Industry Context and Gender Differences in Family Business Succession Intention of the Generation Z in Germany

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Abstract

Title: Industry context and gender differences in family business succession intentions of the Generation Z in Germany.

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The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the role of embedded gender stereotypes within industries as well as industry gender composition in succession intentions among members of Generation Z in German family firms. While prior research has investigated a wide range of individual, family, and organizational drivers of succession intention, the structural context in which the family firm operates has received little attention. By integrating industry context and drawing on Social Role Theory, as well as Gender Stereotype Theory this thesis provides insights into why the Generation Z differs in their intention to take over the family firm.

This quantitative study draws on survey data from 165 Generation Z members with a family firm background. Statistical analyses were conducted to understand the differences in succession intention.

The results show that industry gender composition significantly moderates gender differences in succession intention. Daughters report significantly lower intention to succeed when the family firm is located in male-dominated industry, while no gender differences emerge in gender-balanced industries and reversely in female-dominated industries sons report significantly lower willingness to take over the family business.

Highlighting the need for family firm owners to provide gender neutral successor development, equal involvement opportunities, and counter-stereotypical role models within the firm. Furthermore, succession conversation should be initiated early and transparent to prevent withdrawal due to their gender. Overall, the thesis highlights the importance to take structural and contextual factors into account, when planning succession or developing the next generation towards succession.

Key Words: Family Business Succession, Succession Intention, Generation Z, Industry Gender Composition, Social Role Theory, Gender Stereotype Theory, Occupational Gender Segregation

Resumo:

Título: **O papel do contexto setorial e das diferenças de género na intenção de sucessão em empresas familiares: Evidência da Geração Z na Alemanha"**

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O objetivo desta tese é investigar o papel dos estereótipos de género, assim como a composição de género na indústria molda as intenções de sucessão entre os membros da Geração Z em empresas familiares alemãs. Embora estudos anteriores tenham analisado uma ampla gama de fatores individuais, familiares e organizacionais que influenciam a intenção de sucessão, o contexto estrutural em que a empresa familiar opera tem recebido pouca atenção. Ao focar-me no contexto industrial e baseando-me na Social Role Theory e Gender Stereotype Theory, esta tese fornece insights sobre as razões pelas quais a Geração Z difere nas suas intenções de assumir a empresa familiar.

Este estudo quantitativo baseia-se numa amostra composta por 165 membros da Geração Z com empresas na família. Análises estatísticas foram realizadas para compreender diferenças na intenção de sucessão.

Os resultados mostram que a composição de género da indústria modera significativamente as diferenças de género na intenção de sucessão. As filhas relatam uma intenção significativamente menor de suceder quando a empresa familiar está localizada numa indústria dominada por homens, mas não surgem diferenças de género em indústrias com equilíbrio de género. Adicionalmente, em indústrias dominadas por mulheres, os filhos relatam uma disposição significativamente menor para assumir a empresa familiar. Esta tese destaca a necessidade de que os proprietários das empresas familiares promovam um desenvolvimento neutro em termos de género, ofereçam oportunidades de envolvimento iguais e desenvolvam modelos de papel antiestereotipados. Em geral, a tese destaca a importância de considerar fatores estruturais e contextuais ao planear a sucessão.

Palavras-chave: Sucessão em empresas familiares, intenção de sucessão, Geração Z, composição de género da indústria, teoria do papel social, teoria do estereótipo de género, segregação ocupacional de género

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Abbreviation	
EC	European Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAB	Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung
IfM	Institut für Mittelstandforschung
SMEs	Small to Medium Size Enterprises

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1. Introduction

"Women are from Venus, men are from Mars" - a familiar saying many of use grew up with. The message behind it is simple: men and women are perceived as fundamentally different, almost as if they come from separate planets. While such expressions are simplistic, they do reflect how embedded gendered expectations and stereotypes are, shaping many areas within society including occupational patterns (Ellemers, 2018). In Germany, these patterns are particularly visible within the labour market, as industries differ significantly in their gender composition (Bächmann, Kleinert & Schels, 2024), reinforcing cultural patterns of what kind of work is typical for men and women (Ridgeway & Correll, 2006).

An important question emerging from this is, how influential they still are among the youngest generation, Gen Z, entering the workforce. Such cues shape how individuals perceived career options and leadership roles (Duong, 2025; Wilfred et al., 2023). This also becomes particularly important in the context of family firms' succession.

Family businesses represent a central pillar of the German economy, with 84% of all firms classified as family businesses (Stiftung Familienunternehmen, 2025). At the same time, demographic change increases succession needs, as around 190 000 of owners are approaching retirement within the next years (Fels et al., 2021). Many of these firms have remained in family hands for decades, making succession a critical challenge in order to ensure continuity across generations (LeCounte, 2020; Uman et al., 2024). Yet, most family businesses struggle to successfully transition from one generation to the next (Gichuki & Ábel, 2024), making the willingness of the next generation to take on the leadership role an important aspect.

Existing succession research has identified many determinants of succession intention, such as exposure, identify fit, and attachment (Venter et al., 2005; Dawsn et al., 2015; Istpliler at al., 2024). Yet, despite the strong segmentation of labour markets, the majority of these studies have focused on individual and family level aspects, paying little attention to the broader context in which the family firm operates. Gender segmentation and occupational gender composition influencing perceptions regarding these industries in terms of competence, role suitability, and legitimacy (Ridgeway & Correll, 2006; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 2023), and therefore potential influencing whether sons and daughters see themselves within their family's firm, have not been addressed.

While literature has studied the effects of occupational gender segregation on career choice as a broader topic (e.g. Chaffee, Plante & Binette-Laporte, 2025), it has not been examined in the context of family business succession. Taking into account the theory of Social Role and Gender Stereotype, highlighting how gendered occupational structures influence expectations and behaviour (Eagly &

Wood, 2000; Heimann, 2001; Ellemers, 2018), these mechanisms are likely to be also relevant within succession. Such underlying mechanism may subconsciously shape how daughters and sons evaluate whether leadership in their family firm aligns with their self-perception and career aspiration, and these perceptions are likely shaped by the gendered character of the industry in which the firm operates (Cabrera et al., 2009).

Although early succession research initially downplayed the relevance of gender overall (e.g. Chrisman et al., 1998), more recent work has found that sons and daughters do not face equal opportunities in family business succession (e.g. Vera & Dean, 2005; Alvarado-Alvarez & Euwem, 2024). Despite this recognition, empirical evidence on how industry gender composition interacts with gender on shaping succession intention cannot be found. Therefore, it is central to understand how gender differences interact with the gendered structure of industries.

To address this gap, the study examines the following research question:

"How does industry gender composition shape gender differences in succession intention among Generation Z in German family firms?"

By investigating these questions, this study contributes to the debate about gender equality, workforce participation and generational change within the family business context. The aim is to understand how the underlying mechanism of occupational gender segregation reinforce gender stereotypes and how these, in turn, shape gendered succession intentions.

The objectives of this study are addressed by using a quantitative research approach and it is organised as follows. Chapter two presents the theoretical foundation by reviewing relevant literature on family business succession, Generation Z, industry gender composition, and the underlying theoretical frameworks of Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory on which the hypothesis are built upon. Based on this, chapter three outlines the research method, including the research design, sample and measurement of variables. Chapter four reports the empirical results. Followed by chapter five discussing the findings and highlighting their theoretical and managerial implications. Chapter six discusses the limitations and future research. The study is concluded with chapter seven, summarising the key insights.

2. Contextualization and Theoretical Grounding

2.1 Family Firms in Context

Family firms are one of the most known organizational forms worldwide, operating across all industries (Rovelli et al., 2022). Their legal structures are divers, and they range from small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) to large, listed companies (Skorodziyevskiy et al., 2024). They are also vital due to their economic impact, as they often contribute more than half of national GDP, making them additionally a highly important source of employment (Ferramosca & Ghio, 2018).
Due to their prevalence and influence, family firms have been widely researched, especially in the topics concerning strategy (e.g. Gamble et al., 2025; Block, 2024), entrepreneurship (e.g. Anwar et al., 2023; Suder et al., 2024), and succession (e.g. Uman et al., 2024; Datta & Mukherjee, 2024).
Family firm scholars distinct them from non-family firms due to their unique interplay between the ownership system, the family system, and the business system (Gersick et al., 1997; Kellermanns et al., 2008). Empirical evidence shows that family firms tend to be older than non-family firms, which reflects their long-term orientation and emphasis on continuity across generations (Andersson et al., 2018).

2.1.1 Definition of Family Firms

Despite the importance of family firms, their definition is still a challenge within its research (Chrisman et al. 2005). Scholars such as Chua et al. (1999) distinguish between two types of definitions: the theoretical and the operational. The theoretical definitions focus on the essence of family influence on business behaviour, the culture, and goals, whereas the operational definition emphasizes the level of involvement such as ownership, management, and succession.
Complementing this, the European Commission (2009) has provided a definition within the European context. The EC definition states that a firm of any size qualifies as a family business if the majority of decision-making rights are controlled by the founder or their family, and at least one family member is formally involved in governance. Other papers add fine distinctions to these definitions by highlighting factors that shape family firm identity. For example, the F-PEC scale visualizes family influence across power, experience, and culture (Rau, Astrachan & Smyrnios, 2005), while Habbershon and William (1999) emphasis the concept of ‘familiness’, the unique interplay between family members, unit and business entity. These perspectives do not contradict the definitions by Chua et al. (1999) or the European Commission (2009), but rather underline the heterogeneity of family firms in regard to economic, behavioural and cultural factors. In this thesis, the basis will be primarily with the European Commission (2009), as this perspective provides conceptual and practical clarity.

2.1.2 Economic Importance

As family firms are one of the most widespread organizational forms worldwide, they consequently have a significant economic impact (Škare & Porada-Rochoń, 2021). In Europe, more than 60% of all companies are family firms, which underlines their central role in the European economy (European Commission, 2009). In Germany, the importance is even more visible, as approximately 84% of all companies classify as family firms (Stiftung Familienunternehmen, 2025a). Moreover, family firms in Germany are generating 46% of total corporate turnover and providing nearly 58% of all jobs in the private sector (Stiftung Familienunternehmen, 2025b). Importantly, family firms are present across nearly all industries, however, they are less present in sectors such as health care and education, which are state-dominated (Andersson et al., 2018). In construction, for example, around 96% of businesses are family-controlled, in logistics around 90%, manufacturing and production 85%, while energy and utilities are lower with 67% family owned (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft, 2025).

2.1.3 Succession within Family Firms

Given the central economic role of family firms as discussed previously, it is expected that within family business research succession is one of the most prominent topics (Uman et al., 2024; Chatterjee et al., 2021). Not only because of their size and importance but also because many of the companies have remained in family ownership for decades and seek to stay within family hands in the future (Osnes et al., 2019; Constantinidis & Nelson, 2020).

Garnitz, von Maltazan & Müller (2023) define succession in family businesses as the transfer of ownership and leadership of a company to the next generation for personal reasons. This process is also a defining feature of family firms, distinguishing them from non-family businesses, as every family firm must eventually address the issue of succession (Garnitz, von Maltazan & Müller, 2023). Despite the aspiration of keeping the firm within the family, succession still is a challenge. Many first-year lead firms will not be pasted on to the next generation. In Germany, only around two third of family firms survive to the second generation and around one third of the remaining firms to the third generation (Zellweger, 2023; Garnitz, von Maltzan & Müller, 2023).

