, 2006).

La creació d'avantatge competitiu en les empreses familiars també és fruit dels recursos únics que tenen les mateixes, segons la teoria RBV (*Resource-based view*) de Habbershon i Williams (1999). Els recursos únics, altrament anomenats *familiness*, vénen donats per la gestió i la influència de la família propietària; les interaccions amb els diferents *stakeholders* que generen un compromís a llarg termini; i finalment, el desig de protegir el nom de la família i la reputació d'aquesta. El resultat d'aquests recursos són: una major productivitat i alt rendiment empresarial i dels treballadors familiars i no familiars; una adaptació més ràpida als mercats centrant-se en els clients i els nínxols de mercat; i en l'oferta de productes de més qualitat (Poza, 2010).

En resum, l'autèntic avantatge competitiu d'una empresa familiar no resideix en les estratègies adoptades, ja que aquestes són fàcilment imitables, sinó en la naturalesa dels seus recursos interns (Peteraf, 1993), i l'ús que se'n dóna d'aquests propis recursos (Penrose, 1959). Concretament i

especialment, als recursos i capacitats generats a partir de la interacció entre la família i l'empresa, conegut com a *familiness*. Tot i això, la implicació de la família en l'empresa és una condició necessària per esdevenir empresa familiar, però no és suficient (Chrisman, Chua i Sharma, 2005a). El paper de la família ha de ser el desenvolupament d'uns comportaments diferenciats que generin un caràcter, uns recursos i unes capacitats úniques, les quals seran impossibles de copiar (Davis, 1983). Així doncs, la clau és que la identitat de l'organització ha de ser una identitat familiar, que li confereix una exclusivitat, difícilment imitable (Sundaramurthy i Kreiner, 2008; Zellweger, Eddleston i Kellermanns, 2010).

1.1. El rol del *familiness* en l'empresa familiar

La majoria d'investigacions que fan referència al concepte de *familiness* han estat desenvolupades conceptualment i des d'un punt de vista empresarial, i de com aquest concepte pot ser una gran font d'avantatge competitiu respecte les altres empreses.

Així doncs, el concepte de *familiness* es pot definir com el conjunt de recursos i capacitats idiosincràtiques que té una empresa familiar, fruit de la interacció entre la família i de l'activitat empresarial (Habbershon i Williams, 1999; Habbershon, Williams, i MacMillan, 2003). Pearson, Carr i Shaw (2008) assenyalen que els recursos que té una empresa familiar, i que conformen el *familiness*, es poden agrupar en tres tipologies: estructurals (vincles de la xarxa), relacionals (confiança, normes, obligacions d'identificació) i cognitius (visió, llenguatge compartit i comunitari). En canvi, Irava (2009) afirma que els recursos idiosincràtics que formen el *familiness* es poden classificar en tres tipus: els recursos humans, amb el potencial de diferenciació quant a la capacitació, la confiança, la lleialtat, el compromís, etc.; els recursos organitzatius, amb avantatges en termes dels interessos de la família i els valors, l'orgull de la família, la presa de decisió ràpida, etc.; i els recursos de procés en termes de diferenciació relacional amb les parts interessades i els clients externs.

Les diferents aproximacions del *familiness* a nivell conceptual realitzades per diversos autors, es poden considerar des de dues perspectives diferents: des del punt de vista de l'empresa i des del punt de vista del consumidor.

Des de la visió empresarial, es pot veure com Pearson *et al*. (2008) relaciona la teoria del capital social amb el *familiness*, observant com s'associa el *familiness* amb el liderage de l'empresa familiar. Seguint amb aquesta aproximació, els autors Kansikas, Laakkonen, Sarpo i Kontinen (2012) analitzen com el *familiness* contribueix en les relacions familiars i la seva relació amb el liderage empresarial per tal de reconèixer oportunitats, cercar la innovació, assumir riscos i obtenir la pro-activitat dels líders. Al mateix temps, López, Serrano, Gómez i García (2012) analitzen l'efecte del *familiness* en la *performance* innovadora de les empreses familiars.

Des de l'altre punt de vista, Reuber i Fischer (2011) observen la importància de conèixer les percepcions dels clients sobre les empreses familiars i les seves implicacions (Byrom i Lehman, 2009; Carrigan i Buckley, 2008). En aquest sentit, Tokarczyk, Hansen, Green i Down (2007) suggereixen que *familiness* pot augmentar l'orientació al mercat de les empreses familiars; Craig, Dibrell i Davis (2008) introdueixen el concepte de *family-based brand identity* com una eina de màrqueting atractiva per a les empreses familiars; i Carrigan i Buckley (2008) aprofundeixen en el significat de *familiness* en la ment dels consumidors d'empreses familiars, a partir de les relacions i les experiències obtingudes.

Entre els dos punts de vista, es troba la recerca portada a terme per Smith-Maguire, Strickland i Frost (2013), els quals intenten conceptualitzar el *familiness* de les empreses familiars vitivinícoles per saber si està present en la marca de l'empresa.

Malgrat que s'ha esmentat que el *familiness* pot aportar un avantatge competitiu, no és així en tots els casos, ja que només es pot donar en aquells que continguin uns recursos i unes capacitats positives, que Habbershon *et al*. (2003) anomenen com a *distinctive familiness*, el qual serà l'element diferenciador que tenen les empreses familiars respecte la resta d'empreses. Per altra banda, un *constrictive familiness* podrà afectar a l'eficiència de l'empresa, i que aquesta es vegi limitada (Habbershon, *et al*. 2003). En definitiva, podem trobar alguns casos on el *familiness* també pot esdevenir un element negatiu per l'empresa familiar.

D'altra banda, Chrisman *et al.* (2005a) observen que la singularitat de les empreses familiars és deguda a la participació de la família en la gestió de l'empresa, i li confereix un caràcter distintiu. Aquesta implicació de la família en el negoci és la que crea el *familiness*. En canvi, les empreses familiars on la implicació de la família està només en la propietat i el control, la influència de la família serà mínima, com també ho serà el seu *familiness* (Chrisman *et al.*, 2005a). És a dir, la creació del *familiness* anirà associada a l'activitat, activa o passiva, de les famílies dins de la pròpia empresa familiar (Kellermanns, Eddleston, Sarathy, i Murphy, 2010; Zellweger *et al*., 2010).

Es pot afirmar, doncs, que la implicació i la influència de la família en el negoci està relacionada amb els següents dimensions: la participació de la família i l'essència dels comportaments de la família tal com observen Chrisman *et al.* (2005a). Posteriorment, Zellweger *et al.* (2010) va afegir una tercera dimensió sobre la importància de la família en la identitat de l'empresa. La primera es refereix a la mesura en què la família està involucrada directament en la propietat, la gestió i el control de l'empresa. La segona dimensió representa com els interessos i valors de la família formen part de la filosofia i de les estratègies empresarials; així com, la visió transgeneracional que té la família pel negoci i l'objectiu de protegir-lo (Arregle *et al.*, 2007). Finalment, la tercera dimensió incorporada per Zellweger *et al.* (2010), es refereix en quina mesura la imatge de l'empresa està clarament definida per la identitat de la família.

En resum, el concepte de *familiness* no és un substitut de la influència de la família en el negoci, sinó que fa referència al conjunt idiosincràtic de recursos i capacitats que sorgeixen de la influència de la família (Chrisman *et al.*, 2006; Habbershon, 2006). Essent aquest, un atribut potencial per les empreses familiars que les permet obtenir un avantatge competitiu (Dyer i Singh, 1998; Sirmon i Hitt, 2003).

En l'actualitat hi ha un grau més elevat de coneixement del significat del concepte de *familiness*, però malgrat totes les aportacions fetes pels diferents autors, no s'ha acabat de definir les dimensions del *familiness* d'una forma mesurable per tal d'identificar quin és el grau de *familiness* que té cada empresa en particular. Per tant, és necessari continuar i aprofundir en la recerca en aquest àmbit, a nivell empíric i teòric.

2. Les característiques de les empreses familiars en el sector turístic

Actualment la recerca en empresa familiar en general augmenta anualment entre un 17% i un 12,4% segons ElSevier i el ProQuest en revistes d'empresa, respectivament, segons els estudis realitzats per Astrachan i Pieper (2010) i Steward i Miner (2011). En l'àmbit turístic, en canvi, la

literatura que hi ha sobre empreses familiars és molt poca, si es compara amb el que s'ha estudiat en altres indústries. Cal afegir, que la major part d'aquesta literatura en empresa familiar, específica del sector turístic, no es basa únicament en la investigació de qüestions relacionades amb el propi negoci familiar, sinó que sorgeix com un element secundari i de vegades accidental associat a la recerca amb la petita empresa, l'esperit empresarial, entre altres temes. Per aquest motiu, Getz, Carlsen i Morrison (2004) observen la necessitat d'investigar en l'empresa familiar turística per identificar els aspectes comuns i diferenciadors respecte la literatura d'empresa familiar en general o, específicament, respecte altres sectors o indústries.

Els temes més analitzats en la literatura general en empresa familiar són: les motivacions i objectius, les estratègies de formulació i contingut, les estratègies d'implementació i control, i finalment, el *management* (Matherne III, Debicki, Kellermanns i Chrisman, 2013). Aquest interès ha anat canviant al llarg dels anys. En l'actualitat, el tema que capta més atenció en els investigadors són les estratègies d'implementació i control, les quals comprenen l'estructura, l'evolució, el lideratge, i el *corporate governance*; en canvi, anys enrere, ho era només el lideratge, la propietat i la successió (Matherne III *et al.*, 2013).

Pel que fa a l'empresa familiar turística, Getz i Carlsen (2005) van dur a terme una revisió de la literatura sobre el tema que ens ocupa i van observar que es feia especial menció als atributs de les petites empreses, entre altres temes analitzats com són els motius i objectius de la creació d'una empresa familiar, la vida familiar i qüestions de gènere en l'empresa familiar, així com en les connexions entre les empreses familiars i el desenvolupament del turisme sostenible (Jones i Haven-Tang, 2005).

Paral·lelament, Matherne III *et al.* (2013) van observar que un dels buits en la recerca sobre l'empresa familiar en general és l'aprofundiment en els objectius no econòmics de les empreses familiars. L'objectiu d'una empresa familiar no és només la creació de riquesa i la voluntat de perpetuar aquesta generació de rendes (Chrisman, Chua i Sharma, 2003; Sharma, Chrisman i Chua, 1997), sinó que aquestes empreses tenen altres motivacions com: la independència, l'autonomia, i la seguretat familiar (Andersoson, Carlsen i Getz, 2002; Basco, 2006; Kuratko, Hornsby i Nafziger, 1997).

En canvi, en l'empresa familiar del sector turístic s'han explorat els motius i objectius dels fundadors de les empreses relacionats sobretot amb l'estil de vida i les preferències per un canvi de localització (Komppula, 2000; Getz i Carlsen, 2005), i en canvi, no s'ha indagat en els objectius relacionats amb el creixement empresarial. El motiu d'aquesta diferència és que les empreses familiars turístiques són freqüentment petites, i neixen amb l'objectiu de donar suport a un negoci principal (Pearce, 1990; Getz i Carslen, 2000), com una activitat secundària o un *hobby* (Getz i Carslen, 2000; Kousis, 1989; Lynch, 1996; Oppermann, 1997). També s'hi pot trobar una motivació relacionada amb la cerca d'autonomia evitant treballar per compte aliè (Getz i Carlsen, 2000), i finalment, aconseguir un estil de vida determinat (McKercher i Robbins, 1998). Aquesta tipologia d'objectius, relacionats tots ells amb l'estil de vida, són encara molt més freqüents en empreses situades en les zones rurals tal com mostren Bransgrove i King (1996) en el seu estudi.

Aquestes diferències empresarials entre el sector turístic i altres sectors econòmics, sorgeixen sobretot per la manca de barreres d'entrada a l'hora d'encoratjar nous emprenedors i empresaris amb poca preparació empresarial o formació en invertir en el sector turístic (Getz *et al.*, 2004). Aquests fan servir el *benchmarking* i la seva experiència com a turistes a l'hora de projectar els nous negocis, i això és el que pot limitar el seu potencial de creixement. D'altra banda, aquesta facilitat d'accés fa que, a part de la competència entre destinacions, hi hagi una gran competència per la similitud entre productes i serveis. A Espanya, per exemple, en la distribució sectorial de les

empreses familiars, el sector turístic ocupa la quarta posició amb un 10% del conjunt d'empreses associades al Instituto de la Empresa Familiar (2013).

