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CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING MODEL FOR FAMILY BUSINESS SMEs IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract : *Due to differences in the purpose and mission of the family business, additional factors have to be incorporated into the existing Entrepreneurial Training Model to ensure its effectiveness for family business SMEs. This paper highlights the importance of family-related matters to be incorporated into the training design, and trainer selection. Apart from training design and trainer, this paper also highlights the trainees' learning capacity in the entrepreneurial training program. The model of Entrepreneurial Training for Family Business SMEs is conceptualized based on the Resource-Based View and the absorptive capacity theory. This paper proposed a training design that incorporates dimensions such as family tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency. This paper also proposed the importance of selecting a trainer who has the capacity training on how to deal with issues related to the family business. A family-centric trainer will enable the content of the training to be delivered effectively to trainees. With regards to absorptive capacity, this paper highlights the importance of trainee absorption i.e., trainee potential to apply the knowledge into their family business. This framework is hoped to open for more discussion on the planning and policies on designing effective entrepreneurial training for family business owners in Malaysia.*

Keyword: *Family Business, Entrepreneurial Training, Family-Orientation Concept, Absorptive Capacity*

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1. Introduction

1.1. Family Business SMEs

Family businesses have played significant role in influencing different economies or countries' economic development (Chirapanda, 2019; Lee, Lee, Chua, & Han, 2017; Sonfield, Lussier, & Sreih, 2016). In Japan for instance, Chirapanda (2019) reported that family businesses within the SMEs category provides over 70 percent of the local employment. While in developed countries like the United States (US), these businesses contribute over 50 percent of both the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment (Sreih, Lussier, & Sonfield, 2019; Sonfield et al., 2016). Whereas in Malaysia, Lee et al. (2017) highlighted the significance of family business in fueling the economic development through nurturing cross generational entrepreneurs.

Despite their significance to the economy, the sustainability of family business among SMEs is a major issue with only less than 15 percent of family businesses managed to pass through to the third generation, while merely two-third of the business survived beyond the current generation (Tang & Hussin, 2020; Ghee, Ibrahim, & Abdul-Halim, 2015; Poza, 2013). Moreover, similar to the challenges faced by other SMEs (Tehseen, Ahmed, Qureshi, Uddin, & Ramayah, 2019; Muhammad, Char, Yasoa, & Hassan, 2010), family business SMEs have to deal with other specific issues such as family relationships, conflict and rivalries among members, succession matter, and other family-related matters are attributed as strong determinants towards business failure (Tang & Hussin, 2020; Ungerer & Mienie, 2018; Mokhber, Gi Gi, Abdul Rasid, & Woon Seng, 2017; Teoh, Chong, Chong, & Ismail, 2016).

Specifically, family-related issues in the family business need to be dealt with carefully and deliberately. It is because a unique and effective way of managing conflict among family members is crucial in ensuring the survival of the family business (Sreih et al., 2019; Ungerer & Mienie, 2018). While according to Cabrera-Suarez, Garcia-Almeida, and De Saa-Perez (2018), the tacit knowledge and information possessed by the family business owner are considered the key to successor development which allow the succession process of the business to be completed. Subsequently, it helps to achieve a competitive advantage over their rivals and lead towards the favourable performance of the family business.

This paper is structured as follows. Next is the second (2^{nd}) section - the literature review. This section will discuss related work on family business problems, and important concepts in family-orientation ideas. Section 3 discusses the underlying theories to conceptualize the proposed framework. Section 4 presents the proposed entrepreneurial training model for family business SMEs, followed by section 5, suggestions for further study. Section 6 concludes the research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Family Business SMEs Problems

In the literature, there are numerous reports claimed that family business SMEs are struggling to sustain in the long run (Tang & Hussin, 2020; Ward, 2016; Ghee et al., 2015; Ibrahim, Soufani, & Lam, 2003). Ward (2016) and Ibrahim et al. (2003) detailed out the low survival rate contributed by the overlapping between both family and business system in ownership and management. Among other common challenges faced such as weak in management, lacking innovation and poor execution of business plans and strategies (Thrassou, Vrontis, & Bresciani 2018; Decker, Heinrichs, Jaskiewicz, & Rau, 2017), the failure is also attributed to the lack of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills (Tang & Hussin, 2020; Ghee et al., 2015), that affect the performance and sustainability of the family business.

This failure is despite the budget allocation and efforts put in by the government to spearhead SMEs development (Dlamini & Schutte, 2020; Zainol, Daud, Abubakar, Shaari, & Halim, 2018; Hung, Effendi, Talib, & Rani, 2011). In Malaysia for instance, a total of RM15.7 billion have been allocated for the 10-year period covering 9th and 10th Malaysian Plan (MP). This includes the implementation of various entrepreneurial training programs by various ministries and agencies such as MITI, MATRADE, SME Corp, MARA and others (Zainol et al., 2018). While, Dlamini and Schutte (2020) highlighted that the Zimbabwean government has formed an institution to help both small businesses and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) as part of the SMEs' development agenda in the country.

However, the sustainability of SMEs, specifically family business SMEs is still a major issue as there is no clear evidence on how the entrepreneurial training conducted by the government

helps to facilitate the family-related issues within the business. Instead, studies pointed out that entrepreneurial training conducted in Malaysia for instance, is rather generic which focuses on the traditional business areas like product, marketing, financial and management (Munoz, Welsh, Chan, & Raven, 2015). Besides, the training provided by the government also tend to align to specific characteristic of the industry for instance international trade, exporting and construction industry (Ali, Mohamad, & Bahador, 2018; Toh, 2018). This might leave family business SMEs vulnerable in terms of the performance and sustainability of the business with the lack of knowledge and skills managing the business (Ward, 2016; Burch, Batchelor, Burch, & Heller, 2015).

