



**AFRICAN FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH – CHARTING THE FIELD**

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**AFRICAN FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH – CHARTING THE FIELD**

BY

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## DECLARATION

I, Cassidy Billings (S219542694), hereby declare that the treatise, “African family business research – charting the field” for the degree Honours in Commerce, is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another university or for another qualification, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.



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November 2021

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## ABSTRACT

Over the years there has been a significant increase in the interest of scholars to research family businesses due to the notable economic contributions these businesses make to the economies of countries all over the world. Despite the increase in family business research globally, research on family businesses in an African context remains lacking, with no formal overview of research done on the continent to date. For this reason, the purpose of the current study was to perform an investigation into what research has been done in the field of African family business research and identify which areas require further exploration, thus expanding the existing body of knowledge on family business research in Africa.

To undertake this research a desk research was undertaken, and a bibliometric analysis was performed. In total, 206 articles met the study's search criteria and were analysed. The results highlighted elements such as publication activity, author details, journals, citations, methods adopted, country focus and topics. The journal articles analysed were published over the period 1975 to 2021. Initially, publication activity was low but has increased notably over the last decade. Eighty-four percent of the scholars were located in a country on the African continent at the time of publication. Articles have been published in 142 different academic journals with on average 22.12 citations per article. The average journal impact factor was 2.193 with 64 articles published in journals with an impact factor of zero. Research done on African family businesses has taken place in 17 countries with more than half of the articles reporting the use of quantitative methods. Topics researched most often related to performance, succession, succession planning, entrepreneurship and sustainability, amongst others. Furthermore, the African country out of which most research has originated is Nigeria, followed by South Africa, Kenya and Ghana.

The main contribution of this study is that it has provided an evaluation of the performance and deficits of African family business research by highlighting which areas require further exploration from the patterns and gaps identified.

**KEYWORDS:** Family business, African family business, bibliometric analysis, family business research, African family business research.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Research shows that majority of businesses worldwide are dominated by family businesses and these businesses make significant contributions to economies in both developed and developing countries around the world (Hjorth 2016:5). As it stands, about two-thirds of privately held companies are family owned and the family business model makes up 90% of the world's business environment, contributing to approximately 50% to 80% of the global employment and 70% to 90% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:1; Family businesses dominate: International family enterprise research academy (IFERA) 2003:235-240; Family Firm Institute 2015).

Globally, the field of family business studies has gathered much attention and has experienced tremendous growth over the years (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:43-44). Despite this increase in family business research globally, research on family businesses, in an African context, is lacking and the quantity considered insignificant (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:44; Khavul, Bruton & Wood 2009:1219). To date, however, no formal overview of research done on all African family business research has been undertaken. Notable reviews include those done by Farrington and Jappie on South African family businesses (Farrington & Jappie 2016), Acquaah and Eshun on African family businesses (Acquaah & Eshun 2016) and, Samara on African family business in the Middle East (Samara 2020). Several African countries fall within the Middle East as described by Samara (2020).

With family businesses dominating the economic landscape of Africa it is essential that research focusing on family business in an African context be undertaken (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:86; Khavul *et al.* 2009:1219). It is also important to note that informal businesses make up a major economic force in most developing nations, including Africa (Siqueira & Bruton 2009). However, these informal businesses are not

significant role players in Western countries and therefore are, for the most part, excluded from research done on family businesses (Khavul *et al.* 2009:1234).

An overview of the research done on family businesses in Africa could provide insight as to whether research studies done are on par with international research (Farrington & Jappie 2016:2). Furthermore, a significant majority of businesses in Africa are family businesses and these businesses play a crucial role in the wealth creation, social responsibility and maintenance of steady employment (de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:1). Thus, research on family businesses in an African context could play a significant role in advancing knowledge development on the continent, identifying the challenges facing African family businesses and contributing to their success (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:45, 60; Khavul *et al.* 2009:1219).

According to Sharma (2004:2), in order to identify future areas of research to be done in a field of study, past research should be reflected upon. Thus, if research on African family businesses is to be done, which will contribute to advancing knowledge development on the continent, then reflections of past research need to be made. This study will therefore undertake such reflections by investigating what research has been done in the field of African family business. By reflecting on the past avenues of research on African family businesses, future research can be identified. Against this background the problem statement is presented.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The vast majority of research done in the field of family business has a Western perspective and uses family business models that are mostly of Western European origin (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:83; de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:3; Gupta, Levenburg, Moore, Motwani & Schwarz 2010:147; Khavul *et al.* 2009:1219). To date, limited knowledge on research focusing on family businesses in an African context exists. Therefore, further exploration into the field of family business research in Africa needs to be undertaken, not only to identify what research has already been done but also to investigate which topics require future attention. By charting the field of African family business research, past research can be summarised, and future research

areas can be identified. Research that will ultimately benefit African family businesses in addressing the challenges they face.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The section to follow will present the primary, secondary and methodological research objectives of the study.

#### **1.3.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

In line with the problem statement, the primary objective of this study is to identify, explore, elaborate and quantify the 'who, what, where and how' of research with regards to family businesses in Africa. This will be done by looking at who the researchers are, where they are located, which topics their research covers, the methods used to carry out the research as well as assessing the impact they are having on the field as a whole. In achieving this objective, the current study intends to build on existing subject knowledge of family businesses by scoping out which areas, in the field of family business in Africa, require further research.

#### **1.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

In order to give effect to the primary objective, the following secondary objectives have been formulated:

- SO<sup>1</sup> To identify in which African countries, research on family businesses is being carried out and who the authors and their institutions are that are conducting these studies.
- SO<sup>2</sup> To determine the theories and methods most used when undertaking research on family businesses in Africa.
- SO<sup>3</sup> Identifying which topics and theories are being used when undertaking research on family businesses in Africa.
- SO<sup>4</sup> To explore and measure the impact of published research on family businesses in Africa.

SO<sup>5</sup> To establish trends in the numbers of published articles written on African family businesses.

### 1.3.3 METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the above-mentioned primary and secondary objectives, the following methodological objectives have been identified:

MO<sup>1</sup> To conduct a literature review on the nature and importance of family businesses, as well as research done in the field of family business as a whole.

MO<sup>2</sup> To determine the research methodology best suited for addressing the identified research problems and objectives.

MO<sup>3</sup> To develop an appropriate framework for categorising and analysing the collected data.

MO<sup>4</sup> To identify the relevant published journal articles and capture the necessary data.

MO<sup>5</sup> To analyse the data gathered by using the appropriate methods.

MO<sup>6</sup> To provide recommendations and conclusions based on the results of the study by presenting which areas, of family business research in Africa, require further exploration.

### 1.4 SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The bibliometric analysis undertaken in the current study includes research publications that meet several criteria. These criteria outline the scope of the current study. The first of the criteria is that the study will only focus on research pertaining to family business. Therefore, articles sourced will be limited to those written on family businesses. The study will also only source and consult articles published in journals, such as the Family Business Review, Journal of Family Business Management, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Journal of Family Business Strategy and the International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, amongst others. With regard to the location of the research, the research published must be conducted on family businesses in Africa only. In order for articles to further meet the

criteria, the article must be published in English. As for databases, the only databases that will be consulted, in order to source the published articles, will be Google and Google Scholar. Furthermore, the study will source as many articles as possible that meet the above criteria, taking into account that the sourcing of articles will conclude the 31 May 2021.

## **1.5 KEY CONCEPTS**

With the study's focus being on research done among family businesses in Africa, the clarification of repeated key concepts is given below.

### **1.5.1 FAMILY BUSINESS**

In the current study a family business refers to a business where more than 50% of the shares or equity in the business is controlled or owned by a single family or where a minimum of two family members are actively involved in the day to day running of the business (de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:2; Family Business Index 2019; Farrington & Jappie 2016:2; Moores & Barrett 2010; Osunde 2017:1).

### **1.5.2 AFRICAN FAMILY BUSINESS**

Similarly, an African family business refers to a business as described above. However, in the context of the current study, an African family business specifically refers to any family business operating on the African continent.

### **1.5.3 FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH**

In the current study, family business research refers to research undertaken and published in any journal, with the focus being on family businesses (Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García, & Guzmán-Parra 2013:41).

#### 1.5.4 AFRICAN FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH

For the purpose of the current study, African family business research refers to research undertaken among family businesses located on the African continent (Acquaah & Eshun 2016; Bewayo 2009; Khavul *et al.* 2009).

#### 1.5.5 BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

A bibliometric analysis is a research strategy that uses a quantitative approach to describe, evaluate and monitor published literature. It is useful for conducting an analysis on biographical data which enables researchers to identify trends in literature such as books, articles and other publications (Zupic & Cater 2015:430).

### 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Despite the increase in family business research globally, research on family businesses in an African context is lacking and the quantity considered insignificant. Additionally, no formal overview of research done on all African family business research has been undertaken to date. Therefore, the aim of the study is to add to the existing body of knowledge on family business research, with particular focus on family business research in Africa. More specifically, the research will explore and quantify the 'who, what, where and how' of research with regards to family businesses in Africa by looking at who the researchers are, where they are located, which topics their research covers, the methods used to carry out the research as well as assessing the impact they are having on the field as a whole. Furthermore, the research intends on providing recommendations for future research and researchers by highlighting which areas of family business research in Africa, require further exploration.

By making use of a bibliometric analysis, the current study will be able to analyse and evaluate all possible data, found on African family business research, in the most efficient manner. Bibliometrics enables one to do a performance analysis to evaluate research and publication performance of individuals and institutions. Using this quantitative approach will allow for comprehensive and quality conclusions on patterns and gaps in the research, to be drawn. A bibliometric analysis will contribute most to

this study as it is a valuable tool for analysing research strengths, weaknesses and impact. Through the process of quantifying bibliographical data on African family business research, this study will highlight the performance and deficits in African family business research and will aid in making recommendations for the future.

## **1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

The structure of the study will be presented in the following format:

Chapter One: This chapter introduces the topic under investigation and provides some background to the study. Additionally, the chapter presents the problem statement and sets out the primary, secondary and methodological research objectives. An illustration of the conceptual framework is also included. Furthermore, Chapter One will provide an overview of the study to follow, briefly describe the research design and methodology utilised in the study as well as, highlight the scope and delimitations of the study.

Chapter Two: This chapter pertains to the literature review. The chapter will begin by describing the nature and importance of family businesses. The concept of family business will be discussed and family businesses, in an African context, described. The significance and contributions of family businesses will also be highlighted. The chapter will then discuss the evolution of the field of family business and conclude by summarising the previous review articles done in the field.

Chapter Three: In this chapter the research design and methodology adopted in the study will be described. The chapter will elaborate on the research strategy used, namely a bibliometric analysis. How trustworthiness and rigour are ensured will then be described. The ethical considerations taken into account will lastly be highlighted.

Chapter Four: Following the bibliometric analysis conducted on the data collected, Chapter Four will present the empirical findings of the research. The findings will be summarised visually in pie charts, bar graphs and tables.



Chapter Five: The final chapter will provide an overview of the study and show how the research objectives have been achieved. The findings will be discussed, and conclusions will be made. Additionally, the limitations of the study will be identified, and the contributions of the study will be highlighted. Moreover, several recommendations on topics in African family business research, which require further exploration, will be made.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The primary objective of the study is to investigate what research has been done in the field of African family business research in order to build on the existing subject knowledge of family businesses by scoping out which areas, in the field of family business in Africa, require further research. Chapter One provided the introduction and background, as well as the problem statement, research objectives and scope of the study.

The following section, Chapter Two, will provide an overview regarding the nature and importance of family businesses as a whole, as well as in an African context. Furthermore, the evolution and the previous reviews of the field of family business as a whole will be elaborated on.

#### **2.2 NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY BUSINESSES**

In order to fully comprehend the nature and importance of family businesses, the subsequent sections will first focus on defining family businesses in general. Following that, looking at family businesses in an African context and finally, the importance of family businesses in order to highlight their relevance and contributions.

##### **2.2.1 DEFINING FAMILY BUSINESSES**

When looking at the term family, one can define it narrowly, as consisting of a core family (father, mother and perhaps children) or broadly, as comprising of extended family members (those related to the core family by marriage and through multiple generations) (Kraus, Harms & Fink 2011:34). Given the various definitions that 'family' can take on, it is not surprising that some researchers find the term difficult to define and as such there is no singular definition used by researchers to define a family business (Dumbu 2018:39; Kraus *et al.* 2011:34). However, what differentiates family businesses from non-family business is the involvement of the family in the business

(Chua, Chrisman & Steier 2003). Therefore, family businesses are often defined according to the degree of family involvement in different aspects of the business such as ownership, management and succession (Chrisman, Chua & Sharma 2003:8; de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:2).