Les empreses turístiques requereixen d'un alt nivell d'interacció entre els propietaris i els clients (*hosts and guests*). Aquest contacte, de vegades, és el desencadenant de conflictes a causa de la manca de privacitat de la família propietària, de les possibles queixes dels clients, o de la manca d'expertesa, entre altres. Aquestes situacions conflictives apareixen sobretot quan es dóna un del dos casos següents (o tots dos). Primerament, davant de petites o micro-empreses on tota o part de la família participa en la gestió o té una vinculació casi diària amb l'establiment turístic i en molts d'aquests casos, sense personal extern a la família; o bé, en els casos en què l'empresa turística es troba situada dins del propi habitatge familiar.

D'altra banda, aquest contacte entre propietari i consumidor pot esdevenir un avantatge, ja que pot crear i mantenir una millor relació amb els clients gràcies a proporcionar unes respostes ràpides i personalitzades de les peticions dels consumidors (Micelotta i Raynard, 2011), oferint productes d'una qualitat més elevada (Teal, Upton i Seaman, 2003), proporcionant una excel·lent atenció al client (Carrigan i Buckley, 2008; Orth i Green, 2009), i/o que, pels compradors, el nom de la família es relacioni amb un grau més alt de confiança en la pròpia empresa familiar (Dyer i Dyer, 2009).

En aquest sentit, una de les contribucions en la literatura de l'empresa familiar en el sector turístic és la realitzada per Wanhill (1997) on s'assenyala que les famílies poden ser part de l'experiència turística, i que l'autenticitat de l'experiència turística es pot veure augmentada a través del contacte amb la família i amb la comunitat local. Per tant, quan la família es converteix en part del producte turístic s'esdevé una poderosa font d'avantatge competitiu.

Aquest avantatge competitiu compensa amb la imatge negativa que pot tenir l'empresa familiar en el sector turístic, especialment de les petites empreses. Pel que fa a aspectes considerats negatius, solen anar relacionats amb les possibles insuficiències en els recursos humans, financers i tecnològics que poden tenir i, en particular a un capital limitat, a una manca d'habilitats, al desconeixement en l'orientació del negoci, i la manca de diferenciació, entre altres (Ateljevic i Doorne, 2000; Morrisson i Conway, 2007; Morrison, Rimmington i Williams, 1999; Shaw i Williams, 1987, 1990; Stallinbras 1980; William, Shaw, i Greenwood, 1989).

En resum, podem veure que les empreses familiars turístiques el negoci està més centrat en la família (Singer i Donahu, 1992). Aquesta tipologia d'empresa fa que el desenvolupament i creixement del negoci i dels seus productes estigui enllaçat en tot moment amb els objectius, cultura i valors de la família, trasllats a la pròpia empresa.

3. Objectius de la tesi

Tenint en compte els desenvolupaments teòrics en la literatura en empresa familiar realitzada fins a la data d'avui, pel que fa al significat i l'estructura del concepte de *familiness*, i les particularitats de les empreses familiars en el sector turístic; el principal objectiu de la present tesi és contribuir al debat en curs sobre la conceptualització del concepte de *familiness*, i els elements que el componen, així com l'avantatge competitiu que pot generar a les empreses familiars, concretament, en el context de les empreses familiars d'allotjament turístic. Per assolir aquest objectiu general, se'n deriven un seguit de preguntes de recerca a les que la tesi doctoral en vol donar resposta. Cadascun dels tres articles de la tesi doctoral ofereix una resposta a una de les tres

preguntes de recerca que es mostren i es resumeixen a continuació, i els quals conformen cadascun d'ells un capítol de la present tesi. Finalment, el darrer capítol del document, el capítol 5, es presenten les principals conclusions basades en els resultats obtinguts.

1.2. Com influeix el *familiness* a la creació de la marca corporativa d'una empresa familiar en el sector turístic?

En la literatura s'observa com una empresa familiar pot desenvolupar una marca corporativa d'acord a la seva cultura, valors, ideals, juntament amb la resta de recursos i capacitats intangibles que té la mateixa, altrament conegut com *familiness*. Per tant, la marca corporativa de l'empresa familiar es convertirà en un clar reflex dels valors personals i familiars a l'empresa (O'Malley, 1991). Els elements únics de les empreses familiars, citats anteriorment, contribuiran també a la creació de productes o serveis difícilment imitables (Ackerman, 1998; Balmer, 1995, 2001; de Chernatony, 1999, 2001; Ind, 1997), i atrauran a un públic que compartirà valors similars als de l'empresa familiar.

En aquest context, el capítol 2 de la tesi té com objectiu analitzar la influència del *familiness* a la marca corporativa d'una empresa familiar en el sector turístic, així com les implicacions o conseqüències d'aquesta marca en la comunitat (l'adopció de pràctiques sostenibles), la família (adopció de lent o restringit les estratègies de negoci de creixement) i sobre els clients (en fer la família en si mateixa part de l'experiència turística).

1.3. Com és percebut el *familiness* en l'experiència turística per part del consumidor?

L'èxit d'un negoci i de les compres per part dels consumidors dels seus productes o serveis, és en bona part, de l'adaptació de l'empresa al comportament del consumidor. En el cas de l'empresa familiar turística, si la família que dirigeix una empresa familiar pot arribar a ser part del producte turístic i influir positivament a la satisfacció i en l'experiència dels clients, segons va afirmar Wanhill (1997), s'hauria de conèixer el comportament dels consumidors sobre la presència o absència de *familiness* en els productes i serveis d'empreses familiars, per tal d'avaluar el *familiness* com un factor en el procés de presa de decisions dels consumidors. També condueix a plantejar l'objectiu del segon article sobre el que significa *familiness* segons clients i la forma en què realment perceben o observen la influència de la família a l'empresa familiar.

Per tant, en el capítol 3, es sosté que a l'explorar el *familiness* des de la perspectiva del consumidor pot contribuir a una comprensió més completa del concepte i aprofundir en els possibles avantatges que les empreses familiars turístiques poden guanyar si s'aborden les preocupacions dels consumidors.

1.4. Com influeix el *familiness* en la satisfacció dels consumidors d'empreses familiars turístiques?

En el capítol 4, s'observa que per una banda, la literatura ja ha començat a identificar les dimensions pertinents al *familiness*, i per l'altre costat es pot observar com la comunicació del *familiness* pot ajudar a crear experiències turístiques més satisfactòries, i per tant, aconseguir un avantatge competitiu respecte altres empreses. No obstant, no hi ha una evidència empírica sobre si

les diferents dimensions del *familiness* poden tenir algun efecte sobre la satisfacció dels clients, ni tampoc s'ha observat de si els clients d'hotels de gestió familiar amb més *familiness* estan més satisfets que els clients dels hotels de gestió familiar amb menys *familiness*.

A través d'usar el *familiness* en la marca corporativa, els hotels de gestió familiar poden fer que els seus clients siguin conscients dels recursos i capacitats úniques que tenen, tant abans com durant la visita. Aquest reconeixement de l'empresa com una empresa familiar pot predisposar als clients a gaudir dels potencials avantatges competitius de l'empresa familiar, però no hi ha un fonament empíric per saber si aquest reconeixement pot garantir un lliurament efectiu de totes les dimensions del *familiness*, i encara menys si això té algun efecte sobre la satisfacció convidats.

D'aquesta manera, el plantejament de l'objectiu del tercer article és doble. Primerament, es vol examinar els factors potencials que poden explicar les diferències en *familiness* entre hotels de gestió familiar, i seguidament, esbrinar si els consumidors valoren el *familiness* com un aspecte fonamental de la seva satisfacció general com hostes.

CHAPTER 2:

BRANDING FAMILINESS IN TOURISM FAMILY FIRMS

ABSTRACT Very little research has been done on the creation and development of a family corporate brand in tourism family firms and their effects. In this article, we aim to start filling this gap in the literature by first developing a conceptual model of the creation of a family corporate brand in tourism firms, and later present a case study to explore to what extent the tenets of the model are observed in the case. The conceptual model is developed taking as a reference some of the general literature on branding, and adapting it to the case of family firms in the tourism sector. On the other hand, the case shows how the particular family values or familiness on which the brand is build supports sustainable. practices of tourism development, a particular pattern of business growth and development, and proves how the fact of being a family business becomes an essential part of the tourist experience for the guest.

1. Introduction

Although there are many studies with regard to the analysis of family businesses from different perspectives at a disciplinary and conceptual level, none has yet studied the influence that family values exercise on corporate branding, and their consequences. Fundamentally, the article considers that a family business will develop its corporate brand and product in keeping with its own ideals. At this stage, and in particular in what refers to the consequences of family branding for the strategic decisions that family businesses make, we restrict our analysis to the case of tourism-based family businesses.

The objective of this article is thus to analyse the influence of familiness on the corporate brand of a family business in the tourism sector, and the effects it has on the community (adoption of sustainable practices), on the family (adoption of slow or restricted business growth strategies) and on the customers (by making the family itself part of the tourism experience).

Many tourists are attracted to a type of authentic cultural experience, especially as it provides opportunities for learning about the everyday life in communities and families (Notzke, 1999). Wanhill (1997) observed that those families that own a tourism business might become part of the tourist experience of a visitor themselves, in addition to increasing visitor satisfaction. In addition, the values of these tourism family firms will have specific consequences on the sustainability of the business itself and the destination in which they are embedded, as well as on their growth strategy. Some of these consequences are much more marked in the tourism business, which justify the restricted analysis of the model for tourism firms at this exploratory stage. This fact constitutes the basis of what we term family branding in tourism, the creation of a family brand, which could become a powerful element to gain a competitive advantage in the family business.

This article first introduces the literature on family businesses related to tourism and to branding in these companies. An exploratory conceptual model is then proposed and some propositions derived. Finally, the case of a tourism-based family firm is analysed, making use of interviews and qualitative methods. The results are then presented in the form of a discussion on the influence of the family values on the corporate branding of a family business, and its effects, together with the recommendation that tourism-based family businesses make use of their familiness when creating a corporate brand to help them become and remain competitive.

2. Literature review

Authors such as Getz *et al*. (2004), in a book entitled *The Family Business in Tourism and Hospitality*, identify a series of gaps in the literature, and among them the following gap about the family brand in tourism-based family businesses:

> One of the topics with a particular and until now, unexplored interest, is that of family branding in tourism and hotel businesses. As such, the appropriate research questions are: (1) Are there determined aspects of tourism and the hotel business which influence the strengths or weaknesses of a tourism-based family company? (2) Are there opportunities and unique aspects of family branding in tourism and the hotel trade?

Corporate branding is the practice of using a company's name as a product brand name. It is an attempt to leverage corporate brand equity to create product brand recognition. It is a type of family branding or umbrella brand. The concept of family branding is a marketing strategy that involves the sale of various products and/or services from a company under one brand name. If the brand has value in terms of acceptance by customers, then all products and services using the same brand name should be welcomed.

However, there is a second meaning of the term family branding. It is developed by Wanhill (1997), and occurs when the family of a family business, which becomes part of the tourist experience and the local community, is introduced in the corporate brand of the family firm.

To avoid confusion with these two meanings of the term family branding, we use branding familiness to refer to Wanhill's meaning, and the term family branding to refer to branding by means of an umbrella brand.

Literature on branding informs us that branding is not only a differentiating aspect, but it also acts as an instrument to create added value to the product. To put it another way, a brand is an entity that offers clients an added value, and that is based on factors that reach beyond their strictly functional tasks. These added values or brand values differentiate the offer and provide a base, so that clients feel a preference for or have loyalty to wards one company and not to another (Knox, 2004).

The brand consists of a name, a symbol or a design, or a combination of all three. It is used to identify the goods or services of a company and differentiate it from its competitors (O'Malley, 1991). Despite this, the only purpose of a brand is to construct an image of its product (Cleary, 1981). Companies develop brands in order to attract and maintain clients and promote values, an image, a certain prestige, and/or a lifestyle. A good brand will provide a value for the client and confidence in those products under the same brand, in addition to an acceptance of its new products that enter the market.

