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The Role of the Successor in the Family Business Succession Process: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

With the world's eyes are set on Chinese Family businesses that are facing the first intergenerational transition after the single child policy, as clearly stated in the occasion of the EY's 2016 Strategic World's Forum, held in Shanghai, this appears to be a good moment to review the literature on family business succession in order to cast some clarity on the way it has focused its attention on the successor over the years, so to find common patterns, gaps, limitations, and especially new lines of research. The questions the author is trying to answer concern the way the figure of the successor has been treated by researchers, and which elements his/her role in the succession planning has been evaluated by, and in particular: 1. Is the successor considered important in the succession process? 2. How have successor's skills been considered? Does the literature focus on successor's attributes? 3. Which are the elements the role of the successor has been studied in relation to? Do they influence a successful take - over? 4. Does the successor influence the company's performance once entered the business? 5. Is it possible to build a succession model that puts the successor in the centre?

KEYWORDS Family Business; Intergenerational Succession; Literature Review; Successor

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