Demographic change further increases the urgency of the succession issue in Germany. The Institution for Mittelstandforschung (IfM) Bonn estimates that around 190 000 family firms will face a transfer of ownership between 2022 and 2026, as their current owners will retire from management positions (Figure 1) (Fels et al., 2021). This is an average of around 38 000 transfers per year. Further, as the KfW Nachfolge Monitor found, the parent generation has the desire to arrange succession within the family, as it has been cited with 53% as the most likely scenario (Schwartz, 2025). Still,

LeCounte (2020) highlights that succession planning is rarely done in family-owned SMEs, even though succession is one of the most important determinants of success, growth and legacy.

Beyond the demographic shifts, cultural and educational changes are also reshaping succession patterns. As Achtenhagen et al. (2022) emphasizes, career paths in today's society are determined more by individual interests and are in tension with the family firm. This means that next-generation members may be more likely to pursue careers outside their family firm. Given the large share of family firms in Germany, this trend presents significant challenges for ensuring effective and sustainable succession in the coming years (Garnitz, von Maltzan & Müller, 2023). These numbers and statistics underline the importance of succession planning to ensure survival and continuity of the firm.

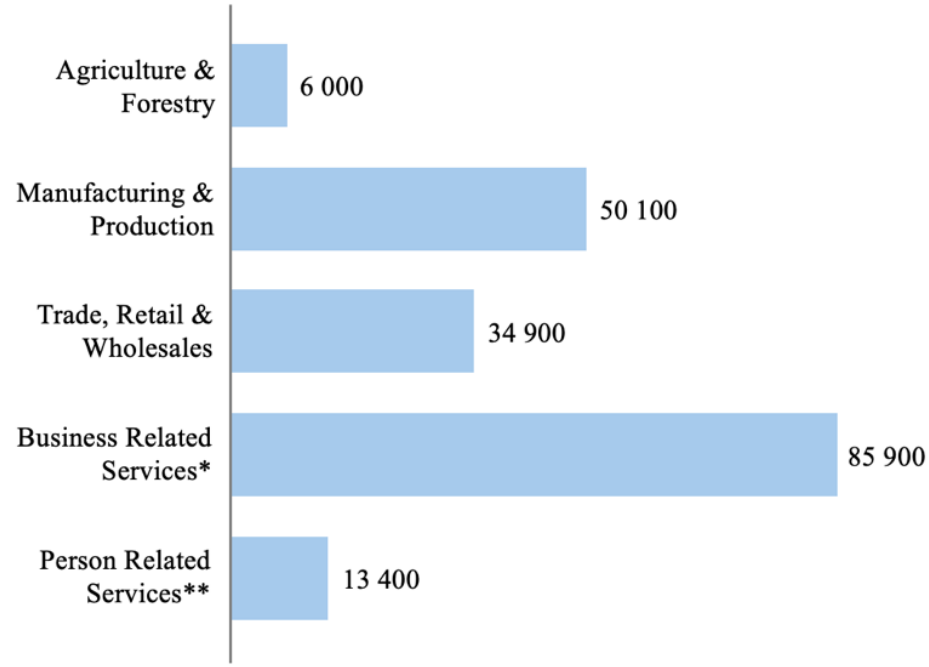

Figure 1: Companies in Germany due for Succession between 2022 and 2026 by Economic Sector (Fels et al., 2021)

2.2 Industry and Occupational Context

As family firms in Germany operate across nearly all industries, it is also important to consider the environment in which they operate (Rovelli et al., 2022). Industry effects with its structures have been found to influence different family firm aspects, such as innovative behaviour (Dorsch et al., 2023), CEO characteristics (Datta & Rajagopalan, 1998), and succession decision (Yeh & Liao, 2021). Even though its relevance, industry effects in regard to gender and succession intention have not been

researched as much. However, German industries are characterized by gender differences especially in relation to occupational gender segregation (Bächmann, Kleinert & Schels, 2024).

2.2.1 Occupational Gender Segregation

Occupational gender segregation refers to the unequal distribution of men and women across jobs and industries. The European Institute for Gender Equality (2014) defines it as the "actual dominance of one sex in a particular occupation or the higher share of one sex relative to the expected share." This can occur both in the form of horizontal separation, meaning the distribution of men and women within jobs and industries is unequal (Hakim, 1979), as well as the form of vertical barriers for advancement within organization (Hausmann et al., 2015). Meaning, that even in industries with balanced gender share, women still face barriers in regard to promotion, glass ceiling effect, and are disproportionately concentrated in low-wage jobs (Antidiskriminungsstelle des Bundes, 2025; Busch 2013; Hausmann et al., 2015). Occupational gender segregation is a form of gender inequality, equivalent to other forms of inequality such as gender pay gap and gender-based harassment (Janssen & Backes-Gellner, 2016).

Even though an increase in female educational attainment and participation within the labour market can be seen (Bächmann, 2023), the German labour market continues to show strong patterns of gender segregation (Bächmann et al., 2024; Hausmann & Kleinert, 2014). According to the Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB), between 2012 and 2019 the degree of occupational gender segregation in Germany decreased only marginally (Bächmann et al., 2024). Furthermore, the IAB researcher Ann-Christin Bächmann summarizes (2024, page 8): "Based on the developments observed, it is not expected that the division of the labour market into male and female domains will disappear in the near future." Overall, it can be seen that occupational gender segregation within the German labour market remains as a defining feature, as well as a driver for gender inequality.

2.2.2 Industry Gender Composition

Although women's overall participation in the labour force has increased significantly in recent decades, their employment is still limited to a range of occupations (Hausmann & Kleinert, 2014). Since the 1990s, the share of women in all occupations has changed only marginally (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2025). The gender distribution across industries in Germany differs clearly, as seen in Appendix 1. In general, women are overrepresented in the service sector, while men are predominantly employed in industry and construction (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2025).

The sector with the highest proportion of women working in it continues to be health and social care, where they account for 77% of the workforce in June 2024 (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2025). This is followed by education, which remains female dominated with 72% of employees being women. Other

service sectors, such as hairdressing and cosmetic services, as well as public administration, have a high female dominance with two-thirds being female. On the other hand, mining and construction is male dominated. Almost nine out of ten employees in this sector are male. Transportation, logistics, as well as manufacturing are male dominated with around three out of five employees being men (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2025). The unequal distribution of women and men across industries has a variety of consequences. It influences seasonal and cyclical employment, contributes to gender specific fluctuations within employment (Piłatowska & Witkowska, 2022), and is connected to the wage differences between men and women (Hindman & Paulsen, 2022; Dong et al., 2024).
Industries are therefore interpreted as 'typically male' or 'typically female' based on the relative share of men and women employed, reflecting historical gender distribution and associated role attributes (Heilman et al., 2024). Further, to analyse industry dynamics within succession intention, this thesis applies a modified version of the NACE Rev.2 classification (Eurostat, 2008), excluding sectors that are not relevant for family business, such as public administration, and merging overlapping areas to create an appropriate industry list (Appendix 1).

2.3 Generational Perspective and Theory Grounding

Understanding succession intention requires one to look at both, generational and social aspects that shape individual attitudes towards leadership and continuing the family firm (Suhartanto, 2023; Zhu & Zhou, 2022). In this context, Generation Z is the youngest successor cohort, entering the labour market with their own values and experiences (Scholz, 2019). Even though they have the reputation of being entrepreneurial and progressive (Singh & Dangmei, 2016), it remains unclear whether traditional gender stereotypes continue to influence their career intentions (Karmakar & Chandola, 2023; Fazloon & Usman, 2024; Duong, 2025).

2.3.1 Generation Z

The concept of generations has long been used to express the effect of social change on a group of people (Alwin & McCammon, 2007). Mannheim (1928) defined a generation as a group of people of similar age whose identity is shaped by shared generational experiences. This perspective highlights that people growing up in the same period experience transformations in society, cultural shifts, or historical events that form their views, values and character, particularly during their formative years being the age of 11 to 15 (Fietze, 2009; Klaffke, 2021). In Germany, the generational perspective is especially relevant for family firms, as approximately 28% of current owners are in their 60s or older (Stiftung Familienunternehmen, 2025b), being the time when succession becomes urgent and the next potential successor, often Generation Z members, become important. Generation Z, generally defined as those born between 1995 and 2010 (Niemczynowicz, Kycia & Nieżurawska, 2023), are at different

life stages, with most entering the workforce (Dolot, 2018). They are also bringing new expectations, such as autonomy, flexibility and are purpose driven (Scholz, 2019). A high level of education and digital nativeness further characterizes this generation, which strengthens their position within the job market (Klauth, 2022; Geis-Thöne, 2023; Niemczynowicz, Kycia & Nieżurawska, 2023). At the same time, they value security, family orientation, and acceptance (Klaffke, 2021), but also face performance pressure and a delayed career entry (Scholz, 2019). They are also known to dislike labels and view themselves as independent individuals (Kutlák, 2021). Furthermore, Gen Z expresses a flexible approach towards gender identity (Kenney, 2020).

2.3.2 Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory

Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2000) provides a framework explaining how gender differences arise from social and economic divisions of labour. Historically, these beliefs appeared due to society assigning women to family and support roles, while men were associated with public and decision-making roles (Boora, 2025). The theory argues that men's and women's positions within society resulted in the development of gender role beliefs or gender stereotypes (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Tak et al., 2019). Gender Stereotype Theory therefore addresses how socially shared beliefs about men and women shape perceptions, evaluations and behaviours (Ellemers, 2018). Gender stereotypes are defined by Heilman (2001) as widely accepted conceptions about the traits and attributes associated with each gender. They serve on the one hand descriptive functions, which explains what women and men are believed to be like, and on the other hand prescriptive functions, which defines how they should behave (Heilman, 2001; Ellemers, 2018). Research shows that gender stereotype influence attention, memory, and judgment of others and themselves (Ellemers, 2018). They shape not only how people evaluate others, but also how they assess their own performance, going as far as penalizing themselves for their competence (Heimann, 2001; Ellemers, 2018). Stereotypes overstate group differences, reinforce gendered expectation within education, work and leadership (Ellemers, 2018). Because these expectations towards women and men reflect cultural systems of beliefs, they are being accepted as social 'trues', reinforcing phenomenon like the occupational gender segregation (Ridgeway & Correll, 2006). Stich (2024) further points out the existence of the "hidden gender structure", which keeps the power structure within organizations in place. Early socialization also plays a role, as schools and educational environments were identified as places, where gender stereotypes are reinforced, shaping later career choices (Stich, 2024).