There is a lack in emphasis on the family-related issues in the training provided given that the training provided did not distinguish between family and non-family SMEs (Ward, 2016; Burch et al., 2015). Specifically, a study conducted by Burch et al. (2015) highlighted that little attention is given towards education and training activities among family business SMEs. Burch et al. (2015) posited that an emphasis on family-orientation concept which entailed five important dimensions of tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency in entrepreneurial training showed a weak link between them as the training providers neglected the family-orientation concept in the training design. Furthermore, both trainer and trainees failed to relate those elements during the training program, subsequently, the inability to absorb and apply any new knowledge (Hussin, Alias, & Ismail, 2013; Hamid & Salim, 2012). This resulted in a non-distinctive measure when separating both family and non-family SMEs as per Burch et al. (2015) claim.

2.2 Theoretical Background

2.2.1 The Current Entrepreneurial Training Framework

There are various empirical and theoretical approaches used in the past discussing and highlighting training transfer and effectiveness (Nikandrou, Brinia, & Bereri, 2009; Baldwin & Ford, 1988). For instance, Nikandrou et al. (2009) and Baldwin and Ford (1998) attributed three factors in training programs that influence performance. Studies conducted by Nikandrou et al. (2009) and Baldwin and Ford (2002) described that factor within training in the form of training design, organisational characteristics and trainee characteristics are significant towards performance (see figure 1). Nevertheless, it is important to note that these studies mainly focused on large organisations and its personnel.

However, it is argued by Burch et al. (2015) that family business requires more specific approach in terms of education, training and development. Burch et al.'s (2015) claim is seconded by many other studies specifying the needs to specific family-related training and education for family business entities (Cabrera-Suarez et al., 2018; Mokhber et al., 2017; Ward, 2016; Pounder, 2015; Peters & Buhalis, 2004). Therefore, it is essential for that the government entrepreneurial training is tailored to the targeted audiences specifically family business SMEs.

Training design is explained as program planning which includes content relevancy, goals, transfer methodology and physical setting. Nikandrou et al. (2009) argued that trainer's quality is embedded within training design to increase the likelihood of training transfer. Whilst, trainees' characteristics like motivation, self-efficacy, commitment and others are also substantial in determining the training success (Yusuf, 2011; Nikandrou et al., 2009). Furthermore, organisational characteristics which emphasize on 'learning organisation' culture, reward system and others are substantial in influencing performance (Hamid & Salim, 2010; Goh, 2002).

In this paper, three distinctive factors in entrepreneurial training in the form of training design, trainer attributes and trainees' absorption are proposed. This is based on the argument that

trainer's quality is significant and should be considered as fundamental in training (Arghode & Wang, 2016; Chukwu, 2016). Besides, past studies highlighted that trainer's qualities such as competency, credibility and empathy are positively significant towards trainees' positive learning outcome (Warren & Lessner, 2014; Yusoff, Zainol, & Ibrahim, 2014; Gauld & Miller, 2004). Chukwu (2016) expressed concern over the scarcity in addressing trainer's role in comparison with trainees' characteristics in training transfer effectiveness measure.

In the past, trainees' motivation and self-efficacy are the most common traits studied (Lee, 2020; Iqbal & Dastgeer, 2017; Yusuf, 2011; Tai, 2006). However, from the interviews with the government agencies, it is revealed that motivation is not a concern. This is due to the fact that entrepreneurs who attended the entrepreneurial training are self-voluntary and look forward to learn and seek guidance for business improvement. While, self-efficacy relates to trainees' motive to learn (Zimmerman, 2000) and one's expectancy that is claimed as a dependent unit over planning and execution process of the training (Vancouver & Kendall, 2006). As such, examining a more critical factor in measuring training causal-effect in trainees' learning absorption is substantial (Hamid & Salim, 2012).

On the other hand, the organisational characteristic is rather irrelevant to this study. This is due to the nature of family business SMEs which are mostly micro and small-sized enterprises. The nature of these group of businesses are more concerned on their daily business survival (Zainol et al., 2018; Gherhes, Williams, Vorley, & Vasconcelos, 2016). Nevertheless, the organisational characteristics such as implementation of 'learning organisation' culture, structured reward system, and many others are more relevant to large corporations (Hamid & Salim, 2010; Nikandrou et al., 2009; Goh, 2002). Thus, the institutional disproportion leads towards the factor exclusion from entrepreneurial training factors in this study framework.

In addition, due to the lack of knowledge capacity in various grounds, family business SMEs owner/s failed to address family-related issues in daily business practices (Ghee et al, 2015; McKee et al., 2014). Therefore, it is very important to revisit the current entrepreneurial training framework in order to cater the specific issues related to the family within family businesses (Burch et al., 2015). Here, the business owners could benefit from the knowledge and skills acquired from the training program which closely-related to their daily operation and reflected onto the performance of the family business subsequently.

2.2.2 Entrepreneurial Training and Family-Orientation Concept

Entrepreneurial training is defined as a tool used by the government to improve knowledge and skills possessed by the SMEs that stimulate performance (Kamarudin, 2019). Past literatures have recognised that knowledge and skills gained from entrepreneurial training and other platforms are critical drivers of family business and organisational performance (Adams & Comber, 2013; Weidenfeld, Williams & Butler, 2010).

Nevertheless, it is unfortunate though that less attention is given towards entrepreneurial training transfer among family business SMEs (Burch et al., 2015). Burch et al. (2015) posited that an emphasis on family-orientation concept in entrepreneurial training showed a weak link between them as the training providers neglected the family-orientation concept in the training design. Instead, their focus is stressed only on other business functional disciplines like accounting, finance, economics and marketing (Burch et al., 2015). Both trainer and trainees failed to relate those elements during the training program, subsequently, the inability to absorb and apply any new knowledge (Hussin et al., 2013; Hamid & Salim, 2012).

This resulted in a non-distinctive measure when separating both family and non-family SMEs (Burch et al., 2015). Although, it is undeniable that other business functional issues are crucial such as financial management, product development and marketing (Tehseen et al., 2019; Muhammad et al., 2010), family-related issues are also regarded as critical in the business success (Kidwell, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2018; Mckee, Madden, Kellermanns, 2014; Tokarczyk, Hansen, Green, & Down, 2007). Issues like members' conflict due to breach of trust, lack of commitment and loyalty, rivalries that shake both family and business stability, misappropriate conducts in family governance, weakness in succession planning and management are all impacting business performance (Kidwell et al., 2018; Ghee et al., 2015; Sundaramurthy, 2008).