A family business is commonly described as a business where:

- More than 50% of the shares or equity in the business are controlled or owned by a single family (Family Business Index 2019; Farrington & Jappie 2016:2; Moores & Barrett 2010; Osunde 2017:1);
- A single family effectively has control and can exercise significant influence over the business or when a considerable amount of the business' senior management is from the same family (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:60; de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:2; Moores & Barrett 2003);
- A minimum of two family members are actively involved in the day to day running (management and/or operations) of the business (de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:2; Farrington & Jappie 2016:2; Osunde 2017:1); and
- A transfer of management or ownership to the next generation in the family (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:60; Successful Transgenerational Entrepreneurship Practices Project 2005:1).

## 2.2.2 FAMILY BUSINESSES IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

Although researchers have developed several models to advance an understanding of family business dynamics, these models predominantly reflect the social-economic environments in Western countries (Bewayo 2009:171). These models follow a Western European framework where an understanding of the concept of 'family' (mostly immediate family) varies greatly from the African understanding. Western European frameworks do not account for the nature of African family dynamics, where extended family is the foundation of the family, or the different cultural, economic and political environments in which African family businesses operate (Bewayo 2009:171; Khavul *et al.* 2009:1219).

According to Bewayo (2009:177), African family businesses differ from their Western counterparts in several ways, including how conflict between family members is managed; business performance; legal, financial, governance and investment structures; as well as obtaining consensus from the entire family on business matters. Despite African family businesses being family owned and controlled, they also differ from family business in the western world in that they tend to lack long term vision, do not undertake succession planning and most do not operate as separate business entities (Bewayo 2009:179).

From a cultural perspective and in contrast to Western family businesses, those in Africa subscribe to the principle of Ubuntu, an African philosophy that incorporates elements of openness, sharing and welcoming others (Boon 1996; Mbigi 1997). Traditionally, Africans are reluctant to change their traditional norms and have an appreciation for preservation, humility and living by the values of their surrounding community (Goussikindey 2006; Gupta *et al.* 2010:147). In contrast Western businesses tend to focus on serving organisational goals rather than elevating the livelihoods of the community (Blunt & Jones 1997; Jackson 2004). In Africa, a humanistic approach is prioritised when striving to achieve and home-grown solutions that tend to be more sustainable and inclusive in the long run, are favoured (Gupta *et al.* 2010:147).

According to Iguise (1999), it is of utmost importance to note that currently, Western family business models are not a perfect fit for African family business. Therefore, if family businesses in Africa are going to be developed, differences between them and western family businesses need to be taken into account (Bewayo 2009:180).

### 2.2.3 IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY BUSINESSES

Family businesses play a crucial role in the development of economies and civilisations and have throughout history been considered the support structure of majority of the world's economies (Bird, Welsh, Astrachan & Pistrui 2002:337; Gedajlovic, Carney, Chrisman & Kellermanns 2012:1011; Osunde 2017:1).

The importance, relevance and contributions of family businesses worldwide can be summed as follows: they make up two-thirds of the world's private companies, between 70% and 90% of the world's business structures and a vast majority of the world's micro, small and medium-sized (MSM) organisations (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:43; de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:1; Farrington 2016:5). Family businesses are the biggest global employer, employing between 50% and 80% of the world's population and subsequently making contributions to alleviating poverty, creating employment opportunities and improving living standards (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:45; Devins & Jones 2016:4; Family Firm Institute 2015; Jorgensen, Masuo, Manikowske & Lee 2020:1; Khavul *et al.* 2009:1219).

Family businesses also contribute to between 70% and 90% of the world's GDP (Family Firm Institute 2015; Osunde 2017:1). The Global Family Business Index highlights that the 500 largest global family businesses employ roughly 24,460 million people and make about 7.5 trillion USD in sales – placing these businesses after the United States and China as the third-largest 'economy' worldwide (Global Family Business Index 2019:8; Zellweger 2015). It is also in the nature of family businesses to survive over the long term, thus offering economic stability to their communities in which they operate (Bewayo 2009:171; Jorgensen *et al.* 2020:1).

### **2.3 EVOLUTION OF THE FIELD OF FAMILY BUSINESS**

Prior to the launch of the Family Business Review journal 34 years ago, research on family businesses was virtually non-existent (Litz, Pearson & Litchfield 2012:17). The first article published in the Family Business Review (FBR) in 1988 was the start of a growing field and the journal provided an integrated and legitimised communicative platform for those researching family businesses (Lansberg, Perrow & Rogolsky 1988:5). According to Litz *et al.* (2012:17), a realisation was made by Wortman in 1994 that the field would not evolve and thus remain barren if no effort, time and research was put into furthering it, although this in itself would be easier said than done in a field entirely uncharted.

In the years that followed, several researchers started taking a deeper look into the field but most research was descriptive in nature and focused on family relationships

(Meyer 1991; Wortman 1994; Sharma, Chrisman & Chua 1997). At the time, Sharma *et al.* (1997:18) noted that for a field to move forward it was essential that various types of family businesses be identified, the goals and objectives of these businesses be clearly expressed and that the studied variables be explicitly noted. Drawing to the end of the FBR's first decade of publication, Dyer and Sanchez (1998:295) stated that most articles published on family businesses had gravitated toward quantitative studies, most contributors to the field were academics from business schools, and that there was no specific model directing future research.

Development of the field was beginning to take off with the number of family business articles growing from 33 in 1989 to exceeding 300 at the end of 2003 (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:43). Despite an increase in the number of scholars, the variety of topics researched and methodologies used (Sharma 2004:27; Zahra & Sharma 2004), in the early 2000's, the field of family business research was still not acknowledged and accepted as an "intellectually rigorous, independent domain" distinctive from the field of entrepreneurship and small businesses (Bird *et al.* 2002:338).

Throughout the years 2007 to 2010, researchers noted that despite frameworks on theoretical convergence and agency theory appearing, there was a lack of consensus about the earlier research conducted on family businesses (Casillas & Acedo 2007:144; Chrisman, Kellermanns, Chan & Liano 2010). During the field's formative years, up to and including the period of the 2000's, family business research was centred around themes and topics such as 'family business', 'succession', 'family ownership', 'family dynamics' and 'corporate governance' (Rovelli, Ferasso, De Massis & Kraus 2021:9).

The next decade would see two noteworthy additions which contributed to the expansion in the field, namely the establishment of the Journal of Family Business Strategy (JFBS) in 2010 and Journal of Family Business Management (JFBM) in 2011 (Rovelli *et al.* 2021:10). Including the Family Business Review (FBR), these three journals became the reference place for research dedicated to family business. With the field evolving over the years, the number of journals publishing family business research expanded to include the Journal of Family Business Strategy, Journal of African Business, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Small Business

Management, Journal of Small Business Economics, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice journal, Journal of Global Business Issues, Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, Entrepreneurship and Regional Development, International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, Journal of Management, Journal of Business Research, amongst others.

As time passed studies started to acknowledge and examine the heterogeneity of family business in more detail (Dekker, Lybaert, Steijvers, Depaire & Mercken 2013; Jaskiewicz & Dyer 2017) and a need shift from asking 'what' type of questions to 'how' and 'why' questions arose (Chrisman, Chua, De Massis, Minola & Vismara 2016). By 2014, the number of articles done on family business had multiplied several times over since the early stages (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:44). More recently, studies have also begun broadening the scope of research to focus on how emotions, psychological foundations and crisis management affect family businesses (De Massis & Rondi 2020; Elsbach & Pieper 2019; Picone, De Massis, Tang & Piccolo 2021). Studies also show that as the field evolves, researchers are beginning to gravitate from topics such as family ownership and management to topics such as succession planning, gender, corporate social responsibility and innovation. This move showing a clear advancement in understanding and research depth (Rovelli *et al.* 2021:9).

The field of family business research has seen significant growth with Rovelli *et al.* (2021:15) reporting on more than 1 381 contributions published in journals dedicated to family business research. As the field seeks further evolvement, researchers have noted the progress already made and look forward to welcoming greater involvement of family sciences in family business research as well as an increase in the theories, methodologies and frameworks used to understand family business dynamics and models (Litz *et al.* 2012:27-28). Researchers also hope for more scholarly engagement and contributions including that the legitimacy of such scholarly studies be enhanced. More research is also needed that draws from international contexts and other disciplines and examines the heterogeneity of family business in greater detail (Rovelli *et al.* 2021:12). Additionally, in the wake of COVID-19, researchers hope to see more studies on how family businesses manage and survive in times of crises as well as research on issues such as family business authenticity, branding and internationalization (Rovelli *et al.* 2021:9).

## **2.4 PREVIOUS REVIEWS ON THE FIELD OF FAMILY BUSINESS AS A WHOLE**

Several review articles have been written over time on research done in the field of family business. These are summarised in Annexure A. The first review of the field took place in 2002 and was published in the FBR by Bird, Welsh, Astrachan and Pistrui (2002). The review focused on investigating the evolution of family business research as an academic field of study. Additionally, it looked at what it takes to establish a unique field of study and reviewed the foundational research in family business by looking at the history of the field.

This review was followed by several others over the years. The most recent include reviews, published in 2021, by Rovelli, Ferasso, De Massis and Kraus (2021) as well as Aparicio, Ramos, Casillas and Iturralde (2021).

The review by Rovelli *et al.* (2021) focused on providing an overview of the family business articles that had been published in the top three family business journals, namely the FBR, JFBS AND JFBM. Additionally, it sought to guide future developments in family business research.

The review by Aparicio *et al.* (2021) focused on exploring the more recent evolution of the field of family business research, by making use of a bibliometric analysis and broadening the scope of journals analysed. Furthermore, the review identifies patterns in journals, articles and authors that are able to assist in navigating the avenues for future research.

While there were numerous reviews published prior to 2010, the number of reviews significantly increased in the years after 2010. These reviews have been published in several journals including the Family Business Review, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Journal of Family Business Strategy and the International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management. The authors with the most article contributions include the likes of Sharma, Chua, Chrisman, Kellermans, Kraus, Payne, Evert, Martin and McLeod.



The scope of these reviews varied from between five and 3 368 articles and the review periods covered years anywhere from 1985 to 2020. The main purposes of these review articles were to describe how the field has evolved, to summarise research done to date, to describe research trends and growth in the field, to identify and highlight contributions made, to make recommendations for the future of the field and to direct research attention.

Reviews that were done on African Family Business publications included the review from Khavul, Bruton and Wood (2009), which looked at family businesses in East Africa. Their study reviewed 8 articles from the period 2000 to 2003. Their review sought to develop a theoretical foundation for studying the establishment and evolution of family businesses in Africa.

The second review on African family business publications was that of Acquah and Eshun (2016), which looked at family businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their study reviewed 29 articles from the period 1985 to 2015. Their review sought to research family business in Africa, focusing on the challenge of defining family businesses, theories utilised, publication outlets, topics investigated, origins of the research and the state of family business research based on current studies.

The third review on African family business publications was that of Farrington and Jappie (2016), who looked at research done on family businesses in South Africa. Their study reviewed 48 articles from the period 1985 to 2014. They sought to establish the status of the field of family business research in South Africa by conducting a bibliometric analysis on elements such as publication activity, journals, family business scholars, institutions, topics and theories covered, and methodologies used.

Lastly, a review was undertaken by Samara (2020) which looked at family businesses in the Arab Middle East. Several African countries fall in the Arab Middle East. Their study reviewed 70 articles from the period 2000 to 2018 and sought to take a deeper look at research on family business in the Arab Middle East and propose a guide on how to further this research in future.

In the review done by Rovelli *et al.* (2021) on 1 381 articles, there were no articles written by African scholars or done on African family businesses. The review focused on the North American-European region, with article contributions predominantly made up by authors from Germany, Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Spain. Smaller contributions outside this region were provided by countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Mexico, Taiwan, Chile and Georgia. The review done by Aparicio *et al.* (2021) analysed 3 368 articles published within the last decade. The review was not confined to any particular region and included an extensive range of articles due to its vast and more inclusive scope. Yet, of these articles, none were carried out by African scholars or covered African family businesses. Thus, these reviews serve as a further indication of the need for more research on African family business.

## **2.6 SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the various unique ways that family businesses, both globally and on the African continent, can be defined. As well as, highlighted the importance and significant contributions that family businesses have around the world.

The evolution of the field of family business as a whole was discussed in detail. Furthermore, the previous reviews on the field of family business as a whole were outlined and reviews done on African family businesses or by African authors were highlighted. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology used in this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Following on from Chapter Two, Chapter Three will describe the research design and methodology adopted for this study with regards to the literature review and the empirical investigation. In addition, how trustworthiness and rigour in the data was ensured, will be described. Lastly, the ethical considerations taken into account will be highlighted.

#### **3.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

A literature review involves collecting secondary data that has already been gathered and analysed for the purposes of a previous study and is available to use and reference (Boone & Kurtz 2015:316; Strüwig & Stead 2013:82). Thus, secondary data analysis is the analysis of data that was originally collected, recorded and analysed by another researcher/s for a unique primary purpose, other than that of the current research (Collis & Hussey 2014:59; Strüwig & Stead 2013:82). This secondary data is useful and available to researchers who may be unable to personally collect primary data – due to factors such as financial or time constraints (Johnston 2014:620).