In the case of family businesses, this brand name may be the surname of the company founder. When the customers view the company name as a person, it is a personification approach that is used to understand the corporate brand image of the business (Vinhas Da Silva and Faridah Syed Alwi, 2008). In all events, any failure within the company affects the image of the family (Getz *et al*, 2004). In contrast, the success of the company engenders prestige and recognition of the family that owns the business.

As such, branding offers family companies the chance to commercialise its products using the vision and the culture of the company as unique elements of its products (Balmer, 1995, 2001; Ind, 1997; Ackerman, 1998; de Chernatony, 1999, 2001). Habbershon and Williams (1999) describe the

family business as unusually complex, dynamic and rich in intangible resources. This set of intangible resources is what makes a family business unique, and can be encapsulated in the term familiness.

The term has been used by Habbershon *et al* (2003) to refer to the result of the interactions between different members of the family, the business and the community with the potential to create a competitive advantage or a disadvantage for the company, in a direct or indirect manner (Dyer and Singh, 1999; Sirmon and Hitt, 2001).

The family business brand therefore becomes a refl ection of the personal values of the company, and the latter must be coherent with the values of its clients (O'Malley, 1991). As such, every family business must create a brand in accordance with its principal family and/or business values, with a specific product that will attract a public with whom it shares similar values.

The brand contributes not only to creating images of the company for the clients, but also to the creation of images of all the stakeholders in the business, such as employees, clients, investors, suppliers, partners, the local community and so on (Hatch and Schultz, 2001).

3.   Research Hypotheses

3.1.   An exploratory model of corporate branding for tourism-based family firms

Our model of the formation of a brand in tourism family businesses and its main consequences takes as a basis Hatch and Schultz's (2001) model, which depicts the factors that interact in the process of creating a corporate brand.

In the model of Hatch and Schultz (2001), the corporate brand arises from the link of three main elements, which are (1) the strategic vision, (2) the organisational culture and (3) the corporate images. These three factors are defi ned in the following manner, according to Hatch and Schultz (2001).

The *strategic vision* is the main idea that is behind the company, and which represents and expresses everything that the company seeks to achieve in the long term. From this, company vision, the mission, the company philosophy and its own objectives arise. The *organisational culture* is a collection of company values, beliefs and premises that must be communicated to all those who work in the company. The *corporate image* comprises the different viewpoints of the organisation held by the stakeholders; that is, the opinion and the impression that different people in contact with the company have, such as clients, employees, the media and the public in general, among others. This perceived image will be translated into corporate reputation, and will promote the fidelity of different stakeholders with respect to the company.

The business culture, which comprises the company values, plays a highly relevant role in the development of any company, given that it acts as a differentiating factor among companies. As such, the existence of centralised values that are inculcated by the family means that the development of the company is coherent with these values.

In family businesses, it has been observed that the role of the founder is fundamental, as the company develops in accordance with his/her values. These values have been transmitted to the rest of the family and to the workers, and are usually maintained throughout the life of the company. As such, it may be said that family businesses usually have a pyramidal structure, as the founder is at

all times the reference during business activity, even though he/she may not be active within the company.

This entire collection of values contributes to the creation of a corporate brand which relates constantly to the values of the family. These values also act as a differential factor with respect to competitors. All the stakeholders within the company must be aware of these values; this means that both the family and company employees are responsible for transmitting these values to the clients. As a consequence, all the actors in the company will project the same image of the company.

Furthermore, the lack of cohesive values and objectives among family members in the company and among other employees may be reflected in the products and services offered. This may hinder the creation of a single image by all the stakeholders and that of a single brand for the entire company, in addition to reducing the quality of the products and services offered. If such internal problems in a family business are not solved, an internal crisis may arise, one that could cause the company to fail.

In this context, we tried to relate the concept of familiness to the process of corporate brand formation through the development of a conceptual model. With this background, we propose a model depicting how family values and the other intangible resources, represented by the term of familiness, are represented in the corporate brand of the family business by means of their presence in the strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate image of the family firm.

In addition, the model suggests some important implications or consequences of these values for a tourism family firm in terms of their contribution to sustainable practices, the business growth path of the firm and the actual experience and satisfaction of the tourist or visitor.

From the elements in the model and their links, depicted in Figure 1 , we derive the following particular hypothesis or propositions, which we argue below.

Figure 1: Familiness and corporate branding in tourism-based family firms.
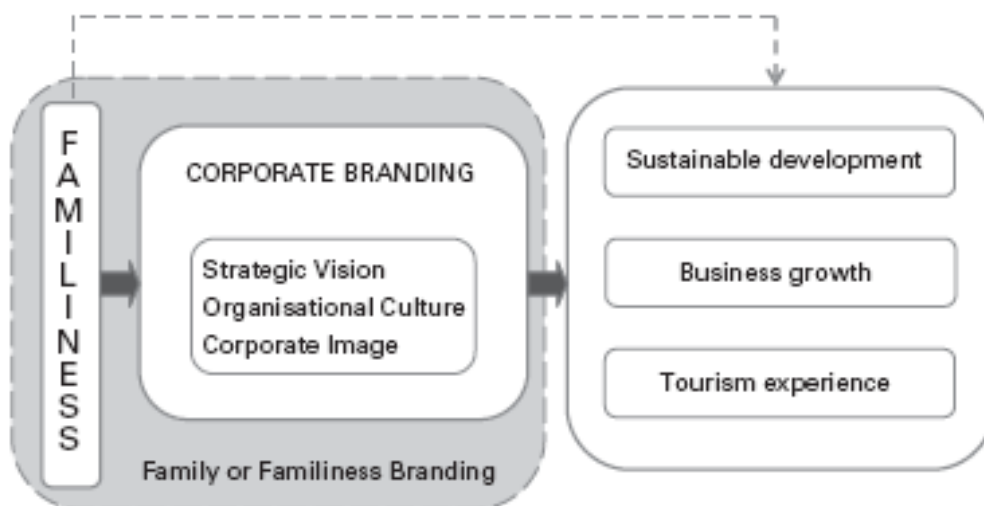
3.2. Propositions

Proposition 1: Family values associated with business activity are the basis for the creation of a corporate brand based on the concept of familiness.

The intangible resources that form the familiness of a company are reflected in the model above, exactly in the three elements that are part of the corporate brand: strategic vision, corporate culture and corporate image. As such, the brand of a tourism-based family company will be linked to values that are inculcated by the family, in comparison to other non-family-based companies in which the values will be different.

The relationship is based on Habbershon and Williams (1999) , which applies the resource-based view to the resources of the family business to highlight its unique character, that is, its familiness. Thus, the author observes how the unique features of family businesses have the potential to generate a competitive advantage. These unique features are provided by some intangible resources such as routines, culture, learning, trust, beliefs, judgement, goals, socialisation, process and experience, and are the elements that compose the familiness. At the same time, some of those resources that make familiness are part of the formation process of the corporate brand, such as beliefs, goals and others.

Proposition 2: A corporate family brand in the tourism business is favourable to the use of sustainable business practices, owing to the values inherent in the concept of familiness.

The subject of sustainability in the tourism sector is a highly important factor, and this factor is associated within a company through the values that are part of the organisational culture of a company.

The main reason for the creation of family businesses is the lifestyle (Getz *et al.*, 2004), but are also motivated according to Carlsen and Liburd (2006) and Schaper and Carlsen (2004) for conservation, and according to Bramwell and Alletorp (2001) and Getz *et al.* (2004) for sustainability, particularly in ecologically, socially and economically rural areas.

Therefore, being a family-based business with values that contribute to sustainability would act as a guarantee when undertaking an activity or service and employing sustainable practices, that is, those focused on its own values (or on its business culture), and not on the idea of doing business at any cost.

Carlsen and Liburd (2006) demonstrated that family businesses, not corporations, are best placed to embrace the transformation towards sustainable tourism development for its principles of equity and concern for matters beyond profitability, and which are fundamental for this type of business.

Proposition 3: A corporate family brand in a tourism-based company determines a model of business growth that is slow and limited.

This proposal concerns a possible expansion of the family business at a territorial level or an expansion of products and/or services, as long as this expansion is in accordance with its values of familiness as a family business. This means that the growth of the business is undertaken as this is fulfilled and as it is able to ensure the perspectives of the family values.

Tourist family businesses do not only seek an environmental, social and cultural sustainability as a mechanism to increase benefits. Instead, this sustainability is motivated by a personal desire to

maintain family values, culture and traditions, which is their aim and the way they sell their own family business (Carlsen & Liburd, 2006).

Proposition 4: A corporate family brand in a tourism-based company will be a guarantee that familiness becomes a key element in the experience of the visitors.

The collection of intangible resources of a family business – that is, the familiness – means that every family business is unique. When these differentiating elements are applied to the corporate brand, competitive advantage can be attained with respect to other companies. Clients perceive this familiness from the family brand created by the company, ensuring that the family becomes part of the tourist product and experience, thereby increasing client satisfaction (Wanhill, 1997).

4. Methodology

We now present an exploratory case made of a tourism-based family company in order to illustrate the theoretical concepts and proposals established in the previous section. The company selected for this study was the Grup Mas de Torrent.

The case study has been conducted following a qualitative methodology, using in-depth interviews with a semi-structured script. A single-case study is used in our research. Yin proposes five rationales as major reasons for conducting a single-case study. In our case, the single study is used to help to refocus future investigations in the same field. In addition, this single-case study will be used as a pilot case that is the first of a multiple-case study (Yin, 2003).

The control for the interviews was established with previous knowledge of what was to be ascertained, and to do this the formulation of the questions were adjusted to the responses desired. During the interview, control was maintained by listening and guiding those interviewed so that they did not stray from the themes dealt with.

The interviewees in this research are: (a) three members of the family who actively participate in the company, one of them being the founder, who is now retired, and the others are two of his sons who are active members of the company; (b) another two people who are professionals, who work in the company but without any family relationship. These interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and were later transcribed, reflecting all the conceptual aspects and incidents such as interruptions and the overlapping of conversations. An analysis of the conversations has been made in accordance with the information provided.

When one reaches the moment at which carrying out more interviews only provides information already gathered, and which does not differ from the information already obtained, a so-called saturation of information has occurred. This is why five interviews were carried out. Despite this, a random exploration was also carried out informally with people from different occupational categories in the firm, to confirm this saturation of information; the result was positive, and no more interviews were carried out.

5. Case study: The Grup Mas de Torrent

The Grup Mas de Torrent was created on the opening of the Mas de Torrent Hotel, in the town of Torrent, Catalonia (Spain), in December 1988. At that time, the business activities of the family were focused on the real estate business; however, the company acquired this name on entering the hotel sector.

The philosophy of the Grup Mas de Torrent is that of its founder Joan Figueras and that of his family, and it is the same philosophy that has inspired their career over the years – one based on quality, tradition and the environment, and one that offers its clients a peaceful holiday in the heart of the Empordà region, an idyllic area of the Costa Brava.

The Grup Mas de Torrent is a diversified family business, operating in both real estate and tourism, although at present the tourism sector has become far more important in terms of company activity. Although a family company, at an organisational level it is a professionalised business; the family is responsible for its strategic management, but the positions of management and administration of the establishments themselves are held by sector employees from outside the family. Despite this, continual contact is maintained between family members and staff – a fact that ensures staff loyalty in the company's various establishments and the inculcation of family values.

6. Findings and discussion

First, from the analysis of the case, we can give a description of the characteristics of the relevant factors in the corporate brand of the family company (Sirmon and Hitt, 2001), showing that the family values and familiness are present in the strategic vision, the organisational culture and the corporate image of the company. Therefore, the statement of the *first proposition* derived from the model is illustrated in this manner in the case analysed. More specially, in the case of Mas de Torrent, the familiness is reflected in each of the three basic factors of corporate branding, as can be seen below:

Strategic vision: The philosophy of the Grup Mas de Torrent is that of enjoying one's work, as the different establishments run by the organisation are treated with the same dedication and enthusiasm as one would give to a "hobby" – the company activities coincide with a passion for business. The Grup Mas de Torrent, as a family business, does not seek to maximise its profits; it seeks to develop and maintain a determined lifestyle in a specific area (the Empordà). As such, the company seeks to maintain a certain relationship to its environment, without renouncing its business activities, in order to achieve recognition and the prestige that came with having pioneered this type of accommodation in the area. This is reflected in the following extracts of the interviews:

> The philosophy and the objectives of the Grup Mas de Torrent, mean that staff feels at home, like a big family. This is how the owners ensure staff loyalty. It is the employees who transmit to the clients their satisfaction within their workplace, meaning that the service which they offer clients is more family-orientated and of a higher quality. Another characteristic of the strategic vision of group is the growth which it has experienced over the years. Even though at first, the growth of the Grup Mas de Torrent was not established as an objective, there has been growth in terms of services and new establishments. This expansion is a reality; however it is one which they can always control themselves, and which involves a component of enthusiasm, or an emotional bond with a new purchase.