From the practitioners' (family business SMEs owner/s) perspective, they should oversee these issues as alarming which could harm their business longevity (Decker et al., 2017; Eddleston & Kellermans, 2007). In addition, Gomez and Tuan (2014) asserted that dispute among family members can be the cause of the business failure. Thus, an effective management in handling conflict among family members is essential for family business (Sreih et al., 2019). Hamid and Salim (2010) also reinstated that ignorance over human resource and learning strategy including absorption capability contributed towards the failure in training transfer for businesses in Malaysia. Therefore, the move towards finding the best solution for the family-related issues are of utmost important and fundamental specifically for the family business SMEs.

Relating this to the family business SMEs and entrepreneurial training practices context, it is unfortunate to note that entrepreneurial training studies addressing family business SMEs' issues and perspectives are rather limited.

2.3 Consideration of Family Business Orientation Concept

Based on the current entrepreneurial training design, the conventional approach of emphasizing on a wide range of business functional areas are covered. This involves business functional areas such as marketing, financial, operation, product and management (Munoz et al., 2015). The conventional design is delivered along with the emphasis of 7P's marketing mix within business practices towards both product and service businesses such as product, process, packaging, promotion, place, people and physical environment (Kushwaha & Agrawal, 2015; Hashim & Hamzah, 2014).

A consideration of family-orientation concept dimensions of tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency in designing entrepreneurial training (see figure 2). These dimensions as proposed by Lumpkin, Martin, & Vaughn (2008) explained as the individual member's characteristics in regards with their perception, relation and value build upon the family and the business system. The dimensions are proposed to be included in the training provided along with other business disciplines like accounting, finance, marketing, leadership and others in viewing the business from the family business SMEs perspective.

In a study conducted by Burch et al. (2015), the proposal to include family-orientation concept could be extended by looking at the traditional training design focusing on the 7P's elements of product, promotion, process, packaging, place, people and physical environment. Efforts in enabling the family-orientation concept onto practices within family business SMEs could be linked with product, process, packaging, place and physical environment (element in 7P's). While, the interaction between business and stakeholders including family members, suppliers and customers are emphasised as people (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018).

The paradigm shift that the government could take in conducting entrepreneurial training. Specifically addressing family business SMEs' issues and concerns, the model of family-

orientation training design includes both perspectives of family and business (see figure 3). The traditional design of focusing on 7P's and business disciplines are blended together with family-orientation training design. Here, the highlight of financial, promotion, product, business planning, marketing, operation and other important elements within business are emphasized along with family-orientation for family business SMEs owner/s optimum learning (Burch et al., 2015).

2.4 Family-Orientation Concept for Training Design

Family-orientation concept for training design is defined as an individual member's perception, relation and value build upon five main dimensions of tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency (Lumpkin et al., 2008). This makes family business SMEs a unique social system where such interactions among family members could influence both family and business landscape, either leveraged as competitive advantages or stands as an obstacle that jeopardise both institutions' fate (Burch et al., 2015; Sundaramurthy, 2008).

The five dimensions of family-orientation concept namely tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency are embedded in the entrepreneurial training for family business SMEs (see table 1). These dimensions proposed by Lumpkin et al. (2008) entails a detailed description of characteristics that build upon each dimension. The featured characteristics also explain the relevance and importance of each dimension of the family-orientation concept. In this study, it is important to highlight that the five dimensions of family-orientation concept are the core element in constructing the family-orientation training design construct.

2.4.1 Tradition

Family tradition is considered a fundamental element within the family system. It includes the recognition of shared history, shared meanings, routines and rituals, legacy and roles identification (Lumpkin et al., 2008). These practices within the family serves to associate each member of the family. The positive tradition tends to persist through time and preserve family beliefs as well as preserves unique family culture, ethnic and religious (Lumpkin, Brigham, & Moss, 2010). Rooted in the family tradition are routines which is described as repeated behaviours that is acceptable while rituals signify strong affection and brings transgenerational impacts within families (Fiese, Tomcho, Douglas, Josephs, Poltrock, & Baker, 2002).

Tradition in the family is also associated with role identification and expectation within the family. For instance, the active role of parents in earning a living and upbringing their child while the reverse role of children is to obey and respect their parents, which is also linked with the concept of legacy (Lumpkin et al., 2008; Bertrand & Schoar, 2006). While, legacy is described as parental accountability and obligation in raising the children. The filial loyalty bounds the children to accommodate their lives somehow to their legacies (Lumpkin et al., 2008, p. 131). Tradition is also indicated through repetition of shared history and meanings among family members, which both the success and struggles experienced by the family were emphasized in bringing certain recognition in members of later generations (Ward, 2016; Ward, 1997).

2.4.2 Stability

Stability within the family involves homeostasis (balance in relationship), predictable interaction patterns, rule-governed and boundaries, permanence and resistance to change and sanction of unacceptable behaviours (Lumpkin et al., 2008). The balanced relationship among family members is critical to create family harmony. However, individual misconducts could be a

damaging scenario such as prolonged conflicts and also change in the family structure (Kidwell et al., 2018).

Family stability is practically preserved when there is a rule-governed and boundaries set within the family. Members of family act to certain governed-rule and boundaries which prevent them from doing what is considered unacceptable behaviours (Rodgers & White, 1993). However, lack in family and business boundaries could lead towards internal issues of authority and responsibility that complicates family social capital which could then lead towards various internal issues to the family businesses (Cruz, Firfiray, & Gomez-Mejia, 2011).

The sense of permanence is another characteristic that is sought and available in the family system. It yielded stability when interaction patterns are very much predicted and those practices in daily life provide organising principle for members to follow conveniently, thus framing assumptions within the family (Lumpkin et al., 2008).

