

Family Business Employer Brand: Understanding Applicants'  
Perceptions and their Job Pursuit Intentions with samples from the US  
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**Family Business Employer Brand: Understanding Applicants' Perceptions and  
their Job Pursuit Intentions with samples from the US and Belgium**

**Abstract**

Recruiting college educated non-family employees has been one of the challenges identified by family business owners affecting the success and continuity of family firms. To better understand this challenge, we build on previous work from recruitment, branding, and family business literature to introduce the family business employer brand construct and its components. We explore the perceptions that non-family applicants have about the family business employer brand components, and how these perceptions affect intentions to pursue a job with a family firm. Data were collected through surveys in the USA (N= 293) and Belgium (N = 324). Results from both countries indicate that participants evaluated instrumental (i.e., compensation, job security, and advancement opportunities) and symbolic (i.e. trustworthiness, innovation, thrift, style, and dominance) components of the family business employer brand differently in the two countries and these factors varied in the effect that they had on the intent to pursue a job in a family firm. Implications of these results for practice and further research are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Perceptions of Family Firms, Job Pursuit Intentions, Symbolic and Instrumental Factors, Careers, Family Business Branding, Family Business Employer Brand.*

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Qualified employees are important because they bring unique intellectual capital that can influence organizational performance and other firm level outcomes. Therefore, attracting, hiring, and retaining skilled workers is critical for the success of any organization (Barney & Wright, 1998; Huselid, 1995; Rynes & Cable, 2003). For family firms this means that, when the family system does not have members who have the specific qualifications and skills needed for the family firm to succeed, the organization will need to rely on recruiting and retaining non-family talent to achieve short and long-term goals (Chrisman, Memili, & Misra, 2014). Family business owners frequently indicate that one of the greatest challenges that they face is recruiting and hiring qualified non-family talent for positions that require a college degree (Chrisman, Chua, & Litz, 2003; Kahlert et al., 2017). Researchers have tried to explain why this challenge exists using three approaches. Some scholars argue that the difficulty in recruiting and hiring skilled non-family employees can be linked to the type of human resource (HR) practices that family businesses use during recruitment and how professional these practices are perceived by applicants (see: Carlson, Upton, & Seaman, 2006; de Kok, Uhlaner, & Thurik, 2006; King, Solomon, & Fernald, 2001). Other scholars suggest that the difficulty in recruiting non-family applicants is linked to the individual characteristics of those who prefer to work for a family business and the ability of family firms to identify these specific candidates (see: Block et al., 2016; Covin, 1994; Hauswald et al., 2015). A third group of researchers suggests that family firms have difficulty recruiting qualified non-family employees because of the perceptions that these applicants have about family firms being small and what they offer as places to work (Botero, 2014; Botero et al., 2012; Kahlert et al., 2017). This project focuses on applicants' perceptions and the role these perceptions play in the intentions to pursue a job in a family firm.

Early in the recruitment process applicants rely on their general perceptions of a firm to determine whether or not to consider the organization as a place to work (Barber, 1998; Cable & Turban, 2003; Lemmik et al., 2003; Rynes, 1991). Researchers who study how applicants make decisions about

where to work argue that this assessment shares similarities with decisions about what brand to buy (Cable & Turban, 2001; Collins & Stevens, 2002). In particular, for an applicant to be willing to consider an organization as a place to work they need to perceive that this organization offers important value as an employer (Cable & Turban, 2001). Building on this rationale, researchers have applied principles from marketing into the recruitment context to further explain why creating a positive brand can be useful when recruiting applicants. This idea is studied under the employer brand label. In its most general sense an employer brand represents a set of beliefs that a job seeker holds about the attributes of an organization and a job (Cable & Turban, 2001; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). A positive employer brand is important because it can influence current and future intentions to pursue a job within a particular organization (Barber, 1998; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016; Theurer et al., 2018).

Researchers that explore the role of perceptions in the recruitment of non-family talent have introduced similar ideas into the family business literature. For example, researchers suggest that early in the recruitment process the use of a descriptor like “Family Business” works similar to a brand in that it provides a signal that helps applicants evaluate what the family firm offers as a place to work (Botero, 2014). Thus, using the “Family Business” descriptor can affect how an applicant perceives important organizational and job attributes that a firm offers, and can influence their intentions to pursue a job with a family business (Botero, 2014; Kahlert et al., 2017). However, this research has several shortcomings. First, although branding concepts have been introduced, there is no explicit articulation of how and why the branding literature could help us better understand the recruitment of non-family employees. Second, we have limited understanding of the components of family business employer brands that are relevant in the recruitment process. And, third, we do not know how applicants evaluate these brand attributes, and the effects that these evaluations have on the intention to pursue a job with a family business.

