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Family Culture, Value Systems, and Governance in Cebu-Based Family Enterprises: Developing a Framework for a Family Constitution

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ABSTRACT

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Family enterprises are a prominent business structure worldwide, significantly contributing to a country's economic growth. This business is deeply rooted in family values, norms, traditions, and culture, which influence how the business evolves. This descriptive-correlational study investigated how family culture and value system factors were manifested, acknowledged, and implemented among Cebu-based family enterprises that participated in the study. The study also analyzed further how these factors predict family governance performed by the respondents. A total of sixty (60) family business owners participated in answering the survey questionnaire, aiming to address all the study's inquiries.

A weighted mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression analysis were employed in the study. The study found that family culture and value systems were generally manifested, acknowledged, and implemented, as perceived by the respondents. Further study analysis indicated that family culture and value systems are significant predictors of family governance. This finding suggests that initiatives to enhance family culture and value systems could effectively mitigate challenges associated with strengthening governance within family businesses. Consequently, the study concludes that the reinforcement of effective governance in family enterprises is most successfully achieved through a focus on cultural alignment, strategic clarity, and inclusive leadership. In the end, the study developed a family constitution framework that serves as the foundation for fostering a harmonized relationship in a family business.

INTRODUCTION

Family businesses are among the most enduring and influential forms of enterprise globally, with many serving as key contributors to national economies. A family enterprise is a business owned and run by family members, which can be passed down through generations. These businesses play a vital economic role in various sectors, including retail, agriculture, manufacturing, and services (Nyabakora, 2024). A prominent feature of family enterprises is that family members are involved in decision-making and daily operations, reflecting the family's values and long-term goals (He, 2023). Unlike publicly traded companies, which often prioritize quick profits, family businesses focus on sustainability, stability, and preserving their legacy (Idris et al., 2025). In addition, business is usually viewed as an extension of the family, with values such as trust, loyalty, diligent effort, and a commitment to legacy playing a significant role in shaping the company's culture and strategic direction. The interaction between family values and business practices is a crucial aspect of family-owned businesses, impacting factors such as governance, growth, succession, and legacy. The success of family businesses tends to increase when professional support is involved and company policies are developed around fundamental values (Rochimat et al., 2023). Thus, having good and positive family values becomes crucial in governing a family enterprise (Tessema et al., 2024).

Multiple recent studies have shown an increasing success rate for family-owned businesses worldwide. A study found that among all companies listed in the Fortune 500, 118 are family-owned and based in the United States (Ernst & Young, 2023). In collaboration with the University of St. Gallen, they also revealed that the world's largest 500 family firms are growing at twice the rate of advanced economies and 1.5 times that of emerging markets. While the U.S. has 118 firms, most companies in the Index are headquartered in Europe, with 16% from the Asia-Pacific and 30% from North America. According to the United States Bureau of the Census, approximately 90% of American firms are family-owned or controlled. In Southeast Asia, family-owned businesses play a significant role in the economic landscape. According to a study by Uy (2020), these enterprises constitute approximately 65% of all publicly listed companies across the region. This statistic highlights the significant contribution of family-run ventures to the market. It highlights their significance in driving economic growth, generating job opportunities, and shaping the broader business landscape in Southeast Asia. Moreover, Fernandez & Leroy (2023) believed that family businesses may lag behind non-family firms in innovation and job creation, particularly in international settings. However, they demonstrate strengths in early business creation and adopting digital platforms for a specific service.

In the Philippines, 80% of enterprises are owned and controlled by families. According to a Credit Suisse Research Institute analysis, family-owned businesses continue to dominate the Philippine economic scene, with the country placing 11th globally in terms of the number of family-run organizations (P & A Grant Thornton, 2019). These businesses, whose ownership may already be distributed, still bear the founding family's name. They would include Ayala Corporation (Ayala family), Metrobank (George Sy Family), ABS-CBN and Meralco (Lopez family), J.G. Summit Holdings (Gokongwei family), and SM Prime Holdings (Henry Sy family). Even though these companies are publicly traded and ownership may include non-family shareholders, each family nonetheless exerts significant influence over these businesses because a family member holds the position of CEO. Moreover, other family members are also company officers or members of the board of directors (Liu et al., 2024).

In the Philippine context, particularly in Cebu, family enterprises form a substantial portion of the business landscape, ranging from small ventures to large, multi-generational corporations. These enterprises are economic entities deeply embedded in cultural and familial dynamics that shape decision-making, leadership, and governance. Also, in the Province of Cebu, Philippines, many businesses are family-owned, playing a crucial role in the local economy; however, there is an apparent absence of detailed data and academic studies regarding the structure and governance of these enterprises, especially concerning the impact of family culture and values, which brings forth significant inquiries about how these elements affect their sustainability, continuity across generations, and enduring success in a fast-changing business environment.

With that in mind, the study investigates how family culture and value systems shape governance in family-owned businesses, primarily aiming to establish a detailed and practical framework for a family constitution. This study provides a valuable resource for addressing the complex and multifaceted issues and challenges commonly faced by family-owned businesses, including succession planning, conflict resolution, establishing effective governance structures, and aligning family values with business objectives.

FRAMEWORK

This study is primarily grounded in the Bowen Theory, developed by Murray Bowen, a psychiatrist and family therapist who was influential in the development of family therapy in the mid-20th century. His idea employed the family as the unit of analysis rather than the individual because he thought the notions he developed might be extended to work in systems (Bowen, 1978). Bowen developed eight interrelated concepts to describe human behavior: differentiation of self, the triangle, nuclear family emotional process, family projection, multigenerational transmission, sibling position, emotional cutoff, and emotional process in society (Moss, 2024).