2.4.3 Loyalty

Loyalty is another strong element within the family which involves sense of duty and obligation, sense of commitment, priority on togetherness and sense of indebtedness among family members (Lumpkin et al., 2008). High sense of commitment and duty indicates individual members' loyalty in the family that possess a strong family orientation (Joshi, 2017; Bertrand & Schoar, 2006). Besides, ethical demands of indebtedness are placed by the family towards the younger generations (children and grandchildren), whereby filial loyalty among children are expected towards their parents (Lumpkin et al.,2008).

As a social group that differs from other social institutions, family members are anticipated and expected to remain loyal to one another (Lumpkin et al., 2010). This indicates a high sense of togetherness among members and portray strong family orientation compared to those members lacking in such orientation. From the business family context, loyalty is deemed substantial and demanded from both family and non-family members in completing job-related tasks in the business (Joshi, 2017; Lumpkin et al., 2008).

2.4.4 Trust

Another important element in family orientation concept is the dimension of trust. Trust involves the element of safety and security, protection, fairness and reciprocity and trustworthiness among members (Lumpkin et al., 2008). Indeed, it is the core aspect in family business as its existence is well beyond the economic rationale and a leverage for family businesses' competitive advantage (Caldwell & Ndalamba, 2017; Sundaramurthy, 2008; Steier, 2001). Members' trust is demonstrated by willingness to fulfil others' expectation, share confidences, and working within systems of perceived fairness (Lumpkin et al., 2008, p. 133) and relationship that lies upon a shared trust, values cohesion, unity and consensus at the utmost level (Ewing, 2021; Fowers & Wenger, 1997).

Another element in the trust dimension is a sense of security whereby member's act in fulfilling their individual roles and obligations provide a sense of security among family members and create peaceful mind. Whereas, any deeds of breaching trust are potentially detrimental in family cohesion (Sundaramurthy, 2008; Barney & Hansen, 1994). In relational perspective, fairness is described as an investment and entitlements among members in the family (Lumpkin et al., 2008) while in family business context, it represents a collective view of engaging, explaining, synchronising, flexible and committed in practicing fairness throughout the business functions (Samara & Paul, 2019; Van der Heyden, Blondel, & Carlock, 2005).

2.4.5 Interdependency

Interdependency in family business involves element of reliance on one another, cohesion, closeness and emotional ties and support of family members. It is built upon emotional ties among members which leads towards closeness, eventually resulting into the idea of relying and supporting one another (Lumpkin et al., 2008). Family members are interdependent on one another in order to fulfil their basic needs, both emotional and physical needs. While in family business context, the concept of reciprocity in relationship is also applicable with family members' willingness to have strong and close support on one another in business functional tasks (Fitz-Koch & Nordqvist, 2017; Joshi, 2017; Anderson, Jack, & Drakopoulou Dodd, 2016), unlike other social structures like superior and subordinates for instance.

The concept of interdependency can be divided into two: emotional and physical (Friedman, 1991). Emotional refers to the share of joy, sorrow, triumphs as well as reliance on others for goals attainment. While physical interdependency is in sharing resources (money, house) and efforts in accomplishing the duty which is based on unrestricted manner in comparison with non-social (economic) system. While interdependency among family members (family social capital) could lead to a potential development of organisational social capital which beneficial for favourable results to the business (Matser, 2013; Carr, Cole, Ring, & Blettner, 2011)

From the family system point of view, the element of interdependency must be considerably high in order for the family system to work and any sign of resistance towards that, calls for pressures to be exerted to force the situation back to such interdependency (Lumpkin et al., 2008).

2.5 Entrepreneurial Training Factors for Family Business SMEs

Based on the discussion on contributing factors in entrepreneurial training conducted by the government, this study proposed three distinctive factors which focuses on family business SMEs. These entrepreneurial training factors specified are family-orientation training design, family-centric trainer attributes and family-centric trainee absorption. These factors are substantial in determining the effectiveness of training and yield positive results for the trainees (Adnan, Nordin, Rahman, & Noor, 2017; Chukwu, 2016; Burch et al., 2015; Hutchins, Burke, & Berthelsen, 2010). Detailed discussion on the factors mentioned are provided in the following sections.

2.5.1 Family-Orientation Training Design

Training design is reportedly essential in numerous training effectiveness literature. Studies in the past indicated that training design plays an important role in influencing performance and measuring the effectiveness of the training program conducted (Chauhan, Ghosh, Rai, & Kapoor, 2017; Yahya, Othman, & Shamsuri, 2012; Nikandrou et al., 2009; Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons, & Kavanagh, 2007). Velada et al. (2007) posited that the design of the training is very crucial and works as an accelerator towards the likelihood of training transfer. Therefore, family-orientation training design in this study is operationalised as a structure of construct presented during entrepreneurial training (Botha et al., 2007) which includes family-orientation essence of tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency during the learning process.

Burch et al. (2015) specified that considering the family-orientation dimensions like tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency in the process of conducting training, helps in integrating the right practices in owning and managing operation, resources and marketing development (Intihar & Pollack, 2012; Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Besides, it is believed that family

orientation is very much affected by family members' purpose, involvement and vision in the business (Lumpkin et al., 2008).

Furthermore, from the entrepreneurial training perspective, training-needs analysis helps the government agencies to look upon this matter from the perspective of family business practitioners who often struggles with family-related issues that leads towards unfavourable business outcomes and discontinuity (Kidwell et al., 2018; McKee et al., 2014). For instance, a study revealed that family stability helps *Noor Arfa Batik*, a Malaysian local family business SME to plan for their business succession for the future (Latip, 2012). Indeed, businesses are unable to move forward and go for such extent should there be issues like conflicts and rivalries among family members in the business (Cruz et al., 2011).

The inclusion of family-orientation dimensions could act as a counter-measure towards family business SMEs' failure due to reconciliation issue of interpersonal, financial and operational between business and family (Teoh et al., 2016; Sexton & Barret, 2003). When there is a high sense of commitment as well as sense of duty and obligation among family members, the reconciliation of family and business resources issue are rested well (Joshi, 2017; Bertrand & Schoar, 2006). Subsequently, family businesses could strive forward with an agenda of expansion and growth (Latip, 2012).