Organisational culture: The father and founder of the Grup Mas de Torrent has passed on his values to his children and to his workers to attain hotels with intangible factors that characterise them, such as quality, exclusivity, prestige and so on, and which are the basis of the philosophy, the motivations and the objectives of the family and of the family firm Grup Mas de Torrent.

The values that the founder has passed on are diverse, owing to their very nature. Among these values transmitted to the rest of the family, there are those that reflect that the family comes first, before the business, and there are also those of environmental sustainability. These final values reaffirm the fact that the business does not pursue the highest profit margins, but rather seeks to maintain a certain lifestyle, which is another value that has been passed on from one generation to the next. This sustainability element is applied in the physical structure of the different establishments that the group has, in addition to the conservation and protection of their environment.

In reference to the other values that have been passed on, and are part of the organisational culture of the firm, there are all those emotional values that result in a determined behaviour and manner of working by both the family and the staff – one that the clients notice. These values emphasise the enthusiasm for taking care of the business, and the idea of feeling at home, among other factors. Expansion is adjusted to the hopes of the family in order to initiate a new business, and not as a new source of income. Thus, when a proposal for a new product does not fulfil the values and perspectives of the family, this new project is discontinued.

Corporate image: The image of the Grup Mas de Torrent is closely linked to the hotel that gives its name to the brand, and which is also the first tourism establishment of the group. This brand has promoted itself with its entry into the international chain Relais & Châteaux, which translates into a symbol of quality and reputation. The reputation is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the success because companies also need strong brands (Corkindale and Belder, 2009).

The brand is only part of the product; the communication strategy is necessary to create the brand image (Guzman, 2005). This image has been worked on in order to obtain a certain prestige, something that the organisation has now acquired. In this case, therefore, this prestige must be maintained and transmitted to the target public and all the stakeholders. The public, or rather the clients, are those who receive the products and the services that the hotel group offers, and they also receive the values, the images and so on that are transmitted by the owners and the workers. Furthermore, one of the main objectives of the company is client loyalty.

The staff, as has been said, are those who have the most contact with the clients, and it is they who transmit the values of the family, and who are responsible for offering a quality service that translates into a corporate image, and consequently, a determined brand. In other words, the staff are seen by customers as a manifestation of the brand (de Chernatony, 2006). Therefore, the relationship between the owners and the employees is highly important, as if the relationship is positive and family-based, this is noticed by the clients. It is thanks to this factor that staff loyalty is achieved in a sector where there is a great deal of employee rotation. To achieve this loyalty, staff are offered a series of advantages for the services which they provide within the establishment.

Second, and regarding the consequences of the tourism family business corporate brand, we have the following evidence.

With regard to the *second proposition*, when family values contain ideas of sustainability and preservation, the family business guarantees the development of a sustainable activity that is in accord with its own values.

Related to the lifestyle that is pursued by family businesses dedicated to tourism-based activities, this family business is associated with several sustainable values that are part of its own culture. These may be transmitted in the development of the products, in the establishments themselves and in their surroundings. However, at the same time they contribute towards and benefit the local population at an environmental, cultural and economic level. As such, the existence of sustainable values within a tourism-based family company contributes to the image of both the area and the tourist destination itself.

The *third proposition* refers to the company expansion of a family business. This growth takes place in accordance with the family values of the company itself.

As has been noted, company development will follow in accordance with the values of the family company. Therefore, the moment may arrive when a family business decides to expand or develop new products or services. This business growth will be closely linked to family and business values so as not to lose the lifestyle values at any time.

This means that the expansion will be the result of the enthusiasm for developing a new product or service, or creating a new establishment, while at the same time this expansion will only be undertaken if the maintenance of these values and this corporate family brand can be maintained.

Finally, the *fourth proposition* shows how a tourism-based family company can become a key factor in the touristic experience of a visitor.

The group of intangible resources that make a family-based business unique, that is, its familiness, are transmitted to its clients through the corporate brand of a tourism-based family company. It can be regarded as a cluster of functional and emotional values that promises a unique and welcoming experience (de Chernatony, 2006). This unique aspect influences the competitive advantage that the company may hold, as it may become part of the tourist experience of its own clients.

7. Conclusions and policy implications

Branding has been defined in different ways over the years, depending on the perspective from which the brand is perceived. But in all cases, the brand is related to product identification and the differentiation from its competitors (Heding *et al.*, 2009).

The conceptual model that has been taken as a basis in this study was developed by Hatch and Schultz (2001), in which they observed the different factors involved in the creation of a corporate brand or the company brand: the strategic vision, the organisational culture and the corporate image. This initial model has been adapted to family businesses in the tourism sector and has been expanded to include the concept of familiness and its consequences for the family business.

The conceptual model proposed in this study is postulated as an exploratory theoretical basis for the creation of a corporate brand in a tourism-based family company. The model enhances the entire collection of intangible factors that interact in order to create a corporate brand, and identifies the factors that act as differentiators from other companies offering the same type of product or service, and which attract stakeholders with whom to share the family values.

In order to explore the potential soundness of the proposed model, we conducted a case study of a tourism-based family company. Throughout the case study, the key elements of the model have been sought, such as familiness, the components of corporate branding, sustainable development, company growth and the tourism experience. As such, it has been possible to observe how the different elements interact within a tourism-based family company, and what the results are.

Sustainable development and possible company growth will therefore follow the lifestyle and familiness objectives of the family that owns the business. This development and business growth will contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the community where the company is located. Furthermore, as a consequence of the interaction between the different components of the model, the family and its familiness may become a key factor in the experience of visitors, in addition to increasing the satisfaction of the tourists, as they can provide information and better knowledge of the area, that is, the authenticity of the area.

The results of the research show how particular family values determine a family-based corporate brand, which has, as a consequence, in the case of tourism-based companies, an important differentiation of the product that is difficult to imitate, the adoption of sustainable business practices and a balanced company growth path, which is also sustainable in terms of preserving the values which maintain the brand. Despite these results, this research does not analyse the dynamics and micro-processes involved in the creation or development of a particular corporate family brand. This is another related and complementary theme to the subject analysed here, and requires further attention from the literature.

It must also be said that this investigation has the typical limitations of exploratory studies; on the one hand we need to consider the distinctive factor of the case we analysed, and on the other the distinctive character of the tourism sector we analysed. Therefore, in order to further advance the research in this area of family branding and family firms, this distinctiveness needs to be addressed, that is, for which subset of tourism family firms family branding is more appropriate? Similarly, further research can address the limitations of the model in terms of its restrictiveness to the tourism sector. With both of these developments, further research will advance our understanding of how family businesses brand themselves, and what benefits or consequences branding can have for the strategic decisions of family firms.

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CHAPTER 3:

CUSTOMER'S PERCEPTION OF FAMILINESS IN TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

ABSTRACT Although familiness is a relevant topic for tourism family firms, there is very little research on familiness from either the perspective of the consumer, or in tourism firms. To redress this situation, this paper focuses on understanding how familiness is perceived by customers of tourism family businesses. Findings suggest that consumers experience and perceive familiness as a bundle of four distinctive dimensions, which are seen as both differentiating and valuable elements of the travel experience. Tourism family firms can thus take advantage of their idiosyncratic resources in order to bestow their products with familiness and brand them as such.

1. Introduction

Research on family businesses has increasingly given importance to the development of the concept 'familiness'. However, while these studies have explored and put emphasis on the conceptualization of familiness and the identification of its relevant dimensions (Irava & Moore, 2010; Zellweger, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2010), all of them take the perspective of the firm. This means they analyze familiness as a construct representing idiosyncratic resources and capabilities as seen, developed and experienced by the family owners and the employees of the firm. Instead, this paper analyzes the concept of familiness from the standpoint of consumers and aims at finding out whether customers perceive the presence of the family in the firm's identity and how they experience it and value it.

Familiness is defined as the idiosyncratic bundle of resources and capabilities that a family firm possesses as a consequence of the interactions between the family and the business system (Habbershon & Williams, 1999). Most of these resources and capabilities are found in the form of human resources and organizational capabilities (Irava & Moore, 2010) and thus, are only perceived from within the firm, by family members and employees.

Previous research on the familiness of tourism firms focused on how the family who runs a business can become part of the product and thus a key element of the experience of customers (Wanhill, 1997). More recently, attention has been paid to the potential that tourism family firms have in branding their familiness (Presas, Muñoz, & Guia, 2011; Parmentier, 2011). Nonetheless, a thorough conceptualization of the topic is still missing.

Therefore, we argue that by exploring familiness from the perspective of the consumer we can contribute to a more complete understanding of the concept and shed light on the potential advantages that tourism familiy firms can gain if they address consumers' concerns.

In the paper, we first introduce the most relevant findings from literature on the topic. This is followed by an explanation of the methods used by the authors to explore what perception consumers have of familiness in tourism experiences, a description and interpretation of the main findings and finally, the main conclusions.

2. Background

2.1. Family firms

In recent years we have seen a considerable increase in research on family businesses. This is partly due to the relevance these firms have in most economies. Some of this research has focused on the differences between family and non-family businesses (Chrisman, Chua, & Sharma, 2003), with particular attention to the extent to which family firms possess idiosyncratic resources and competencies and therefore possess a competitive advantage over non-family firms. The analysis of these idiosyncrasies of family businesses is always tied to the affections, impacts and influences that the family owners have on the business (Klein, Astrachan, & Smymios, 2005).

According to Stal (2010: page 2) "family businesses are not like other businesses; anyone who has ever worked with, or for, a family business will know that there are unique forces at play. It is a unique environment that has benefits and pitfalls all of its own."

Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma (2005) say that definitions of family firms can be largely categorised into two groups. The first highlights the family involvement in ownership, governance, management and succession as necessary antecedents to defining a family business. The second further adds that these antecedents are necessary, but are insufficient if they do not produce certain family distinctiveness e.g. familiness.

2.2. Familiness

The family firm literature has coined the term familiness to refer to the idiosyncratic bundle of resources and capabilities that family firms possess (Habbershon *et al.*, 1999; Habbershon, Williams, & MacMillan, 2003). Thus, the role of the family in a family firm is seen as a characteristic contribution to the strategy of the firm with the aim of profiting from the idiosyncratic interplay of both the family and the business elements in this type of firm (Basco & Pérez Rodríguez, 2009; Nordqvist & Melin, 2010; Pieper & Klein, 2007).

Habbershon *et al.*, (1999) are the first authors to use this concept in the family business literature. They defined family firms as complex and dynamic businesses with characteristic and unique resources, and referred to these resources as familiness. Irava (2009) has recently made an important contribution by clearly stating what these idiosyncratic resources are, and classifying them into three types: human resources, with potential distinctiveness in terms of empowerment, trust, loyalty, commitment, etc.; organizational resources with advantages in terms of family interests and values, family pride, fast decision making, etc.; and process resources in terms of relational distinctiveness with external stakeholders and customers. Familiness is therefore seen as a potential attribute, from which family firms can gain competitive advantage (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Sirmon & Hitt, 2001).

A useful and relevant recent definition and conceptualization of familiness is provided by Zellweger *et al.*, (2010), who define a three-dimensional model of familiness which explains the influence of the family on the business in a family firm, thus contributing to the definition of familiness. The three relevant dimensions of familiness for these authors are: the involvement of the family in the ownership of the firm, the essence of family participation, and the relevance of the family in the identity of the firm. The first is concerned with the extent to which the family owners

are directly involved in the ownership, management and control of the firm. The second dimension, essence of the family participation, represents the interests and values of the family that are embedded into the philosophy and strategies of the firm. Finally, the third dimension, the presence and visibility of the family in the identity and image of the firm refers to the extent to which the image of the firm is clearly defined by the identity of the family (figure 1).