In the current research study, a literature review was undertaken. Various journal articles, textbooks and previous research on family businesses were consulted in order to conduct the literature review. In order to search for relevant information to achieve the objectives of the study, the databases Google and Google Scholar were used, using keywords such as 'family business', 'Africa', 'importance and 'evolution'. Once information was found, it was analysed and summarised to capture the most significant work that would form part of the literature review. The literature review elaborates on the nature and importance of family businesses, the evolution of the field of family business is described and previous reviews on the field of family business as a whole are summarised. The literature review for the current study can be found in Section 2.1.

### **3.3 EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

The various options, choices made and justification for choices made with regard to the empirical investigation in this study are elaborated on in the Table 1.1. Thereafter the research strategy and the techniques and procedures for data collection and analysis will be described.

**Table 3.1: Research design and methodological choices for study**

Descriptor	Options	Description of choice and justification for use
<b><i>Philosophy and approach</i></b>		
Philosophy/paradigm	Positivism	<p>Positivism is highly structured, makes use of quantitative methods of analysis and follows a highly scientific empirical method where the objective is to attain only reputable data and facts not effected by human understanding or bias (Saunders, Lewis &amp; Thornhill 2012:140).</p> <p>Positivism is best suited for the current study because the study focusses on collecting reputable data and facts which are not reliant or moved by human bias or stance, namely facts about journal publications on African family businesses.</p>
Approach to theory development (The logic of the research)	Deductive research	<p>A deductive research approach is strongly based on deriving factually logical conclusions from a set of known theory, data and facts. It is used for scientific research where the conclusions are a direct result and correlation to the theory, data and facts (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:143-145).</p> <p>This approach is best suited for this study as the study focusses on categorising factual information based on known literature. The framework for capturing and analysing the data will be based on the literature.</p>
<b><i>Research design</i></b>		
The purpose of the study	Descriptive and Reporting	<p>This study serves both descriptive and reporting purposes. Descriptive research involves presenting thorough and accurate information/conclusions and findings on data gathered and analysed (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:669). Reporting in research involves remaining objective and presenting factual information based on primarily quantitative data which highlights trends/patterns in the information (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:182).</p> <p>These purposes align with the purpose of this study which is to present factual and accurate information relating to research done on African family businesses.</p>
Methodological choice	Mono method	<p>The mono methodological choice indicates that one will follow a single quantitative or qualitative research design (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:164). As such a single data collection technique and corresponding analytical procedure is used (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:164, 675). This study makes use of a mono method as only a single data collection technique will be used – namely desk research.</p>

**Table 3.1: Research design and methodological choices for study (continued)**

Descriptor	Options	Description of choice and justification for use
The process of the research (approach)	Quantitative study	<p>This study follows a quantitative research approach. In a quantitative approach, outcomes are viewed as objective, unbiased and scientific because of the fact that they are derived from measurable data (Saunders, Lewis &amp; Thornhill 2019:134). With this approach, data is taken in its original form and is processed and analysed in a statistical/ quantifiable manner in order to provide information of value. Tools such as graphs and charts allow for the processing, presenting and elaborating of data trends (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:472-473).</p> <p>In order to identify trends in family business research in Africa (such as the impact factor, author and institution contributions made, methods used, topics covered etc.), basic descriptive statistical analysis and quantitative content analysis will be undertaken to quantify and analyse the data gathered from published articles.</p>
Research strategy	Archival research and Bibliometric research	<p>This study makes use of an archival and bibliometric research strategy. An archival research strategy is one that gathers, extracts and analyses data from other existing research, records and documents for research purposes (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:178).</p> <p>Bibliometric research involves making use of statistical processes to analyse information in books, articles and other publications (Farrington &amp; Jappie 2016:5; Science - Postgraduates &amp; Research Support: Bibliometric and Citations Analysis 2021). This strategy is useful in measuring/ quantifying data (such as biographical data) as well as identifying trends in order to form conclusions (Ellegaard &amp; Wallin 2015). A bibliometric strategy thus makes use of a quantitative approach (Farrington &amp; Jappie 2016:5).</p> <p>Both these strategies are suited to the current study as they focus on gathering and analysing existing data on what the current state of research is with regards to family businesses in Africa. For example; information will be gathered on who the researchers are, where they are located, as well as the topics and theories covered etc.</p>
The time dimension	Cross-sectional	<p>A cross-sectional time dimension involves researching a specific event at a specific point in time (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:190). This time dimension is often used because most research projects have time constraints (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:190). The current study is based on capturing the current state of African family business research and the data is collected at one point in time. Therefore, it adopts a cross-sectional time dimension.</p>

**Table 3.1: Research design and methodological choices for study (continued)**

Descriptor	Options	Description of choice and justification for use
Techniques and procedures for data collection and analysis	Monitoring study	Monitoring is a data collection and analysis technique/procedure that makes use of the process of collecting, analysing, summarising and using data and information that is already in existence to form the basis and context of a study (Project Management Professional n.d.). Monitoring is thus a suitable technique for the current study as various data and information, relating to published articles on African family businesses, will be collected, analysed, and summarised.
Data collection	Desk research	The desk research method of data collection involves searching, gathering and using existing data and information in order to substantiate and arrive at the purposed research objectives and conclusions (Secondary Research- Definition, Methods and Examples n.d.). Existing information and data is summarised, analysed and organized in order to identify research trends (Secondary Research- Definition, Methods and Examples n.d.; Travis 2016). The current study on African family business research requires a desk research data collection method as the study intends on identifying patterns and trends in research data in order to draw conclusions as to how the field of research on African family businesses needs to move forward.
Data analysis	Statistical analysis Content analysis	<p>This study will make use of both statistical analysis and content analysis methods in order to analyse the data collected. Statistical data analysis involves making use of different statistical functions in order to collect, analyse and quantify data in order to recognize data trends and patterns (Ali &amp; Bhaskar 2016; Statistical Data Analysis n.d.).</p> <p>Content analysis provides a similar function, enabling researchers to analyse and quantify data trends and patterns in various words, themes, communication and literature in order to draw conclusions (Bengtsson 2016:8; Content Analysis Method and Examples 2021).</p> <p>Both methods of data analysis are appropriate for the current study as the data collected will be used to identify trends and patterns within research on family businesses in Africa.</p>

**Table 3.1: Research design and methodological choices for study (continued)**

Descriptor	Options	Description of choice and justification for use
<b><i>Other descriptors</i></b>		
The degree of structure	Exploratory study	An exploratory study takes on a degree of structure that involves charting “unknown spaces” (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:171). It focuses on predominantly exploring and gathering new research information through analysing data, asking questions and making use of diagrams. This type of structure allows researchers to discover and understand research data and information from new perspectives (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:670). As such, the current study can be described as explorative because it involves researching “unknowns” with regards to African family business research.
The researcher’s control of variables	Ex post fact	Ex post fact control relates to performing a study where the method used in conducting the study is that of the researcher exercising full control of which variables they choose to research and how they plan on grouping these variables within the research, bearing in mind that these elements that make up the variables already exist (Ex Post Facto Research Design n.d.; Salkind 2010). The current study is described as ex post fact as the researcher will choose what to research and can only report on what already exists in the field of African family business research.
The outcomes of the research	Basic (pure) research	Basic research is research that is conducted mostly at academic institutions in order to make sense of processes and their consequences (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:11). As such it is research of an academic nature where the main consumer is the academic community (Saunders <i>et al.</i> 2012:12). The current study is described as basic research because the outcomes and findings of this research will serve and be of interest to the academic community.



### 3.3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY: BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

The research strategy adopted in the current study is a bibliometric analysis. Bibliometrics is a research strategy that takes a quantitative approach to studying different elements of published literature (Thanuskodi 2010:1). Once a researcher has a particular topic of interest, bibliometrics can be used to identify patterns and trends in publications such as who the authors are, how many times an article has been cited, the publication date and so forth (Thanuskodi 2010:1). As a result, researchers are able to gain deeper insight into the dynamics of a particular area of study's growth (Thanuskodi 2010:1). Researchers use bibliometric analysis as a sophisticated research method because it allows for published research to be tracked and allows for an analysis to be done on biographical data which enables researchers to identify trends (Thanuskodi 2010:1). Furthermore, bibliometrics also allows researchers to justify findings and conclusions based on theoretically derived categories in a review article (Zupic & Cater 2015:431). A bibliometric analysis is thus a valuable tool where it comes to mapping scientific knowledge and evolutionary variations of well-established fields by making sense of large volumes of data through the use of different bibliometric methods (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey & Lim 2021:97).

Overall, a bibliometric analysis uses a quantitative approach to describe, evaluate and monitor published literature which ensures that the review process is systematic, transparent and coherent (Zupic & Cater 2015:430). Furthermore, a bibliometric analysis improves the quality of research studies as researchers do not end up influencing their findings with their own opinions but instead base their findings on the collected bibliographic data captured from published research and other researcher(s) work (Zupic & Cater 2015:430).

Bibliometrics is a useful tool for when researchers want to evaluate the impact of research as well as identify its strengths and weaknesses. It is also useful for identifying who the top performing researchers and journals are in a particular research field (Bibliometrics & Citation Analysis 2021). The two main uses for bibliometric methods are performance analysis, which is used to evaluate the research and publication performance of individuals and institutions, and science mapping, which aims to explore the structure and dynamics of scientific fields (Zupic & Cater

2015:431). Although there are several bibliometric methods, this study will only focus on publication performance analysis. A performance analysis examines the contributions of research constituents, such as authors, institutions, countries and journals, to a given field (Donthu *et al.* 2021:287). Thus, by making use of this form of analysis, researchers are able to map biographical content in articles such as author/s of article, institution with which affiliated, title of article, date published, journal in which published and so forth (Wallin 2005:262).

### 3.3.2 STEPS IN UNDERTAKING A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

According to Ruiz Real, Uribe-Toril, De Pablo and Gazquez-Abad (2018:2) there are five steps to follow when conducting a bibliometric analysis, each of which will be described as applicable to the current study in the paragraphs below.

The *first step* is search criteria and involves defining the search criteria, keywords, and time periods which will be applied in a study. The researcher must ensure that the search criteria, keywords and time periods used in defining the search is not too limiting, such as to yield a small number of results that are not considered enough to warrant the use of a bibliometric analysis (Donthu *et al.* 2021:292). Thus, the scope of the search criteria should not be too broad but large enough so that the volume of data needed to perform a bibliometric analysis is met (Donthu *et al.* 2021:292).

A population refers to every individual, object, event or measurement that meet the criteria for selection of the study (Miller 2017:16). This therefore includes everyone or everything eligible for selection in terms of the hypotheses of a study (Chow, Shao, Wang & Lokhnygina 2017:7). For the purpose of this study, all journal article publications on family business in an African context make up the population. Furthermore, the sampling technique selected and utilised in the study is that of criterion sampling as it entails selecting the sample based on pre-established criteria that is of importance to the research (Criterion Sampling in Research 2021).

The following criteria was laid down for journal articles to be included in the sample for this study: The search will be limited to articles published in journals only. The databases used to search for these journal articles will be Google and Google Scholar

only. The articles must be published in English and the research undertaken in the articles must be on family businesses based on the African continent.

The *second step* involves selecting the databases from which to source the data. The database selection is a significant step in undertaking a bibliometric analysis as the results of the bibliometric analysis may vary depending on the data obtained from the database used (Agramunt, Berbel-Pineda, Capobianco-Uriarte & Casado-Belmonte 2020:3). Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar and Microsoft are amongst the most commonly used bibliometric data sources as they provide adequate coverage of various disciplines (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:3). Google Scholar in particular has been hailed as a superset combination of other databases due to the substantial wider coverage it provides (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:3). For this reason, only two databases will be used to obtain data (articles in journals), namely Google and Google Scholar.

The *third step* is research refinement and involves the adjustment and refinement of the research criteria. Researchers should go back to the key terms that will be used when searching the databases and look at ways to define key terms to yield optimum search results (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:3). Researchers are able to do this by developing search formulas recognised by the databases used (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:3). These formulas can have a variety of two or more combinations of terms, connected together with different operators, in order to obtain the highest degree of accuracy in the search and facilitate the capture of large amounts of data (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:3). This steps also provides for researchers to take another look at the time period their search will encompass as well as what specific type of documents the search will focus in on (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:3).

For the purpose of this study, the key terms for the search include family business, family firm, family owned business/firm, family enterprise, family owner and family ownership as well as the names of all the African countries. The proposed formula to be used is: “family business (es)” OR “family firm(s)” OR “family-owned business (es)/firm(s)” OR “family enterprise(s)” OR “family owner(s)” OR “family ownership”; AND “Country” (specifying each country that forms part of the African continent). There is no start time period that the search will encompass but the end time period will be

12 August 2021. Furthermore, the type of document that the search will focus on is that of articles published in English journals only.