To address these gaps this project has three goals in mind. First, it introduces and explains the family business employer brand construct and identifies its components. Second, it assesses how a sample of U.S. and Belgian applicants evaluate the components of the family business employer brand. And, third, it explores the relationship between the evaluation of the components of the family business

employer brand and the intent to pursue a job with a family firm. To achieve these goals, this paper builds on literature in recruitment, marketing, and family business branding to present the rationale for our study. Data was collected from students in the U.S. (N = 293) and Belgium (N = 324) that were looking for internships and entry-level post college positions. Using a survey approach, participants were asked about their intentions to pursue a job in a family firm; their perceptions of tangible (i.e., salary, advancement opportunities, and job security) and intangible (i.e., trustworthiness, innovation, dominance, thrift, and style) components of the family business employer brand; their familiarity with family firms as a control variable; and demographic information. Our results indicate that applicants in the two countries evaluated the components of the family business employer brand as neutral and positive. Additionally, the perceptions on several of these components had a significant effect on their intent to pursue a job in a family firm.

These results are important because they continue to build our understanding about the family business brand and its effects (See: Binz Astrachan et al., 2018), and provide important implications for academics and practitioners. For academics, the ideas presented in this project enhance our understanding of branding and recruitment in family firms. In the branding area, our ideas help to understand some of the components of the family business employer brands, the evaluation of these components, and how these evaluations can influence the intention to pursue a job within a family firm. In the recruitment area, our study helps to continue to assess the factors that are relevant when non-family applicants make decisions about working for family firms. This knowledge complements other studies that explore who is likely to work for a family firm (Block et al., 2016, Hauswald et al., 2015), what are the human resource practices that are used in the recruitment process (de Kok et al., 2006; King et al., 2001), and the roles and expectations that non-family members have within family firms (Tabor et al., 2018). At a practical level, results from this study can help managers identify the effects of promoting the family business brand in the recruitment process, and understand what needs to be communicated during the recruitment process and to whom it needs to be communicated. In the following sections we further elaborate on the rationale for our study, and present our methodology and results. We conclude by discussing the contributions of

our work for research and practice.

### ***The Recruitment Process***

Recruitment is a process that incorporates activities and practices that are conducted by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting applicants to a firm, and assessing how these activities are perceived and experienced by the applicant (Barber, 1998). In general, recruitment can be divided into three phases: generating applicants, maintaining applicant's interest, and influencing applicant's job choice decisions (Barber, 1998). Both applicants and organizations have goals within each phase. In the first phase, applicants collect and evaluate information to assess the possibility and desirability of an organization as a place to work, while organizations try to identify the pool of applicants that can help them better meet their needs. In the second phase, applicants narrow their options to consider the best candidates as place to work, and companies start their face-to-face interaction with the applicant to better assess the applicant's capabilities and interest in the firm. Finally, in the third phase, applicants and organizations make their choices of where to work and who to hire.

Each of the stages is relevant for applicant and organization decision-making. However, the initial stage is particularly important for the rest of the recruitment process because it determines the success of the other stages (Barber 1998; Turban & Greening, 1996). When an applicant is not willing to engage with a firm early in this process, they will not engage with the firm at all. Similarly, when an applicant is not perceived as interesting and qualified for a position early on, they will no longer be taken into consideration. With this in mind, this project focuses on the initial stages of recruitment in the context of family firms. The focus is on the applicant, and the factors that play a role in their decision-making regarding whether or not they intend to pursue a job in a family firm (i.e., intention to take action to find out more information about the organization, and to consider the organization as a place to work; Aiman-Smith et al., 2001). During these decision-making events, individuals collect information from the organizations (e.g., recruitment messages, organizational website, or brochures) and from important others (e.g., family, acquaintances, and friends) to evaluate and determine which firms they intend to apply to (Barber, 1998). However, early in the recruitment, applicants tend to rely on limited information

and previous experiences to make their initial assessments about a firm (Barber, 1998). Although these initial perceptions are created based on limited information they have important implications. In the short run, when initial perceptions are not favorable, applicants are likely to discard that organization from their pool of options (Barber, 1998). In the long-term, these perceptions can also bias the applicant in their future job searches (Barber, 1998). Because of this, it is important to understand the initial evaluations that applicants have about different types of firms.