As an essential component of the emotional process in society, communication plays a vital role in ensuring that neither the firm nor the family will implode when unavoidable crises arise (Harvard Business Review, 2020). Family communication styles vary widely and are influenced by several factors, including cultural background, individual personalities, family structure, past experiences, and societal expectations. Additionally, these patterns affect how well families function (Carter et al., 2019). According to Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1993), there are four types of families based on their degree of compliance orientation and conversation orientation: consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire (Liu et al., 2024). They proposed that these categories could help explain family socialization and communication patterns. First, there are high levels of both dialogue and compliance orientations in consensual households. Consensual families maintain family hierarchy while promoting communication.

In this family structure, authority figures, such as parents or elders, are respected and hold primary decision-making authority. Assent and tolerance coexist in consensual households (Gupta et al., 2024). Family members are encouraged to express their ideas, concerns, and feelings openly, and these communications are received with acceptance and support. Second, pluralistic households have a high level of communication and a low level of uniformity. There is considerable interaction and decision-making among family members in this type of family (Geurtzen & Wilkinson, 2024). Parents usually encourage their children to think for themselves and make decisions. It also emphasizes that families with higher differentiation allow more open communication, respect for individuality, and emotional regulation. Third, protective families are characterized by low discussion but high conformity. These families place a premium on parental authority and their children's compliance. Because the parents are authoritative characters, these families rarely have conflicts (Wang et al., 2022). Lastly, lower conformity and conversation orientations are found in laissez-faire homes. Laissez-faire family members often fail to communicate with one another. Families that practice laissez-faire have the least interaction among their members (Sawitri et al., 2024). Rather than being influenced by their parents, children are more likely to be influenced by their peers. Physical separation, divorce, or both may be attributed to these factors (Seesawang et al., 2024).

Decision-making is the standard variable in multigenerational transmission, family projection, and triangle (Ashfaq, 2024; Hall, 2024). All family members place a high value on decisions that will shape the company's direction. The following are several options for making these choices: the first is autocratic decision-making. Autocratic decision-making, where a single person, such as a father, makes decisions, is the quickest and most straightforward approach to decision-making (Marie et al. 2024). However, the absence of ownership of the choice by the parties concerned is a significant drawback. People tend to support and feel ownership over their decisions (Doyle & Brubaker, 2024; Juel et al., 2024). On the other hand, they have little ownership over judgments made by others. The autocratic approach is practical for decisions where individual participants are not obligated to contribute or when a swift decision is required (Kaur, 2024; Yousaf & ul Ain, 2024).

The second is democratic decision-making. The democratic approach to decision-making is defined by the phrase "Let us vote." The majority triumphs over the minority (Wiązek, 2022). This approach is beneficial for making decisions in large groups, whereas other methods are more suitable for small groups. However, this approach can sometimes create rifts within the family. For instance, when decisions are determined by majority vote, the interests of the minority may be overlooked or ignored. Consequently, those who disagree with the outcome might feel unheard, unhappy, or resentful. This feeling of exclusion can result in increased tension, decreased collaboration, and, in some instances, active resistance or disruption of the collective decision-making process.

The third is consensus decision-making. Consensus building is based on the idea that opponents naturally gravitate toward your solution when they are provided with accurate information (Cheng, 2022). Consensus building is most effective when facts are utilized to list the benefits and drawbacks of a decision. However, many decisions are based on attitudes, perceptions, and emotions rather than facts (Chao et al., 2022). Last is collaborative decision-making. Collaboration is a procedure. Collaboration brings all parties together to constructively explore their differences in search of answers beyond their perspectives. No single position is sacrificed at the price of another. This is often referred to as “brainstorming.” Although collaborative decision-making takes the most time, it is usually the preferred method for making significant corporate decisions (Badmus et al., 2024; Hao, 2024; Mack et al., 2024).

Moreover, the concept of self-differentiation is best expressed in the roles that each family member has to carry out as they fulfill their obligations within the family enterprise (Wang et al., 2022). Clear role definitions establish responsibilities, clarify expectations, and guarantee that essential tasks and emotional needs are addressed. Nevertheless, roles can become an issue when they are overly strict or oppressive. Rigid roles may hinder personal development, lead to frustration, and prevent individuals from adapting to changing circumstances or requirements. For example, a family board member was perceived as a “challenger” on the board, regularly questioning the founder’s and management’s decisions. Later, when this board member attempted to play the “peacemaker” role within the family structure, he was trapped in the “challenger” role and the expectations that came with it because board members could not change their opinion of him. Within relationships, four distinct sets of roles are constantly and continuously engaged. The four sets form the relationship strata.

The outer roles are associated with external function. Outer roles in organizations are typically defined by job descriptions, such as those of CEO, CFO, and others (Xu et al., 2022). For successful operation, organizations rely on the quality of their external responsibilities (Lutfi et al., 2022). In family-run enterprises, external roles are equally crucial for ensuring efficient operations and long-lasting viability. The effectiveness and clarity with which individuals undertake their external roles significantly impact the organizational efficiency and the ability of family businesses to thrive across generations. The inner roles are associated with internal and emotional functions. We are often unaware of them: initiator, devil’s advocate, disturber, and peacemaker, among others. Inner roles may have little to do with an individual’s official work description but may be deeply ingrained in their character and personality (Goffman, 2023). They can have a significant impact on relationships. Individuals are not a single entity but a collection of selves (Mead, 2023). Recognizing inner roles can facilitate smoother interactions in groups and relationships by promoting a deeper understanding and greater emotional awareness.