The *fourth step* is the exporting of final data and involves fully exporting the results found in the data searched. This step involves that the researcher gathers or collects all the data retrieved from their databases of choice in order to categorise the data in a separate document using a format that will make the most coherent sense and be best suited for the biographical information the researcher intends on analysing and describing (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:4).

For the purpose of this study, the biographical information relating to the journal articles sourced, which met the search criteria, was captured on an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. The data obtained from the articles was captured according to several categories, namely author name, title of article, date published, journal name, journal impact factor, journal accreditation, citations of article, country focus, topic, and abstract and whether the research was qualitative or quantitative.

The journal impact factor and accreditation justify further explanation. The impact factor pertains to the impact factor of a journal. This journal impact factor (JIF) is calculated by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) on a bi-annual basis, and the results are published in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) (Wallin 2005:263). The JIF favours journals that are heavily cited within the two-year period that the calculation falls in. The JIF is a popular used representation of a journals scientific impact and reflects the numerous publication and citation patterns and trends within the different research fields (Wallin 2005:263). Journal accreditation refers to journals obtaining an International Standard Book Number or International Standard Serial Number (ISBN or ISSN) (International Standard Book Number n.d.; International Standard Serial Number n.d.). Journals receive accreditation by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) once they successfully satisfy the standard criteria, such as being peer reviewed, which acknowledges their credibility, trustworthiness and contribution of quality research to the development of a specific field of study (International Standard Book Number n.d.; International Standard Serial Number n.d.; Publication Guidelines n.d:2-3; Selecting a quality journal: Accredited journals 2021).

The primary data collected in this study consisted of articles published in journals identified as meeting the criteria described. This data will be collected via a desk research and will include all journal articles published based on research done on African family businesses. Once the relevant important bibliographic data is acquired, a bibliometric analysis then provides that the data be captured into specified categories and allows for an analysis of these categories, from which a researcher can begin to make conclusions, and identify patterns and themes of the research (Zupic & Cater 2015:430-431).

The *fifth step* is an analysis and discussion of the findings and involves analysing the information and discussing the results produced. This step involves an analysis to be undertaken in order for scientific 'maps' to be discovered, created and visualised (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:4). This step will most times include a descriptive analysis and content analysis (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:4). The descriptive analysis will look at the constituents in the research field such as; authors, institutions and countries while the content analysis will focus on the evolution of the field in terms of which components such keywords or topics are most prevalent at a particular time period (Agramunt *et al.* 2020:4).

Once all the relevant data from the journal articles has been captured into the Excel spreadsheet, the final step will be to analyse, describe and discuss the findings. In this step, the study will focus on selected biographical information obtained from the journal articles (listed above). In order to appropriately chart and describe the evolution of the field, identify patterns and trends in the research as well as provide recommendations, various mapping tools will be utilised such as pie charts, graphs and tables.

In a bibliometric analysis, data is analysed by methods of publication analysis, citation analysis, impact factor analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographical coupling, co-author analysis, and co-word analysis. A publication analysis involves an in-depth analysis of key content elements in publications such as journal articles (Wallin 2005:262). A citation analysis involves analysing the relationships across various publications by identifying the most significant publications in the research field (Donthu *et al.* 2021:289). An impact factor analysis involves analysing the impact

factor of a journal in order to gauge its scientific impact and identify patterns and trends within a research field (Wallin 2005:263). A co-citation analysis involves analysing the relationship among cited publications in order to identify foundational themes in a research field (Donthu *et al.* 2021:289). Bibliographic coupling involves analysing the relationships among cited publications in order to identify the development of themes in a research field (Donthu *et al.* 2021:289). Co-word analysis involves investigating the relationships among topics in a research field by looking at the written content of the article (Donthu *et al.* 2021:289). Co-author analysis involves exploring the relationships among authors as well as their affiliations and impact on the development of the research in the field (Donthu *et al.* 2021:289).

A publication analysis is being performed, as the current study involves an in-depth analysis of key content elements (biographical information), in journal publications on African family businesses research.

In this manner a bibliometric analysis uses a quantitative approach to analysing the data of published research by describing, evaluating and monitoring it (Zupic & Cater 2015:429-430). By using a bibliometric analysis, a researcher is able to analyse data more efficiently as the bibliometric analysis will guide the researcher to the specific bibliographic data of importance and allow for the research field to be evaluated without subjective bias (Zupic & Cater 2015:429-430).

### **3.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RIGOUR**

Trustworthiness refers to the quality and authenticity of the data used in the study (Cypress 2017). The trustworthiness of the study directly impacts the degree of trust and confidence that a reader attaches to the research and its findings (Cypress 2017). Rigour is similarly defined as the quality of data where a study is undertaken with careful or strict precision (Cypress 2017). Where there is trustworthiness and rigour in a study, it means that the researcher has ensured that the data, interpretation of the data and the methods and procedures used to source and analyse that data, all ensure quality of the study (Connelly 2016).

Initially outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are four measures most often used to assess the trustworthiness of a study, namely credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility refers to the confidence one has in whether the data gathered is truthful and accurate in accordance with the data obtained by participants in a study (Korstjens & Moser 2018:121; Polit & Beck 2014). To guarantee credibility, the researcher must ensure that no information is distorted by implementing measures such as triangulation, persistent observation and member check (Korstjens & Moser 2018:121). In order to ensure credibility in the current study, the researcher will personally undertake the collection, capturing and analysis of data. In addition, member check will be used. Respondent validation, otherwise known as member check, is a tool that allows one to further explore the credibility in a researcher's study (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter 2016:1802). By using the technique of member checking, researchers are able to provide better accuracy, validity and trustworthiness in a study's results (Birt *et al.* 2016:1802). In the current study, the researcher will make use of the member check technique by checking their individual list of data (articles) collected against the lists collected by fellow research students. To further enhance credibility, the researcher will strive to make use of no sources older than ten years. Additionally, the researcher will consult the insights of her supervisor, who is an expert in the field, to ensure that the data gathered, and the method followed is as credible as possible.

Dependability is similar to reliability and refers to the consistency of the data and the conditions of the study over a period of time (Polit & Beck 2014). In order to increase the dependability of a study, the researcher can have participants assess the study's findings, interpretations and recommendations to ensure they have accurately captured the data (Anney 2014:278). In order to ensure dependability in the current study, the researcher will aim to use only trusted sources, no older than 10 years, which meet the research criteria in order to generate findings that have established dependability. To further enhance dependability, the methodology followed as well as, the findings and recommendations will be made available for future reference.

Transferability pertains to the extent to which the research data and findings of the study are valuable and able to be used by people in different settings/contexts outside of the study (Connelly 2016:435; Korstjens & Moser 2018:120; Polit & Beck 2014). In order to ensure transferability in the study, the researcher will analyse and compare past and present research done on family business research in Africa, in order to provide future research and researchers with what has been done in the field and where gaps exist for further exploration.

Lastly, confirmability refers to the objectivity and consistency of the findings of a study, such that they are able to be repeated (Connelly 2016:435). In order to increase confirmability, a researcher must be able to show that the data gathered and the conclusions made are free from research bias and focus only on the participant responses (Cope 2014:89). In order to ensure confirmability in this study, the researcher will record all information on data gathered in an Excel spreadsheet and include an extensive research methodology chapter that will explain in detail the methods adopted by the researcher as well as the procedures followed during the data collection and analysis phases. By doing this the researcher will demonstrate that all findings and conclusions are directly sourced from the data collected and not subject to research bias.

### **3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics are philosophies that direct human behaviour (Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund 2015:41). In relation to business research, ethics are of the utmost significance as it provides researchers with the guidance necessary to conduct research appropriately (Quinlan *et al.* 2015:41). The benefit of ensuring research is ethically carried out is that no one is affected negatively by the undertaking or results of the research (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler 2011:115).

When research is conducted, ethical practices that must be considered include anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent and data protection (Klee 2014:106). Confidentiality is the “non-disclosure” of information, such as participants’ names, by the researcher (Quinlan *et al.* 2015:395). The researcher must ensure that all data is used for its intended purpose (Collis & Hussey 2014:32). Informed consent is the act



of fully informing the participant of what the study is about, what the data gathered will be used for and what they are required to do. This should be done prior to obtaining their approval to go forth with the study (Blumberg *et al.* 2011:116). Data protection pertains to a person's right to privacy, regarding their personal information that the researcher should not disclose to other people or the public (Blumberg *et al.* 2011:118-119).

In the current study a desk research will be undertaken, and no people will be involved in the process of collecting the data. Given the nature of the information collected (the fact that the information is not private nor personal in nature) and that no people are directly involved, no specific ethical clearance is required.

However, in accordance with the ethical standards of Nelson Mandela University (NMU), an ethics form has been signed by the researcher, her study leader and the Head of the Department of Business Management. This form is attached as Annexure B.

### **3.6 SUMMARY**

Chapter Three outlined the research design and methodology that will be implemented in this study. The research design and methodological choices for the study were described within this chapter. This was followed by a discussion on the research strategy adopted and the steps followed in order to conduct a bibliometric analysis. To conclude the chapter, the manner in which research trustworthiness and rigour will be ensured as well as, the ethical considerations taken into account were highlighted.

In Chapter Four, the information collected from the journal articles on African family businesses will be analysed and presented before conclusions and future recommendations can be made.

## CHAPTER 4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

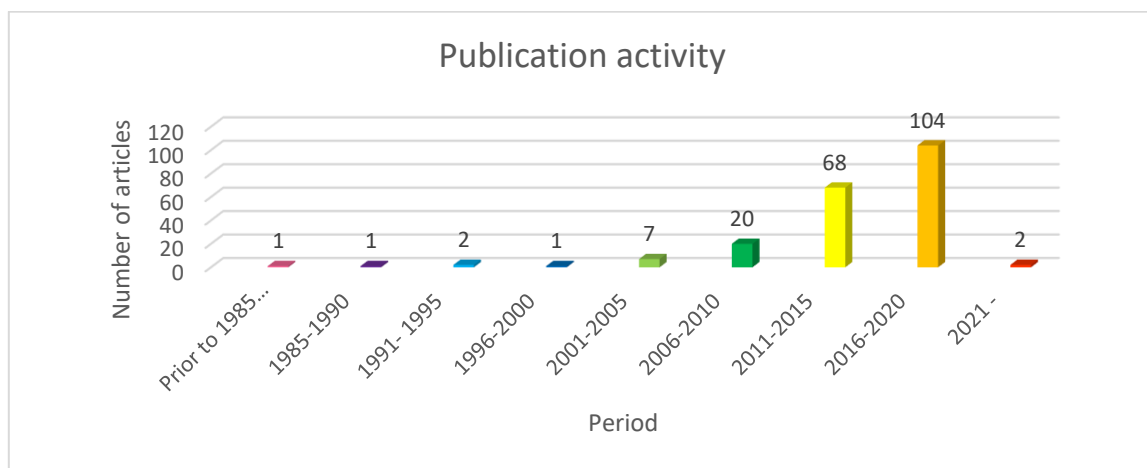
### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the research design and methodology adopted to achieve the objectives of this study were described and justified. In this chapter, the empirical findings of the study are presented. A total of 206 articles met this study's search criteria and the data extracted from these articles is presented below. The data collected from the journal articles, is presented in terms of publication activity, author details, journals, citations, methods adopted, country focus and topics investigated. More specifically author names and whether the authors are based in an African country, the title and publication date of the article, whether the research done was qualitative or quantitative, the number of citations the article has obtained to date, the name, impact factor and accreditation of the journal as well as the article's country focus, topic, and keywords, are presented.

### 4.2 PUBLICATION ACTIVITY

The 206 journal articles identified as meeting the study criteria were published over the period 1975 to 2021 (see Figure 4.1). The first article was published in 1975 and the most recent in 2021.