### ***Family Business Employer Brand***

In their search for a job, applicants often show diverse preferences regarding their interest in an organization as a place to work (Barber, 1998; Cable & Turban, 2001; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Gatewood et al., 1993; Highhouse et al., 1999). These preferences arise from the interaction of the individual with the organization, and are impacted by a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, and general impressions (Aaker & Myers, 1982). General favorable impressions about a firm are important because they enable organizations to recruit more qualified applicants (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Lemmink et al., 2003). In the recruitment context these perceptions, attributes, and associations are grouped under the label of *employer brand* (Cable & Turban, 2001; Collins & Stevens, 2002). In its most general sense, employer brand encompasses a set of beliefs that a job seeker holds about the attributes of an organization and a job (Cable & Turban, 2001). These beliefs are important because they affect applicants' behaviors and decisions in at least three ways (Aaker, 1996; Barber, 1998; Keller, 1993): (1) a positive employer brand can increase the chances that a firm will be considered as a place of employment; (2) a positive employer brand can influence an applicant's receptivity to organizational messages; and (3) a positive employer brand early in the recruitment context may be the only information that applicants have about a firm that can help create differentiation and motivation to choose a particular organization over others in the employment market.

This project focuses on the family business employer brand, how university educated non-family applicants evaluate the family businesses employer brand, and how these evaluations influence their intentions to pursue a job within a family firm. We view the family business employer brand as the set of

beliefs and perceptions that job seekers hold about the attributes of a family firm as a place work. This includes the characteristics of the organization as a whole and the characteristics of the jobs that they offer. Given the systems approach to family business brands (Binz Astrachan et al., 2018), our definition focuses on the reputation component of the family business brand system. Similar to other authors (Binz-Astrachan, 2014; Botero et al., 2018), we argue that although family businesses vary greatly between them, the general public is not likely to maintain differentiated views between family firms. Instead, the term “family business” is likely to trigger a set of overall associations that distinguish between family and non-family firms. In this project we focus on the general family business employer brand that is activated by explicitly communicating the family’s involvement in a firm.

An employer’s brand is composed by the set of beliefs about particular attributes of the job and the organization (Cable & Turban, 2001). These attributes include tangible (i.e., instrumental) and intangible (i.e., symbolic) characteristics of the organization (e.g., size, location, centralization, values, organizational environment, and culture), the job (e.g., pay level, opportunities for advancement, job security), and the individuals that work in the organization (e.g., characteristics of supervisors, characteristics of colleagues) (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Previous research points to three instrumental (i.e., compensation, advancement opportunities, and job security) and five symbolic factors (i.e., trustworthiness, innovativeness, dominance, thrift, and style) that are relevant early in the recruitment process (Chapman et al., 2005; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Schreurs et al., 2009; Slaughter et al., 2004; Uggerslev, Fassina, & Kraichy, 2012). Thus, we use these eight attributes to reflect the initial components of family business employer brand that are assessed in this project.

We build on the work of Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) to argue that the intent an applicant has to pursue a job in a family firm is determined by two related events. Initially, we need to understand how the applicant interprets the term “family business”, when characterizing a firm, to develop perceptions about the components of the family business employer brand. Once they have these perceptions, they determine their intent to continue finding out information about the firm, and their interest in the firm as a place to work. Early in recruitment, applicants are looking to narrow the pool of organizations that they will



consider in their job search. Thus, job seekers rely on a limited pool of information to make inferences about organizational and job characteristics of the firm. Applicants will use these inferences to determine whether the firm they are considering can offer what they are looking for in a place to work. The extent to which applicants evaluate job and organizational characteristics of family firms as positive and important, will influence their intent to pursue a job in a family firm (Barber, 1998). The following sections summarize what we know about recruitment in family firms, and present the rationale for our hypotheses.