Secret or hidden roles form a layer beneath our inner roles and are often closely linked to our true character and private facets of identity. These roles encompass deep, sometimes subconscious aspects of who we are, mirroring alternative selves or identities that may not surface daily. Secret roles are profound components of one's personality. Secret selves are alternative identities that exist within us (Ibarra, 2023). They can involve concealed aspirations, anxieties, or ambitions that influence how a person acts or responds in specific situations, even if they do not overtly express those feelings. When people are triggered, their hidden selves can emerge: our regular adult coping skills vanish, replaced by the secret self that rushes to the surface (James, 2022). The final set of roles in family business dynamics is the ghost role.

Ghost roles are intangible and reflect third-party influences that, although not visibly present, still significantly impact the emotional interactions within a group or family. These roles can manifest in subtle ways, such as through former family members, unresolved conflicts, or external pressures that persist in shaping the atmosphere even after those involved have departed. In the context of a family business, a "ghost" could be the memory of a late founder who is still remembered and felt throughout the organization (Colas & Souchaud, 2024). It could also be a son who left the company due to frustration, but whose absence ("ghost") is still felt on the board. These roles can be helpful or harmful and may need modification as symptoms arise (El Agamy et al., 2011).

Meanwhile, the purposes and tasks of family governance can be broadly characterized as social, educational, and formal. In a family business, social capital is the glue that holds family members together, fostering their shared interest in the family business (Sorenson & Milbrandt, 2023). This collective trust and feeling of belonging enable family members to focus on the business's long-term well-being rather than personal gains, minimize disputes, and work through difficulties together more effectively. By promoting transparent communication, fidelity, and a deep-rooted connection to the business, social capital guarantees that the family business is a source of income and a heritage that brings generations together. When it is strong, there is a sense of friendliness, loyalty, trust, and mutual respect inside the family (Virk et al., 2024). However, this emotional tie gradually weakens when a family grows and its members separate to pursue different lifestyles and careers. Given this reality, effective family governance can foster collaborative involvement that keeps the family together (Rondi et al., 2022). Furthermore, these governance structures facilitate collaboration, promote transparency, and uphold a unified vision for the organization. Involving family members in decision-making and updating them about the business fosters engagement, develops a joint sense of accountability, and strengthens emotional connections across generations. Families with businesses in their lives are likely to gain some knowledge about them. This can be planned as part of family governance to foster interest and understanding of the business, particularly among those who may one day inherit future ownership or choose to work for the family business. In terms of formal goal, a family may wish to participate in some governance concerns that may affect the family, such as developing the following policies that will affect family members: Employment, the process by which family members can become employees, as well as their salary and career management; Confidentiality, a policy to remind or require family members not to reveal any information received in connection with the enterprise that is not otherwise in the public domain; and Media and Personal Relations, it will be beneficial to have a policy for media engagement if a family is worried about how the actions of the owners, the business, and the more prominent family may damage the reputation of others. This could include a requirement that the extended family be informed of the PR release by the company, preferably in advance, so that they are aware of what is happening rather than learning about it through the general media (Maccracken, 2019).

Rounding up the variables in family culture and value systems to ensure the sustainable and long-term success of family enterprises involves setting goals. Establishing goals is essential for a successful organization, as they offer a distinct guide for decision-making and development. Clearly defined objectives keep leadership focused on key priorities, ensuring that day-to-day activities align with the vision. Furthermore, goals serve as a significant source of inspiration for employees, giving them a sense of direction and measurable targets for which to strive. In addition, they establish criteria for success, enabling the organization to monitor progress, acknowledge accomplishments, and make necessary revisions throughout the process. Without explicit goals, an organization risks losing its direction, decreasing employee engagement, and overlooking opportunities for growth and innovation. Financial is the first goal that needs to be established (Battilana et al., 2022). Financial objectives help family businesses focus on increasing revenue, reducing costs to improve profitability and maintain cash flow, and setting new financial targets for future growth. The company must collaborate with multiple departments to develop and achieve its economic goals (Camilleri et al., 2023). Each department can contribute to developing cost-cutting measures, such as reducing facility or supply costs. The team's skills also include implementing ideas that help achieve revenue and profitability targets.