2.5.2 Family-Centric Trainer Attributes

The trainer is expected to deliver training that enhance trainees' skills and change in behaviour resulting in both improved individual and business performance (Chukwu, 2016). Family-centric trainer attributes is defined as a quality or feature possessed by a trainer in delivering the content of training to the owners of family business SME (Gauld & Miller, 2004). Indeed, it is necessary for the trainers to equip themselves with certain quality and dispositions which help in reaching the significant return of training investment (Galbraith, 1998).

The trainer is expected to use his or her quality attributes (Yusoff, et al., 2014; Hassi, Storti, & Azennoud, 2011; Joshi, Sarker, & Sarker, 2007) including the family-orientation concept in delivering his or her transfer of knowledge. Inculcating good traditions in family such as routines and formalities, members' role identification and appreciation of the family legacy (Lumpkin et al., 2008; Fiese et al., 2002) could be emphasized as the strength of the family business. In addition, the implication of inappropriate conducts in business such as members' promotion regardless of competency as the practice of family tradition or any deed which could breach members' trust also needs to be stressed on for trainees' attention (Kidwell et al., 2018; Eddleston & Kidwell, 2012, Sundaramurthy, 2008).

It is clear that entrepreneurial training activities are measured by the outcomes thus, trainer competency in realising such goal is critical (Gauld & Miller, 2004). Competency describing how good a trainer is and it brings a significant meaning of underlying characteristics of the trainer who could demonstrate measurable results (Gauld & Miller, 2004; Boyatzis, 1982). As such, trainer's competency in having a clear idea of how family-orientation dimensions (tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency) were embedded in the business are fundamental in order to achieve desirable result.

From there, the trainer could fine tune the critical information onto the best way it can be presented in order to highlight family orientation dimensions' importance to the trainees (family business SMEs owner/s) (Chukwu, 2016). The trainer's method of deliveries helps in assists family business SMEs owner/s realising the significance of family orientation dimensions subsequently achieving the training objectives (Chukwu, 2016; Cheng, Wai, & Mahmood, 2009). For instance,

the use of case study and role play enables the owner/s to realise and appreciate the element of interdependency among family members and started to have a good view over it (Anderson et al., 2016; Lumpkin et al., 2008).

Credibility is another attribute deemed important to be possessed by a trainer. The trainer who is perceived as credible is described as being trustworthy, reliable and dependable over the subject matter (Hassi et al., 2011; Joshi, et al., 2007). Hassi et al. (2011) asserted that the trainers are perceived as trustworthy and reliable when he or she portrayed to be knowledgeable over the subject matter and able to communicate the knowledge effectively. In addition, Joshi et al. (2007) reflects trustworthiness as the beliefs that trainees have towards trainer's reliability and able to fulfil its obligation well. In addition, Tam, Bierstaker and Seol (2006) asserted that the knowledge delivered is better organized thus lead towards trainees' better performance.

Family business SME owners are managing not only business functional areas such as management, marketing and finance, but also dealing with family-related matters including family members' relationship, succession issue and family commitment (Ghee et al., 2015; Ibrahim et al., 2003). Therefore, the trainer of the training courses is required to portray that he or she is well equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to discuss family business issues accordingly. The trainers could highlight the significance of family values such as tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency (Burch et al., 2015; Lumpkin et al., 2008) as the businesses' strength and opportunity to overcome the challenges faced in the business.

Dealing with family business SMEs owner/s with family-related issues, requires a high level of empathy among trainers. Indeed, it is claimed as the most crucial attribute to be possessed by a trainer (Warren & Lessner, 2014). According to Davis (2018), empathy is an act of acknowledging and acquiring insights, showing concerns and responding to the needs of participants based on an interpretation of their immediate needs sufficiently. Empathy is also crucial in discussing family-orientation dimension, for instance, the element of fairness and trust within family businesses, as it can be a sensitive issue to a certain extent for family business owner/s (Van der Hayden et al., 2005).

Moreover, the existence of empathy in trainer is needed to justify the fairness and reciprocity element within family business SMEs. Such quality is important in observing the business' collective approaches throughout functional areas such as marketing, finance, management and others. One such, method is called perspective taking where the trainers placed themselves in the shoes of the trainee, imagining life including business from participants' perspective that shape his or her current state of life and business (Warren & Lessner, 2014).

2.5.3 Family-Orientation Trainee Absorption

Trainees' ability in absorbing the knowledge and learning is the third factor of entrepreneurial training that should be considered. The definition of family-centric trainee absorption is described as the ability to identify, assimilate, and exploit knowledge relating to the family-related matters in the business from the learning avenues (Cohen & Levinthal, 1989, p.589).

The knowledge absorption is further categorised into two, namely, potential absorptive capacity (PAC) and realized absorptive capacity (RAC). PAC is defined as the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge that could be useful for the business (Zahra & George, 2002). It involves the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by the business, and requires certain appreciation for assimilation from the businesses (Hamid & Salim, 2012). While RAC refers to the transformation and exploitation of knowledge gained for the business (Zahra & George, 2002). Transformation capacity involves the process of blending new knowledge acquired with one that is in existence,

while exploitation capacity is deemed as business capacity to put on the acquired or transformed knowledge into operational practices (Kamal & Flanagan, 2012; Zahra & George, 2002).

Indeed, trainees' learning absorption is critical in evaluating training effectiveness in a learning initiative and various studies highlighted its importance (Adnan et al., 2017; Hutchins, 2009). Hamid and Salim (2012) raised concern over training activities which should stress on trainees' ability to gauge the knowledge and skills conveyed. With the presence of specific family-orientation training design tailor-suit to family business owner/s (Burch et al., 2015), SME businesses' ability to absorb and utilise the knowledge is the key towards successful business practices and performance (Adnan et al., 2017; De Massis, Frattini, & Lichtenthaler, 2013; Gray, 2006).

The inclusion of family-orientation concept offers family business SMEs owner/s a huge realisation in their learning absorption. The owner/s are able to realise the needs to distinguish business activities from family activities and avoid any misappropriation of the business resources (Andersen, 2015; Sexton & Barret, 2003). Chen and Hsu (2009) also stressed the impact on the business over the misutilisation of resources which should not put the trust from other family members in jeopardy due to such unethical conducts (Sundaramurthy, 2008).