### ***Recruiting Non-Family Members into the Family Business***

One of the greatest challenges that family firms face is recruiting qualified non-family employees (Chrisman et al., 2003). To help family business owners address this challenge, scholars have been interested in understanding who is most likely to work in a family firm and why. Some scholars suggest that one way to address this issue is by outlining individual characteristics of applicants who express interest in working for a family firm. These scholars have found that, at a demographic level, being a female and having self-employment intentions are both positively related to wanting to work in a family business (Block et al., 2016; Covin, 1994). On the other hand, the number of years of education and having previous managerial roles are both negatively related to expressed interest in working for a family firm (Block et al., 2016; Covin, 1994). At the job values level, individuals who are likely to place importance on jobs that provide change and variety, opportunities to work independently, opportunities to continuously build their skills and knowledge, opportunity to earn high income, and the opportunity to feel accomplished, are more likely to want to work for their own family firm (Covin, 1994). Finally, at the general values level, individuals who value conservation (i.e., importance placed on tradition, conformity, and security) and self-transcendence (i.e., preserving and enhancing the welfare of others) are more likely to be interested in working in a family business; while individuals who value openness to change (i.e., valuing independent thought and action) and self-enhancement (i.e., achievement and power) are less likely to be interested in working in family firms (Hauswald et al., 2016). Although these findings provide some initial understanding of who is interested in working in family firms, and which individuals family businesses can target in their recruitment messages, it provides less guidance to understand why some job

seekers might not be interested in working for a family firm.

To better explain why job seekers might be interested in working in a family firm, other researchers focus on applicants' perceptions about family firms as an explanatory mechanism (Botero, 2014; Botero et al., 2012; Kahlert et al., 2017). This line of research borrows from the branding literature to explain that, early in the recruitment process, applicants use the term "family business" as an important descriptor to make inferences about a firm and determine their interest to work in these firms. These scholars argue that when applicants have positive associations with the explicit communication of the "family business" characteristic of a firm, they are more likely to express intentions to work for a family firm. On the other hand, when applicants evaluate "family business" as a negative characteristic of the organization they will view the organization in a negative light and stop considering it in their employment search. Even though this line of research has provided some initial understanding about perceptions of family firms, it does not provide information regarding how job seekers directly evaluate family businesses as places to work. Instead, this work has relied on experimental design to explain how organizational factors (size and type of ownership) and applicant characteristics (MBA vs. graduate students) affect the evaluations of family firms as places to work in comparison to non-family firms (Botero, 2014; Botero et al., 2012; Kahlert et al., 2017). To expand our current understanding of the role of perceptions in the recruitment process, this study incorporates the family business employer brand concept as a way to enhance our understanding of how and why perceptions influence job seeker's intent to pursue a job in a family firm.

Building on previous work on perceptions of family firms, we suggest that the descriptor "family business" serves as an identifier that signals a unique type of employer. This signal influences different aspects of an employer brand that can be assessed. Lievens and Slaughter (2016) indicate that measuring the instrumental and symbolic attributes is one of the ways to assess perceptions about an employer brand. As mentioned earlier we focused on eight important attributes of an employer brand that are relevant in the initial stages of recruitment: (1) *Compensation* (i.e., the amount of direct and indirect payment an individual receives for their services in the firm; Turban, 2001); (2) *Advancement*

*opportunities* (i.e., evaluations of the growth possibilities within an organization; Lievens et al., 2005); (3) *Job security* (i.e., the perception that applicants have regarding their possible continuity in the organization; Kraimer et al., 2005); (4) *Trustworthiness* (i.e., the degree to which organizations are evaluated as being benevolent, having integrity, and being transparent; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011); (5) *Innovativeness* (i.e., the extent to which organizations are perceived as creative, exciting, interesting, unique, and original; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011); (6) *Dominance* (i.e., the degree to which organizations are perceived as being successful, popular, active and influential; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011); (7) *Thrift* (i.e., extent to which a firm is conservative in their budget and use of money; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009); and (8) *style* (i.e. the degree to which the applicant views the organization as being stylish, fashionable, and trendy; Slaughter et al, 2004). We argue that when applicants are presented with the term “family firm” as an identifier of an employer they are likely to evaluate the organization in these eight factors before they determine whether or not they are willing to work for this organization.

Signaling theory is a useful framework to understand how and why applicants use the label “family business” to infer and evaluate family business employer brand components (Barber, 1998). This theory argues that early in the recruitment process applicants tend to have incomplete information to evaluate an organization as a place to work (Celani & Singh, 2011; Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). Therefore, individuals will rely on signals provided in recruitment messages, and their previous experiences to make inferences about the attributes of the organization. The label “family business” represents a signal used to infer job and organizational characteristics of a firm. Family businesses as a group hold an overall reputation that can influence whether the “family business” label represents a positive or negative signal to applicants (Binz-Astrachan, 2014).