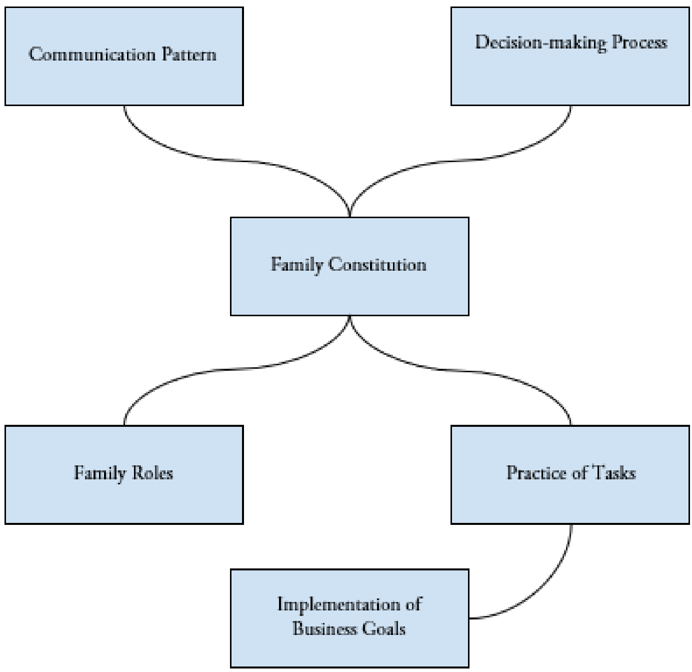
The company needs a concise vision statement that can be broken down into manageable phases to set growth goals. Establishing a realistic number of goals, manageable tasks, and a team to achieve those growth objectives is crucial, whether it involves expanding into new markets, introducing new products, developing the client base, or increasing brand recognition. To ensure the strategy is sound, begin with a thorough market analysis. The business may need to adjust or update the priority as it implements growth goals to ensure they do not conflict with other business objectives. The enterprise must also emphasize the customer goal to support the growth goal (Mandal, 2023). Businesses can enhance their growth by prioritizing customer satisfaction and loyalty, focusing on the quality of products and services, and adopting strategies such as engaging closely with customers and establishing loyalty programs (Mandal, 2022). Improving relationships with the enterprise's target audience accomplishes more than just resolving individual customer issues (Ma & Gu, 2024). Improved customer service also helps the organization gain the respect of all stakeholders, which in turn supports further corporate growth (Herrera & Murcia, 2024).

Employee development goals must also be prioritized as an essential aspect of business operations and management. Motivated and engaged employees provide numerous benefits to a firm, including improved productivity, increased loyalty, and enhanced innovation (Hoxha & Ramadani, 2024). This skill is a necessary ingredient in a company's recipe for success (Serafimovski, 2024). That is why it is vital to create and implement goals that help employees acquire skills and knowledge while challenging them sufficiently to maintain their motivation in their work.

Finally, as the company grows, it establishes a presence in the community. As such, it must develop philanthropic and social projects that serve local and global communities to strengthen its position (Achmad, 2022). The family environment, parental examples, and conversations influence the transmission of philanthropic values across generations, resulting in interconnected relationships among financial contributions, volunteer work, and civic engagement (Schmid et al., 2023). This not only feels pleasing, but it also helps the company's reputation as a socially conscientious organization. Furthermore, these social aims demonstrate to employees that the organization is about more than just generating profits. Instead, it strives to benefit everyone (Boitnott, 2022).

In brief, Bowen's theory provides a comprehensive framework, as illustrated in Figure 1, for analyzing and interpreting behaviors within family-based enterprises. The Figure emphasizes communication dynamics, showing how interactions shape relationships and influence decision-making processes. By applying Bowen's principles, one can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between individual behavior and collective dynamics, making it a valuable tool for enhancing personal and group functioning.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to develop a framework for formulating and promulgating a family constitution for family enterprises. To support this goal, the study quantitatively investigates family culture, value systems, and family governance practices. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) Determine the degree to which communication patterns are manifested among family members in Cebu-based family enterprises, as perceived by family-member employees. (2) Assess the extent to which decision-making styles are employed in Cebu-based family enterprises, based on the perceptions of family-member employees. (3) Examine the extent to which family roles within the enterprise require acknowledgment and recognition. (4) Evaluate the level of practice of family governance in Cebu-based family enterprises, as perceived by family-member employees. (5) Assess the degree of implementation of business goals among family members in Cebu-based family enterprises, based on employee perceptions. (6) Determine the perceived effectiveness of family governance practices in Cebu-based family enterprises. (7) Identify the factors that significantly predict the effectiveness of family governance in Cebu-based family enterprises. (8) Formulate recommendations based on the findings of the study to guide the development of a family constitution framework.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational design, aiming to measure the extent of communication patterns, manifestation of decision-making processes, acknowledgement of different family roles, and the importance of goals and governance practices, as well as the implementation of family business goals and the effectiveness of family governance among selected family enterprises in Cebu, Philippines. To further analyze the study's data, a correlational approach was developed to identify which of the five elements significantly predicts the effectiveness of family governance.

The study's locale was a Cebu-based family enterprise involving sixty (60) individuals who belonged to a family-owned business. They were selected randomly to ensure an equal chance for all and minimize bias. In choosing the respondents, the inclusion criteria should be met: (1) a family member who works on their family business, (2) the existence of a family business should be at least 5 years, and (3) they have signed the informed consent and are willing to participate in the data collection.

A self-made instrument was used to address the study's inquiries. The survey provided analysts with transparent access to the respondents' reactions. The instrument is divided into five sections. The first part aims to measure the extent to which communication patterns are manifested within the respondents' families. The second part examines the decision-making process employed by the respondents' families. The third part measures the degree to which the respondents acknowledge distinct roles within the family enterprise. The fourth part assesses the extent to which goals and tasks are practiced in family governance. The fifth and last part aims to determine the level of implementation of business goals among family members in a business enterprise. Ultimately, the questionnaire used was validated by three (3) experts; two from the academe who teach business subjects, and one from a family business management.

The statistical techniques employed in the study were descriptive and inferential statistics. On the one hand, standard deviation and weighted mean were utilized to determine the weight of the data points that are significant as perceived by the respondents and to measure the spread of data points around the weighted mean. On the other hand, multiple regression analysis was used to predict the value of an independent variable based on the values of two or more independent variables. In other words, the independent variables of the study, such as Communication Pattern, Decision-making Process, Family Roles, Practice Task in Family Governance, and Implementation of Business goals, were scrutinized to determine which factor significantly predicts the effectiveness toward family governance and guides the researchers to craft a framework for family constitution among selected Cebu-based enterprises.