Figure 1: Familiness relevant dimensions (adapted from Zellweger *et al.*, 2010)

F A M I L I N E S S		
Involvement in ownership of the business by the family members	**Essence of participation** of the family in the bussiness How much family values are introduced in the strategies of the firm?	**Identity and image of the firm** with strong presence and visibility of the family identity
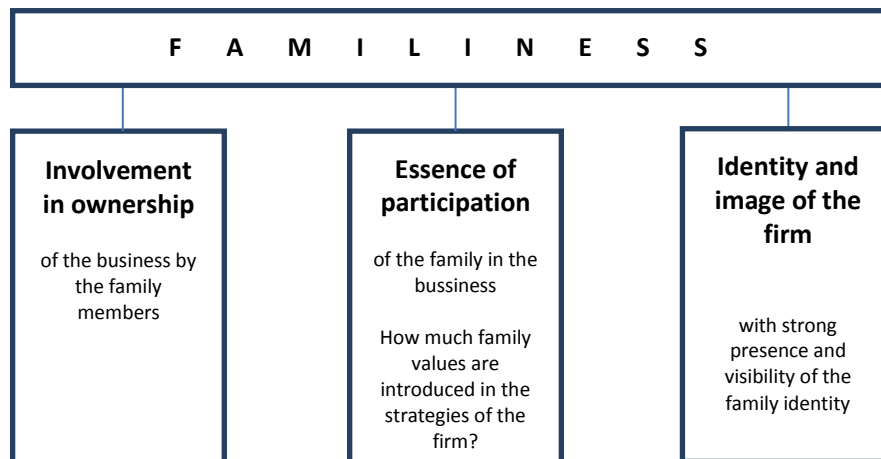
The first of these dimensions, involvement in ownership, is a pre-requisite for a firm to be a family firm, that is, to have an accountability structure that can sustain the family culture in the business. The other two, essence of participation and identity of the firm, increase the firm's familiness when present and thus the potential to gain competitive advantage over firms with less familiness. This suggests that the cultural dimension of familiness is relevant and that we should look at a family business as a family culture with a particular philosophy.

2.3. Familiness and consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour is "the psychological and social processes people undergo in the acquisition, use and disposal of products, services, ideas, and practices" (Bagozzi, Gurhan-Canli, & Priester, 2002). The study of consumer behaviour is needed to explain the success of a business and the consumers' purchases of products or services. Therefore, by analysing the behaviour of consumers concerning the presence or absence of familiness in products and services we can assess the position of familiness as a factor in the consumer decision-making process. There is thus a need to better understand the role family members play in conveying familiness to customers, and how this conjures up feelings of guest satisfaction. In different words, we need to find out how customers perceive familiness and how they value this attribute.

Among the general public the awareness of whether there are family businesses behind the products they consume, or not, is low. This is because people cannot generally distinguish a family from a non-family company unless these businesses actively communicate their family status (Schwarz, Smit, & Moeller, 2009). Therefore, advertising a family-based brand identity might have a significant impact on the firm's performance (Craig, Dibrell, & Davis, 2008).

In fact it has proven to positively influence the buying behaviour of consumers (Nyenrode Now, 2008). Recent research has begun to examine the specific ways in which family firms leverage on their distinctive attributes, that is, their familiness, in their marketing activities. Emphasis has been given to the development of family-based brand identities (Cabrera-Suarez, Deniz-Deniz, & Martin-Santana, 2011; Parmentier, 2011), to the different branding strategies that family firms can draw on to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Micelotta & Raynard, 2011), and to how family firms use their websites to promote themselves as such (Morgan & Botero, 2010; Blombäck & Ramírez-Pasillas, 2009; Presas *et al.*, 2011).

A consumer or a potential client might, thus, be able to distinguish the nature of the company in two ways. Firstly, through how it communicates and presents and introduces itself and its products to others, and secondly, through the information that people get from other consumers, for example, by word of mouth. In addition, when the product or service is delivered and consumed at the same time (Peters & Frehse, 2011) and within the premises of the business, as in the case of most tourism experiences (Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005), the direct contact with the business and the unmediated consumer' perception of the idiosyncratic combinations of resources can suffice to recognize the familiness of the firm.

An adequate understanding of what familiness means to consumers is therefore needed if tourism family firms are to benefit from this attribute by designing appropriate experiences, and developing adequate marketing and branding strategies.

2.4. Family firms and familiness in tourism research

With tourism being the primary research domain of this study, it is worthwhile examining the literature on family firms and familiness in this context. Getz and Carlsen (2005) reviewed the literature on tourism and family firms and concluded that the principal concern of this literature is on the small business attribute of most of these firms, with emphasis on entrepreneurship, especially in terms of motives and goals for starting up a family business; on family life and gender issues within the family business; and on the connections between family businesses and sustainable tourism development (Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005). Unfortunately, most of this literature is not based on research specifically concerned with the family-related dimensions of tourism businesses, which remains a secondary and often incidental topic associated with small business, entrepreneurship, and other themes. This has resulted in a lack of systematic comparison of family and non-family businesses, and the fact that the vital influence of familiness in tourism and hospitality has been surprisingly downplayed.

The most remarkable exceptions are found in Wanhill (1997; 2000) and Presas *et al.* (2011). Wanhill noted that families can be part of the tourism experience, and that the authenticity of a tourism experience can be increased through contact with local residents. Presas *et al.* (2011) explain how particular family values, or familiness, support sustainable practices of tourism development and a particular pattern of business growth, and prove how the fact of being a family business becomes an essential part of the tourist experience for the guest.

Therefore, when the family becomes part of the attraction, it can become a powerful source of competitive advantage. Then, branding this familiness can play a crucial role and even encompass "brand extensions" into non-tourism products and services, i.e. farm products in a family agrotourism, wine in a family wine tourism business, etc.

2.5. Research focus

As mentioned earlier, the term familiness has mostly been conceptualized and analyzed from the internal perspective of the company. Familiness relates to the influence of the family that runs a family business, which manifests itself as a set of unique and distinctive capabilities and resources for this type of firm i.e. trust, commitment, loyalty, family values, etc. In the tourism literature, most of the research on tourism and family firms ignores the role familiness can play for these firms in terms of competitive advantage. Wanhill (1997) and Presas *et al.* (2011) are the exception, suggesting that the family of a tourism family firm may indeed be part of the tourism experience, and this opens the door to research on what familiness means to costumers and how they really perceive or observe the influence of the family on the family business

Family firms and their distinctive resources and capabilities can add value to the experience of the visitor. They can thus differentiate the product in a way that non-family firms or family firms with low familiness cannot match. This, in turn, opens up opportunities for the branding of familiness as an additional means of differentiation.

Interestingly, the topic of branding familiness has very recently started receiving substantial attention (Presas *et al.*, 2011; Parmentier, 2011; Micelotta & Raynard, 2011). However, the understanding of the underlying differentiating attributes of the experiences of customers in tourism family firms, which are the basis of these branding strategies, remain unknown. In other words, we do not know yet how consumers perceive familiness. This is the focus of this study and, thus, the research question is: How do consumers perceive a sense of familiness in the services and experiences delivered to them by family tourism firms?

3. Method

We take an exploratory approach, which is justified on the basis of the scant literature and lack of previous research available in this area. To fulfil the aim of the paper we opted for qualitative methods. The purpose was to collect and interpret data concerning the way consumers perceive familiness in tourism family firm's experiences.

From the range of available qualitative methods we chose the use of focus groups in order to obtain in-depth qualitative data. A focus group, as defined by Dean (1994), is "an informal, small-group discussion designed to obtain in-depth qualitative information". The choice of this method of data collection is based on its advantages in terms of obtaining deep insight into the way participants think, and how the perceptions and ideas of the group are formed (Sebele, 2010). In our case the intention of the focus group was to bring together a range of people with different perspectives on the way they travel with the purpose of both, getting individual responses and also obtaining dynamic interaction between them, so enabling contrasting views to be compared and explored in-depth (Gration, Raciti, & Arcodia, 2011).

We organized and conducted three different focus groups. No additional groups were needed as saturation was reached with the third group. In our case, mixed groups were advantageous over segmented groups as more diverse perspectives could be discussed together. No obstacles to the group dynamics were expected, due to the type of topic under discussion. Each group was, thus, comprised of experienced consumers of family firms' tourism products with different backgrounds regarding gender, age and nationality. We assumed, thus, that different perspectives and

experiences on the topic were to be found in differences in these attributes. There were six participants in each focus group, proportionally distributed between men and women; among young (18-35), middle aged (36-50), and older (51-70) participants; and among southern Europeans, northern Europeans and Americans. Sampling was thus theoretical or purpose-motivated, which is common in this type of method. Small groups allow more time for each participant, provide a clearer sense of their reaction to the topic, and require less moderator involvement. They are, thus, suitable for less structured approaches to focus groups. Participants were direct or indirect acquaintances of the researchers and were found through the researchers social networks. About half of them were acquaintances themselves. This approach to recruiting is not problematic in our case as the topic for discussion was not sensitive, and has advantages in terms of participants' self-disclosure.

The researchers opted for a low structured discussion with low moderator involvement. The exploratory character of the study and the lack of previous research on the topic call forth this type of approach (Morgan, 1997). In each session, the moderator or facilitator and her assistants (who were the authors of the paper) introduced the topic to the participants explaining what familiness is and how it has been defined in the literature; letting them know that the purpose of the discussion was to learn from their perspectives and experiences regarding this topic; and instructing them with the rules of focus group participation.

Then, the discussion started with this general question: One of the things that we are especially interested in is how you have perceived and experienced familiness in your past activities as consumers of tourism family firms' services. What can you tell us about that? The question was first answered individually by all participants and later discussed in a group with interventions from the moderator as required, depending on the particular evolution of the group dynamics. This topic occupied most of the time of the discussion as it deals with the main aim of the study. A second complementary topic was discussed with the introduction of these questions: how much do you value familiness in your travel experiences? Do you always value it positively? Finally, a last complementary topic under discussion was concerned with the extent to which participants felt that familiness is adequately used as a differentiating element of the product in the advertising and communicational strategies of these firms: What effect do you think branding familiness would have on improving the business of these firms?

Then, when these three topics were properly covered in the group discussions, they ended with each participant providing a summary of the most important elements of the debate. Each session lasted between one and two hours, and in each of them one of the assistants took notes during the discussions.

Finally, the results of the focus group sessions, both as recorded information and notes taken by the assistant, were analysed and discussed by the researchers to check the consistency of the outcomes and of the process through which they were obtained, and also to come up with a systematic account of the findings which are presented in the next section. The first stage of the analysis consisted of the coding of the emerging relevant topics and dimensions with notes about the number of mentions, importance and enthusiasm given to them in each group. Given the relatively small amount of information to be analyzed, coding was done manually instead of by using specialized software like NVivo or AtlasTi. After examining group-to-group validation (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999), codes were then interpreted and reported with references to relevant and illustrative excerpts of the discussions.

4. Findings

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained in the focus groups, we observed that customers of tourism family firms experience, interpret and understand familiness as a bundle of four complementary but different dimensions: (1) getting acquainted with the family business; (2) having direct communication with the family owners of the firm; (3) feeling the hospitality and hospitableness of the firm and (4) perceiving 'authenticity' and 'slow travel' values in their experience. The four dimensions were found in all the focus groups with minor differences in emphasis depending on the group.

4.1. Getting acquainted with the family business

This dimension was concerned with learning about and getting to know the family and the family firm: learning that there is a family behind the business, the history, origin and evolution of the company, the place, etc. This learning can occur before, after or during the visit either via the company website, leaflets, and other advertising materials, or through word of mouth or social networks.

Among the various communication tools that are available to let customers know that the business is a family business, storytelling is the most effective way of conveying this knowledge to customers, as pointed out by the focus group participants: "In the very moment you know that it is a family business you have a different feeling (...) and if you read or are told stories about the history of the business, this feeling gets stronger. It is like in social situations, where you feel you are getting to know some new acquaintances (…) some interesting people".

Here, we must note the relevance of the tacit dimension of knowledge (Polany, 1958) in the experiences of learning. On one hand, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) describe the processes of transferring tacit knowledge as 'socialization' and 'internalization' processes. On the other hand, Swap, Leornard, Shields, and Abrams (2001) explain how close interaction and storytelling promote the transfer of tacit knowledge through these mechanisms. Therefore, the close interaction and type of storytelling observed between family firm's members and customers are propitious to exchange tacit knowledge: a type of knowledge that is absent in the much more impersonal interactions seen in non-family businesses. This is, thus, a source of additional satisfaction for customers as opportunities to learn tacit forms of knowledge are scarcer than to learn codified forms.