Without purposeful training design with the dimensions of family orientation deliberately included (Burch et al., 2015; Lumpkin et al., 2008), the application of effective business practices such as succession planning and social capital management are hardly seen and materialised within family business SMEs (Kidwell et al., 2018; Arregle, Hitt, Sirmon, & Very, 2007). It happens when the owners are unable to grasp intrinsic family business knowledge and skills in implementing effective practices in the business which then translated into positive performance in the business.

2.6 The Linkage Entrepreneurial Training Factors and Family-Business SMEs Performance

Entrepreneurial training acts as a tool in elevating knowledge and skills among SMEs which could stimulate performance (Kamarudin, 2019). Indeed, factors within entrepreneurial training are crucial in determining the effectiveness of the training program conducted. Factors like training design, trainer attributes and trainee absorption capacity are reportedly significant in influencing positive performance of the business (Adnan et al., 2017; Chukwu, 2016; Raven & Le, 2015; Nikandrou et al., 2009).

According to Raven and Le (2015), entrepreneurial training can be very effective which help the trainees to achieve positive performance in business. However, the delivery methods of training are inevitably needed to be aligned to the needs of the trainees. In the same vein, Nikandrou et al. (2009) asserted that training specifically designed to address the needs of the trainees is beneficial to realize a positive outcome both in individual and business. Indeed, Burch et al. (2015) proposed training for family business SMEs to incorporate the family-orientation concept is needed and a proper grasp by the owner prior to the application of the knowledge gained into the business for a favourable result eventually.

Besides, the trainers possess an important role in enhancing trainees' knowledge and skills while changing their behaviour resulting in both improved individual and business performance (Chukwu, 2016). It is a manifestation of effective communication upon delivering the training through the quality possessed by the trainers (Warren & Lessner, 2014; Yusoff et al., 2014; Gauld & Miller, 2004). The process of acquiring and assimilating the delivered knowledge and information is rather easier thus lead towards better application into the business. This is supported

by Tam et al. (2006) which claimed that the knowledge delivered by a good trainer allows better organisation of the knowledge thus leading towards trainees' better performance.

The businesses' ability to absorb and utilise the knowledge gained is vital in realizing successful business practices and performance (Adnan et al., 2017). The high level of absorptive capacity possessed by the business is certainly a useful resource in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). It allows for a better execution and application for instance of the new knowledge relating to technology (Adnan et al., 2017). It is clear that the ability of the business to acquire, assimilate the knowledge gained allow for a better transformation and exploitation, thus reducing the unapplied knowledge conveyed during the training (Hutchins, 2009; Berk, 2008). Most importantly, the knowledge gained is able to lead the business towards positive performance, both individual and business.

Knowledge is considered as an important strategic resource to an organisation including family business SMEs and can be leveraged by the organisation to gain competitive advantages (Cabrera-Suarez et al., 2018; Tapies & Fernandez Moya, 2012; Barney, 1991). In family business, knowledge possess by the owners are considered tacit and valuable. Therefore, it is important for the knowledge and skills to be transferred to the successor effectively (Cabrera-Suarez et al., 2018). The tacit knowledge is best absorbed when there is a process of acquiring and assimilation (Andersen, 2015; Zahra & George, 2002). It is followed by the process of transformation and exploitation of the knowledge in the business practices application for instance implementing effective succession planning in the family business. This is helpful in strengthening the predecessor-successor relationship besides increase in commitment and motivation of the successor over the family business (Woodfield & Husted, 2017; Chien, 2014).

3.0 Underpinning Theory

3.1 The Resource-Based View Theory (RBV)

As mentioned, RBV is used as one of the underpinning theories in this paper and acts as a canvas theory to underpin the whole framework. Barney (1991) suggested that businesses that aim to achieve sustainable competitive advantage must leverage on their resources. Business resources could be explained as all type of resources possessed including assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, and others. Barney (1991) added that these resources are controlled by the business which enable them to plan and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

In this paper, all of the proposed variables are considered as resources which could be exploited by the business in gaining competitive advantage. Furthermore, the variables could be categorised into different type of resources as per claimed by Barney (1991). The entrepreneurial training factors, namely, family-orientation training design, family-centric trainer attributes and family-centric trainee absorption are considered as a pool of knowledge resource for family business. In addition, the trainee absorption factor can also be considered as the capability possessed by the owners in in driving the business forward.

Describing the theory in relation to family businesses context, Tapies and Fernandez Moya (2012) highlighted that the RBV theory is identified as a useful framework in explaining competitive advantage of family business. This is further supported by Tokarczyk et al. (2007) who claimed that family businesses have distinct capabilities that provide a competitive advantage due to the "tacitness" in their resources. Specifically, family-orientation concept in this study comprising five dimensions of tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency are intangible

family resources which can be used as their source of strength and leveraging them for family business SMEs advantage (Lumpkin et al., 2008).

Entrepreneurial training is a tool used for entrepreneurs including family business SMEs to elevate their knowledge and skills (Kamarudin, 2019). The training factors which specifically designed with the family-oriented formulation, trainers whom have quality in understanding and tackling family-related issues and trainees' learning ability with a family-centric specified and in accordance to family-orientation concept are beneficial. The benefits from the tailor-suit factors for family business SMEs' needs could be translated into useful resources in the form of knowledge and skills which could be applied effectively. Therefore, the entrepreneurial training factors namely family-orientation training design, family-centric trainer attributes and family-centric trainee absorption fall under capability resources as per Barney's (1991) description.

3.2 The Absorptive Capacity Theory

The RBV theory is explained as the key resources possessed by the family businesses which can be exploited to gain competitive advantage over their competitors (Barney, 1991). However, RBV did not fully explain how the resources gained and applied for instance, knowledge and skills gained from the training is translated to obtain good business performance. Therefore, the absorptive capacity theory is used to develop the framework as it explains in details how the knowledge and skills gained (acquisition and assimilation) and applied (transformation and exploitation) for the benefits of the family business. It is used together in this study to complement the RBV theory specifically from the knowledge management perspective (Andersen, 2015; Zahra & George, 2002; Cohen & Levinthal, 1989).