Family business research has found mixed results regarding how individuals evaluate the “family business” label (See Blombäck & Botero, 2013; Sageder et al., 2016, and Tabor et al., 2018 for a detailed discussion). On the positive side, the term “family business” can elicit a positive reputation for an organization (Binz-Astrachan & Astrachan, 2015; Blombäck, 2009; Craig, Dibrell, & Davis, 2008; Frost, 2008). Family businesses are a symbol of prestige and success that evoke trust and positive thoughts

about an organization (Blombäck & Botero 2013). Thus, using the label “family business” to describe an organization can elicit positive associations about an organization. On the other hand, the term “family business” can also elicit negative associations (Barnett & Kellermanns 2006; Ibrahim et al., 2008). For example, promoting the family’s involvement in a firm can evoke perceptions of smallness, fewer resources, nepotism, and lower professionalization of systems (Miller & Le-Breton-Miller, 2003; Ward, 1997), that can result in negative associations towards family firms. However, many of these studies have been conducted in the consumer context, and we know less regarding the employment context.

The limited empirical evidence about the explicit communication of “family business” in the employer context suggests that promoting this association results in negative perceptions about the family firm. For example, Ceja and Tapiés (2009) have found a negative perception among mainly Spanish MBA students about family firms as employers due to the perceived lack of professionalism and career opportunities in family firms. Michael-Tsabari and colleagues (2008), Litchfield (2008), and Beehr and colleagues (1997) also found that non-family applicants, and non-family employees have negative stereotypes about family ownership and perceive that family firms are more favorable towards family members. Thus, it seems that in the employment context the term “family business” can represent a negative signal about the organization that evokes perceptions of smallness, fewer resources, lower salaries, nepotism, conflicts and lower professionalization of systems (Botero et al., 2018; Miller & Le-Breton-Miller, 2003; Tabor et al., 2018; Ward, 1997). Based on this evidence, and using signaling theory as a framework, we argue that early in the recruitment process, using the term “family business” can elicit negative associations by activating views about “family-first” preferences (Berrone et al., 2012). In these situations, family businesses are seen as focusing and helping family employees more because “they are family”. Thus, when applicants are asked to evaluate the components of family business employer brand, they will evaluate these characteristics as negative because they see the “family business” label as a negative signal about a firm as a potential employer because they are not related to the owning family. Building on these arguments, we advance the following hypothesis:

*H1: Using the label “family business” when describing an organization to applicants early in the recruitment process will result in negative perceptions of family business employer brand components.*

### ***Effects Of Family Business Employer Brand Perceptions On Job Pursuit Intentions***

Employer brand plays an important role in the intentions to pursue a job in an organization (Cable & Turban, 2003; Collins, 2007; Gatewood et al., 1993; Lemmink et al., 2003). The theory of planned behavior (TPB) can be a useful framework to understand why evaluations of family business employer brand components play a role in the intent to pursue a job with a family firm. The central premise of this theory is that decisions about behaviors are a logical sequence of cognitions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this context individuals are primarily rational decision makers who rely on available information to make their choices. Thus, their behaviors are the result of a decision-making process by which a person or group of people evaluate their intentions towards engaging in a behavior, the attitudes they have towards the behavior, how significant others evaluate that behavior, and their personal evaluations of how easy or difficult it is to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991; 1985). Research suggests that before committing to a behavior, individuals evaluate and prioritize their beliefs towards the behavior, and the stronger the belief towards the behavior the more likely the individual will be to develop intentions to perform it (Hale et al., 2002). This framework can be useful to understand how job applicants make decisions of whether or not to pursue a job with a family firm.

Job pursuit intentions describe the willingness that applicants have to take action and find out more information about an organization, to want to continue to stay in contact with the organization, to want to learn more about the organization, and to consider an organization as a place to work (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001). An individual's motivation to engage in a behavior (i.e., behavioral intention) is the strongest predictor of behavior; and the strongest predictor of intentions are beliefs (Ajzen, 1985; 1991). Thus, individuals first evaluate and prioritize their beliefs towards a behavior, and the stronger the belief towards the behavior the more likely the individual will be to develop intentions to perform it (Hale et al., 2002). Family business employer brand components represent an applicant's assessment of these beliefs (Collins & Stevens, 2002). We view the eight components of family business employer brand as

representing a set of job and organizational attributes that are relevant to applicants when making decisions about continuing to consider a family business in their employment search.