**Figure 4.1: Publication activity**

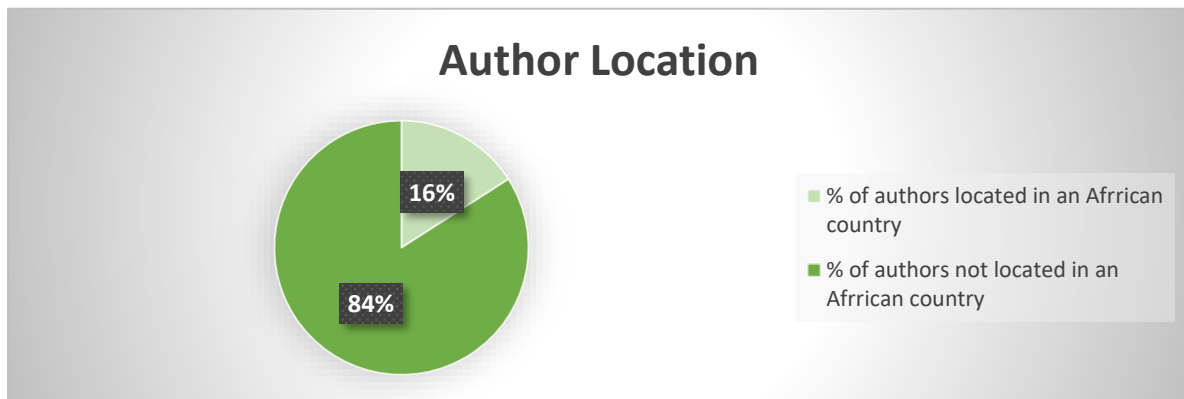


As observed from Figure 4.1, there was only one article published prior to 1985. The first article was published in 1975 by J. Zarwan and was published in the *Kroniek van Afrika*. The article presented a case study on two related families and was titled “The social and economic network of an Indian family business in Kenya, 1920-1970”. Only one article was also published during the five-year period, 1985 to 1990. This article was authored by S. Jithoo, from the University of Durban-Westville and was published in the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. The article was titled “Indian family businesses in Durban, South Africa” and was a quantitative study. Publication rates remained consistent during the periods of 1991 to 1995 and 1996 to 2000, with one and two articles published respectively. The period 2001 to 2005 saw an increase in publication activity with seven of the articles under review being published during this period. Notable increases followed in the periods 2006 to 2010 and 2011 to 2015, with these periods having seen publication rates rise to 20 and 68 articles, respectively. The period of 2016 to 2020, however, saw the most significant jump in publication activity, with a total of 104 articles published during this period. At the time of the current study’s search for articles having concluded (2 August 2021), only two articles have been published in the upcoming period 2021 to 2025. The first was published in the *International Organisation of Scientific Research Journal of Business Management* by A. Olalekan, O. Oluseyi and V. Bienose. Quantitative in nature, the article is titled “Management Succession Planning and Family Business Continuity in Lagos State, Nigeria”. The second article has been published in the *International Journal of Management and Entrepreneurship* and is authored by O. Nnenna. The article is titled “Sustainability and succession planning of selected family businesses in South-East Nigeria” and is also quantitative in nature.

#### **4.4 AUTHOR DETAILS**

The results of this show that the 206 articles were authored by 452 scholars. As can be seen in Figure 4.2, 380 (84%) of these authors were located in a country on the African continent at the time of publication, with only 16% of the authors being located in a country outside of Africa.

**Figure 4.2: Author location**



An analysis of author productivity (see Table 4.1) reveals that the most productive authors are E. Venter (Nelson Mandela University), S.M. Farrington (Nelson Mandela University), S.P. van der Merwe (North-West University), C. Boshoff (Stellenbosch University), K.C. Agbim (Veritas University, Abuja) and M. Acquaaah (University of North Carolina).

Tabled below is a list of the most prolific authors as well as their country of location and employing institution (see Table 4.1). From Table 4.1 it is evident that all but one of the authors who have generated the most outputs are based in an African country and that the top six authors have contributed towards 29.61% (61 articles) of the total articles.

**Table 4.1: African family business research authors, institutions and country of location**

Author	Articles	Institution	Country (African/Non-African)
Venter, E.	16	Nelson Mandela University	African
Farrington, S.M.	14	Nelson Mandela University	African
Van der Merwe, S.P.	10	North-West University	African
Boshoff, C.	9	Stellenbosch University	African
Agbim, K.C.	7	University of Agriculture	African
Acquaah, M.	5	University of North Carolina	Non-African
Lahmiri, S.	4	ESCA School of Management	African

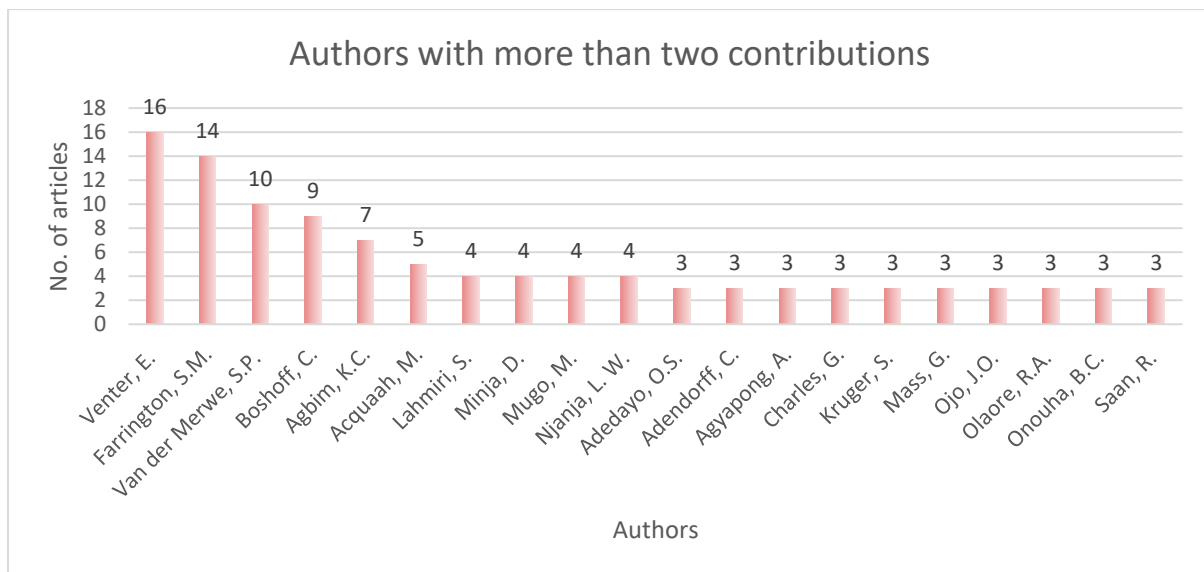
**Table 4.1: African family business research authors, institutions and country of location (continued)**

Author	Articles	Institution	Country (African/Non-African)
Minja, D.	4	Kenyatta University	African
Mugo, M.	4	Multimedia University College of Kenya	African
Njanja, L. W.	4	St. Paul's University	African
Adedayo, O.S.	3	Babcock University	African
Adendorff, C.	3	Nelson Mandela University	African
Agyapong, A.	3	University of Science and Technology	African
Charles, G.	3	University of Dar es Salaam	African
Kruger, S.	3	University of Johannesburg	African
Mass, G.	3	Nelson Mandela University	African
Ojo, J.O.	3	McPherson University	African
Olaore, R.A.	3	Osun State Polytechnic	African
Onouha, B.C.	3	Kogi State University	African
Saan, R.	3	WA Polytechnic	African

An analysis of author productivity indicates that the authors who collaborated the most were Venter and Farrington, who published 11 articles together. Following this is Venter and Boshoff with seven collaborations, Farrington and Boshoff with five collaborations and Venter and van der Merwe with four collaborations. The three authors who collaborated together most frequently were Minja, Mugo and Njanja with four collaborations. Farrington, Venter and van der Merwe also collaborated on four articles together.

As can be seen from Figure 4.3, there are 20 authors that have contributed towards more than two publications based on research conducted on African family businesses. Worth noting is that there were 34 other authors that have made contributions to two publications and 68 that have each made contributions to one published article. On average, the number of authors contributing to each article is 2.194.

**Figure 4.3: Authors with more than two contributions**



#### 4.5 JOURNALS

The 206 articles analysed for the current study are published in 142 different academic journals. The highest number of articles published in one journal is 10. The journals with the highest number of articles published as well as their current impact factors (August 2021) and accreditation are summarised in Table 4.2.

The journals in which the highest number of articles have been published is the *South African Journal of Business Management (SAJBM)*, with 10 articles. This is followed by *Management Dynamics* (8 articles), the *European Journal of Business and Management* (7 articles), and the *Family Business Review* (5 articles).

As can be seen from Table 4.2, there are 13 journals that have published more than two articles based African family business research. In addition, there are 17 journals that have 2 publications and 112 journals that have one publication only. Worth noting is that the *South African Journal of Business Management (SAJBM)*, which has the highest number of publications, currently only has an impact factor of 0.55. Whilst the *European Journal of Business and Management* and the *Family Business Review*, with the third and fourth highest number of publications, have current impact factors of 7.17 and 5.212. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, the journal with the highest current impact factor (10.75), has only three articles published in it.

**Table 4.2: Academic journals with the highest number of publications**

Journal	Articles	2021 Impact Factor	Accreditation
South African Journal of Business Management (SAJBM)	10	0.55	WoS/Scopus
Management Dynamics	8	0.765	IBSS
European Journal of Business and Management	7	7.17	ISSN
Family Business Review	5	5.212	WoS/Scopus
Journal of African Business	4	5.8	IBSS/Scopus
Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship	4	1.2	Scopus
IOSR Journal of Business and Management	4	3.5	ISSN
Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal	3	0.8	Scopus
Covenant Journal of Entrepreneurship	3	0	ISSN
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	3	10.75	IBSS/WoS
International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences	3	0.897	ISSN
International Journal of Business and Social Science	3	0.876	ISSN
International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business	3	0.81	Scopus

The average impact factor of the 206 journals is 2.193, with the highest impact factor being 10.75. Of the 206 journals, 105 had an impact factor of less than one. In total there were 64 articles published in journals that had an impact factor of zero. It is important to note that the impact factor of the journals at the time of publication, is not the same as the current impact factor of the journals as recorded in 2021. The five journals with the highest impact factors are tabled below (see Table 4.3).

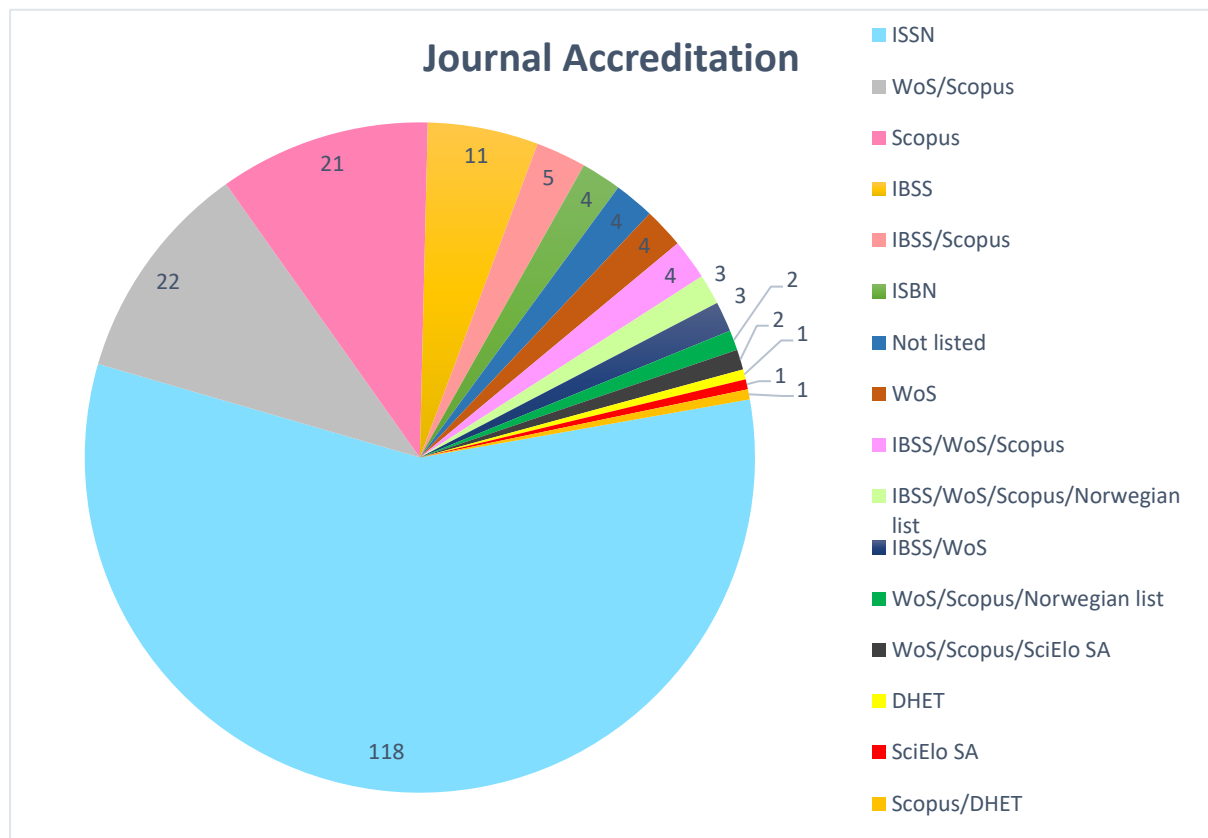
**Table 4.3: Academic journals with the highest impact factors**

Ranking	Impact factor	Journal
Highest	10.75	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice
2nd	8.987	Journal of Business Venturing
3rd	8.641	Strategic Management Journal
4th	8.08	Universal Journal of Management
5th	7.803	International Journal of Science and Research

Despite having the highest impact factors, the high impact journals have some of the lowest numbers of articles published, with the *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Strategic Management Journal* and the *Universal Journal of Management* each only having published one article based on research done on African family businesses. The *International Journal of Science and Research* has published only two articles.