These gender role beliefs extend into professional context. For example, men are expected to be more competent in areas like technology, while women are better in the field of communication (Duong et al., 2025). Studies also found that female students are often underestimated in science related fields

even though their performance is equally good or better compared to their male colleagues (Leslie et al. 2015; Grunspan et al. 2016). A persistent example is the perception of leadership competence. Historically, men were preferred and seen as better suited for leadership positions than women, as masculine traits, such as assertiveness, emotional stability, rationality and independence, have a higher value than feminine traits, such as warmth and expressiveness, which come from gender stereotypes (Ridgeway, 2001; Becker et al., 2002; Heilman et al., 1995). Furthermore, it has been shown that these traditional gender stereotypes are resistant to change (Dodge et al., 1995; Tak et al., 2019). Within family firm succession, these stereotypes can create barriers to legitimacy and leadership acceptance (Alvarado-Alvarez & Euwema 2024; Lapeira, 2025). Research shows that daughters who aim for succession often challenge gender roles externally, for instance within education or career choice, but still face gendered expectation within their family business (Overbeke et al. 2013; Hytti et al. 2016). Successful female successors also report that their competence is tested more and that they must adopt masculine behaviours to attain legitimacy as successor (Constantinidis & Nelson 2009; Hytti et al. 2016).

2.3.3 Generation Z and Gender Stereotype in Succession

Considering both the generational and theoretical perspective, Generation Z takes on an unclear position. On the one hand, the generation grew up in a time promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion, where one would expect a break from traditional gender expectation (Kenney, 2020; Kushwaha et al., 2024). However, within the research field it is not as clear. Studies such as from Fazloon and Usman (2024) highlight that Generation Z actively reject traditional gender roles. On the other hand, other studies suggest the opposite, that gender occupational stereotypes remain. For instance, Duong (2025) finds that across generations, including Gen Z, stereotypes regarding career choices are persistent. Comparably, Karmakar and Chandola (2023) found, that there is little difference within the attitude towards gender roles between the Generation Z and Generation X, which are born in more conservative times, between 1965 and 1980 (Dolot, 2018). Adding to this, Julmi et al. (2024) found that within this generation, woman rate gender equality as significantly more important than men, suggesting that woman still perceive inequality. This challenges the assumption of a shift of perception in gender stereotypes, being consistent with research pointing out that gender stereotypes persist and are resilient towards change (Rashotte & Murray, 2005; Tak et al., 2019).

While on the surface it looks like Gen Z are trying to reject gender stereotype consciously, but it seems like unconscious gender framing continues to influence behaviour and judgment (Fisk & Ridgeway, 2018).

In the context of family firm succession, gender stereotypes can therefore influence self-perception and external evaluation to becoming successor (Ellmers, 2018; Overbeke et al., 2013).

Drawing on gender stereotype theory, it can be assumed that due to the persistence of stereotypes regarding leadership and competence, they still influence the behaviour and perception of Generation Z. Therefore, the literature suggests that gender continues to shape perception of leadership among Generation Z and it can be expected that daughters overall have a lower succession intention than sons.

H1: Gender is negatively associated with succession intention, such that women report lower succession intentions than men within the Generation Z.

2.4 Gender and Industry Influence on Succession Intention: A Social Role and Gender Stereotype Perspective

Even though women today are better educated and increasingly involved in business succession, lasting institutional and cultural factors exist (Alvarado-Alvarez & Euwema 2024, Bannó et al., 2024). Regardless of progress, traditional gender role beliefs and occupational gender segregation is still visible within leadership opportunities (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 2023). In order to understand how succession intention is influenced, Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory provide useful frameworks, explaining how gendered role perceptions and societies expectations influence individuals' choice.

2.4.1 Gender and Succession

Early research in succession focused on attributes and characteristics of successors. For example, Chrisman et al. (1998) found that attributes such as integrity and commitment to business were seen as the most important ones, whereas gender and birth order were rated as relatively unimportant. At that time, succession research did not consider gender as relevant for succession compared to other factors (Nelson & Constantinidis, 2017). As the field evolved, scholars began to include gender and noticed its importance. Still, historical views of succession demonstrate a neglection of women (Wang, 2010). Nearly 80% of succession articles published in leading journals over two decades did not use gender as a concept within their research. Terms such as 'son' or 'father' dominated the language, demonstrating a male focused view of succession (Nelson & Constantinidis, 2017). In this period, the late 1980s and early 1990s, daughters were often presented as 'invisible successors', limiting their recognition for leadership roles (Duman, 1989; Gillig-Donovan & Moynihan-Bradt, 1990; Alvarado-Alvarez & Euwema, 2024). Barriers faced by daughters included stereotypes, exclusion from planning processes, and legitimacy struggles when seeking leadership positions, simply women were not considered to be in a managing position within the family firm (Salganicoff, 1990). Although by the late 1990s and early 2000s a shift can be seen and daughters were recognized

more often, however still with the association of taking on an emotional and supportive role rather than being fully recognized as successors (Martinez Jimenez, 2009).

Overall, since then there has been great progress towards inclusion (Martínez Jiménez, 2009; Bannó et al., 2024). Studies show that a new generation of highly educated daughters increasingly assume leadership roles (Alvarado-Alvarez & Euwema 2024). Social change and educational achievements are slowly closing this gap (Bannó et al., 2024), however cultural and structural barriers remain (Alvarado-Alvarez & Euwema 2024, Bannó et al., 2024) and questionable is how influential they still are.

2.4.2 Succession Intention in Male-Dominated Industries

When trying to explain were the historical neglection of women within succession and the remaining barriers come from, one must consider Social Role Theory. As established earlier, Social Role Theory argues that men and women tend to reinforce gender stereotypes due to the roles they occupy, placing specific social expectation on them (Vogel et al., 2003). These generalized expectations, influence the behaviour of individuals, despite them rejecting gender stereotypes (Duong et al., 2025). Especially for daughters, their career intentions are influenced by gender roles formed at an early age due to interactions with family and peers (Decker et al., 2017). Consequently, women, but also men make career decisions that align with societal beliefs about their gender rather than their own interest (Boll et al., 2015).

In Germany, the outcome of these processes is clearly visible, as women are still more strongly represented in service-based occupations, while men tend towards technical or industry related jobs (cf. Appendix 1, Schmidt 2020). This structural division does not only show the persistence of gender stereotypes, but also reinforced them (Boll et al., 2015). Studies underline the phenomenon, as women need to showcase evidence of success more in order to get recognition within a professional context (Sundermeier, 2024). Furthermore, women need to behave accordingly to the ‘ideal worker’ role expectation (Acker, 2006). This becomes especially visible when they work in sectors that do not align with traditional gender stereotypes (Duong et al., 2025). Women working in male dominated occupations face greater challenges compared to more balanced or female dominated jobs, affecting both their retention and career success (Martin & Barnard, 2013).

Additionally, women are influenced by the activation of their stereotype to not go after leadership roles and instead remain with subordinate occupations that seem nonthreatening to them (Davies et al., 2005). However, if they go after leadership position in male dominated industries, they face resistance and reluctance to be tolerated as within the managing role (Larsson & Alvinius, 2020). These challenges and outcomes are due to the persistency of traditional gender hierarchies within families and society, where male is the dominant gender (Hartmann, 2010). Cha (2013) argues further

that organizations are still structured in ways that conflict with women's career path and their needs, such as integrating work and family. Martin and Barnard (2012) also show that both formal and covert organizational practices maintain gender discrimination, including unsuitable accommodation of women's needs.

These persistent expectation towards women and the structural barriers, are also existent in family firms, potentially influencing succession intentions. As women are aware of the challenges (Askew & Blau, 2025), it raises the question of how willing daughters are to take on leadership roles in male dominated industries and how they will perceive their own fit within them.

Therefore, Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory help understand how persistent gender role expectation, regarding specific industry context, influences succession intention. It can be assumed that the culturally association of male dominated industries, such as technical and industrial sector with a higher share of men, with male traits leads daughters to have lower intention to succeed their family firm when it operates within such industry.

H2: In male-dominated industries, daughters will report lower succession intentions than sons.

2.4.3 Succession Intention in Gender-Balanced Industries

In gender balanced industries, such as hospitality, tourism, retail and more, the share of men and women is relatively even (cf. Table 1; Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2025), and occupational roles do not have a strong association with male attributes (Cheryan et al. 2017; Cejka & Eagly, 1999), combined with weakening anti-female gender bias (Ali et al., 2020).

From the perspective of Social Role Theory, the cultural association between gender and occupational role weakens as gender representation becomes more balanced, since beliefs are partly derived from role performance (Anglin et al., 2022; Eagly & Wood, 2012). Similarly, Gender Stereotype Theory suggest that the ongoing exposure to gender-congruent roles fosters stereotypes, whereas seeing counter-stereotypical role models, can help reduce implicit bias and break stereotypes (Olsson & Martiny, 2018). This suggests that within gender balanced environments, acting as identity safe environments with more diverse role models and interactions, stereotypical associations between gender and suitability for leadership weakens (Davies et al., 2005).

Empirical findings support this dynamic, as women in gender balanced industries experience fewer barriers in terms of exclusion and limited mentorship compared to those in male dominated industries (Ali et al., 2020; Stephenson et al. 2023). They are also less likely to be evaluated more negatively than men within gender neutral or female typed industries (Heilman et al., 2024). Further research has connected the increased presence of women, especially within leadership positions, with a reduction within occupational gender segregation (Huffman et al., 2010).

Beyond structural inclusion and the decrease of implicit gender stereotypes, social belonging also plays a role. The similarity-attraction paradigm proposes that individuals would want to work with others that share similar values, experiences, and interpersonal behaviour (Gould et al., 2018), while the optimal distinctiveness paradigm implies that people seek a balance between belonging and individuality (Brewer, 1991). This would further suggest that in gender-balanced industries, women are more likely to achieve this balance, experience higher job satisfaction and more commitment compared to either female or male dominated industries (Olafsdottir & Einarsdottir, 2024; Gould et al., 2018). For the family business context, these implications would mean that gender-balanced industries offer a more inclusive environment, in which leadership roles are not tied as much to gendered expectations (Olsson & Martiny, 2018).

Based on the decreasing role of Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory in these industries, it can be assumed that gender balance within an industry reduces the influence of gender stereotypes on succession intention. Therefore, in industries with a balanced gender share, the differences between sons' and daughters' intention to take over the family firm should not be significant.

H3: In gender-balanced industries, no significant differences will be observed between sons' and daughters' succession intentions.

2.4.4 The Moderating Role of Industry Context

Industry gender composition is particularly relevant as an external factor, continuously influencing career paths and leadership access (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017), even in labour markets politically aiming for equality, such as Germany (Lietzmann & Frodermann, 2021). As established earlier, gender composition differs across industries, making it a prominent factor and reinforcing occupational gender segregation as well as gender role stereotypes. According to Social Role Theory, men and women internalize expectations by society about their appropriate behaviour and role (Eagly & Wood, 2012). When an industry is dominated by a particular gender, it will symbolically be associated with that gender, which is known as industry gender typing (Cabrera et al., 2009). In such context, the minority becomes more visible, and their behaviour is often interpreted through stereotypical representation (Davison & Burke, 2000). Men or women, who do not conform with these gender role beliefs will face social sanctions, which in turn shape their occupational choices and their perceived fit within industries (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Consequently, men and women would behave in congruence with gender stereotypes, (Eagly & Karau, 2002) as well as perceive a weaker fit within industries where the other gender dominates (Meeussen et al., 2021; Fox & Barth, 2017).