The absorptive capacity theory is the capacity to absorb knowledge from the entrepreneurial training programs (Andersen, 2015). The capacity to absorb knowledge could be further detailed in two categories, first, potential absorptive capacity (PAC) and second, realized absorptive capacity (RAC) (Zahra & George, 2002). PAC is explained as the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge, while RAC is described as the transformation and exploitation of knowledge gained for the business (Zahra & George, 2002). In this study, the entrepreneurial training factors could be categorised under PAC.

Family business SMEs have the capacity to acquire, assimilate, transform and exploit knowledge and skills gained particularly from entrepreneurial training conducted by the government. The training which is designed specifically to cater to family businesses concerned, the trainers with the right quality as well as the absorption ability among the family businesses are the combined factors in training (Davis, 2018; Burch et al., 2015; Hassi et al., 2011). The training allows the family business SMEs to acquire and assimilate the knowledge and skills from the training program. The learning gained and assimilated (entrepreneurial training factors) are then transformed and exploited in the businesses' practices by the family businesses which is translated in the outcome (family business performance).

4.0 The Entrepreneurial Training Model for Family Business SMEs

4.1 The Proposed Framework

Based on the discussion above, this paper proposed three significant factors within entrepreneurial training in influencing the performance of family business SMEs. They are family-orientation training design, family-centric trainer attributes and family-centric trainee absorption. The schematic diagram of the proposed framework of entrepreneurial training for family business SMEs (see figure 4).

Training design that caters particular needs of the participants is essential in the training where it plays a significant role in influencing performance and indicating the effectiveness of the training program conducted (Chauhan et al., 2017; Yahya et al., 2012; Nikandrou et al., 2009). The inclusion of family-related matter namely, tradition, stability, loyalty, trust and interdependency in the design of the training helps in integrating the right mindset and attitude among members in the family (Burch et al., 2015; Intihar & Pollack, 2012; Lumpkin et al., 2008). Such incorporation could result into favourable practices thus, reflected in the positive performance of the business.

The trainer played a vital role in delivering the training content to the trainees (Arghode & Wang, 2016; Warren & Lessner, 2014). Most importantly, the quality possessed by the trainer is able to move the trainees in changing their behaviour resulting in both improved individual and business performance (Chukwu, 2016; Ward, 2016; Hassi et al., 2011; Tam et al., 2006). Tam et al. (2006) asserted that the knowledge delivered by a good trainer allows better organization of the knowledge thus lead towards trainees' better performance. From the family business perspective, it is even more crucial for trainers to have the necessary attributes that could lead to family business SMEs performance (Ward, 2016).

On the other hand, trainees' learning absorption is significant in every training program. Past studies claimed that besides being useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, most importantly the trainees' ability trainees to absorb and apply the knowledge gained from the training is essential (Cabrera-Suarez et al., 2018; Adnan et al., 2017; De Massis et al., 2013). The ability of the family businesses to acquire, assimilate, transform and exploit the learning obtained for the training certainly brings positive impact on the business practices, subsequently the performance (Adnan et al., 2017; Kamal & Flanagan, 2012). Cabrera-Suarez et al. (2018) asserted that the distinctive knowledge and skills possessed the family business owners are critical in shaping the successor properly which gives an added advantage over their rivals and lead towards positive performance of the family business.

5. Future Research

Based on the proposed framework of entrepreneurial training specifically for family business SMEs, this paper opens up opportunities for future research. First, studies on the determining factors of entrepreneurial training can be conducted among family business SMEs. Thus, a clear comparison on the importance of the proposed framework between family and non-family business SMEs could be depicted for a greater acceptance in both academic and practical world. Ideally, studies on this framework could invites a constructive discussion and consideration among practitioners including the government agencies whom conducting the entrepreneurial training.

Both cross-sectional and longitudinal study could be employed which aims to derive a causal inference for variables measured in this study. This allows greater understanding of the factors of entrepreneurial training, namely, training design, trainer attributes and trainee absorption over two different times. The cross-sectional study could measure the family business SMEs development at one point of time, while longitudinal study could monitor the continuity of respondents' responses and detect any changes and trend throughout a longer study time frame. Hence, more information could be gathered as the family business SMEs going through different stages of growth and development.

In addition, since the definition of family business is largely varied among scholars, the methodology of this study could be tackled from different set of definitions. For instance, study can be conducted from the lens of generational transfer (Ward, 1987), or family behaviour (Chua,

Chrisman, & Sharma, 1999), or family embeddedness (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) or ownership (Barontini & Caprio, 2006) and/or family involvement (Intihar & Pollack, 2012). Therefore, a wider conclusion could be made when specific trends are identified in accordance to different definition of family business.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, it is presented the evidence that reveals the challenges and issues faced by the owners of family business SMEs dealing with various issues relating to the family matters. In fact, these challenges make the business vulnerable in terms of the performance and sustainability of the business beyond the current generation with the lack of knowledge and skills managing the business (Ward, 2016; Burch et al, 2015). Possibly the most important part is the realization that in a family business is the existence of overlapping system of family and business which require a unique way in the process of training and development of the family businesses (Burch et al., 2015). Although the government entrepreneurial training has often been the subject of interest, it is always viewed from a non-family business SMEs perspective without considering family-related matters concretely. Comparatively, family business SMEs studies in some parts of the world are still understudied as researchers are focusing their efforts mostly on succession planning issues.

The discussion brings the significance of family-orientation concepts to be integrated in the design of the entrepreneurial training conducted by the government. The representation of how the five dimensions in the family-orientation concept namely, tradition, loyalty, stability and interdependency were exemplified clearly in influencing both the practices and the performance of the family business SMEs. In addition, trainers who are able to comprehend family businesses' issues and challenges are crucial in influencing the performance and the quality like competency, credibility and empathy could lead the owners of family businesses a step closer towards positive performance. While the family businesses' ability to absorb and exploit the knowledge gained is the key in realizing successful business practices and performance. Therefore, the proposed framework of entrepreneurial training to family business SMEs are to emphasize on training design, trainer attributes and trainer absorption factors.