From Figure 4.4 it can be seen that more than half (118 articles; 57%) of the articles were published in journals accredited with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). Eleven percent (22 articles) are accredited with both Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. Ten percent (21 articles) are accredited with only Scopus, while five percent (11 articles) are accredited with the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS). Only two percent of the articles analysed in this study were published in journals that are not accredited.

**Figure 4.4: Journal Accreditation**





## 4.6 CITATIONS

The 206 articles reviewed for this study have on average 22.12 citations per article. As can be seen from Table 4.4, the article with the highest number of citations (1075) was published in 1997 by Morris, M., Williams, R., Allen, J. and Avila, R. and was titled “Correlates of success in family business transitions”. This article was published in the *Journal of Business Venturing*. The article with the second highest number of citations, with 391 citations, was published in 2009 by Khavul, S., Bruton, G.D. and Wood, E. This article was published in the *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* journal and titled “Informal family business in Africa”. The third most cited article, with 196 citations, was authored by Acquaaah, M. and titled “Social networking relationships, firm-specific managerial experience and firm performance in a transitional economy: A comparative analysis of family owned and non-family firms”. This article was published in 2012 in the *Strategic Management Journal*.

**Table 4.4: Publications with the highest number of citations**

Author/s	Journal	Title	Year	Citations
Morris, M. Williams, R. Allen, J. Avila, R.	Journal of Business Venturing	Correlates of success in family business transitions.	1997	1075
Khavul, S. Bruton, G. D. Wood, E.	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	Informal family business in Africa.	2009	391
Acquaah, M.	Strategic Management Journal	Social networking relationships, firm-specific managerial experience and firm performance in a transitional economy: A comparative analysis of family owned and non-family firms	2012	196
Acquaah, M.	Journal of Family Business Strategy	Management control systems, business strategy and performance: A comparative analysis of family and non-family businesses in a transition economy in sub-Saharan Africa	2013	145

**Table 4.4: Publications with the highest number of citations (continued)**

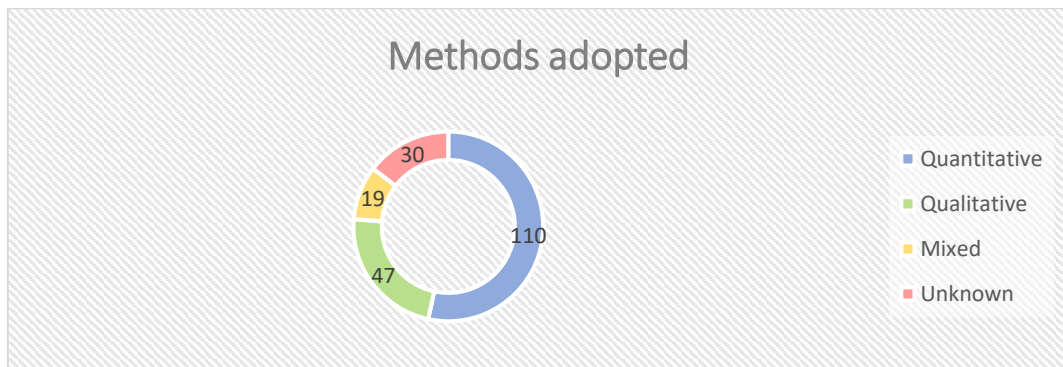
Author/s	Journal	Title	Year	Citations
Khayesi, J. N. George, G. Antonakis, J.	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice.	Kinship in entrepreneur networks: Performance effects of resource assembly in Africa	2014	133
Acquaah, M. Amoako- Gyampah, K. Jayaram, J.	International Journal of Production Research	Resilience in family and nonfamily firms: An examination of the relationships between manufacturing strategy, competitive strategy and firm performance	2011	122
Acquaah, M.	Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship	Business strategy and competitive advantage in family businesses in Ghana: The role of social networking relationships	2011	109

As reported, the highest number of citations for an article is 1075 with the average number of citations for an article being 22.12. The article with the highest number of citations is authored by three international authors and is published in the academic journal (*Journal of Business Venturing*) that boasts the second highest impact factor of 8.987. The number of articles that have zero citations are 37 (17.96%). The vast majority of articles with zero citations are published in academic journals with a current impact factors of zero.

#### 4.7 METHODS ADOPTED

As can be seen in Figure 4.5, more than half (110; 53%) of the 206 articles published during the period 1975 to 2021 reported the use of quantitative methods, with only 47 articles (23%) using qualitative methods. Nineteen articles (9%) reported adopting mixed methods, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods and for 30 of the articles (15%) the method used could not be identified.

**Figure 4.5: Methods adopted**

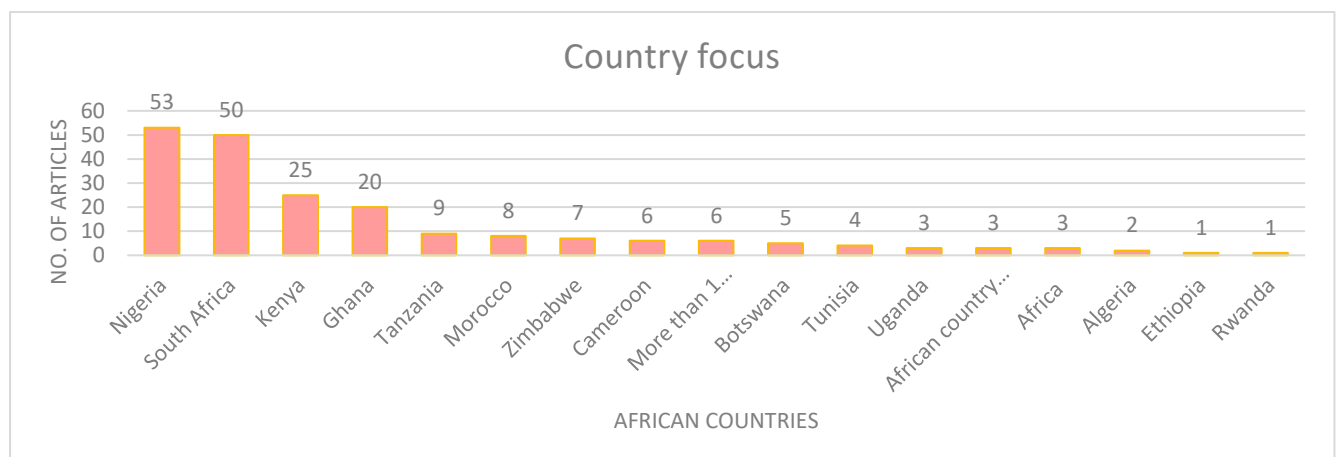


#### 4.8 COUNTRY FOCUS

An analysis of the 206 articles under review shows that the research done on African family businesses has taken place in 17 countries, with an average of 12.12 articles for these 17 countries. As depicted by Figure 4.6, the country out of which most research has originated is Nigeria, with 53 articles, followed by South Africa (50 articles), Kenya (25 articles) and Ghana (20 articles). Furthermore, there were six articles that based their research on family business in more than one African country and three articles that based their research on family business in both an African and a non-African country.

All the other countries had less than nine articles published based on research done on family businesses in those countries.

**Figure 4.6: Country focus**



## 4.9 TOPICS

By means of a WordCloud using Atlas ti, the various keywords reported in the 206 articles were analysed. After eliminating irrelevant words such as those relating to names of places and countries, and business size, as well as general economic and methodology words, 343 words remained that related to specific topics. These words were then further analysed and those that had the same meaning were labelled the same (synonyms). As can be observed in Figure 4.7, topics (as represented by keywords) that were researched most often related to performance and succession, with these keywords occurring 37 times each. Succession planning was reported as a keyword 24 times and entrepreneurship, 23 times. Other words that appeared frequently were sustainability (15 times), finance (12 times), networking and strategy (11 times each), and continuity and management (10 times each). Furthermore, there were 10 keywords that appeared only once, these included words such as diversification, profitability, nepotism and job creation, amongst others.

**Figure 4.7: WordCloud of keywords**



The keywords examined (see Figure 4.7) reveal the key topics investigated. Based on these keywords, several possible independent and dependent variables can be identified. Independent variables possibly include issues such as succession, entrepreneurship, finance, networking, succession planning, strategy, management, governance, culture, entrepreneur and innovation. On the other hand, dependent

variables possibly include variables such as performance, growth, sustainability, continuity and organisational culture. It is possible that most articles investigated the influence of these independent variables on the dependent variables identified. For example, the influence of family business governance on the business's growth and performance. An analysis of these keywords could suggest that the most common topics investigated and reported on in the published articles relate to succession, succession planning and entrepreneurship, and how these topics influence the performance of family businesses.

#### **4.10 SUMMARY**

Chapter Four presented the empirical results of this study. The results presented are based on an analysis of 206 published journal articles. With regards to these articles the following was reported: publication activity, author details, journals, citations, methods adopted, country focus and topics.

Chapter Five, the next and final chapter, includes a brief summary of the study. Following this, the findings of the research will be discussed. Thereafter, the contributions and limitations of the study will be highlighted and recommendations for future research will be presented.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The final chapter of this study, Chapter Five, provides an overview of the study and discusses the research findings. Several recommendations are also proposed. Additionally, the contributions and limitations of the study are highlighted and areas for future research are proposed. The chapter is then brought to a close with some concluding remarks.

#### **5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

Chapter One introduced the research by providing a background of the topic under study. The introduction was followed by a description of the problem, the purpose of the study and the research objectives. The purpose of this study was to conduct an assessment on the current state of research in the field of family business research in Africa. In accordance with the problem statement and purpose of the study, the primary objective was to identify, explore, elaborate and quantify the 'who, what, where and how' of research with regards to family business in Africa. To achieve the primary objective several secondary and methodological objectives were formulated (see Table 5.1). Chapter One also described the scope and demarcation of the study and provided definitions of the key concepts used. The chapter concluded by highlighting the significance of the study and presenting an overview of the study's structure.

Chapter Two provided the literature overview and described the nature and importance of family businesses in general, as well as in an African context. For the purpose of this study a family business refers to a business where more than 50% of the shares or equity in the business is controlled or owned by a single family or where a minimum of two family members are actively involved in the day to day running of the business (de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:2; Farrington & Jappie 2016:2; Moores & Barrett 2010). It was also noted that African family businesses differ from their Western counterparts in terms of how conflict between family members is

managed, and how legal, financial, governance and investment structures are arranged, amongst other matters (Bewayo 2009:177).

The chapter concluded by describing the evolution of the field of family business and summarising previous reviews of the field as a whole. Four reviews were identified as being conducted on African family business publications.

In Chapter Three, the research design and methodology adopted for this study was described. The research paradigm, approach, strategy and methods, the sampling process, as well as the data collection and data analysis techniques adopted were described and justified. The research strategy, namely a bibliometric analysis and the steps undertaken in such an analysis were elaborated on in detail. In addition, the manner in which the trustworthiness and rigour in the collection process and the data collected was ensured, was described and the ethical considerations taken into account were highlighted.

Chapter Four presented the empirical findings of the study. The search for journal articles that met this study's search criteria resulted in 206 published journal articles, done on family business research in Africa, that were able to be analysed. Firstly, a description of publication activity was presented. Thereafter, author details and productivity were elaborated on. This was followed by an identification of the academic journals in which the articles were published. Citations of the published articles were reported on and the methods adopted by authors were identified. Finally, the country focus as well as the topics of the published journal articles were described. These findings will be discussed in more detail in 5.3 of this chapter.

The overview of this study confirms the achievement of the primary, secondary and methodological objectives. Table 5.1 summarises in which chapters each of the study's objectives were achieved.

**Table 5.1: Research design and methodological choices for study**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Relevant chapter(s)</b>
<b>Primary objective:</b>	
To identify, explore, elaborate and quantify the ‘who, what, where and how’ of research with regards to family business in Africa.	Chapter 4
<b>Secondary objectives:</b>	
To identify in which African countries, research on family businesses is being carried out and who the authors and their institutions are that are conducting these studies.	Chapter 4
To determine the theories and methods most used when undertaking research on family businesses in Africa.	Chapter 4
Identifying which topics and theories are being used when undertaking research on family businesses in Africa.	Chapter 4
To explore and measure the impact of published research on family businesses in Africa.	Chapter 5
To establish trends in the numbers of published articles written on African family businesses.	Chapter 5
<b>Methodological objectives:</b>	
To conduct a literature review on the nature and importance of family businesses, as well as research done in the field of family business as a whole.	Chapter 2
To determine the research methodology best suited for addressing the identified research problems and objectives.	Chapter 3
To develop an appropriate framework for categorising and analysing the collected data.	Chapter 3 and Chapter 4
To identify the relevant published journal articles and capture the necessary data.	Chapter 4
To analyse the data gathered by using the appropriate methods.	Chapter 4
To provide recommendations and conclusions based on the results of the study by presenting which areas, of family business research in Africa, require further exploration.	Chapter 5

### **5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study will be discussed in the sections below and recommendations will be proposed.