Therefore, for family firms, industry gender composition may play as a moderating role in succession. Daughters may face greater barriers in male dominated industries due to stereotype misfit perception, while sons perceive similar barriers in industries with a higher share in women. Therefore, it is assumed that industry gender composition moderates the relationship between gender and succession intention (Figure 2).

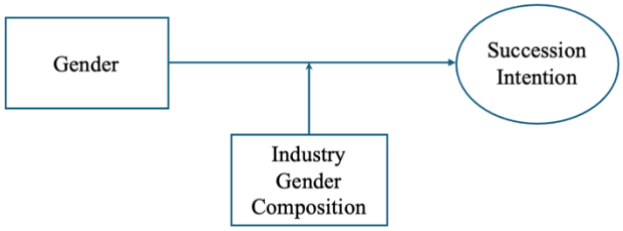

Figure 2: Model of Industry Gender Composition as a Moderator for Gender and Succession Intention based on PROCESS macro model 1 Hayes (2022)

H4: The effect of gender on succession intention is moderated by industry context.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To test the proposed moderation model and the developed hypothesis of Gen Z's succession intention across industries depending on their gender, this thesis deploys a quantitative approach using t-test, Whitney U test, as well as Hayes PROCESS macro in SPSS for analysis. Further, the study is based on a survey, which was conducted online by using the platform Qualtrics.

The targeted research group were German members of the Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2010), that have a firm within their family according to the EC (2009) definition, that is, a firm in which the family holds ownership, control or both. Participants were selected randomly, by distributing the survey on various channels and platform, as well as targeting relevant associations and networks across Germany related to the family firm topic. Additionally, snowball sampling method has been adopted, as the topic of having a family firm can be very sensitive to some and is not shared publicly, making it harder to reach a broader set of people with different intentions towards the family firm. This process has been taken on carefully as respondents tend to further distribute the survey to people with similar characteristics and prospects (Etikan et al., 2015). Therefore, to not skew the sample, the initial set of respondents, who were asked to further share the questionnaire, were analysed before to guarantee an acceptable variety. The combination of these methods assures

a diverse and broad picture of participants, with a variety of firms, ranging in size and distributed across all industry types according to the industry table, Appendix 1.

In order to avoid behavioural biases, according to Podsakoff et al (2003), procedural and statistical countermeasures have been adopted within the survey. First, the survey was structured in a way that guaranteed consistency, as well as not influencing respondents by the order of the questions. Further, the exact topic of the research was not shared, selling it as a broader context of succession. Secondly, the anonymity of the respondents was protected throughout the process and all information was handled confidentially. All details regarding the survey are displayed in Appendix 2.

3.2 Sample

The survey was distributed from the 20th of October 2025 until the 10th of November 2025. A total of 214 responses were captured, of which 165 were completed responses usable for analysis, which relates to 77%. Responses were excluded due to missing critical variables, as well as respondents not matching the research group, such as age or location of the family firm. The final sample comprised of 46.7% female and 53.3% male. As, Generation Z was targeted their age ranges from 15 to 30 years (M = 25.62, SD = 3.05). However, no respondents were captured by the lower range, being born 2008 to 2010. Most of the respondents also have siblings (78.8%). Educational background ranged from completing High School to PhD, with most having obtained a master's degree (41.2%) and a bachelor's degree (30.9%). Further 6% obtained a PhD, 24% vocational training and 16% high school. Regarding the main field of study, the survey was answered mainly by people from the business and management (48.5%) and engineering field (18.3%). All other fields of study or training ranged between 1.8% and 8.5%. The involvement within the family firm of the sample ranged from 44.8% never having worked at their family's company, to 12.7% working at the firm full time, 13.3% working part time and 29.1% having worked there in the past. Appendix 3 present all the general information about the tested sample.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics of the Respondents (N=165)

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max
Gender of Respondent[1]	.47	.50	0	1
Age of Respondent (years)	25.62	3.051	17	30
Highest Educational Level[2]	3.15	1.037	1	5

[1] Gender coded as 0 = male, 1 = female

[2] Education coded from 1 = A-Level to 5 = PhD

When looking at the family firms related to the respondents, firm age ranged from 2 to 380 years (M = 45.06, SD = 53.095). The distribution of the family businesses across industry categories was uneven, with a higher proportion operating in male dominated industries (47.3%) and lower proportion in balanced (29.1%) and female industries (23.6%). This reflects the actual structure of family firms in Germany, which are disproportionately represented in male-dominated industries (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft, 2025). Regarding their size, 54.5% have 1 to 9 employees, 26.1% have 10 to 49 employees, 13.3% have 50 to 249 and 6.1% have over 250 employees. The highest number of companies is owned and managed by the family itself (89.1%), while only 9.1% owns the family firm but do not manage it and 1.8% manage the firm but do not own it.

3.3 Variables and Measurements

3.3.1 Dependent Variable

Within this thesis succession intention is the dependent variable. To measure the Gen Z's succession intention, questions were obtained and adapted from the entrepreneurial intention questionnaire from Liñan and Chen (2009). To make it appropriate for this study the six items have been changed to fit the respondent's succession intention, as done in previous studies (Zhu & Zhou 2022; Basco & Gómez, 2022). The items span from "I am ready to do anything to take over my parents' business." to "I have a strong intention to become a successor in my parents' business one day.". Multi-item scale has been used as it has been proven to be more reliable (Nunnally, 1978). Respondents' intention was then captured by using a 7-point Likery scale (1 for strongly disagree, 7 for strongly agree). This scale is highly reliable, as Cronbach $\alpha = 0.962$. Additionally, the corrected item-total correlation ranged from 0.74 to 0.95, indicating that all items contribute strongly to the overall construct. Therefore, to establish the value of succession intention, the average score of the six items was used.

3.3.2 Independent Variable

The independent variable used in this study is *gender*. Only binary categories were considered. Respondents either identified themselves as male and female, all other were excluded from the sample. The variable was coded as a dummy variable, with 0 = male and 1 = female.

3.3.3 Moderator Variable

As mentioned before, to analyse industry dynamics within succession intention an adapted industry table is used, which can be found in Appendix 1. This table served as the basis for the survey, allowing respondents to easily identify the corresponding industry to their family firm.

For the analysis and since the number of responses varied considerably across the eleven industry sectors, industries were grouped into broader categories based on gender composition to ensure sufficient observations per group. This approach also reflects theoretical reasoning based on Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), which highlights that similar gendered distribution are linked to similar social norms and role expectations. Therefore, industries were classified on gender representation and associated gender stereotypes. The exact gender representation per industry can be found in Appendix 1. The data gathered by Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2025) on proportion of women in each sector was categorized as male-dominated (≤ 39% women), gender-balanced (40-60% women), and female-dominated (≥ 61%). This scale has been derived from previous studies (Ali et al., 2020; Karamessini, 2016; Mroczek-Dąbrowska & Gaweł, 2020). Notably, no industries where capture with homogeneous representation (≤ 5%).

Historically, family firms in Germany have been more common in traditionally male-dominated industries (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft, 2025). Consequently, the sample includes a higher number of respondents from male-dominated sectors, which aligns with patterns observed in the broader labour market. Additionally, the lower number of responses from female-dominated industries likely reflects the smaller representation of family firms in these industries, as education, healthcare, or social services are mainly public organization rather than family owned (Andersson et al., 2018). This limits the access to potential respondents from these areas and is reflected in the uneven distribution across industry categories in the sample (see Table 2).

Table 2: Crosstabulation of the Industry Category and Gender Composition

			Gender of Respondent		
			Male	**Female**	**Total**
Industry Category (gender composition)	**Male-dominated**	Count	46	32	78
		%	59.0%	41.0%	100%
	Balanced	Count	22	26	48
		%	45.8%	54.2%	100%
	Female-dominated	Count	20	19	39
		%	51.3%	48.7%	100%
Total		Count	88	77	165
		%	53.3%	46.7%	100%

3.3.4 Control Variables

In line with prior research within succession, a variety of control variables were included, that have been found to be highly influential on succession intention or have been used frequently. First of all, parameters regarding the firm, such as firm size and foundation year of the firm, were controlled for

(Motylska-Kuzma et al., 2023; Zhu & Zhou, 2022; Davis & Harveston, 1998; Sharma et al., 2003). *Firm size* has been captured according to the official European Union (2025) definition regarding number of employees, being 1 - micro (1-9 employees), 2 - small (10 to 49), 3 - medium (50 to 250) and 4 - large (above 250). The *foundation year* is included as a numeric variable.

Secondly, attributes of the potential successor were also controlled for. Papers have found that age, being an only child, the level of education and the involvement within the family firm are influential on succession intention (Gimenez-Jimenet et al., 2021; Parker & Van Praag, 2012; Zellweger et al., 2016). Therefore, *age* was included as a numeric variable ranging from 15 to 30 years old. *Being an only child* was coded as a dummy variable, 1 representing being an only child, while 0 means having siblings. The categorical variable, *level of education*, was coded as 1 - High School, 2 - Vocational training, 3 - Bachelor, 4 - Master and 5 - PhD. Lastly, the *involvement in the family firm* was captured as ordinary variable: 1 - full-time, 2 - part-time, 3 – past, and 4 – never.

To examine the associations between succession intention, demographics and firm characteristics, a spearman correlation analysis was conducted (see Table 3). Succession intention correlated positively with the respondents age ($\rho = .24$, $p = .002$), company size ($\rho = .42$, $p < .001$) and firm age ($\rho = .29$, $p < .001$). A strong negative correlation was found between the respondents' involvement within the family firm and succession intention ($\rho = –.62$, $p < .001$) reflecting that respondents with greater involvement in the company show higher intention towards succession. On the other hand, educational level and only child status were not significantly correlated to succession intention. Therefore, these variables were not used as control variables in the main analysis.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix (Spearman's rho)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Succession Intention		.238**	.030	−.622**	.071	.424**	.285**
2. Age of Respondent (years)	.238**		−.086	−.302**	.336**	.111	.142
3. Only Child Indicator	.030	−.086		.013	−.149	−.070	.007
4. Involvement in Family Firm	−.622**	−.302**	.013		−.065	−.179*	−.121
5. Highest Educational Level	.071	.336**	−.149	−.065		.159*	.115
6. Company Size (employees)	.424**	.111	−.070	−.179*	.159*		.504**
7. Age of Family Firm (years)	.285**	.142	.007	−.121	.115	.504**	

Note. N = 164–165 depending on variable
* p < .05. ** p < .01 (two-tailed)
Spearman's rho correlations reported

Additionally, and although involvement in the family firm was initially considered as a control variable due to its strong theoretical relevance, in the course of the analysis it was excluded from the main hypothesis testing. Initial regression displayed that involvement served as a potential mediator between gender and succession intention. Therefore, controlling for it would remove meaningful variance that theoretically belongs to the gender effect. Hence, involvement was left out from the main models and was explored separately in a moderated mediation model (see Chapter 3.4.5).

4. Data Analysis and Main Findings

To analyse the succession intention among Generation Z in Germany and test whether gender and industry gender composition influence these intentions, different approaches were used to test the hypothesis developed in the theoretical framework. All tests were evaluated using a significance threshold of $p < .05$. Established procedures such as descriptive statistics, correlations and t-tests were applied. To test whether industry context moderates the effect on gender on succession intention, Hayes' PROCESS Macro Model 1 was used. In this model, gender was specified as the independent variable (Y), succession intention as the outcome variable (X), and industry category as the multi categorical moderator (W). This approach is appropriate as it tests whether the direction of the relationship between X and Y varies across categories of W, allowing a reliable and thorough analysis (Hayes, 2022).