General findings from the recruitment literature indicate that the instrumental and symbolic components of the employer brand are important when determining attractiveness and willingness to work for a company. For example, compensation is an important predictor of an individual's intent to pursue a job in an organization (Lievens et al., 2007; Turban, 2001). For applicants, compensation serves as a signal of the quality of life that they can afford if they choose to join an organization. Thus, when applicants have positive perceptions about the type and amount of compensation they will receive by joining a firm, they are more willing to pursue a job in this organization. Similarly, applicants who are beginning their professional career place greater importance on advancement opportunities given that this information can serve as a proxy for how much they can move in the hierarchy of the organization (Lievens et al., 2005). Thus, when applicants perceive that an organization offers good advancement opportunities, their intentions to pursue a job within the organization will increase. Job security reflects stability and degree of risk for an applicant (Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007). Applicants are more attracted to organizations that offer them higher job security because they offer individuals peace of mind and an opportunity to focus on their work and not to worry about whether they will lose their job (Chapman et al., 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Symbolic attributes (i.e., trustworthiness, innovation, dominance, thrift, and style) also influence the level of attractiveness to a firm (Lievens et al., 2007). In general, researchers indicate that individuals like to be associated with organizations that are perceived positively by themselves and other stakeholders (Cialdini et al., 1976; Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007). Symbolic attributes help applicants assess how others perceive a firm.

Building on the theory of planned behavior, we suggest that applicants' evaluations of the family business employer brand components will affect their intentions to pursue a job with a family firm. When family businesses are viewed as providing good compensation, advancement opportunities, job security, and as being trustworthy, innovative, dominant in their area, not thrifty, and stylish, then these positive perceptions will result in higher intentions to pursue a job in a family firm. On the other hand,

when family business employer brand components are seen as negative, applicants will not want to join the family firm to avoid the negative associations with these factors. Therefore, we suggest that family business employer brand components will be related to intentions to pursue a job in a family firm because they represent the assessment of important attributes that applicants believe are relevant when making job choices. Following this rationale we hypothesize that:

*H2: Applicants' evaluations of the family business employer brand components will be significantly related to their intentions to pursue a job in a family firm.*

### **Method**

We designed our research to include data collection in two cultural settings: the United States and Belgium. We wanted to see the generalizability of the results across settings. Given that we did not have sound theoretical reasons to expect substantive relationships to differ across contexts, we followed Gelfand and colleagues' (2007) suggestion to study the relationships within each setting rather than focusing on traditional t-test comparisons between cultures. The two countries differed on uncertainty avoidance (UA) and long-term orientation (LTO), where, based on Hofstede's research (2001), the U.S. scores 46 on UA and 26 on LTO. These scores suggest that individuals from the U.S. are comfortable with some degree of ambiguity and are able to easily adapt to changes in the environment, and value immediate gratification. On the other hand, Belgium has a score of 94 on UA and 82 on LTO. These scores indicate that individuals from Belgium do not like ambiguity in their context and prefer regulations and structures. Individuals from Belgium tend to focus on future rewards and value perseverance and persistence. It is important to note that the focus of this study is on the relationship between family business employer brand and job pursuit intention, and not on the cultural comparison. Thus, the added value of testing our relationships in two different cultural settings is to provide more robust tests of our hypotheses.

### **Study 1- Method**

#### ***Participants and Procedure***

Study 1 was conducted in the US with a sample of 293 students who were juniors and seniors at

the University of Kentucky majoring in the School of Business. These students were actively looking for a job or for an internship. The average age of participants was 20.83 years ( $SD = 2.84$ ), 49% were females, and 98% were full time students. Participants were recruited by visiting courses during the second week of classes, and inviting students to voluntarily participate in a survey about perceptions of family businesses as places to work. Participation took between 15 to 20 minutes. **Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of both samples and the general characteristics of the universities that both samples came from.**