#### **5.3.1 PUBLICATION ACTIVITY**

As indicated in Chapter Four, the 206 journal articles identified as meeting the study’s criteria were published over the period 1975 to 2021. Initially, publication activity was low but the period 2006 to 2010 saw a notable increase in the number of articles being published and this continued over into the periods 2011 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020,



with publication rates reaching new heights. A comparison can be drawn between the publication activity of research originating from an African context to the field as a whole. African family business publication activity was slow to start with an eventual rapid increase in activity. This was also the case when publication first started in field as a whole. In the beginning, in the 1970's, there were only a few publications in the field as a whole but this has changed drastically over the last 20 years with the number of publications vastly increasing (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:44; Litz *et al.* 2012:17; Rovelli *et al.* 2021:15). In order to increase publication activity among scholars, academic institutions should put resources aside for family business research. Incentives to study further, such as bursaries, should also be offered to masters and doctoral students in order to attract them to the field.

### 5.3.2 AUTHOR DETAILS

An analysis of the articles under review show that the 206 articles were authored by 452 scholars of which 380 (84%) of these authors were located in a country on the African continent at the time of publication. Six of these authors, from five institutions, contribute towards 29.61% of the total outputs. A notable contributor to the productivity of these authors is the numerous collaborations that have occurred between them. The findings of this study support the sentiments of Litz *et al.* (2012:27-28) who notes that the field of family business will evolve by means of greater researcher involvement and collaboration. For African family business scholar to increase their publication activity it is recommended that collaborations between both national and international authors be increased. These collaborations can be initiated by presenting papers at international conferences and inviting others at these conferences to become involved in projects.

### 5.3.3 JOURNALS

An analysis of the articles under review show that the 206 articles are published in 142 different academic journals. The top journals with the most number of articles published include the *South African Journal of Business Management (SAJBM)*, *Management Dynamics*, the *European Journal of Business and Management*, and the *Family Business Review*.

As highlighted in Chapter Four, the articles are published in a wide variety of journals with 112 journals having published only one article. It is recommended that scholars select their journal outlets carefully and rather publish in journals where research on African family businesses can become more centralised.

Worth noting is that the *South African Journal of Business Management (SAJBM)*, which has the highest number of publications, currently only has an impact factor of 0.55. Whilst the *European Journal of Business and Management* and the *Family Business Review*, with the third and fourth highest number of publications, have current impact factors of 7.17 and 5.212. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, the journal with the highest current impact factor (10.75), has only three articles published in it. Of the 206 journals, 105 had an impact factor of less than one. In total there were 64 articles published in journals that had an impact factor of zero. For this reason, it is recommended that scholars publish in high impact journals by means of increasing the sophistication of the methodologies they adopt and undertaking research on topics that contribute to matters of current interest in the field.

The vast majority of articles were published in journals with either an ISSN, WoS, Scopus, or IBSS accreditation. Only two percent of the articles analysed in this study were published in journals that are not accredited. Scholars are encouraged to be more selective in terms of the journals in which they publish. Scholars should continue to only publish in accredited journals and avoid predatory journals at all costs as this can undermine research quality, reliability and integrity (Mills & Inouye 2020:90; Mouton & Valentine 2017:9).

#### 5.3.4 CITATIONS

The results of this study show that the journal article with the highest number of citations has 1075 citations. Noteworthy, is the fact that the article with the highest number of citations is authored by three international authors and is published in the academic journal (*Journal of Business Venturing*) that boasts the second highest impact factor of 8.987. The articles with the second and third most citations are also published in journals with the first and third highest impact factors. The number of articles that have zero citations is 37 (17.96%), and the vast majority of these articles

are published in academic journals with a current impact factors of zero. For African scholars to increase their citation numbers they should actively pursue publishing in international journals as well as journals with higher impact factors. Evidence of this is depicted in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4, where articles with the highest citations are those published in journals with the highest impact factors such as the *Journal of Business Venturing*, the *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice Journal* and the *Strategic Management Journal*. Authors should also explore opportunities to collaborate with other national and international authors on articles by attending conferences where they have the opportunity to meet, engage and foster collaborations with these authors. Additionally, authors should attempt to publish in online journals that are open access. Furthermore, authors should publicise their research through attending conferences and joining academic social networking platforms such as ResearchGate, Academia and Mendeley.

#### 5.3.5 METHODS ADOPTED

An analysis of the articles under review show that more than half of the 206 articles published during the period 1975 to 2021 made use of quantitative methods, with only 23% using qualitative methods. This would appear to confirm the fact that most articles published on African family businesses gravitate toward quantitative studies which is similar to the field as a whole where initially qualitative methods were mostly used but now the method of choice is primarily quantitative (Dyer & Sanchez 1998:295; Wilson, Whitmoyer, Pieper, Astrachan, Hair & Sarstedt 2014:9). Of the total journal articles, nineteen (9%) reported adopting mixed methods, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, whilst the methods used in 30 (15%) of the articles, could not be identified. Despite quantitative methods being favoured, researchers should explore and make use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in their studies as both methods are equally significant in achieving research objectives. Qualitative research remains necessary to provide for theoretical research conducted on experience, meaning and perspective that quantitative research cannot simply measure or account for (Hammarberg, Kirkman & de Lacey 2016:499). There has also been an increase in calls made for more qualitative research such as the use of grounded theory and intensive theoretical research (Benavides-Velasco *et al.* 2013:46). Mixed method combinations of research are also essential as they help grow

and strengthen the understanding of family businesses (Farrington 2016:21). There are various advantages of using a mixed combination of methods for research such as elaboration, complementarity or corroboration, which is used by means of employing two different methods that both result in the same outcome, confirming a particular finding or reasoning (Hammarberg *et al.* 2016:499).

### 5.3.6 COUNTRY FOCUS

The findings show that the research done on African family businesses has taken place in 17 countries. The African country out of which most research has originated is Nigeria, followed by South Africa, Kenya and Ghana. This is not surprising given that these countries represent the largest economies in Africa (Varrella 2021). Additionally, there were six articles that based their research on family business in more than one African country and three articles that based their research on family business in both an African and a non-African country. In the field as a whole, the research was also initially focussed in North America and Europe and as the field has grown, research has spread further (de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:3; Rovelli *et al.* 2021). This has also been the case in Africa as research has been primarily focused on the African countries with the largest economies but is spreading slowly to include other African countries as interest in the field grows.

Given that only four African countries are the source of most research on African family businesses, more research should be conducted in other African countries in order for knowledge development, wealth creation and the success of their family businesses to increase, and to represent Africa as a whole. Countries and institutions should set aside resources to be used for funding, more research studies and attracting researchers to the field. Additionally, researchers and institutions in countries with smaller economies should apply for funding with multi-lateral financing institutions such as the African Development Bank and the World Bank, in order to fund family business research in these countries. Furthermore, these researchers should attempt to foster collaborative partnerships with benefactors and researchers who are experienced and well-known, from countries with larger economies. This could ensure that the research is well-publicised and is of high-impact, thus drawing attention to the call for more research on these small economy countries.

### 5.3.7 TOPICS

Topics researched most often and published in the articles under review relate to performance, succession, succession planning, entrepreneurship, sustainability, finance, networking and strategy, continuity and management. Other topics investigated include profitability, nepotism, governance and job creation, amongst others. These topics are consistent with the field of family business as a whole, where the topics of succession and governance were dominant themes in the field in earlier years (Rovelli *et al.* 2021:9). Furthermore, the field as a whole is evolving with researchers now focusing their attentions on topics such as succession planning, gender, corporate social responsibility and innovation, indicating a shift in understanding and research depth (Rovelli *et al.* 2021:9). As depicted in Figure 4.7, research on innovation and entrepreneurship, which are closely related, are also topics of increasing interest among African scholars. Furthermore, despite not being researched as frequently, other topics that have been the focus of studies and are gaining in research popularity are social responsibility and gender (Mariani, Al-Sultan & De Massis 2021:1; Nguyen, Nguyen, Le, Luong & Vuong 2021:1).

Recommendations for future research on African family businesses include topics that have in recent times become dominant themes in the field as a whole, including succession planning, performance, entrepreneurship, sustainability and networking, amongst others. By ensuring that their research addresses the current topics of interest to the field as a whole, greater interest in research originating on the African continent can be generated among international family business scholars. Researchers are encouraged to attend conferences or join academic social networking platforms to keep up to date with trending topics in the field.

## 5.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Farrington and Jappie (2016:2), conducting an investigation into the research done on family businesses in Africa, provides insights as to whether research studies done are on par with international research (Farrington & Jappie 2016:2) and if the topics investigated are relevant. As the majority of businesses in Africa are family businesses and these businesses play a crucial role in the continent's economies, it stands to reason that research on family businesses in an African context could make a noteworthy difference in further advancing knowledge development on the continent, recognising the challenges facing African family businesses and contributing to their overall success which, in turn, facilitates wealth creation in their respective economies (Acquaah & Eshun 2016:45, 60; de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera 2020:1; Khavul *et al.* 2009:1219).

Therefore, this study sought to provide a systematic overview of the research done on all African family business research to date as no such formal overview has yet been undertaken. Through providing this overview the current study has added to the existing body of knowledge on family business research, with particular focus on providing insights into the family business research done in Africa. In doing so, this study has drawn quality conclusions on the patterns and identified gaps that exist in the field of African family business research. More specifically, the research has undertaken the task of exploring and quantifying the 'who, what, where and how' of research with regards to family businesses in Africa by looking at who the authors are that are contributing to research outputs, which topics their research covers, the methods used to carry out the research as well as assessing the impact they are having on the field as a whole. By doing this, this study provides insights and recommendations as to the focus of future research and how researchers can increase their publication activity. This is done by highlighting how to increase their citations, which journals to publish in, potential methods and topics to focus on and which areas of family business research in Africa require further exploration. Moreover, by providing an overview of research done on family businesses, in an African context, this study plays a significant role in contributing to the current knowledge in the field, having a positive effect on the success of these businesses which, in turn, advances the wealth creation of their respective economies.

Through the process of quantifying and consolidating bibliographical data on African family business research, this study has provided an evaluation of the performance and deficits in the field of African family business research.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study has made an important contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of African family business research. Despite its contributions, several limitations should be taken into account.

The first limitation is that the bibliometric analysis undertaken in the current study was restricted to research articles published in journals only. The second limitation is that the databases used to search for these journal articles were limited to Google and Google Scholar only. The articles had to be published in English and the research undertaken in the articles had to pertain to family businesses based on the African continent.

Based on these limitations, recommendations for future research could be that upcoming studies, on family business in Africa, should not be limited to published journal articles only but should be expanded to include masters' dissertations, doctoral theses', conference papers, academic institution publications and books on family business research in an African context. By including these outputs a more accurate picture of the current state of the field of African family business research can be presented. Additionally, future studies can expand the search engines used, from just Google, to include other search engines such as Bing, Yahoo Search and Yandex amongst others. Making use of various search engines would allow for a larger pool of findings as one search engine may produce different outputs when using the same search criteria. In order to have a greater representation of countries, future studies should also not confine themselves to English research only as this excludes non-English research that originates from countries where English is not a predominant language.

Furthermore, in order to gauge as to whether research studies done on African family business is on par with international research and the extent to which the research differs, it could be beneficial to compare the work done by African scholars to those of their international counterparts. Finally, it would be advantageous if the current study was repeated annually, not only for there to be more reviews on the field of African family business research, but also because the scope of future studies will continue to broaden. Thus, serving as a confirmation as to whether gaps in research are met and need to be readjusted, which would be of interest to African scholars.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

Research in the field of African family business is on the rise. Researchers, as well as the field itself, deem it essential to identify where the gaps in the research are that require further exploration. Thus, the primary objective of this study was to identify, explore, elaborate and quantify the 'who, what, where and how' of research with regards to family business in Africa. In doing so, it has become evident that the current state of the field of family business research in Africa, despite having made tremendous steps forward, still requires further effort, exploration and research in order to advance the field. For this reason, it is imperative that researchers in the field come together to ensure its evolution by means of collaboration as well as engagement and support of the next generation of researchers. Additional recommendations for future researchers and avenues of future research have also been proposed in the study. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this study are of value to African family business scholars.

This study was also of significant benefit to the researcher, whose writing skills, research and analysing abilities, capacity and competencies were developed throughout the study. The skills and knowledge gained in the study will be beneficial to the researcher when undertaking any future research or endeavours.