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

As contextual information, the average succession intention among respondents was $M = 3.35$ ($SD = 1.89$), indicating moderate to slightly lower intention on a 7-point scale. Full descriptive statistics, means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations of all variables are shown in Appendix 5.

4.2 Hypothesis 1

To evaluate H1, an independent sample t-test was conducted to examine gender difference in succession intention among Generation Z. Descriptively, male respondents reported slightly higher succession intentions ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 2.02$) than female respondents ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.73$). Leven's test indicated homogeneity of variance ($F = 3.25$, $p = 0.73$), therefore equal variances were assumed. The results of the t-test show that the difference is not statistically significant, $t(163) = 1.06$, $p = .290$. The effect size was small (Cohen's $d = 0.17$), indicating only a negligible gender difference in succession intention overall. Therefore, H1 is not supported, suggesting that only gender is not significantly associated with succession intention among Gen Z. Detailed insights into the test can be found in Appendix 6.

4.3 Hypothesis 2

Before analysing H2, as a descriptive context, a one-way ANOVA explored whether succession intention differs across the three industry categories. The analysis indicated significant variation across industries, $F(2,162) = 6.30$, $p = .002$. This analysis serves as contextual information and not as hypothesis testing but informs the following hypothesis tests regarding industry categories.

Hypothesis 2 was then tested using an independent sample t-test comparing succession intention between sons and daughters within male-dominated industries. When looking at descriptive statistics, sons reported higher succession intention ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 2.13$) than daughters ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.43$). Due to Levene's test indicating unequal variances ($F = 13.26$, $p < .001$), a Welch t-test was applied. The result shows a significant gender difference $t(75.95) = 3.44$, $p < .001$, with a medium to large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.74$). Therefore, H2 is supported and daughters in male-dominated industries report significantly lower succession intention than sons. Further details can be found in Appendix 7.

4.4 Hypothesis 3

H3, which examined the intention differences in gender-balanced industries, was also conducted by using an independent samples t-test. Sons ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.65$) and daughters ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.68$) reported nearly identical levels of succession intention. Levene's test indicated equal variances ($F = 0.04$, $p = .834$), therefore the standard t-test statistic was used. Son and daughters did not differ significantly in their succession intentions $t(46) = 0.17$, $p = .868$, with a very small effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.05$), indicating a negligible difference.

As the subgroups have a small sample size, a robustness check was conducted. The Mann–Whitney U test also showed no significant difference between sons and daughters ($U = 277.0$, $p = .852$). Therefore, H3 is supported, as no differences between the two groups were found in gender-balanced industries regarding their succession intention. See Appendix 8 for the detailed statistical findings.

4.5 Hypothesis 4

For H4 a moderation analysis using PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2022) was conducted to test whether the effect of gender (X) on succession intention (Y) was moderated by industry type (W), controlling for firm size, age of the family firm, and age of the respondent.

$$\text{Succession Intention} = b0 + b1\ (\text{Gender}) + b2\ (\text{Industry}) + b3\ (\text{Gender x Industry}) + e$$

The overall model showed a significant interaction between gender and industry $F(2, 155) = 9.49$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .085$, indicating that the relationship between gender and succession intention varies across industry types (see Figure 3).

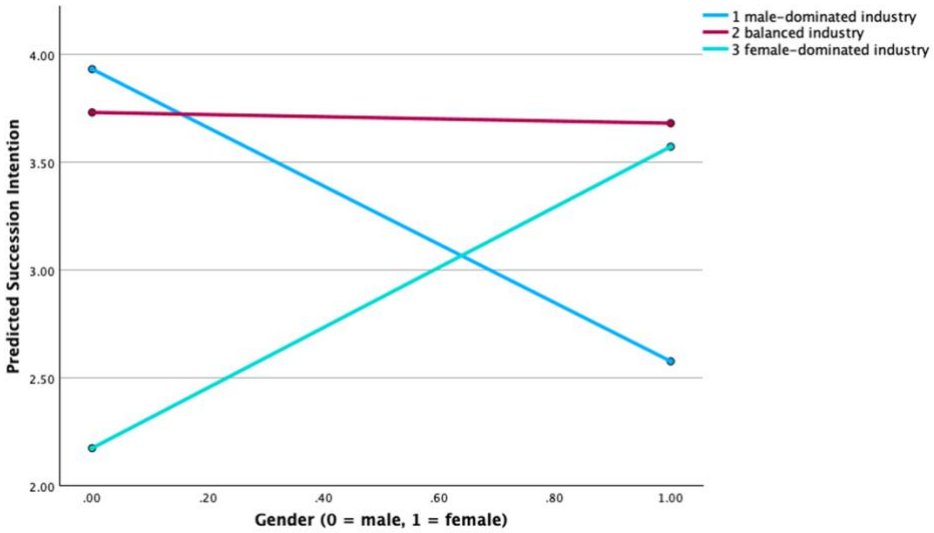

Figure 3: Moderating Effect of Industry Gender Composition on the Relationship between Gender and Succession Intention

In more detail, the gender x industry interaction creates two industry differences. First of all, simple-slope analyses revealed that in male-dominated industries, men reported higher succession intentions than women (b = –1.356, SE = 0.374, t = -3.622, p < .001), with a 95% confidence interval (CI) of [–2.096; –0.617], excluding zero and further confirming a robust moderating effect. Secondly, (W2: female-dominated vs. balanced) was also significant, b = 1.399, SE = 0.519, t = 2.695, p = .008, with a 95% CI of [0.374; 2.424], further supporting the presence of moderation. Lastly for balanced industry no significant effect was visible, b = –0.050, SE = 0.469, t = –0.106, p = .916, suggesting similar levels of succession intention across genders. Collectively, the results confirm that gender differences in succession intention depend on the context and shift their direction across industry types, therefore supporting H4. All statistical findings can be seen in Appendix 9.

4.6 Exploratory Analysis: Moderated Mediation Model

In addition to the hypothesis testing, an explanatory analysis was conducted to clarify the role of the variable 'involvement'. In the initial moderation analysis (H4), gender became non-significant once involvement was included as a control variable. However, when involvement was removed, gender again significantly predicted succession intention. This indicated that involvement may be part of the underlying mechanism and may act as mediator. To explore this, a moderated mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Model 7, with gender (X), succession intention (Y), involvement (M), and industry type (W). The interaction between gender and industry significantly predicted involvement ($F(2, 155) = 11.11$, $p < .001$). The overall model predicting involvement was significant, $F(8, 155) = 5.996$, $p < .001$. Importantly, in this model, the direct effect of gender on intention (the c'

path), was not significant ($c' = –0.07$, $p = .734$). However, the conditional indirect effects through involvement differed across industry types. The detailed results can be found in Appendix 9.

5. Discussion & Implications

The results of this thesis contribute to the growing field of family business research, especially to the understanding of succession intentions among members of Generation Z in Germany. Succession is one of the fundamental processes for the survival and continuity of family firms and therefore has received significant attention over the past decades (LeCounte, 2020; Uman et al., 2024). Prior studies consistently showed that succession intention is shaped by a complex interplay of individual, family, and organizational factors. For instance, research identifies several family-level factors that shape succession intention. Clarity of succession plan, the preparation of the successor, parental support, trust in the successor's abilities, and family rivalries are consistently linked to impact the willingness to take over (Daspit et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2003; Sharma et al., 2003). Studies focusing on the next generation similarly highlight the importance of harmonious intergenerational relationships (Venter et al., 2005), alignment between personal interest and the family firm (Dawsn et al., 2015), and a strong locus of control (Zellweger, Sieger & Halter, 2011). Yet findings remain mixed. Even though early exposure to the family firm may strengthen emotional attachment and increase succession intention (Carr & Seqeira, 2007; Istpliler at al., 2024), it can likewise generate pressure or feeling of inadequacy, leading some next-generation members to distance themselves from the firm (Wang, Wang, Chen, 2018; Mungai & Velmauri, 2011). Overall, the literature suggests that succession intention is neither automatic, but rather shaped by a combination of reinforcing and conflicting influences.

However, a gap remains within research. While scholars acknowledge the importance of family dynamics, gender, and individual motivations, the role of the industry in which the family firm operates has received little direct attention, even though it likely shapes how sons and daughters perceive their fit and legitimacy within the family firm. In countries such as Germany, where industries differ strongly regarding gender representation and occupational gender segregation, ignoring industry context risks overlooking an important factor towards succession intention.

Due to this gap, this thesis examines whether industry gender composition moderates the relationship between gender and succession intention, integrating Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Heilman, 2001; Ellemers, 2018) into the succession context. Building on this, four hypotheses were formulated. Nearly all results support the theoretical expectations and suggest a moderating role of industry context. This indicates that succession intentions may be shaped by an interplay of gender and industry environment.

To address the research question on how industry context shapes gender differences in family business succession intentions of the Generation Z in Germany, the first step was to examine the general level of difference within succession intention between daughters and sons (H1). The results do not support this hypothesis, as no significant differences were found between their succession intentions overall. This result suggests that gender alone may not be sufficient to explain differences within the intention to take over the family firm among this generation. While earlier succession research has underlined barriers due to gender (Wang, 2010; Nelson & Constantinidis, 2017), the absent gender gap in this result may be consistent with changing norms among the younger cohort. Previous research show that the next generation does not automatically seeks to be involved in the family firm (Sieger, Fueglistaller & Zellweger, 2016) but instead depends on factors such as exposure, perceived fit, family climate, and more (Zellweger, Sieger & Halter, 2011). From a generation perspective, this result goes in line with what is known about the generation, as they value autonomy, flexibility, and purposeful work (Scholz, 2019), while also valuing security and family orientation (Klaffke, 2021) and seeing themselves as independent individuals (Kutlák, 2021). Whether succeeding the family business is attractive therefore depends on whether the firm aligns with these values and might depend less on gender itself.

Although prior research has increasingly acknowledged gender as an important factor in succession processes, the interaction between gender and the broader industry context has not been taken into account. The second hypothesis (H2) examines this, looking at the differences between daughters and sons within male-dominated industries regarding their succession intention. The result shows that daughters report significantly lower succession intentions than sons when the family firm operates in a male-dominated industry. While this has not been examined in previous succession literature, the pattern is consistent with evidence from occupational gender segregation and gender stereotype research. As Social Role Theory argues that men and women internalize gendered expectations due to roles that men and women typically took on (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Male-dominated industries are strongly associated with masculine traits (Cabrera et al., 2009), leading to a weak perceived fit for women in these industries (Meeussen et al., 2021; Fox & Barth, 2017). Further, Gender Stereotype Theory explains that stereotypes about competence and technical knowledge for instance are especially prominent in male industries, discouraging women to enter these fields and aspire leadership roles (Heilman, 2001; Larsson & Alvinius, 2020). This aligns with occupational segregation research, which shows that gendered stereotypes continue to shape career decisions (Boll et al., 2015; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 2023). Translating this into the family business context, literature shows that daughters already face greater legitimacy barriers and higher expectations in succession processes (Overbeke et al., 2013; Hytti et al., 2016; Constantinidis &

Nelson 2009). This would suggest that, when the firm operates in male-dominated industry, additional challenges may be perceived, as such industry contexts are associated with male-typed stereotypes, potentially signalling a perceived mismatch with role expectations. As women are aware of the barriers (Askew & Blau, 2025), their willingness to pursue succession in these industries may be lower. This aligns with the significant lower succession intention of daughters in male-dominated industries. Overall, this finding contributes to the literature by showing that gendered mechanisms appear to be reflected within succession intention of the young generation of daughters and that these patterns differ by industry gender composition.