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Table

Table 1: *Dimension of Family Orientations*

Dimension	Characteristics
Tradition	Role identification
	Rituals and routines
	Shared history
	Shared meaning
	Legacy
Stability	Homeostasis
	Predictable interaction patterns
	Rule-governed, boundaries
	Permanence, resistance to change
	Sanction of duty and obligation
Loyalty	Sense of duty and obligation
	Sense of commitment
	Priority on togetherness
	Sense of indebtedness
Trust	Safety, security
	Protection
	Fairness, reciprocity
	Trustworthiness
Interdependency	Reliance on one another
	Cohesion
	Closeness, emotional ties
	Support of family members

Source: *Lumpkin et al. (2008)*

Figure

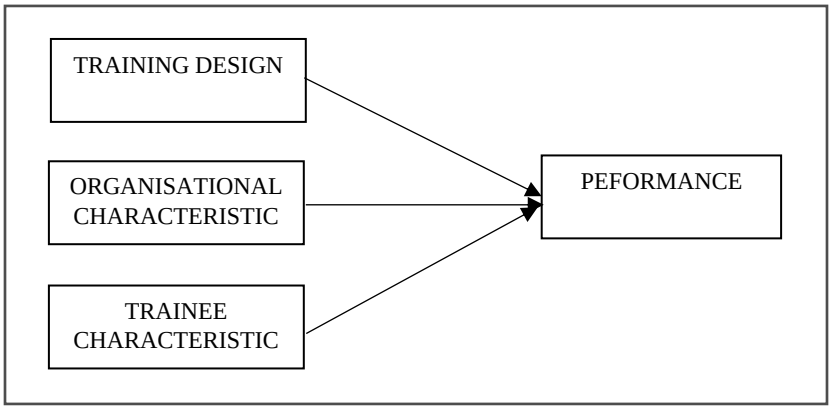

Figure 1: *Training Transfer Framework*

Source*: Nikandrou et al. (2009), and Baldwin & Ford (1988)*

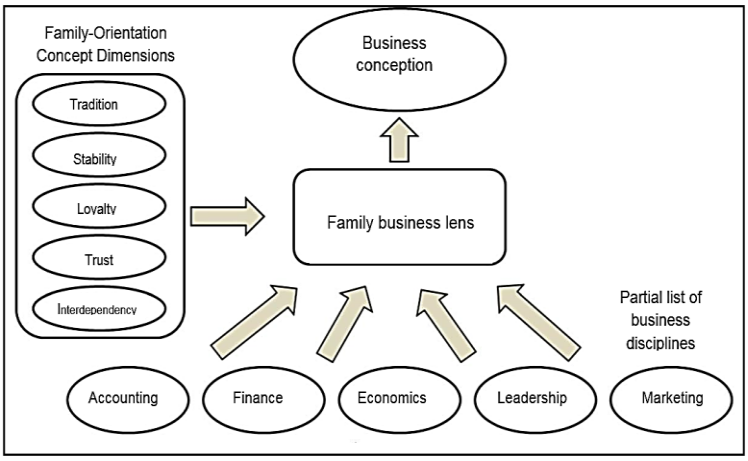

Figure 2: *Family Business Orientation Conception*

Source: *Burch et al. (2015)*

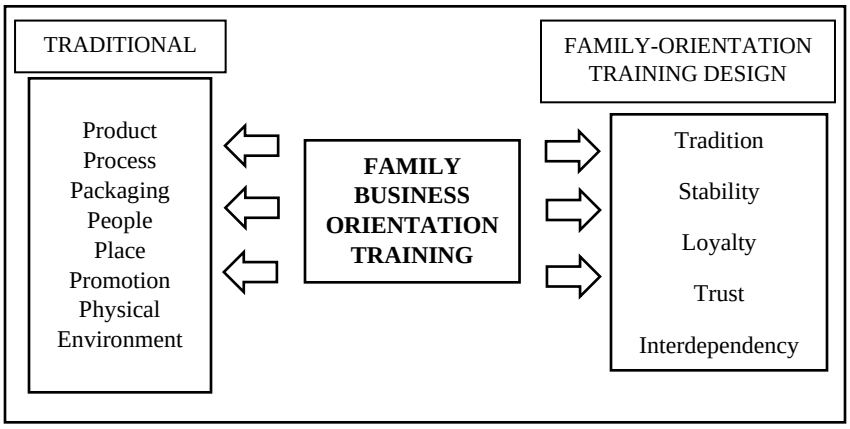

Figure 2: *Model of Family Business Orientation Training Design*

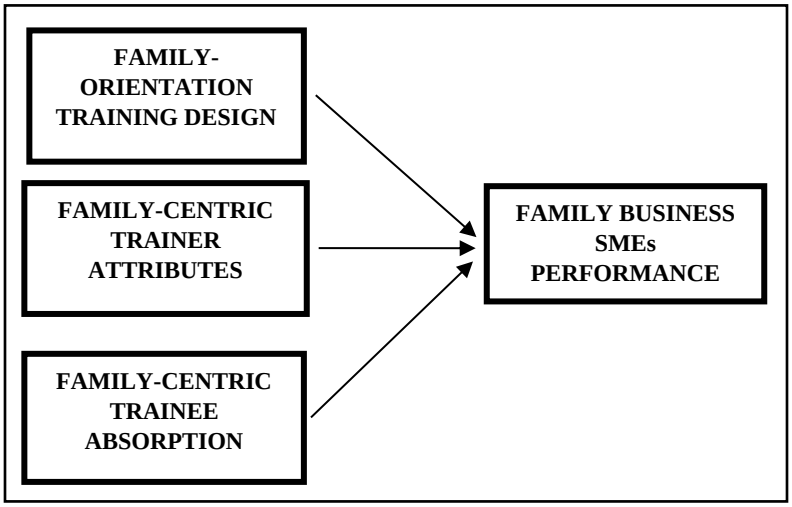

Figure 4: *Schematic Diagram of Proposed Research Framework*