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## ANNEXURE A: CHARTING FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH

Author(s)	Journal	Year	Number of reviewed articles	Review period (years)	Origins of articles published	Focus of the review	Objective/purpose
Bird <i>et al.</i>	Family Business Review	2002	148	1980's & 1997-2001	USA	History of the Field.	Reviews the foundational research of family business.
Chrisman <i>et al.</i>		2003	190	1996-2003	USA & Canada	Defining family businesses, theory of family business research (agency and resource-based view), directions of future research and family business management education.	Review of the most significant contributions to the development of family business, the direction for future research and recommendations on pedagogy for family business management.
Sharma	Family Business Review	2004	217	1996-2004	Canada	Challenges on defining family business, family business performance, methodological issues and strategies.	Evaluate every degree of comprehension at the current state of research and make recommendations for future research.
Casillas & Acedo	Family Business Review	2007	339	1988-2005		Research trends, authors, year published, number of articles, references and citations.	Identifying the characteristics of the family business as a differentiated field within management.
Debicki <i>et al.</i>	Family Business Review	2009	291	2001-2007	USA	Ranking of authors, institutions, top areas in family business research, research productivity, journals, research limitations and future research directions.	Assesses the contributions of academics and academic institutions to family business research.
Khavul <i>et al.</i>	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	2009	8	2000-2003	Africa (East)	Theoretical foundations, how family ties affect establishment and growth, as well as future research.	To develop a theoretical foundation for studying the establishment and evolution of family businesses.

**ANNEXURE A: CHARTING FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH (continued)**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of reviewed articles</b>	<b>Review period (years)</b>	<b>Origins of articles published</b>	<b>Focus of the review</b>	<b>Objective/purpose</b>
Chrisman <i>et al.</i>	Family Business Review	2010	25	2003-2008	USA, Canada, Germany	Articles frequently cited, journal, sorts of articles, theories, family governance systems, owner agency costs, noneconomic goals and research limitations.	Identifying and reviewing articles especially influential in shaping the status quo of family business research.
Kraus <i>et al.</i>	International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management	2011	104	1983-2006	Austria, The Netherlands	Defines family businesses, foundation of theories in research, areas of family firm research and topics.	This article summarizes and builds on current research on family businesses by searching for findings and topics from the literature that may be appealing to business scholars.
Yu <i>et al.</i>	Family Business Review	2012	257	1998-2009	USA	Identify and categorize dependent variables, relationships between variable categories, summarise variable categories and explore research for variables lacking.	By investigating the variables utilised in current family business research and the relationship between them, the review encourages the theoretical development of family business research and furthering of our understanding of family business disciplines.
Benavides-Velasco <i>et al.</i>	Small Business Economics	2013	703	1961-2008	Spain	Development of activity in publications, top contributors (journals, institutions, and country), methodologies applied, and main themes researched.	Provides a report of the trends and state of family business literature and analyses family business published content.

**ANNEXURE A: CHARTING FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH (continued)**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of reviewed articles</b>	<b>Review period (years)</b>	<b>Origins of articles published</b>	<b>Focus of the review</b>	<b>Objective/purpose</b>
Wilson <i>et al.</i>	Journal of Family Business Strategy	2014	617	1983-2013	USA, Germany, Australia	Publication data, methods and theories utilised and family business definitions.	Summarise and identify trends in the research methods used in the family business literature, explores how trends shape family business research evolution and provide method recommendations for future research.
Pieper & Astrachan	Journal of Family Business Strategy	2014	5	2014		Research contributions, articles and authors.	A review on the field and research conducted during 2014.
Evert <i>et al.</i>	Family Business Review	2015	319	1988-2014	USA	Family business research design and methods, challenges, suggestions and topics.	Investigates and assesses research in order to make recommendations for future family business research.
Xi <i>et al.</i>	International Entrepreneurship Management Journal	2015	1103	2002-2012	USA, China, Germany, Switzerland & Liechtenstein	Most influential publications, changes in citation patterns, future research, governance in family businesses, competitive advantage, leadership and management, succession, limitations and future directions.	Summarizes family business research, not only in the business field but across academics, academic institutions and the relationships they share.
Farrington & Jappie		2016	48	1985-2014	South Africa	Publication activity, journals, family business scholars, institutions, topics and theories covered, and methodologies used.	Establishing the current state of family business research in South Africa.

**ANNEXURE A: CHARTING FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH (continued)**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of reviewed articles</b>	<b>Review period (years)</b>	<b>Origins of articles published</b>	<b>Focus of the review</b>	<b>Objective/purpose</b>
Evert <i>et al.</i>	Family Business Review	2016	319	1988-2014	USA	Methods, data source, techniques, challenges and future suggestions.	Identify and evaluate empirical trends, explores family business research difficulties and make recommendations for future research.
Short <i>et al.</i>	Family Business Review	2016	774	1988-2014	USA	Topics and journals.	Overview of past and present research on family businesses and identifying future possibilities for research to expand to.
Acquaah & Eshun	Family business in Sub-Saharan Africa (Book)	2016	29	1985-2015	Africa	Defining family business, theories utilised, publications, and topics covered, origins of research and state of family business research.	Reviews family business research in Africa, exploring the challenge of defining family businesses as well as what theories are used, the topics covered, research's country of origin and the current status of family business research.
Payne	Family Business Review	2018	5	2001 - 2018	USA	Links between family and business, limitations of research, research theories and domains.	To reflect on family business research considering domains and theories.
de las Heras-Rosas & Herrera	MDPI	2020	286	2003 - 2019	Spain	Indicators of sustainability in family businesses, authors, number of articles, year published and journals.	Investigating the trends in scientific production related to family businesses and their sustainability.
Samara	Journal of Family Business Strategy	2020	70	2000-2018	United Arab Emirates & Lebanon	Classification of current research and avenues for future research (strategy, succession etc.).	Reviews research on family businesses in the Arab Middle East and suggests manners in which to further this research in future.



**ANNEXURE A: CHARTING FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH (continued)**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of reviewed articles</b>	<b>Review period (years)</b>	<b>Origins of articles published</b>	<b>Focus of the review</b>	<b>Objective/purpose</b>
Rovelli <i>et al.</i>	Journal of Family Business Strategy	2021	1381	1988-2020	Italy & Peru	Publications, citations, authors, year, institutions, topics, methods, future suggestions for research and research limitations.	Providing an overview of the studies conducted in the FBR, JFBS and JFBM and providing a guide for future research developments.
Aparicio <i>et al.</i>	European Journal of Family Business	2021	3368	2011-2020	Spain	Performance indicators, the evolution of research on family business, top journals, articles and authors in family business research field, analysis of keywords and avenues for future research.	Explores the more recent evolution of the family business research by making use of a bibliometric analysis and expanding the scope of analysed journals included.

## ANNEXURE B: LEARNING AGREEMENT

### LEARNING AGREEMENT

#### EBML410 LEARNING AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT(S) AND STUDY LEADER(S)

<p><b>Specific responsibilities of the study leader and co-study leader for research supervision.</b></p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDY LEADER(S)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To advise the student(s) on the proposed research</li> <li>• To critically scrutinise work and suggest improvements</li> <li>• To suggest and advise student(s) on research in general</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research support required for the successful completion of the study.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student(s) would need some research methodology support</li> <li>• Student(s) would need statistical support (see lecture on Statistica presented)</li> <li>• Student(s) would need language editing support</li> <li>• (list of language editors could be supplied if available from service providers)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research training needs on the part of the student(s) and process to address them.</b></p>	<p>Student(s) to do EBMR420 Business Research modules will prepare the student(s) to conduct the research and write the treatise</p>
<p><b>Frequency and nature of consultation sessions.</b></p>	<p>Student(s) will keep regular contact with study leader(s) via e-mail on progress, etc. Reply to emails is crucial. Student(s) will meet study leader(s) in person at least 1 x per month (and as deems necessary based on progress).</p>
<p><b>Research schedule/plan to be adhered to by the student(s).</b></p>	<p>As discussed in meeting, and as communicated per email</p>
<p><b>Reviews of the students' work (for example, the format in which feedback will be given, the time taken to provide feedback).</b></p>	<p>Feedback to be received within 14 days. Comments hand-written on document(s) or electronic review comments.</p>
<p><b>Availability of study leader during period of research and/or ordinary leave.</b></p>	<p>The study leader(s) will only be available on e-mail during normal leave – student is informed of the dates that the study leader will take leave. Study leader(s) will not work on the treatise during the Christmas period in December 2020 and student(s) should NOT expect assistance during this time. If due dates are not adhered to in 2020, the student(s) should register for EBML410 in 2021 again.</p>

**ANNEXURE B: LEARNING AGREEMENT (continued)**

<p><b>Remedial action if schedule is not adhered to</b></p>	<p>Student(s) need to provide acceptable reasons for not adhering to a schedule and negotiate a new time frame with the study leader(s). The student(s) need to know that the study leader(s) may not be able to fit in a new time schedule on short notice when the student(s) has failed to stick to the schedule. Study leader(s) will determine what action is needed to continue with studies or will recommend the discontinuation of the study.</p>
<p><b>Remedial action if feedback agreement is not adhered to</b></p>	<p>Student(s) need to inform the study leader(s) that he/she is in disagreement/not satisfied about the feedback within 2 weeks after receiving such feedback. A discussion on the disagreements must take place. If student(s) do not implement recommendations, study leader(s) will request a full explanation of the reasons for not doing so.</p>

This Learning Agreement is signed on 14 April 2021  
(date) between the Postgraduate student(s) and Study leader(s).



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Signed by the study leader



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Signed by student

**ANNEXURE C: ETHICS FORM**



FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES

**ETHICS CLEARANCE FOR TREATISES / DISSERTATIONS / THESES**

**Instructions:**

- Should be completed by study leader and student
- Must be signed off by student, study leader and HoD
- Submit completed form to Ms Lindie van Rensburg
- Please ensure that the research methodology section from the proposal is attached to this form
- ***Please note that by following this Proforma ethics route, the study will NOT be allocated an ethics clearance number***

FACULTY: Business and Economic Sciences

SCHOOL / DEPARTMENT: Business Management

I, (surname and initials of study leader) \_\_\_\_\_

the study leader for (surname and initials of candidate) Billings C

\_\_\_\_\_ (student number) 219542694

a candidate for the degree of Bcom Honours (Business Management)

with a treatise/dissertation/thesis entitled (full title of treatise/dissertation/thesis):

African family business research – charting the field  
\_\_\_\_\_

considered the following ethics criteria (*please tick the appropriate block*):

## ANNEXURE C: ETHICS FORM (continued)

		YES	NO
1.	Is there any risk of harm, embarrassment or offence, however slight or temporary, to the participant, third parties or to the communities at large?		✓
2.	Is the study based on a research population defined as 'vulnerable' in terms of age, physical characteristics and/or disease status?		✓
2.1	Are subjects/participants/respondents of your study:		
2.1.1	Children under the age of 18?		✓
2.1.2	NMMU staff?		✓
2.1.3	NMMU students?		✓
2.1.4	The elderly/persons over the age of 60?		✓
2.1.5	A sample from an institution (e.g. hospital/school)?		✓
2.1.6	Handicapped (e.g. mentally or physically)?		✓
3.	Does the data that will be collected require consent of an institutional authority for this study? (An institutional authority refers to an organisation that is established by government to protect vulnerable people)		✓
3.1	Are you intending to access participant data from an existing, stored repository (e.g. school, institutional or university records)?		✓
4.	Will the participant's privacy, anonymity or confidentiality be compromised?		✓
4.1	Are you administering a questionnaire/survey that:		
4.1.1	Collects sensitive/identifiable data from participants?		✓
4.1.2	Does not guarantee the anonymity of the participant?		✓
4.1.3	Does not guarantee the confidentiality of the participant and the data?		✓
4.1.4	Will offer an incentive to respondents to participate, i.e. a lucky draw or any other prize?		✓
4.1.5	Will create doubt whether sample control measures are in place?		✓
4.1.5	Will be distributed electronically via email (and requesting an email response)?		
	Note:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your questionnaire <b>DOES NOT</b> request respondents' identification, is distributed electronically and you request respondents to return it <i>manually</i> (print out and deliver/mail); <b>AND</b> respondent anonymity can be guaranteed, your answer will be NO.</li> <li>If your questionnaire <b>DOES NOT</b> request respondents' identification, is <i>distributed via an email link and works through a web response system (e.g. the university survey system)</i>; <b>AND</b> respondent anonymity can be guaranteed, your answer will be NO.</li> </ul>		✓
5.	Do you wish to publish an article from this study and submit to an accredited Journal?		✓

Please note that if **ANY** of the questions above have been answered in the affirmative (**YES**) the student will need to complete the full ethics clearance form (REC-H application) and submit it with the relevant documentation to the Faculty RECH (Ethics) representative.

**ANNEXURE C: ETHICS FORM (continued)**

and hereby certify that the student has given his/her research ethical consideration and full ethics approval is not required.

SM Farrington

July 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDY LEADER(S)

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT

11 July 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

## ANNEXURE D: TURNITIN REPORT

Billings, C - 219542694

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>14%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<b>hdl.handle.net</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>"Family Businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2016</b> Publication	<b>1%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>zombiedoc.com</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Submitted to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University</b> Student Paper	<b>1%</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>core.ac.uk</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>"The Palgrave Handbook of Heterogeneity among Family Firms", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2019</b> Publication	<b>1%</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Naveen Donthu, Satish Kumar, Debmalya Mukherjee, Nitesh Pandey, Weng Marc Lim. "How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An</b>	<b>1%</b>