Overall, this research was conducted ethically with respect for individuality, compassion, and fairness. The anonymity of this research guaranteed the privacy and dignity of the respondents. No respondents were forced to participate; instead, the study was explained clearly and straightforwardly, and the benefits and risks were discussed. Equal treatment of all respondents ensured impartiality, regardless of their background or status. Questionnaires will be the primary mode of collecting data. Respondents were informed in detail about the study's objectives, methods, and results for transparency. Moreover, they were told they could withdraw from the study without any negative consequences. All subjects were given sufficient time to decide whether to participate in this study. They were assured that the subjects would maintain their anonymity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section outlines the findings from the quantitative analysis performed in this research. The information gathered via structured tools was examined using statistical methods to answer the research questions. The results are organized based on each research objective. This analysis offers a foundation for comprehending the significance of the results and their contribution to the broader field of research about family culture, value systems, and governance in family enterprises.

Table 1
Summary of the Sub-Variables of Family Culture

Family Culture	Mean	SD	Interpretation
	Communication Patterns		
Consensual Communication Pattern	3.19	0.500	Moderately Manifested
Pluralistic Communication Pattern	3.29	0.729	Strongly Manifested
Protective Communication Pattern	2.60	0.712	Moderately Manifested
Laissez-Faire Communication Pattern	2.23	0.689	Less Manifested
Overall	2.823	0.658	Moderately Manifested
	Family Roles		
Outer Roles	3.417	0.451	Strongly Acknowledged
Inner Roles	2.967	0.549	Moderately Acknowledged
Hidden Roles	2.087	0.831	Less Acknowledged
Ghost Roles	2.375	0.828	Less Acknowledged
Overall Mean	2.476	0.736	Less Acknowledged
	Practice of Tasks		
Social	3.442	0.546	Strongly Practiced
Educational	3.142	0.766	Moderately Practiced
Formal	3.367	1.859	Strongly Practiced
Overall Mean	3.317	1.057	Strongly Practiced

Table 1 shows the sub-variables of family culture, such as communication patterns, family roles, and practice of tasks. The findings on family culture reveal that among the different communication patterns, the pluralistic communication pattern is the most strongly manifested, obtaining a mean of 3.9, suggesting that family members are generally open to sharing ideas and respecting differing viewpoints, while the laissez-faire communication pattern is the least manifested, having a mean of 2.23, illustrating a minimal reliance on passive or disengaged communication styles. In summary, communication within families is moderately manifested, implying that while there is some openness and interaction, it is not consistently strong across all family-based enterprises.

The overall mean score of 2.823 suggests a moderately healthy communication pattern within the family business, leaning towards pluralistic interactions while still being impacted by some authoritative and reserved communication approaches. This indicates that some family-owned enterprises typically encourage open discussions and collaborative decision-making, a characteristic of a pluralistic communication approach, while still incorporating consensual and protective communication, where leaders might overshadow conversations or restrict open expression on occasion. The research conducted by Gavrić and Braje (2024) highlights the importance of open communication and the exchange of diverse ideas as a key factor in driving cultural development within family-owned businesses. This notion is further supported by Trebicka (2023), who emphasizes that fostering an environment of open communication is crucial for instilling core values like transparency, critical thinking, and individual autonomy among family members in these enterprises. However, according to the study of Coffie et al. (2024), protective and laissez-faire communication styles are less commonly practiced by family-owned businesses within SMEs.

The other aspect of family culture, family roles, reveals that outer roles such as founder, heirs, or any governing body to the enterprise are strongly acknowledged, with a mean of 3.417. In contrast, inner (m=2.967), hidden (m=2.087), and ghost roles (m=2.375) are less recognized. This suggests that family-based enterprises acknowledge more presence of the founder, heirs, and governing board in making decisions that benefits the business operation, even though these people are not directly involved. Also, they are looking forward to these people's financial, social, and professional influence.

The following literature supports the findings presented above. As Chen et al. (2021) demonstrated, the existence of these outer roles, specifically the firstborn son as heir, in the context of family-owned enterprises directly influences the overall success of a business, as they may help the founder during the decision-making process. It is also important to acknowledge the founder's presence, for they are the head of the firm and are responsible for making crucial decisions that could either benefit or disrupt the business' operations (LeCounte, 2022). Moreover, these people are frequently regarded as pioneers of the organization's vision, legacy, and reputation, which gives significance to their views and perceived influence (Dacko-Pikiewicz, 2022).

Additionally, family-based enterprises strongly emphasize social (m=3.442) and formal tasks (m=3.367). This highlights their intention to foster positive relationships by actively engaging to maintain unity, uphold shared values, and establish structured responsibilities. Aside from that, family members are notably involved in the planning stages of the business. Also, the study found that educational tasks are moderately practiced, pointing out that families make moderate efforts to cultivate interest and knowledge in the industry among members, particularly future successors. They moderately expose younger generations to business operations and encourage continued learning or training to support long-term business growth. Moreover, these results imply that family-based enterprises strongly practice social and formal tasks, reflecting strong relationships, unity, and structured responsibility of the organization; educational tasks are moderately practiced, showing some effort to prepare future generations for the business, though there is room for improvement in fostering learning and development.