In contrast, when looking at the third hypothesis (H3) regarding gender differences within balanced industries, no gender differences in succession intention emerge. This suggests that when the gender composition of an industry is more equal, sons and daughters perceive similar levels of fit and acceptance. This finding goes in line with research showing that gender-balanced contexts weaken gendered expectations and providing more divers role models, which reduces the presence of gender stereotypes (Cheryan et al. 2017; Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Davies et al., 2005; Olsson & Martiny, 2018). Being also in accordance with findings, showing that cultural associations between gender and occupational role weakens as gender representation become more balanced, as beliefs to some parts come from observing who typically preforms certain roles (Anglin et al., 2022; Eagly & Wood, 2012). Exposure to counter stereotypical role models helps reduce implicit bias and break these stereotypes further (Olsson & Martiny, 2018). The finding confirms prior research, as it indicates that the normalisation of gender diversity would reduce structural and perceived barriers, allowing for equal succession motivation across genders. Studies further show that environments with equal gender representation can increase inclusion, job satisfaction, and commitment (Olafsdottir & Einarsdottir, 2024; Gould et al., 2018). The contribution of this finding is that it shows how gender-balanced industries appear to reduce observed gender differences in family business succession intention, providing insights that more structural gender balance may be associated with more similar levels of succession intentions among Generation Z, further indicating that contextual conditions shape succession intention.

Taken together, these findings underscore that gender differences in succession intention are context dependent. The findings support the last hypothesis (H4), which investigates the moderating role of industry context on gender and succession intention. The moderation analysis suggests that industry gender composition shapes how sons and daughters perceive the family firm as a potential career opportunity. As expected, in male-dominated contexts, gender differences are observed, in balanced industry they are not evident, and in female-dominated industries they emerge again in the different

direction. This suggests that succession decisions are not only personal but also embedded in broader labour market structures.

Overall, the findings go in line with Social Role Theory, which proposes that individuals internalise societal expectations linked to gendered occupational roles (Eagly & Wood, 2012) and act accordingly to these gender stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Therefore, when an industry is strongly associated with one gender the expectations may become more prominent (Cabrera et al., 2009). This results in a perceived weaker fit within industries where the other gender dominates, reducing motivation to pursue a career in that context (Meeussen et al., 2021; Fox & Barth, 2017).

The results also contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding Generation Z. Even though they are growing up in a period of equality (Kenney, 2020), the patterns observed in the finding suggest that Gen Z is still influenced by traditional gender stereotypes. This is consistent with the finding by Duong (2025), showing that career choices within the younger cohort are still influenced by gender stereotypes. Further, does it align with the finding, that only limited generational shifts within attitude towards gender can be seen within Generation Z (Karmakar & Chandola, 2023). The moderated pattern therefore raises questions about the assumption that Generation Z has moved passed traditional gender expectation.

For family firms, that means that not only general occupational intentions may be influenced but also the willingness of the young generation to view their family's business as potential career path. These findings contribute to the literature by highlighting industry gender composition as a contextual condition associated with gendered succession intention. It also complements occupational segregation research by suggesting that industry gender composition not only influence general career choices but also succession intentions within family firms.

Although not formally hypothesized, an exploratory moderated mediation analysis was tested to better understand the relation of involvement in the family firm with gender and industry context. The pattern suggest that involvement in the family firm differ for daughters and sons depending on the industry type. In male-dominated industries, daughters tend to be less involved in the business, which then lowered their succession intentions. On the other hand, in female-dominated industries, daughters were more involved and therefore reported higher succession intention. These results cannot be interpreted causally, but they indicate a potential relationship, which would need further investigation. The patterns broadly align with Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), which emphasises how gendered environments influence behaviour. Overall, this exploratory analysis offers direction for future research.

5.1 Theoretical Implication

The findings make various contributions to the family business research field. First of all, the study expands succession literature by introducing industry gender composition, which has been previously overlooked, as a contextual condition influencing the Generation Z of successors intention to take over the family firm. While previous research has looked into many different aspects, such as family relationships, preparation etc. (Venter et al., 2005; Sharma et al., 2003), the industry context regarding its gender composition and influence on succession intention has received little attention. By showing that industry gender composition moderates succession intention among Generation Z, the thesis provides evidence that succession is not only shaped by individual preferences or family dynamics but also due to broader labour market structures. These findings extend the idea by Gimenez-Jimenez (2021), that succession intention is not solely individual or a normal process within the family but also a socially constructed process.

Furthermore, the findings apply Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2000; Heilman, 2001) by showing that the resulting gendered roles and expectations within industries continue to influence the youngest generation of successors. The results suggest that industry gender typing influences how individuals perceive their fit and legitimacy and it extends the theories into the family firm succession research. Overall, the thesis indicates that gender stereotypes are persistent within the Generation Z, even though they are claimed to be the most progressive generation, trying to resist gender stereotype. While some studies argue that Gen Z actively rejects traditional gender roles (Fazloon & Usman, 2024), the moderation model suggests otherwise, the rejection does not fully reach career related decisions. This aligns with studies showing that gender stereotypes are stable across generations and persistent to change (Rashotte & Murray, 2005; Tak et al., 2019). However, at the same time, the findings also advocate that gender balanced environments weaken stereotypical assumptions in succession intention. Adding another layer to the findings that state that a more balanced gender representation weakens the stereotypical link between certain roles and gender (Anglin et al., 2022; Olsson & Martiny, 2018), by showing that this may also be applicable for succession intentions.

Therefore, it also adds to the generational research by shedding light on the Generation Z and their responds to gendered occupational structures. As mentioned before, the findings indicate that their succession intentions are still influenced by industry gender composition and the linked stereotypes. With this finding, the thesis adds to the discussion whether generational change goes in hand with shifts in gender roles attitude.

Altogether, the findings underline the importance of considering the interplay of individual factor, gender and the contextual aspect ‘industry’ when trying to understand succession intention. The

results support and apply existing theoretical frameworks, add another layer to the understanding of the next generations willingness to succeed their family business.

5.2 Managerial Implication

Additionally, the findings of this thesis provide several implications for family firms trying to ensure a successful succession and to better understand the motivations of the Generation Z. Overall, the results suggests that succession intention among Gen Z is not only associated with individual preferences or family interplay but also related to the gender composition of the industry in which the family business operates and the gender stereotypes associated with it. This underlines the importance for family firms to not only consider internal processes but also mind the broader structural settings when preparing succession. Meaning, owners should understand and reflect on how industry compositions shape the perceived attractiveness of leadership roles for daughters and sons as successors.

First of all, gendered assumptions regarding the potential successor should be avoided were possible. As the findings suggest, intention varies across industries, indicating that families should be aware of early signs from their children and avoid categorising them into gender-stereotypical roles. Preferably, family businesses would benefit from fostering an environment in which both daughters and sons can explore different aspects of the business and develop a sense of fit. Research has shown that early socialisation plays an important role in shaping career choices (Lambrecht, 2005; Steinberg, 2001; Stich, 2024), which suggests that it is important to provide encouragement and avoid indications in the direction of one gender being associated with certain roles. This is especially important, as children furthermore take on the beliefs of their parents regarding their ability, which can influence their self-assessment over time (Tiedemann, 2000).

Secondly, to add on the prior point, the structure of the succession conversation should be taken into account. Besides having an earlier discussion regarding the family firm, families should also focus on communicating the whole range of possibilities within the business and make clear that several ways can lead to leadership of the firm. As research has shown, career decisions are shaped by perceived self-efficacy and clarity of expectations especially with larger companies (Choi et al, 2011; Bozer, Lewin & Santora, 2017). It may therefore be advisable to create a supportive environment with focus on an ongoing development process and reduced pressure associated with stereotypical role expectations.

Thirdly, the findings indicate the importance of role models. In industry where one gender is overrepresented, family firms cannot influence broader labour market structures, yet they can foster awareness of how those environments shape perceptions. Highlighting counter-stereotypical examples within the firms might help in the long-term to broaden the next generations perceived fit.

The findings from balanced industries, where no gender differences in succession intention could be seen, suggest that fostering a similar environment or trying to achieve a similar gender balance may help reduce stereotype driven perceptions over time. Exposure to diverse role models, especially during the socialisation phase, can reduce implicit bias and challenge internalised assumptions about gendered career fit (Ertl et al., 2017, Olsson & Martiny, 2018). Within the family, parents themselves often serve as the main role model, as well as their beliefs serving as reference (Anderson & Cavallaro, 2002; Viljaranta et al., 2015). This underlines the importance to foster unbiased attitudes and openness towards daughters and sons as successor. While structural changes within industries is slow, family businesses can adopt a long-term orientation by fostering inclusive teams and supporting gender diverse interactions, in order to challenge gender stereotypes and foster environments in which both gender feel equally accepted.

Furthermore, the findings imply that the specific expectations and work preferences of Generation Z should be taken into account. As their overall succession intention is rather low, family firms should investigate factors influencing their perception towards succession, trying to understand the root cause. As commitment from the successor toward the family firm is a key attribute this would need investigation (Sharma & Irving, 2005). Further, creating development experiences that are not gender related may help ensure that potential successor acquire the skills and exposure necessary to make informed career decisions.

All in all, the implications show that family firms play an important role in shaping the conditions in which successor develop their interest for the company. While industry gender compositions cannot be changed quickly, families on the other hand may counterbalance these influences during socialization processes, foster divers role models and broaden their children's perception for fit in the long-term. This may support a more inclusive and lasting succession process, one in which daughters and sons perceive equal fit, with reduced impact due to gender stereotypes to take over the family business.