Organizational storytelling, therefore, becomes an important communication tool to differentiate the business, not only to the employees, but also to the customers. Through storytelling a company can create a powerful corporate identity (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboyly, 2005) which, if adequately communicated through marketing messages, will form the basis for a strong corporate image and brand: "I've been there many times and every time I was told stories about the history of the business, anecdotes (…). It makes this business unique, different from any other (...). A strong brand in my mind".

Moreover, the particular history of the family business that delivers the product or service might become an added value to the experience of the customer. This history can be attractive in that it explains the values that inspired the development of the business. This can be a source of pride for the owners and employees of the firm (Cowan & Milne, 1997). The history of the firm can also add consumer credibility and sympathy regarding the vision, values and objectives of the

business (Peters & Austin, 1985): "It is a third generation family business (…). You are delighted by the stories they tell, a sense of dignity and self-respect (…). You feel some attachment to their world, some identification with their values (…) something similar to what you experience when reading a novel or watching a film".

Many businesses are willing to adopt an image on the basis of traditional or 'family' values. Family businesses, in particular, have distinctive and inimitable stories to tell to the stakeholders as a distinctive family business history where the family is implicated (Narva, 2010) and incorporate them into their business communication strategy.

4.2. Having direct communication with the family owners of the firm

Another important dimension of familiness that came up from the focus group discussions is concerned with the experience of direct communication and interaction between the customer and the family owner(s) of the business.

In the tourism literature we find that one of the differentiating characteristics of consuming tourism products and services is the direct contact between consumer and supplier. This contact strongly affects the satisfaction of the consumer and thus, owners and employees of the delivering family firms become somehow part of the product (Mullins, 1995). Indeed, being in close contact with guests and delivering personal, hands-on service is a primary task in a tourism and hospitality business; and in some cases provides a personalized hospitality experience (Loureiro, 2010). This experience of familiness requires that the interaction with the owner goes beyond the mere delivering of the service, encompassing other types of interactions like conversations and first-hand exchange of information, which foster the creation of a somehow closer and personal relationship between client and supplier that goes beyond the conventional 'business' relationship: "It is a lovely place in a rural area (…). At dinner time you can sit with the family owners and share the same meal (….). You chat with them in the same way as when you are having dinner with friends or new acquaintances (…). You can even help them to cook the meal!".

In addition, with stronger and more meaningful intercourse, customers can get to know the history of the business, the family, their values and identity, etc., directly from the most important person in the business. This has an additional value in terms of both, authenticity in the acquisition of knowledge, as we saw above, and a stronger 'feeling of belonging', after having experienced a direct personal relationship with the owner or family member: "Every time we've been there we have had the opportunity to spend time with the family owners (…). They have always shown interest in us, our family, our region, our life, our stories (…). It is not only that we get to know them, but that they get to know us (…). Somehow, you feel they are your friends and feel comfortable treating them as such".

In small family firms where all the members of the business are family members, it is important for them to know the relevance that their interaction might have for the delivery of this type of familiness and for the satisfaction of customers with the experience. In the case of family firms that have employees that are not members of the family, they should also be made aware of the relevance of the way they relate to clients in search of familiness. Where staff is employed in family businesses, their morale, attitudes and actions are likely to be directly affected by the owners, who give a personal touch to every aspect of the business. In this case, the selection of employees, their training and their rewarding play a key role in ensuring the delivery of familiness (Powers & Barrows,

1999). This might result in service that is quite different from that obtained in large, impersonal establishments.

In any case, when the contact and the relationship is with the owner, the feeling of familiness might be slightly different than when it is with employees, as in the former the relational content of the experience involves a 'higher level' social capital, that is, some 'friendship' with somebody who is a more 'prominent' player: "I remember a nice family run hotel I sometimes stay in (…). The owners are not always present and in these cases you only deal with employees. It is not the same experience (…) well it depends on the employee (…) some of them behave as if they were part of the owner's family (…). In any case if you miss talking to the owners you feel some sort of a 'loss'".

4.3. Feeling the hospitality and hospitableness of the firm

Another dimension of familiness the participants in the focus groups agreed on is concerned with experiencing hospitableness in their visit. Tourism services are different from other services because the former are linked to emotional experiences associated with the relationship between guest and host (Lashley, 2000; Lashley & Morrison, 2003; Lashley, Morrison, & Randall, 2004).

The definition of hospitality that best matches the descriptions of the experiences of familiness narrated by the focus group participants is Hank (1989)'s 'kindness in welcoming strangers'. This conception of hospitality has been termed 'hospitableness' (Telfer, 2000; O'Connor, 1999). It refers to the welcoming that guests or visitors experience from their hosts (Hanks, 1989) and might be felt by the visitor as a kind of generosity from the host: "Everytime I go there I feel welcome, cared for (…). A little bit like another family member. It makes the stay very comfortable and relaxed … When I leave I'm always offered products from the farm as a present to take home".

Some of the descriptions given by the focus group participants also stressed the idea of 'feeling at home', that is, being somewhere new, but having the opportunity to enjoy the comfort and conveniences that we have or would like to have at home, but without having to experience the same daily routines. Paradoxically this 'feeling at home' implies the freedom to experience newness (Bortherton, 1999) together with the feeling of being cared for and feeling satisfied with life: "It has definitely something to do with 'feeling at home' while 'being away'. By feeling at home I mean finding some time for what you have or would love to be able to have at home: for social interaction, for relaxing (…) and why not, for having a tea or your favourite type of breakfast (…). I definitely find this is delivered better by family firms. By being away, I refer to the unique opportunities you have for new experiences of all sorts when you travel, which you do not have at home".

Therefore 'familiness' as 'hospitableness' is concerned with caring for the guests on the basis of a close understanding of their emotional needs and desired experiences (Lashley, Lynch, & Morrison, 2007). Hospitableness is a term that provides the right insight into the kind of 'familiness' service that most customers expect from the tourist and hospitality industries (Telfer, 2000). Tourism family firms whose family members have these values are therefore better positioned to make the clients experience a stronger feeling of familiness.

The consumer satisfaction is sometimes influenced by the actions and service of front-line employees (Mattila & Enz, 2002; Han & Back, 2007). An important aspect of this dimension was raised in the discussions regarding the culture-bound character of hospitableness. Particular types of behaviour that add to the feeling of welcome and familiness within some cultures might be otherwise offensive in other cultures. These points to the fact that, within the concerns of the

international tourism market, the delivery of familiness will only be assured when the family members and/or employees of the firm in direct contact with the customers are proficient in both languages and intercultural relational skills.

4.4. Experiencing 'authenticity' and 'slow travel' values

The last dimension of familiness that arose in the focus groups discussions was concerned with the feeling of 'authenticity' and of 'slow travel' values.

The concept of 'authenticity' was first introduced in tourism academic literature by MacCannell (1999). The interaction between the tourist, the firm and the product can create a feeling of 'authenticity' in the tourist experience when certain circumstances apply (Olsen, 2002). On the other hand, 'slow travel' means exploring and experiencing what the tourist feels is interesting and not what is supposed to be interesting (Cole, 2006). Slow travelling means getting to know the place and the local culture, shopping in the same shops as the locals, learning to cook the local food, learning and being interested in the local language, etc. This implies 'taking time' and getting attached to a place. In summary, slow travel is travelling with lots of room for improvisation (Gosálvez, 2006), and avoiding staged authenticity (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010, Wang, 2000).

Therefore, familiness as 'slow travel' means consuming 'authentic' products and services; feeling close to the 'hosts', whether service suppliers or locals, and getting to experience the local traditions, food, culture, history, etc.: "The family owners belong to the local community, they are proud of their identity (…). They give you advice about the places you can visit, local restaurants, where to shop, events you might want to attend, etc. They always emphasize the places they go or would go themselves as locals and even explain stories and anecdotes about them. Altogether it makes the experience very authentic (…) or in other words a slow travel experience".

On the other hand, family firms seem to be particularly suited to putting sustainability into practice and making it a credible commitment (Presas *et al.*, 2011). Learning that the company puts sustainable values into practice and thus supports the economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability of the local community, can contribute to the feeling of authenticity and slow values: "The owners of that family business are active members of local community groups involved in the preservation of the local heritage, identity and culture. They use the local language, cook traditional food from local products; the hotel extensions are built with traditional materials and within the local architecture aesthetic standards. All this definitely adds to the feeling of authenticity".

Therefore, tourism family firms can enhance the amount of familiness as perceived by customers by acting as dedicated hosts in terms of supplying slow travel values and authenticity to the way they deliver the services. This includes both a genuine and authentic welcoming of the guests, as already suggested above and, sharing their social contacts with local people and culture, as tourists who have close contact with local cultures have more memorable travel experiences (Kim, 2010).

Nonetheless, the development and promotion of slow tourism needs an adequate understanding by the local stakeholders and, in particular, by the local communities. With this, stakeholders gain an awareness of the advantages of this type of tourism and can adopt the 'slow travel' values in their behaviour when designing products and interacting with costumers (Matos,

2004). It is important to note, though, that too much planning might damage the 'authenticity' of tourism experiences and, therefore, break away from the desired 'slowness'.

4.5. What is the value of familiness as perceived by consumers?

Finally, regarding the value of familiness for costumers, the focus group discussions resulted in a generalized appreciation of all these attributes. There was only one exception and this was when the tourist prefers anonymity, at least concerning their accommodation services. Some customers sometimes prefer a service where they can feel a high level of privacy, which is the opposite of what defines familiness: "It depends, sometimes depending on your mood or the motive and type of trip you do, all you need is privacy, comfort and anonymity. I am thinking of a business trip now. In these cases familiness will not add value to the experience and might even be harmful".

Therefore, knowledge about the dimensions of familiness that consumers perceive and value, inform tourism family firms about the type of activities, services and behaviour they should deliver to satisfy the guest and differentiate themselves from competitors.

The focus group participants also discussed the potential benefits that firms delivering familiness could reap from branding this behaviour. There was agreement that, in most cases this type of product is known by the customer via 'word of mouth', or as a positive unexpected surprise after experiencing a randomly chosen 'supplier', after which an ongoing pleasurable relationship between the business and the client ensues (Kumar, Olshavsky, & King, 2001; Loureiro, 2010). So, more can be done by tourism family businesses to communicate this element of their products and create a familiness brand, from which they would definitely benefit.

5. Discussion

Now, if we look attentively at the four dimensions of perceived familiness together, we can observe how similar they are to the attributes of visiting family and friends' experiences as described in the literature. Therefore, treating the guests somehow as 'friends or relatives' could strengthen the feeling of familiness in the experience of the customers.

The Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) form of tourism is defined as ''a form of travel that is about being co-present with significant 'faces', being their guests, receiving their hospitality and perhaps enjoying their knowledge of local culture'' (Larsen, Axhausen & Urry, 2006, p. 247). The first two dimensions of familiness identified above, 'getting to know the family firm and its history, values, etc.' and 'having contact with the familiy owners' both relate with the idea of 'being co-present with significant faces' of the definition of VFR experiences given above. The first of these dimensions is necessary to make the hosting family firm a 'significant face' for the tourist, as without knowledge of who they are this is just not possible. The second, 'having contact with the family owners' is also needed to make the idea of 'co-presence' of the VFR experience definition plausible. The other two dimensions of the familiness construct, 'hospitableness' and 'authenticity and slow travel values' have a clear correspondence with the rest of ideas in the VFR experience definition: 'being their guests, receiving their hospitality and perhaps enjoying their knowledge of local culture'. Hence we can say, that while the first two dimensions of familiness as perceived by consumers make the tourist acquainted with or 'personally' related to the host (without which this familiness cannot

exist), the other two dimensions of familiness make the tourist take advantage of this relationship to actually experience hospitality and authenticity in their visit.

There are, therefore, important similitudes between the consumer perception of familiness and the visiting friends and relatives' experience. There is, however, a clear difference between them in that there is a commercial transaction behind in the former, while in the latter there is not (Giraud, 2007).

Uriely (2010) further states that VFR tourism is a complex and multidimensional experience that may involve both feelings of 'home' as well as a sense of being 'away'; where 'home' is a complex entity that involves spatial and physical aspects as well as symbolic and emotional attachments to real or imagined places and people (White & White, 2007). He presents a conceptual model that includes three guiding dimensions to evaluate tourists' sense of being at 'home': familiarity (Schutz, 1944), sociability (Simmel, 1949) and privacy (Goffman, 1959; Watson & Austerberry, 1985).