Previous studies, like the study of Kandade et al. (2021), found that family firms that practice positive relationships among their members often lead to a more unified and healthier workplace. Another study concluded that the interconnectedness of every member within a family firm ensures the reinforcement of shared values and the establishment of well-defined responsibilities (Diaz-Moriana et al., 2024). In addition, a study by Calabrò et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of shared planning for family members within family firms to navigate and neutralize crises as they arise. One notable example of this is the COVID-19 Pandemic. Furthermore, according to the study of Hsueh et al. (2023), executing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs is a strategic benefit for family-owned businesses to maintain and renew their generational legacy. This formality strengthens the family's principles, improves the company's reputation, and promotes enduring stakeholder trust (Howell, 2025). Additionally, the study of Capolupo et al. (2024) highlights that members in a family firm are required to acquire diverse types of knowledge, specifically technical expertise, and business knowledge. Technical knowledge, such as production techniques, technological skills, or industry-specific practices, is vital for enhancing operational efficiency and fostering innovation (Mahardhani, 2023). At the same time, business knowledge, encompassing management, finance, marketing, and strategic planning, is critical for steering the company's direction, making well-informed choices, and sustaining competitiveness (Alsqour et al., 2024).

Table 2
Summary of the Sub-Variables of Value Systems

Value Systems	Mean	SD	Interpretation
	Decision-Making Process		
Autocratic Decision-Making	2.583	0.773	Moderately Manifested
Democratic Decision-Making	2.817	0.704	Moderately Manifested
Consensus Decision-Making	3.150	0.658	Moderately Manifested
Collaborative Decision-Making	3.033	0.679	Moderately Manifested
Overall	2.896	0.7035	Moderately Manifested
	Implementation of Business Goals		
Financial Goals	3.425	0.640	Strongly Implemented
Growth Goals	3.183	0.589	Moderately Implemented
Customer Goals	3.333	0.594	Strongly Implemented
Employee Development Goals	3.342	0.651	Strongly Implemented
Social Goals	3.575	0.534	Strongly Implemented
Overall	3.372	0.6016	Strongly Implemented

Table 2 provides valuable insights into the value systems and strategic execution of family enterprises based in Cebu. Regarding the decision-making process, the results show that autocratic decision-making is exhibited to a moderate degree (M = 2.583). Likewise, democratic, consensus, and collaborative decision-making approaches are also demonstrated at a moderate level, with mean scores between 2.817 and 3.150. The overall mean for decision-making (M = 2.896) implies that, although participatory decision-making methods are present, they are not deeply ingrained in the organizational culture, which could limit the benefits that the enterprises can get from inclusive governance.

The following literature has the same findings as the results above. Decision-making styles are crucial in achieving goals, adapting to changes, enhancing processes, sustaining market position, and guaranteeing long-term success (Parii & Kubrak, 2023; Sinnaiah et al., 2023). Autocratic decision-making in family enterprises ensures quick decision-making and a transparent chain of command. Still, this decision-making style has some drawbacks, such as hindering future leaders' development and restricting adaptability to newer trends (Yea et al., 2024). This means that efforts can be made to improve and enhance the collaborative governance structure. Furthermore, integrating participatory decision-making in enterprises improves outcomes and strengthens ethical decision-making (Rovolis & Habibipour, 2024). Participatory decision-making also enhances employees' task performance and personal growth, which results in job meaningfulness and involvement (Kim, 2022).

The execution of business goals is more substantial. Most strategic objectives, including financial (M = 3.425), customer (M = 3.333), employee development (M = 3.342), and social objectives (M = 3.575), are implemented effectively. This indicates that enterprises are generally successful in establishing and reaching their business targets. Nevertheless, growth objectives are only implemented moderately (M = 3.183), pointing to possible limitations or difficulties in scaling operations or venturing into new markets. The overall mean score for implementing business goals (M = 3.372) further emphasizes that enterprises prioritize operational efficiency and strategic execution, implying that enterprises have a reliable and effectively coordinated operational structure that aids in achieving their long-term objectives.

Multiple studies support the conclusions mentioned above. According to Alam (2022), prioritizing strategic operations management is crucial in gaining a sustainable edge and ensuring long-term success in today's ever-changing environment. Moreover, enterprises with a proper and reliable plan for their business targets usually successfully achieve them (Jati et al., 2024). Furthermore, having business goals in an enterprise helps to foster and maintain a unified corporate culture, reduce baseless decisions, and minimize the chances of strategic errors caused by short-sighted management (Riabukha, 2022).

Table 3

Result of the Assessment of Family Governance, as Perceived by the Respondents

Family Governance	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Our family enterprise has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each family member.	3.35	0.700	Strongly Agree
Conflicts within the family related to the business are resolved in a structured and respectful manner.	3.325	0.616	Strongly Agree
Business goals are communicated and supported by all involved family members.	3.325	0.656	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	3.333	0.560	Strongly Agree

Table 3 presents the findings of the assessment of family governance, as viewed by the respondents in the family business in Cebu. The overall mean (3.333) indicates a well-established governance practice within the family business and is consistently observed within their respective enterprises. This established governance fosters role clarity, effective conflict resolution, and unified business direction. Moreover, these governance practices are likely influenced by deeply rooted family values and cultural norms emphasizing harmony, respect, and shared responsibility.

Several publications corroborate the above findings; a study found that family governance practices positively influence the financial performance of family businesses (Berent-Braun & Uhlaner, 2012). Also, a positive practice of family governance, as indicated in the study of Agrawal and Bhavani (2021), can enhance business strategies and long-term succession, contributing significantly to their economic strength and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Nevertheless, well-balanced governance benefits large companies and small and medium-sized enterprises. Just like the study of De Massis et al. (2016) found, family governance can lead to high-performing new product development programs.