6. Limitation and Future Research

This study was based on a diverse dataset, captured during a time period of approximately three weeks, allowing for a robust analysis to understand the moderating role of industry context within succession. However, several limitations need to be acknowledged. First, the data collection process relied strongly on personal and extended network, which might limit the representativeness of the sample. Associations have been approached across Germany, but it is questionable how many responses where captures through this approach. Still, it must be noted that reaching suitable respondents across the entire population of Germany is hardly achieved in the scope of a master

thesis. Furthermore, the sample shows an overrepresentation of respondents from male-dominated industries, which goes in line with the broader market structure but restricts the generalisability of the findings. A larger and more evenly distributed sample would have ensured greater statistical power across all subgroups, especially within female-dominated industries. In this regard, the industry categorization was simplified into three main gender composition groups. This approach is grounded in theory and makes it possible to compare between groups in a meaningful way, however looking at each industry type separately and considering each gender representation percentage could have further increased precision. For the scope of this master thesis gaining this number of responses was not feasible, therefore for this purpose the chosen categories capture the essential structural differences. Furthermore, it also must be noted, that the industry gender composition rather serves as a proxy for underlying gender stereotypes and social expectations. It does not directly capture individuals' stereotype endorsement or perceived fit. Thirdly, this study used a cross-sectional design, only capturing intentions at a single point in time. As succession intention is a social construct, which can change over time due to personal experiences, exposure to the family firm, and changes in life (Assenmacher, 2025; Li, Wang & Cao, 2023), a longitudinal design would therefore offer a better understanding of how intention changes in the course of life, especially considering educational and career transitions. The fourth limitation is, that career choices are very complex. They are never fully autonomous, but rather influenced by a wide range of factors especially during socialisation due to family, peers, and school (Schmidt, 2020; Stich, 2024). Even though this study identifies industry gender composition as a significant contextual factor, other influences play an important role. The explanatory moderated mediation analysis already explores that more pathways are relevant and exist. Future research should aim to include a wider range of variables and develop are more in depth and comprehensive model that influences succession intention. Lastly, the study could not account for whether respondents' field of study aligned with the industry in which their family firm operates, due to the restriction to the three gender composition groups and the resulting incomparability. Despite these limitations, this thesis sustains consistency and reliability. Measures met standard criteria for validity and robustness, and the statistical test were appropriate for the research design.

As mentioned before, some limitations should be considered for future research. Adding to the suggestions, future research should expand its research by using longitudinal studies, that track the evolvement of succession intention across important phases. Additionally, a qualitative approach would further help to uncover motivation, role expectations, and emotional parameters that cannot be captured with quantitative methods. Future studies should also incorporate additional moderators that might be influenced by gender stereotypes and try to understand the factors in combination. This would help to understand in even more depth how gendered career direction occur in family firms. At last, increasing the study and going beyond Germany would help to understand how cultural and

gender equality levels influence the relationship between industry context and succession intention. This could further shed light on the question of how deeply embedded gender stereotypes are and under which condition they change.

7. Conclusion

The family business research field has been rather important, as these firms contribute substantially to the economy worldwide. This makes succession and the corresponding higher chance of survival of the firm a relevant subject. Within the topic of succession, this thesis examines whether the gender composition of an industry influences the succession intention of Generation Z in German family firms. The findings provide important conclusions, that succession intention is shaped by structural conditions namely labour market environment. The industry gender composition emerged as a moderator between gender and succession intention, as gender differences were significant both in male and female dominated industries but disappeared in gender-balance industries. These results suggest that gendered occupational expectations remain relevant for the youngest generation of potential successors. This challenges the assumption that Generation Z has overcome gender stereotypes. The study contributes to the family business research by adding industry context as an important factor within succession intention. Additionally, it applies Social Role Theory and Gender Stereotype Theory into the field of succession, as it shows that societal and gendered expectations coming from occupational gender segregation are influential within the succession decisions.
Nevertheless, the limitations, such as limited generalisability due to the study design and a larger scope need to be acknowledged. Addressing these and adding a longitudinal design, cross country comparison, as well as investigating more moderators would be beneficial to even better understand the role and importance of occupational gender segregation and the resulting gender stereotypes on succession intentions.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Industry Gender Composition in Germany

Industries	**Further Explanation**	**German Wording**	**Percentage of Women** according to Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2025)
Agriculture & Forestry		Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Fischerei	34%
Construction & Skilled Trades	Construction, building trades, craft based production	Baugewerbe	14%
Energy & Utilities	Mining, energy, water/waste disposal	Bergbau, Energie, Wasser/Entsorgung	23%
Manufacturing & Production	Machinery, food processing, textiles etc.	Verarbeitendes Gewerbe	26%
Trade/ Retail & Wholesales	Retail shops, wholesale businesses	Handel, Instandhaltung, KFZ-Reparatur	50%
Transportation & Logistics	Trucking, warehousing, logictics servides	Verkehr, Lagerei und Logistik	24%
Hospitality & Tourism	Hotels, restaurants, trourism services	Gastgewerbe, Tourismus	51%
Personal & Other Services	Hairdresser, cleaner, dosmestic help	Dienstleistungen und private Haushalt	63%
Professional & Business Services	Law firms, tax advisory, consulting, cerative agencies	Finanz-, und Versicherung; wirtschaftliche Dienstleistungen	54% (0,97 Mio) 46% (5,04 Mio) = 47% (weighted)*
Health & Educations	Private schools, nurseries, medical practives, pharmacies, care facilities	Gesundheits- und Sozialwesen; Erziehung und Unterricht	77% (5,29 Mio) 72% (1,42 Mio) = 76% (weighted)*
Information & Communication / IT & Software		Information und Kommunikation	35%

*Industries have been merged and percentages are calculated as weighted averages based on the number of employee in each industry.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Succession Intention | Family Firms in Germany

General Information

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

This survey is part of a Master's thesis at Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics.
It explores the influence of gender and industry on the succession intentions of Generation Z in family businesses.
The survey is aimed exclusively at individuals born between 1995 and 2010 (Generation Z) whose family owns or manages a business in Germany.

Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. All information will be treated confidentially and used solely for research purposes.

Completing the survey will take no more than 5 minutes.

Please answer all questions completely and honestly.

By clicking "Next," you confirm that you have read the information provided and agree to participate voluntarily in the survey.

Survey Quetsions

1	**Please select your birthyear.** below 1995 1995 ... 2010 Above 2010
2	**Is your family..** a. the founding family that owns and manages a business(es) b. the founding family that ownes the majority but does not manages a business(es) c. the founding family that manages a business(es) but does not owns it. d. none of the others
Info	If your family owns more than one company, please choose for the following questions the one that represents the core business or best reflects your family's main entrepreneurial activity.

3	**Is the Company located in Germany?** a. Yes b. No
4	**In which industry does this company primarily operate?** a. Agriculture & Forestry b. Construction & Skilled Trades c. Energy & Utilities d. Manufacturing & Production e. Trade/ Retail & Wholesales f. Transportation & Logistics g. Hospitality & Tourism h. Personal & Other Services i. Professional & Business Services j. Health & Educations k. Information & Communication / IT & Software
5	**How many people are employed in this company?** a. 1–9 (Micro) b. 10–49 (Small) c. 50–249 (Medium) d. 250+ (Large)
6	**What is the foundation year of the company?** _____ (open field)
7	**How frequently are you involved in the family business?** a. I currently work there full-time b. I currently work there part-time c. I worked there in the past but no longer do d. I have never worked there
8	**Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statements.** 1 I am ready to do anything to take over my parents' business. 2 My professional goal is to become a successor in my parents' business. 3 I will make every effort to become a successor in my parents' business. 4 I am determined to become a successor in my parents' business in the future. 5 I have very seriously thought of taking over my parents' business. 6 I have a strong intention to become a successor in my parents' business one day. **Measurement per subquestion** 7-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree – 7 = Strongly agree
9	**What is your gender?** a.Female b.Male c.Non-binary / Other d.I prefer not to say

10	**What is you educational level?**
	a. High school b. Bachelor c. Master d. PhD e. Vocational training / apprenticeship
11	**What is your field of study or training?**
	a. English/German b. Business & Management c. Engineering & Technology d. Computer Science / IT e. Natural & Life Sciences f. Law g. Medicine & Health h. Social Sciences i. Education j. Arts, Design & Media k. Other (please specify)
12	**Are you an only child?**
	a. Yes b. No

End of the Survey

Thank you for your participation!
You have successfully completed the survey.
If you are interested in the results of this study, feel free to contact me at s-sbuchner@ucp.pt

Appendix 3: Descriptive Statistics

Respondent

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age of Respondent (years)	165	17	30	25.62	3.051
Valid N (listwise)	165				

Only Child Indicator

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	130	78.8	78.8	78.8
	Yes	35	21.2	21.2	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	100.0	

Highest Educational Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High School	16	9.7	9.7	9.7
	Vocational Training	24	14.5	14.5	24.2
	Bachelor	51	30.9	30.9	55.2
	Master	68	41.2	41.2	96.4
	PhD	6	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	100.0	

Field of Study or Training

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Engineering	30	18.2	18.3	18.3
	Computer Science/ IT	11	6.7	6.7	25.0
	Business & Management	80	48.5	48.8	73.8
	Art, Design & Media	4	2.4	2.4	76.2
	Law	6	3.6	3.7	79.9
	Medicine & Health	14	8.5	8.5	88.4
	Social Sciences	9	5.5	5.5	93.9
	Natural & Life Siences	7	4.2	4.3	98.2
	Education	3	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	164	99.4	100.0	
Missing	Not specified	1	.6		
Total		165	100.0		

Involvement in Family Firm

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Full-time	21	12.7	12.7	12.7
	Part-time	22	13.3	13.3	26.1
	Past	48	29.1	29.1	55.2
	Never	74	44.8	44.8	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	100.0	

Family firm

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age of the Family Firm (years)	164	2	380	45.06	53.095
Valid N (listwise)	164				

Industry Category (gender composition)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male-dominated	78	47.3	47.3	47.3
	Balanced	48	29.1	29.1	76.4
	Female-dominated	39	23.6	23.6	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	100.0	

Company Size (number of employees)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-9 employees	90	54.5	54.5	54.5
	10-49 employees	43	26.1	26.1	80.6
	50-249 employeed	22	13.3	13.3	93.9
	above 250	10	6.1	6.1	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	100.0	

Type of Firm Ownership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Owns and manages the firm	147	89.1	89.1	89.1
	Manages but does not own the firm	3	1.8	1.8	90.9
	Owns but does not manage the firm	15	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	100.0	

Succession Intention Scale

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Succession Intention Item 1	165	1	7	3.15	1.934
Succession Intention Item 2	165	1	7	3.20	2.105
Succession Intention Item 3	165	1	7	3.00	2.000
Succession Intention Item 4	165	1	7	3.21	2.105
Succession Intention Item 5	165	1	7	4.24	2.063
Succession Intention Item 6	165	1	7	3.30	2.145
Valid N (listwise)	165				

Appendix 4: Reliability

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	165	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	165	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.962	6

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Succession Intention Item 1	3.15	1.934	165
Succession Intention Item 2	3.20	2.105	165
Succession Intention Item 3	3.00	2.000	165
Succession Intention Item 4	3.21	2.105	165
Succession Intention Item 5	4.24	2.063	165
Succession Intention Item 6	3.30	2.145	165

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Succession Intention Item 1	16.94	94.143	.810	.962
Succession Intention Item 2	16.89	86.769	.945	.947
Succession Intention Item 3	17.09	89.851	.908	.952
Succession Intention Item 4	16.88	86.871	.942	.947
Succession Intention Item 5	15.85	94.320	.741	.969
Succession Intention Item 6	16.79	86.567	.930	.949

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
20.09	128.266	11.325	6

Appendix 5: Descriptive Statistics for Analysis Context

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Succession Intention	165	1.00	7.00	3.3485	1.88758
Gender of Respondent	165	0	1	.47	.500
Industry Category (gender composition)	165	1	3	1.76	.811
Age of Respondent (years)	165	17	30	25.62	3.051
Involvement in Family Firm	165	1	4	3.06	1.046
Company Size (number of employees)	165	1	4	1.71	.917
Age of the Family Firm (years)	164	2	380	45.06	53.095
Only Child Indicator	165	0	1	.21	.410
Highest Educational Level	165	1	5	3.15	1.037
Valid N (listwise)	164				