The experience of 'home' entails familiarity both at the home of their hosts and outdoors in the visited destination. Indoors is considered in terms of familiar food, language and behaviour when interacting with the hosts. Outdoors is considered in terms of access to the non-tourist areas of the visited destination and getting familiar with the everyday life of local residents. Moreover, the hosts might provide their visitors with useful information regarding transportation, directions and prices, as well as wider knowledge about local politics, culture or other aspects of local society. Thus, regarding familiarity, both VFR and family firms' hosts provide their guests with feelings of 'home' while being away.

Following Uriely (2010), 'sociability' stresses the importance of interactions in shaping home-like experiences. The meaning of 'home' is here linked to forms of associations between equal significant others who come together for the sole purpose of enjoying each other's company (Simmel, 1949). Although Larsen (2008) suggests that VFR tourism can be seen as a representative form of sociability, Uriely (2010: page 855) acknowledges that "the social role of being a non-commercial tourist involves situational inferiority that could serve as a barrier against the desire of the VFR tourist to feel 'at home' in terms of achieving sociability". This is not the case when the host is a family firm, in that the role of being a commercial host dissipates the above inferiority and so the tourist will also feel 'at home' in terms of sociability (Giraud, 2007).

Finally, following Goffman (1959), 'home' refers to the 'back-stage' zone, where individuals and families can be themselves. Along these lines, Watson and Austerberry (1985), relates the notion of 'home' to privacy. Visitors staying with friends or relatives might feel less at 'home' than other tourists who enjoy the indoor privacy provided by a paid hotel room. Additionally, the visitor's social role of being non-commercial guests involves social obligations and behavioural constraints. In this regard, Aramberri (2001) suggests that non-commercial guests are obliged to show gratitude for the hospitality and adjust to the conditions, as well as to the rules of the house without complaint. Furthermore, the decision making of VFR tourists, in terms of what to do and where to go, might be restricted based on their hosts' preferences and schedule. Therefore, if 'home' means privacy and freedom, the social role of being a non-commercial guest might hinder the VFR tourist's sense of being 'at home'. Again, here family firms are at an advantage against VFR to make their clients feel more 'at home', as the social obligations do not exist and the lack of privacy is much less felt.

Nonetheless, if we compare the experience of privacy in these tourism family firms with that of more conventional large firms that supply a more impersonal service, the privacy found in the latter is higher and thus, in this respect family firms will make the tourist feel a little 'less at home' than

conventional firms, as learnt from the focus group participants. Therefore, tourism family firms are at an advantage to both enable their clients to feel 'at home' in a foreign place in terms of familiarity, and ignore the circumstances that might generate feelings of being 'away' among VFR tourists in terms of both sociability and privacy. When compared with conventional large firms that supply impersonal services, family firms also perform better in making the tourist 'feel at home' attribute, except in terms of privacy (Wood, 1994). We summarize these arguments in table 1.

Table 1: Types of travel experiences and 'feeling 'at home'

	VFR	Family firms	Non-family firms
Familiarity	Higher	Higher	Lower
Sociability	Medium	Higher	Lower
Privacy	Lower	Medium	Higher

Finally, our findings are also a reflection of Relph's (1976) theory of place and placelessness. Places have an identity and are significant centres of our immediate experience of the world. The degree of attachment, involvement and concern that a person has for a place affects the intensity of this identity. Therefore, places are experienced as authentic. Oppositely, placelessness is the result of the eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes as a consequence of insensitivity to the significance of place and an uncritical acceptance of mass values. Thus, experiencing familiness, as seen in this paper, is clearly related to finding and feeling a sense of place. Instead, placelessness, or location could be a valid metaphor of the type of experience found in impersonal encounters characteristic of chain operations in larger non-family firms.

6. Conclusions and implications

In this paper, an attempt is made to contribute to the growing research on the concept of familiness. We have observed that the consumers' perception is a novel and necessary approach to the topic. The interpretation of familiness by tourism consumers through their experiences in family firms results in a bundle with four dimensions: (1) getting to know the business as a family business; (2) having direct interaction with the family owners of the firm; (3) feeling the hospitality and hospitableness of the firm; and (4) perceiving 'authenticity' in the consumption in terms of 'slow' values. The first two dimensions create a bond between the company and the client, while the latter two allow the costumers to experience authenticity and slow travel values in their visit.

The familiness provided by tourism family firms makes the customer 'feel at home' while in a foreign place. In fact we have seen that this familiness makes the tourist feel more 'at home' than non-family firms, and even more than VFR hosts. None of the three dimensions of 'feeling at home' is low in family firms: familiarity and sociability are high while privacy is medium. This seems to situate tourism family firms at a clear advantage over non-family firms (and even over VFR) in terms of potential to satisfy tourists.

Nonetheless, being a family firm is not enough to make the tourist perceive familiness. In the first place the tourist needs to know that the firm is a family firm and have information about who the family owners are. Here, branding and storytelling are essential mechanisms. Secondly, the family values that owners instil in the business need to be supportive of hospitality and authenticity so that customers can perceive them and experience them. And lastly, by having direct contact with the clients, the owners can create a closer 'personal' relationship which enhances the sociability of the experience and the feeling of familiness and feeling 'at home' of the tourists.

The only 'feeling at home' dimension where family firms can under-perform is privacy and intimacy. Although firms that supply more impersonal services are clearly at an advantage on this issue, there must be mechanisms in the hands of the family firm to handle this whenever necessary. Further research is needed on this, though.

The findings also inform of the importance of the actual experience of the tourist which is not so much related to the branding strategy as to the actual operation and supply of services and experiences to customers, i.e. service quality, welcoming, decor, food, etc. . This calls for the need of further research on the design of new products and their operations so that the corresponding dimensions of familiness can actually be experienced and valued by the tourist. There is therefore a pressing need to consider these dimensions as key elements that add value to tourism experiences. The main product can be differentiated when one or several of these dimensions are correctly and successfully integrated into the product itself. These elements catch the attention of tourists and further satisfy their tourism experience.

Therefore, family firms that are able to supply familiness and actually integrate these dimensions into their advertising and branding strategies are at an advantage in that their distinguishing and valued attributes can be better recognized by both prospective and actual customers. Despite the recent interest in researching this topic, more research is still needed in this area to better understand how family firms create a meaningful brand through which customers perceive the familiness of their products.

Nonetheless, not all tourists seek for familiness in their travel activities. Further research on this topic will be much welcome to inform tourism family firms about the consumer behaviour of tourists regarding familiness. Future research should also focus on the role of storytelling in the delivering of familiness. Storytelling seems to be behind each of the four dimensions and therefore can have a major impact on the implementation of familiness practices. For instance we have seen how storytelling is an effective mechanism to transfer tacit knowledge, which implies a more intense understanding of the family business and a closer interaction with the owners, in opposition with larger non-family businesses where interaction is impersonal and based on the transfer of only explicit knowledge. Similarly, storytelling can increase the intensity with which a place can be felt and become meaningful and authentic.

Finally, the type of pseudo-relationships which frequent guests may experience with alterning staff members in chain establishments could also seen in family businesses that rely on non-family employees. Thus, whether the family firm has or does not have employees, and how these employees are involved and have internalized the values of the family firm may also have an impact on the delivery of familiness as perceived by the customers.

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CHAPTER 4:

FAMILY-OWNED HOTELS AND GUEST SATISFACTION IN ONLINE REVIEWS: THE ROLE OF FAMILINESS

ABSTRACT Hotel family firms can gain competitive advantage if they seize on their idiosyncratic resources of capabilities, i.e. on their familiness. This paper acknowledges four dimensions of familiness as perceived by customers: recognition, relation, reception and realness; it explores how branding and the size of hotels affect the presence of familiness in family-owned hotels; and examines which dimensions of familiness have an influence on the guest satisfaction, and to what extent. Results from a large sample of online reviews on family-owned hotels demonstrate that, except for one dimension, familiness is most effectively implemented when the size of the hotel is smaller, and that it has a significant and positive impact on guest satisfaction.

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Abstract

Hotel family firms can gain competitive advantage if they seize on their idiosyncratic resources of capabilities, i.e. on their familiness. This paper acknowledges four dimensions of familiness as perceived by customers: recognition, relation, reception and realness; it explores how branding and the size of hotels affect the presence of familiness in family-owned hotels; and examines which dimensions of familiness have an influence on the guest satisfaction, and to what extent. Results from a large sample of online reviews on family-owned hotels demonstrate that, except for one dimension, familiness is most effectively implemented when the size of the hotel is smaller, and that it has a significant and positive impact on guest satisfaction

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSIONS

En aquest apartat es presenten les principals conclusions a les que s'ha arribat en aquesta tesi doctoral. En primer lloc, es dur a terme una discussió dels diferents resultats obtinguts a partir dels diferents articles que integra la tesi. En segon lloc, es procedeix a analitzar les aportacions d'aquesta tesi començant per les contribucions a la literatura actual en empresa familiar, i seguidament, les implicacions que té en la indústria turística. Finalment, es posa en manifest quina direcció haurà de prendre la recerca futura sobre el concepte de *familiness* en l'empresa familiar turística.

1. Resultats

En la investigació prèvia es destaca com les empreses familiars van associades a unes característiques concretes fruit de la influència de la família en el negoci i que les fa ser úniques, i que pot generar un avantatge competitiu respecte la resta d'empreses. La conseqüència de la relació entre la família i l'activitat empresarial genera un conjunt de recursos i capacitats que s'anomena *familiness*. Segons Habbershon i William (1999), aquest concepte es pot definir com el conjunt idiosincràtic de recursos i capacitats que té una empresa familiar, fruit de la interacció donada entre família i empresa. Els estudis investiguen els aspectes més teòrics del concepte i les seves dimensions, però no són concloents pel que es refereix a elaborar un mètode per mesurar el grau de *familiness* que té cada empresa en particular. Cal assenyalar que la gran majoria de les investigacions prèvies que analitzen el *familiness* ho fan des de la basant interna de l'empresa, observant els beneficis o els resultats que aquest concepte aporta a la pròpia empresa familiar.

En aquest escenari, la present tesi intenta contribuir en la conceptualització del *familiness* a partir de l'observació de les empreses familiars en el context turístic, on aquestes representen un gran percentatge en aquest sector empresarial. Al mateix temps s'ofereixen algunes possibles explicacions de com aquest concepte pot diferir respecte els altres estudis realitzats i altres sectors analitzats.

En primer lloc, el concepte de *familiness* sorgeix com a conseqüència de la influència i la implicació de la família a la pròpia empresa, i dels recursos i capacitats que emergeixen fruit d'aquesta relació entre empresa i família. La relació entre aquestes dues unitats, li confereix a l'empresa familiar un caràcter distintiu que serà el que li podrà proporcionar un avantatge

competitiu respecte altres empreses (Chrisman *et al.*, 2005a). En canvi, en el cas del sector turístic, l'avantatge competitiu sol aparèixer com a resultat de la relació entre el propietari i els clients (Micelotta i Raynard, 2011). Aquesta observació posa en consideració la conceptualització del *familiness* feta fins el moment, que tal com s'ha mencionat anteriorment, s'ha fet sobretot des del punt de vista intern de l'empresa familiar. En aquest sentit, el resultat assenyala que el concepte de *familiness* ha d'anar més enllà de la mera implicació de la família a l'empresa familiar, fins el punt que la família es pugui convertir en part del producte i de l'experiència turística, tal com ja va assenyalar Wanhill (1997) en el seu moment.

Després d'observar que el *familiness* esdevé un element diferenciador de la resta d'empreses que ofereixen un mateix tipus de producte o servei; s'ha volgut observar si el *familiness* d'una empresa familiar influeix en la creació de la pròpia marca corporativa. Seguint els exemples d'altres investigacions recents que examinen com les empreses familiars utilitzen el seus atributs distintius en les activitats de màrqueting (Blombäck i Ramírez-Pasillas, 2009; Cabrera-Suarez, Deniz-Deniz i Martin-Santana, 2011; Micelotta i Raynard, 2011; Morgan i Botero, 2010; Parmentier, 2011).