Table 4
Model Summary – Family Governance

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	RMSE
M_0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.560
M_1	0.971	0.944	0.885	0.190

A multiple regression analysis examined the effect of family culture and value system constructs on family governance among Cebu-based family enterprises. The regression model was statistically significant, $R^2 = .944$, Adjusted $R^2 = .885$, indicating that the predictors can explain approximately 94.4% of the variance in family governance. It further supports that the model remains strong and not overly fitted even after adjusting for the number of predictors. Also, the Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) of 0.190 indicates that the model's prediction errors are relatively small, suggesting high prediction accuracy.

These results imply that combining family culture and value systems significantly predicts family governance among Cebu-based enterprises. In fact, the model explains 94.4% of the variance in retention, suggesting that initiatives aiming to enhance family culture and value systems may substantially reduce problems in strengthening governance in the family business.

Table 5
ANOVA Summary for the Multiple Regression Model

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
M1	Regression	11.535	20	0.577	15.955	< .001
	Residual	0.687	19	0.036		
	Total	12.222	39			

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model significantly predicts the dependent variable, $F(20, 19) = 15.955$, $p < .001$. This means that, taken together, the predictors provide a strong explanation of the outcome variable. Only a small proportion of the variance remains unexplained by the model (residual = 0.687). The findings suggest that family culture and value systems are powerful determinants of family governance in Cebu-based family enterprises. Since these two factors explain 94.4% of the variance in governance, it implies that Family enterprises should pay close attention to nurturing a strong family culture and well-defined value systems, as they are closely tied to governance outcomes. On the one hand, a family constitution shaped by culture and values must institutionalize governance principles based on these elements to ensure cohesion and continuity. On the other hand, families planning generational transitions should use these insights to align their governance frameworks with cultural values for long-term stability.

Various studies supported the positive contribution of family culture and value systems in family governance. A study concluded that Family business culture (FBC) significantly impacts a firm's performance, amplifying the favorable effects of a high-performance work system (Alipour et al., 2024). In a Chinese family-based business, well-established and respected family governance can enhance business value through improved solvency, liquidity, operating capacity, and development capacity (Li, 2022). In contrast, research found out that values instilled by the family members in the business is inconsistent with the organizational culture and this evidence have been statistically proved by the researchers, leading to a conclusion that values should be highly aligned to the culture of the organization as it strengthens the governance of the business

(Mikusova et al., 2024).

Table 6
Coefficients Interpretation of the Regression Model Predicting Family Governance

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p-value
M_0	(Intercept)	3.333	0.089		37.659	< .001
M_1	(Intercept)	-0.125	0.396		-0.315	0.756
	CPC	0.094	0.100	0.084	0.946	0.356
	PCP1	-0.039	0.102	-0.050	-0.380	0.708
	PCP2	0.068	0.084	0.087	0.808	0.429
	LFCP	0.037	0.084	0.045	0.435	0.668
	ADM	-0.167	0.077	-0.231	-2.162	0.044
	DDM	0.064	0.096	0.080	0.662	0.516
	CDM1	0.203	0.123	0.238	1.653	0.115
	CDM2	-0.020	0.117	-0.024	-0.172	0.865
	OR	0.234	0.120	0.189	1.958	0.065
	IR	-0.024	0.086	-0.024	-0.282	0.781
	HR	0.041	0.062	0.061	0.672	0.510
	GR	0.121	0.053	0.178	2.296	0.033
	Social	0.401	0.111	0.392	3.607	0.002
	Educational	0.126	0.071	0.172	1.779	0.091
	Formal	-0.009	0.022	-0.029	-0.392	0.699
	FG	0.082	0.126	0.094	0.652	0.522
	GG	-0.361	0.141	-0.380	-2.557	0.019
	CG	0.301	0.143	0.320	2.106	0.049
	EDG	0.262	0.113	0.304	2.318	0.032
	SG	-0.324	0.107	-0.309	-3.030	0.007

Table 6 shows the predictive power of various dimensions of family culture and value systems on family governance in Cebu-based family enterprises. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(20, 19) = 15.96$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of .944 and an adjusted R^2 of .885. This indicates that approximately 94.4% of the variance in family governance can be explained by the predictors in the model, signifying a strong model fit. Among the 20 predictors, several emerged as significant. Specifically, Social ($\beta = .392$, $p = .002$), Customer Goals ($\beta = .320$, $p = .049$), Employee Development Goals ($\beta = .304$, $p = .032$), and Ghost Roles ($\beta = .178$, $p = .033$) had statistically significant effects, suggesting that these dimensions of family values and cultural practices affect governance structures. In contrast, Autocratic Decision-Making ($\beta = –.231$, $p = .044$), Growth Goals ($\beta = –.380$, $p = .019$), and Social Goals ($\beta = –.309$, $p = .007$) were significant negative predictors, indicating that these constructs may hinder effective governance.

These findings imply that while family culture and values are central to governance, not all components are beneficial. For family enterprises to thrive, it is essential to reinforce the positive cultural traits and values while identifying and addressing those that negatively affect governance. It implies that an enhancement of the predictors found in the study must be considered, while other constructs resulting in negatives must be investigated for intervention. Moreover, these insights can guide the development of a family constitution that strategically strengthens governance by aligning it with constructive family dynamics.