Correlations

			Succession Intention	Gender of Respondent	Industry Category (gender composition)	Age of Respondent (years)	Involvement in Family Firm	Company Size (number of employees)	Age of the Family Firm (years)	Only Child Indicator	Highest Educational Level
Spearman's rho	Succession Intention	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	−.067	−.205**	.238**	−.622**	.424**	.285**	.030	.071
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.395	.008	.002	<.001	<.001	<.001	.698	.362
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165
	Gender of Respondent	Correlation Coefficient	−.067	1.000	.086	−.078	.076	−.007	−.040	.139	−.028
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.395	.	.272	.320	.334	.928	.613	.076	.724
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165
	Industry Category (gender composition)	Correlation Coefficient	−.205**	.086	1.000	−.112	.106	−.249**	−.506**	.221**	−.160*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.272	.	.151	.174	.001	<.001	.004	.039
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165
	Age of Respondent (years)	Correlation Coefficient	.238**	−.078	−.112	1.000	−.302**	.111	.142	−.086	.336**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.320	.151	.	<.001	.155	.070	.275	<.001
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165
	Involvement in Family Firm	Correlation Coefficient	−.622**	.076	.106	−.302**	1.000	−.179*	−.121	.013	−.065
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.334	.174	<.001	.	.021	.124	.864	.408
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165
	Company Size (number of employees)	Correlation Coefficient	.424**	−.007	−.249**	.111	−.179*	1.000	.504**	−.070	.159*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.928	.001	.155	.021	.	<.001	.369	.041
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165
	Age of the Family Firm (years)	Correlation Coefficient	.285**	−.040	−.506**	.142	−.121	.504**	1.000	.007	.115
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.613	<.001	.070	.124	<.001	.	.928	.143
		N	164	164	164	164	164	164	164	164	164
	Only Child Indicator	Correlation Coefficient	.030	.139	.221**	−.086	.013	−.070	.007	1.000	−.149
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.698	.076	.004	.275	.864	.369	.928	.	.057
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165
	Highest Educational Level	Correlation Coefficient	.071	−.028	−.160*	.336**	−.065	.159*	.115	−.149	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.362	.724	.039	<.001	.408	.041	.143	.057	.
		N	165	165	165	165	165	165	164	165	165

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 6: Hypothesis 1 Results

Group Statistics

	Gender of Respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Succession Intention	Male	88	3.4943	2.01692	.21500
	Female	77	3.1818	1.72596	.19669

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
						Significance				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Succession Intention	Equal variances assumed	3.254	.073	1.061	163	.145	.290	.31250	.29444	-.26890	.89390
	Equal variances not assumed			1.072	162.926	.143	.285	.31250	.29140	-.26291	.88791

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Succession Intention	Cohen's d	1.88685	.166	-.141	.472
	Hedges' correction	1.89559	.165	-.140	.470
	Glass's delta	1.72596	.181	-.127	.488

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendix 7: Hypothesis 2 Results

ANOVA test:

Descriptives

Succession Intention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male-dominated	78	3.5641	1.98647	.22492	3.1162	4.0120	1.00	7.00
Balanced	48	3.7292	1.64906	.23802	3.2503	4.2080	1.00	7.00
Female-dominated	39	2.4487	1.70532	.27307	1.8959	3.0015	1.00	6.50
Total	165	3.3485	1.88758	.14695	3.0583	3.6386	1.00	7.00

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Succession Intention	Based on Mean	2.061	2	162	.131
	Based on Median	1.903	2	162	.152
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.903	2	146.393	.153
	Based on trimmed mean	2.185	2	162	.116

ANOVA

Succession Intention

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	42.156	2	21.078	6.298	.002
Within Groups	542.167	162	3.347		
Total	584.323	164			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Succession Intention

	(I) Industry Category (gender composition)	(J) Industry Category (gender composition)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	Male-dominated	Balanced	-.16506	.33560	.875	-.9589	.6288
		Female-dominated	1.11538*	.35878	.006	.2667	1.9641
	Balanced	Male-dominated	.16506	.33560	.875	-.6288	.9589
		Female-dominated	1.28045*	.39438	.004	.3476	2.2133
	Female-dominated	Male-dominated	-1.11538*	.35878	.006	-1.9641	-.2667
		Balanced	-1.28045*	.39438	.004	-2.2133	-.3476
Games-Howell	Male-dominated	Balanced	-.16506	.32748	.870	-.9428	.6127
		Female-dominated	1.11538*	.35378	.006	.2719	1.9589
	Balanced	Male-dominated	.16506	.32748	.870	-.6127	.9428
		Female-dominated	1.28045*	.36225	.002	.4154	2.1455
	Female-dominated	Male-dominated	-1.11538*	.35378	.006	-1.9589	-.2719
		Balanced	-1.28045*	.36225	.002	-2.1455	-.4154

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Homogeneous Subsets

Succession Intention

	Industry Category (gender composition)	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
			1	2
Tukey HSD[a,b]	Female-dominated	39	2.4487	
	Male-dominated	78		3.5641
	Balanced	48		3.7292
	Sig.		1.000	.893

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 50.595.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

T-test:

Group Statistics

	Gender of Respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Succession Intention	Male	46	4.1341	2.12702	.31361
	Female	32	2.7448	1.43496	.25367

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
						Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Succession Intention	Equal variances assumed	13.261	<.001	3.217	76	<.001	.002	1.38927	.43180	.52926	2.24928
	Equal variances not assumed			3.444	75.952	<.001	<.001	1.38927	.40336	.58590	2.19264

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Succession Intention	Cohen's d	1.87582	.741	.272	1.205
	Hedges' correction	1.89459	.733	.269	1.193
	Glass's delta	1.43496	.968	.451	1.473

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendix 8: Hypothesis 3 Results

Group Statistics

	Gender of Respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Succession Intention	Male	22	3.7727	1.64795	.35134
	Female	26	3.6923	1.68173	.32981

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
						Significance				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Succession Intention	Equal variances assumed	.044	.834	.167	46	.434	.868	.08042	.48272	-.89125	1.05209
	Equal variances not assumed			.167	44.979	.434	.868	.08042	.48189	-.89017	1.05101

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval Lower	Upper
Succession Intention	Cohen's d	1.66639	.048	-.520	.616
	Hedges' correction	1.69419	.047	-.511	.606
	Glass's delta	1.68173	.048	-.521	.615

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Mann-Whitney Test

Ranks

	Gender of Respondent	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Succession Intention	Male	22	24.91	548.00
	Female	26	24.15	628.00
	Total	48		

Test Statistics[a]

	Succession Intention
Mann-Whitney U	277.000
Wilcoxon W	628.000
Z	-.186
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.852

a. Grouping Variable: Gender of Respondent

Appendix 9: Hypothesis 4 Results

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 1
    Y  : successi
    X  : gender
    W  : industry

Covariates:
 age_nume firm_siz age_fami

Sample
Size:  164

Coding of categorical W variable for analysis:
 industry       W1       W2
    1.000     .000     .000
    2.000    1.000     .000
    3.000     .000    1.000

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 successi

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
       .554       .306      2.614      8.560      8.000    155.000       .000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     -1.031      1.121      -.920       .359     -3.247      1.184
gender       -1.356       .374     -3.622       .000     -2.096      -.617
W1             .412       .307      1.344       .181      -.194      1.019
W2            -.465       .349     -1.331       .185     -1.155       .225
Int_1         1.307       .600      2.177       .031       .121      2.493
Int_2         2.755       .640      4.306       .000      1.491      4.019
age_nume       .125       .042      2.976       .003       .042       .208
firm_siz       .606       .147      4.134       .000       .317       .896
age_fami       .002       .003       .863       .389      -.003       .007


Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        gender   x        W1
 Int_2    :        gender   x        W2

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W       .085      9.486      2.000    155.000       .000
----------
    Focal predict: gender   (X)
          Mod var: industry (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

   industry     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      1.000     -1.356       .374     -3.622       .000     -2.096      -.617
      2.000      -.050       .469      -.106       .916      -.975       .876
      3.000      1.399       .519      2.695       .008       .374      2.424

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/
   gender     industry   successi   .
BEGIN DATA.
      -.470      1.000      3.933
       .530      1.000      2.577
      -.470      2.000      3.732
       .530      2.000      3.682
      -.470      3.000      2.174
       .530      3.000      3.573
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 gender   WITH     successi BY       industry .

********************* ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

NOTE: The following variables were mean centered prior to analysis:
          gender

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Appendix 9: Explanatory Analysis Results

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 7
    Y  : successi
    X  : gender
    M  : involvem
    W  : industry

Covariates:
 age_nume firm_siz age_fami

Sample
Size:  164

Coding of categorical W variable for analysis:
 industry       W1       W2
    1.000     .000     .000
    2.000    1.000     .000
    3.000     .000    1.000

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 involvem

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
       .486       .236       .884      5.996      8.000    155.000       .000

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     5.613       .652      8.608       .000      4.325      6.902
gender        .935       .218      4.294       .000       .505      1.365
W1           -.199       .178     -1.118       .265      -.552       .153
W2            .162       .203       .797       .427      -.239       .563
Int_1       -1.201       .349     -3.441       .001     -1.891      -.512
Int_2       -1.583       .372     -4.254       .000     -2.318      -.848
age_nume     -.090       .024     -3.677       .000      -.138      -.041
firm_siz     -.096       .085     -1.131       .260      -.265       .072
age_fami     -.001       .002      -.599       .550      -.004       .002

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        gender   x        W1
 Int_2    :        gender   x        W2


Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W       .110     11.113      2.000    155.000       .000
----------
    Focal predict: gender   (X)
          Mod var: industry (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

   industry     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      1.000       .935       .218      4.294       .000       .505      1.365
      2.000      -.266       .273      -.977       .330      -.805       .272
      3.000      -.648       .302     -2.147       .033     -1.244      -.052

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/
   gender     industry   involvem   .
BEGIN DATA.
      -.470      1.000      2.674
       .530      1.000      3.609
      -.470      2.000      3.038
       .530      2.000      2.772
      -.470      3.000      3.579
       .530      3.000      2.931
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 gender   WITH     involvem BY       industry .

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 successi

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
       .748       .559      1.631     40.044      5.000    158.000       .000

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     5.291      1.034      5.117       .000      3.249      7.333
gender       -.068       .201      -.340       .734      -.465       .328
involvem    -1.152       .101    -11.400       .000     -1.352      -.953
age_nume       .023       .034       .669       .505      -.045       .091
firm_siz       .543       .114      4.768       .000       .318       .767
age_fami       .002       .002       .798       .426      -.002       .005
```

```
****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      -.068       .201      -.340       .734      -.465       .328

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
 gender      ->    involvem    ->    successi

   industry     Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
      1.000     -1.077       .289     -1.688      -.544
      2.000       .307       .291      -.264       .886
      3.000       .747       .363       .083      1.531

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):
        Index     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
W1      1.384       .412       .609      2.217
W2      1.824       .504       .924      2.910

********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

NOTE: The following variables were mean centered prior to analysis:
          gender

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

------ END MATRIX -----
```