A través d'un cas d'estudi a una empresa d'allotjament turístic, la present tesi, ha observat com la interacció entre el *familiness* i els components de la marca corporativa desemboca en un desenvolupament sostenible, un creixement limitat de la pròpia empresa i una experiència turística específica. Els resultats suggereixen que el desenvolupament sostenible i el possible creixement de l'empresa serà d'acord amb la implicació de la família propietària, els recursos i capacitat generades, els objectius d'estil de vida, entre altres. Aquest desenvolupament i creixement de l'empresa, contribuirà al desenvolupament econòmic, social i cultural de la comunitat on està ubicada l'empresa. D'altra banda, com a conseqüència de la interacció entre els diferents components del model, la família i el *familiness* poden arribar a ser un factor clau en l'experiència dels visitants, a més d'augmentar la satisfacció dels turistes, proporcionant més informació a causa d'un millor coneixement de la zona, i per tant, són capaços de transmetre l'autenticitat de la zona. Per tant, els valors i la cultura d'una família determinen la creació o el desenvolupament d'una marca corporativa basada en la unitat familiar. La conseqüència del que s'ha manifestat, comporta una diferenciació en el producte, servei o experiència que l'empresa familiar s'ofereix als turistes, en aquest cas, per les seves característiques específiques, esdevé difícilment imitable.

La contribució del *familiness* a l'experiència del consumidor, fa que en la present tesi doctoral es plantegi si el *familiness* és percebut per part d'un client en un establiment turístic. En el cas afirmatiu, de quina manera s'experimenta amb l'inconvenient afegit, que tal com mostren els estudis, els consumidors tenen una certa dificultat en la diferenciació entre empreses familiars i no familiars dels productes que consumeixen, llevat que aquestes empreses comuniquin activament que darrera hi ha una gestió i una implicació d'una família (Craig *et al*., 2008; Schwarz, Smit i Moeller, 2009). Els resultats trobats indiquen que la interpretació del *familiness*, a través de les seves experiències en empreses familiars turístiques, té quatre dimensions: (1) saber que l'empresa és un negoci familiar, (2) tenir una interacció directa amb la família propietària de l'empresa, (3) sentir la *hospitality* i *hospitableness* de l'empresa, i (4) percebre una autenticitat. Les dues primeres dimensions creen un vincle entre l'empresa i el client, mentre que les dues últimes permeten als clients a experimentar l'autenticitat i els valors *slow travel*.

Un altre aspecte del *familiness* de les empreses familiars turístiques és que fan sentir el client "com a casa" quan estan en un lloc estrany. Això permet fer una comparació entre les empreses familiars i l'experiència de visitar amics i familiars, per a les importants similituds entre ambdós. La diferència entre elles és que a la primera hi ha una transacció comercial a darrera, mentre que la visita a amics i familiars no (Giraud, 2007). De fet, els resultats mostren com el *familiness* fa que el

turista se senti més "a casa" que no pas en empreses no familiars, i fins i tot més que en les experiències de visitar amics i familiars. Això sembla situar les empreses familiars turístiques en un clar avantatge enfront de les no familiars, i fins i tot més que visitar amics i familiars, en termes de potencial per satisfer als turistes. La privacitat en el cas de les empreses familiars es veurà una mica reduïda davant d'empeses no familiars, a part, com major sigui l'empresa, l'anonimat del client s'aconseguirà de forma més fàcil. D'altra banda, l'empresa familiar aconseguirà una major privacitat en front l'hostalatge en cases d'amics i familiars.

Malgrat això, el fet de ser una empresa familiar no és suficient perquè el turista pugui percebre el *familiness*. En primer lloc, el turista ha de saber que l'empresa és una empresa familiar i tenir informació sobre qui són els propietaris o la família. Aquí, la marca i la narració són mecanismes essencials. En segon lloc, els valors de la família han de formar part de l'empresa i els clients els han de poder percebre i experimentar, com per exemple, proporcionant hospitalitat i autenticitat. I, finalment, l'existència d'un contacte directe entre els clients i els propietaris, creant una relació més estreta i personal que millora l'experiència i el sentiment "d'estar com a casa" pels turistes.

Un cop constatat que el *familiness* pot ajudar a crear experiències turístiques més satisfactòries, i per tant, aconseguir un avantatge competitiu respecte altres empreses, sobretot en el cas del sector turístic, la present tesi també es planteja si el *familiness* pot ser un determinant a l'hora d'influir positivament en la satisfacció dels consumidors turístics, ja que no hi ha una evidència empírica. Per exemple, amb la creació d'experiències memorables per part dels propietaris i de les seves famílies (Lashley, 2008, Peters i Frehse, 2011). Exactament, la idea era observar si les diferents dimensions del *familiness* poden tenir algun efecte sobre la satisfacció dels clients, i a continuació, observar si els clients d'hotels de gestió familiar amb més *familiness* estan més satisfets que els clients dels hotels de gestió familiar amb menys *familiness*.

A partir dels resultats obtinguts es pot concloure que el *familiness* és un atribut corresponent de les empreses familiars i contribueix a la satisfacció dels clients, però no ha de ser vist com una única construcció sinó com una sèrie de quatre dimensions diferents: el reconeixement, la relació, la recepció i el caràcter real. Aquests atributs depenen sobretot de les decisions i les actituds de la família propietària, però la mida de l'establiment també juga un paper rellevant. Els grans hotels de gestió familiar no són els més escaients per crear interaccions significatives i personals entre els clients i hostes, basades en l'acolliment i la hospitalitat, ni la percepció d'autenticitat durant la seva estada. Aquestes conclusions es recolzen en el fet que per oferir aquests atributs els propietaris dels hotels de gestió familiars han d'invertir temps a tenir un contacte o una relació directe amb els clients, i això requereix un temps i un esforç addicional determinat, i com més gran i més clients té l'hotel, més complicat és aconseguir aquesta interacció.

Així doncs, es pot concloure que el *familiness* augmenta la satisfacció dels clients, però no en totes les dimensions del *familiness* mencionades. El reconeixement per part dels clients que una empresa és familiar i els recursos i capacitats úniques que aquesta pot tenir, no és una característica indispensable per augmentar la satisfacció. En canvi, si que ho són les altres tres dimensions restants: relació, recepció i caràcter real.

2. Contribucions teòriques

Una notable contribució de la present tesi és a la literatura en empresa familiar mitjançant la investigació del concepte de *familiness*. Per una banda, la major part de la recent investigació sobre

familiness se centra en el desenvolupament teòric des del punt de vista intern de les empreses (Habbershon i Williams, 1999; Sirmon i Hitt, 2001; Habbershon *et al*., 2003; Pearson, *et al*. 2008; Irava, *et al*., 2009; Zellweger, *et al*., 2010). L'objectiu ha estat centrar la investigació en el *familiness* des de la perspectiva del consumidor, com un aspecte fonamental de la seva satisfacció general, aportant així un enriquiment teòric sobre la conceptualització del *familiness*.

Per altra banda, l'estudi es realitza en un sector empresarial concret, com és el turisme, i per tant hi ha una contribució també en aquesta literatura. En aquest sentit, primerament, es va identificar un buit en la recerca d'empresa familiar i turisme, on es plantejava que la família podia formar part del producte i l'experiència turística, rebent el nom de *family branding* (Wanhill, 1997). La tesi ha aprofundit en aquest buit contribuint, així doncs, en la relació entre el *host* i el *guest*, és a dir, la relació entre la família i els turistes. També s'aprofundeix en la cerca dels atributs del *familiness* que tenen un major impacte en la satisfacció dels clients, i per tant poden ser la causa de la creació d'experiències memorables proporcionades pels propietaris i les seves famílies (Lashley, 2008, Peters i Frehse, 2011). No obstant això, el comportament i les necessitats dels turistes són diverses, per aquest motiu, no tots els turistes busquen el *familiness* o alguna de les seves dimensions en les empreses turístiques, sinó que moltes vegades cerquen uns serveis més impersonals.

Finalment, la darrera aportació de la present tesi és la integració del *familiness* en la creació d'una marca com un element eficaç per tal que l'empresa familiar pugui obtenir un avantatge competitiu. En aquest cas, i segons els resultats obtinguts, la marca no afecta directament a la satisfacció dels clients, però ajuda a la identificació de les empreses familiars abans de la visita.

3. Implicacions per la indústria

Les principals conclusions que es presenten tenen implicacions importants per a les mateixes empreses familiars, així com pels altres agents implicats (*stakeholders*). A nivell de les implicacions per les empreses familiars, l'evidència empírica d'aquesta tesi mostra la importància de la participació activa i la implicació de la família a l'empresa per tal de generar recursos i capacitats úniques fruït d'aquestes relacions i que esdevenen la base per constituir *familiness*, i que serà una font d'avantatge competitiu per a l'empresa.

En aquest sentit, una participació adequada de la família en la relació directa i estreta amb els clients com per exemple, en la acollida i la cura dels clients, i en les visites i les experiències dels visitants durant l'estada, són atributs dels *familiness* que tenen un impacte en la satisfacció dels clients. El resultat és la creació d'experiències memorables per part dels propietaris i les seves famílies, que al mateix temps, poden servir per crear una estratègia diferenciadora en les empreses familiars del sector, i com a base per desenvolupar la marca amb un valor afegit de caràcter emocional. Per tal de generar aquest valor emocional es poden usar diferents estratègies de màrqueting per tal de comunicar aquesta marca amb valor afegit. Per exemple, trobem el cas del *retro-branding* que té l'objectiu d'harmonitzar el passat amb el present de l'empresa familiar usant el paper de la família per enriquir els propis productes o serveis. Però sobretot l'ús de la narració o *storytelling* per transferir el coneixement tàcit que pot augmentar l'autenticitat del lloc i de les relacions.

Malgrat que la present tesi alerta dels efectes negatius que pot tenir la mida de l'empresa en el lliurament del *familiness*, els resultats també mostren com les empreses familiars amb empleats no

familiars, però que estiguin involucrats i hagin interioritzat els valors, la cultura i la identitat de l'empresa familiar de la mateixa manera, o fins i tot més, que els membres de la pròpia família; poden transmetre els diferents atributs del *familiness*, de la mateixa manera que ho fa la pròpia família, ja que tindran un sentiment molt fort de pertinença a la pròpia família i de creença en l'empresa familiar. Així doncs, els propietaris han de ser capaços d'influir en el comportament dels treballadors, familiars o no, perquè aquest vagi en consonància als objectius de l'empresa familiar.

4. Futura recerca

Aquesta investigació té les limitacions pròpies dels estudis exploratoris, d'una banda, hem de tenir en compte la complexitat del concepte de *familiness* i la perspectiva des de la qual s'ha analitzat; i per l'altra banda, el caràcter distintiu del sector turístic, i específicament, de la Costa Brava que fa que sigui més complicat d'extrapolar a altres zones turístiques.

Els resultats mostren com algunes dimensions del *familiness* poden influir en l'experiència i en una valoració positiva de la prestació de serveis turístics. Això exigeix la necessitat d'una major investigació sobre el comportament de les famílies empresàries i el disseny de nous productes i el seu funcionament per tal que les dimensions corresponents del *familiness* puguin crear una experiència memorable i que l'empresa obtingui un avantatge competitiu.

El següent pas per aquelles empreses familiars que estan en condicions de subministrar *familiness* és integrar aquestes dimensions en la seva publicitat i estratègies de marca, per tal que els clients potencials i reals puguin reconèixer els atributs distintius i valuosos de l'empresa respecte la resta. Malgrat el recent interès en la recerca en aquest àmbit, encara es necessita un major aprofundiment en aquesta àrea per tal de comprendre millor com les empreses familiars creen o poden crear una marca significativa a través del qual els clients percebin el *familiness* dels seus productes. Per tant, la investigació futura s'haurà de centrar en el paper de la narració en el procés de lliurament dels elements distintius de les empreses familiars.

Calen noves investigacions per tal d'aprofundir en el comportament dels turistes a l'hora de consumir productes o serveis d'empreses familiars, perquè tal com ja s'ha apuntat anteriorment, no tots els turistes busquen el *familiness* en les seves activitats turístiques.

En resum, les noves línies de recerca s'orienten per indagar de quina manera es pot millorar la presència del *familiness* a les empreses familiars, i en quina mesura la marca predisposa als turistes a gaudir dels atributs del *familiness*, i així esdevenir un avantatge competitiu per les empreses familiars.

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