According to research, family businesses have a more positive corporate culture and perform better than non-family businesses since their shared histories and identities contribute to their success (Denison et al., 2004). This shows how important a positive culture is in a family business.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's results underscore the significant influence of family culture and value systems on family governance among Cebu-based family enterprises. The regression analysis revealed a highly predictive model, explaining approximately 94.4% of the family governance variance, demonstrating a strong and reliable model fit. Key dimensions that positively impact governance structures include Social values, Customer Goals, Employee Development Goals, and Ghost Roles, all of which reflect the importance of relational, developmental, and legacy-oriented practices in strengthening governance frameworks. In contrast, Autocratic Decision-Making, Growth Goals, and Social Goals emerged as significant negative predictors of family governance. With that, the study concludes that overly centralized leadership, a focus on rapid growth, and an excessive emphasis on external approval can harm the development of stable and transparent governance in family businesses. These negative factors show the risks of ignoring collaborative decision-making and sustainable growth while prioritizing short-term control or image. Thus, such approaches can create tension among family members, limit accountability, and reduce flexibility, ultimately jeopardizing the business's long-term success and harmony.

These findings emphasize that governance in family enterprises is not merely a structural or procedural concern but a deeply cultural one, rooted in the family's shared values, goals, and leadership philosophies. Therefore, family business owners must intentionally reflect and align their cultural practices and values with governance goals. This calls for developing formal governance mechanisms, such as family constitutions, advisory boards, or succession plans co-designed with family input and grounded in inclusive, developmental, and relational values. Moreover, the results advocate capacity-building efforts among family members to promote participatory leadership, balanced growth strategies, and clearly defined roles to avoid informal power dynamics such as ghost roles.

To sum up, the study reinforces that effective governance in family enterprises is best achieved when cultural alignment, strategic clarity, and inclusive leadership are prioritized. This ensures the business's sustainability and the family's unity across generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, it is strongly recommended that Cebu-based family enterprises develop a *Family Constitution Framework* that institutionalizes governance practices grounded in positive family cultural dimensions and value systems. This constitution should serve as a guiding document that clearly articulates the family's shared vision, core values, governance structures, roles and responsibilities, succession planning, conflict resolution mechanisms, and guidelines for business involvement across generations.

To ensure its relevance and effectiveness, the framework must be developed collaboratively, with active participation from multiple generations of the family. It should reflect the positive predictors identified in the studies such as relational values (e.g., Social values), long-term orientation (e.g., Employee Development Goals), and informal legacy roles (e.g., Ghost Roles)while also deliberately mitigating risks associated with negative predictors, including Autocratic Decision-Making, unchecked Growth Goals, and superficial Social Goals.

Figure 2
Family Constitution Framework

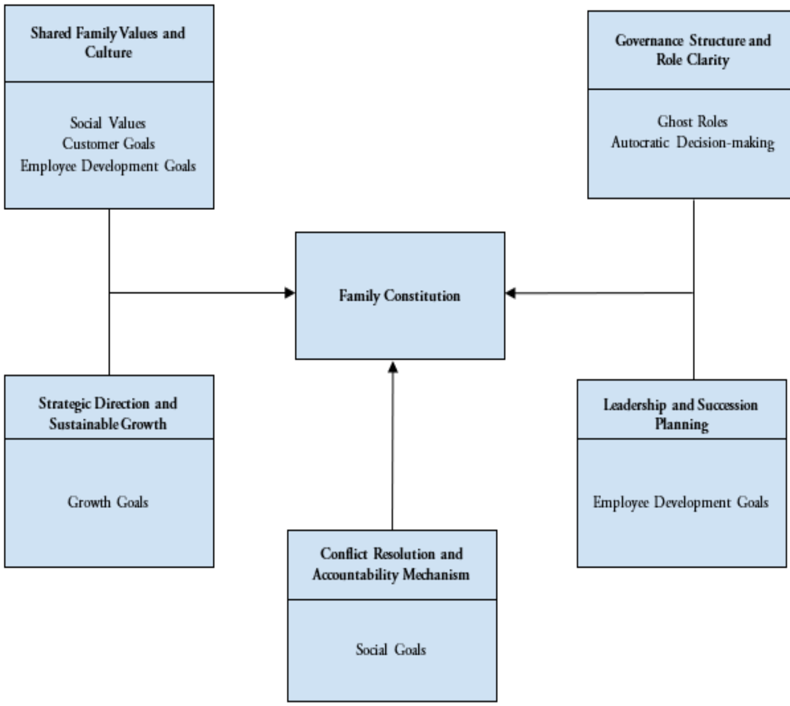


Figure 2 illustrates the family constitution framework developed by the researchers, with each component acting as a pillar. These pillars must be comprehended and mutually agreed upon for the Family Constitution to function effectively as a living document that promotes governance, unity, and continuity within a family enterprise. Moreover, this framework captures the study's findings and guides Cebu-based family enterprises, aiding them in refining governance structures that are culturally relevant, values-driven, and sustainable.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

This study can be translated to entrepreneurs operating in Cebu and the Philippines, as it builds on the study's key finding that family culture and value systems strongly influence family. With these dynamics, this study proposes a Family Constitution Framework, a practical scheme, to help family enterprises formalize governance structures rooted in shared values and inclusive leadership. The framework's core pillars are designed to intensify governance, foster family unity, and ensure continuity within family enterprises. Moreover, it translates the study's key findings into practical guidance, helping them build governance structures that are culturally grounded, values-driven, and built for long-term sustainability.

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