#### **INSERT TABLE 1 HERE**

#### ***Measures***

All items were measured using a five-point response scale. *Job pursuit intention* was measured with five items adapted from Aiman-Smith and colleagues (2001). To measure family business employer brand we assessed the perceptions of the instrumental and symbolic attributes individually. *Compensation* was measured with three items adapted from Turban (2001). *Advancement opportunities* (seven items) and *job security* (four items) were measured with items adapted from Lievens and colleagues (2005). Five symbolic attributes were assessed in this study. *Trustworthiness* (ten items), *innovation* (eight items), *dominance* (five items), *thrift* (four items) and *style* (five items) were measured with items adapted from Slaughter and colleagues (2004). Perceptions of organizational size was measured with two items adapted from Lievens et al. (2003), and familiarity with family firms was assessed with 3 items created for this project. Table 2 shows only the items that met the measurement validity criteria and hence were used in the analyses.

#### **INSERT TABLE 2 HERE**

#### ***Measurement Model and Cultural Equivalence***

Before analyzing the data we ascertained the measurement model structure and the equivalence of the measures across cultures to be able to compare results. Guidelines from Hair and colleagues (2006) were followed when testing the measurement model. In the analyses, items with standardized loadings below .60 were removed. This resulted in using one item for *Compensation*, *Dominance* and



*Innovativeness*. The remaining factors had a composite reliability score between .74 and .88. This combined with an average variance extracted in each factor of .49 to .60 (i.e. close or above the required .50 cut-off) enables us to conclude that the convergent validity obtained was sufficient for the measures used. In addition, all factor loadings were significant at .001 level. The measurement model for the instrumental factors of the family business employer brand produced a good model fit (N = 593):  $\chi^2 = 22.25$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 1.85$ ; GFI = .99; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .04, PCLOSE = .77). The two instrumental factors had acceptable discriminant validity as the square root of the AVE for each factor (.70 and .75) is above the inter-factor correlation of .25.

For the symbolic attributes of the family business employer brand we had a very good fit for the measurement model (N=576):  $\chi^2 = 99.60$ ,  $df = 80$ ,  $p < .10$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.25$ ; GFI = .94; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .02, PCLOSE = .99. The three symbolic factors had acceptable discriminant validity as the square root of the AVE for each factor (.74 to .77) was above the inter-factor correlations (i.e., ranging from .10 to .50). As a robustness test we estimated a 3-factor symbolic model in which the two single items for *Dominance* and *Innovativeness* were loading on the Style factor with which it was most strongly correlated (.43 to .48), but this resulted in a significant worse fit. A second robustness test consisted of a combined factor for *Trustworthiness* and *Thrift* but this yielded a significant worse fit. Thirdly, we compared the sign and level of significance of the estimations based on the maximum likelihood estimation method with the asymptotically distribution free estimation method. Overall, results were very similar but given the violation of the multivariate normality from the correlation of errors in the maximum likelihood model, we report the results of the ADF estimation method, which allows for small correlations of errors. Lastly, our outcome variable *Job Pursuit Intentions* had a very good convergent measurement validity:  $\chi^2 = 6.13$ ,  $df = 5$   $p > .29$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 1.23$ ; GFI = .992; CFI = .995; RMSEA = .02, PCLOSE = .86. All items had significant ( $p < .001$ ) loadings on the factor Job Pursuit Intention and AVE equals .60 and the composite reliability reaches .88.

A multi-group confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test measurement equivalence across the two cultures. For *Job Pursuit Intentions* the configural equivalence was met. We reached full

metrical equivalence as the model with all factor loadings set equal in both country samples had no significant worse fit compared to the configural equivalence model ( $\Delta\text{Chi}^2[\text{df} = 4] = 6.33, p > .17$ ). For the instrumental and symbolic components of the family business employer brand the configural equivalence was met. The final measurement model had an acceptable fit for both instrumental and symbolic attributes for each separate sample. The metrical equivalence was only partially met. Since we still had at least 2 metrically equivalent items for each scale, our measure was sufficiently equivalent in both countries to be used for the combined cross-country sample (Kankaras & Moors, 2010).

### ***Common Method Bias***

Our outcome measure *Job Pursuit Intentions* and the family business brand components were all measured on a 5-point Likert response scale. To proactively minimize common method bias due to a similar response scale, we applied the guidelines from Podsakoff and colleagues (2003). This required us to split the family business brand attributes from the job pursuit intention questions in the survey. In addition, both set of items were headed with a different introduction in an attempt to sharpen the mindset of the respondent to the content of the underlying questions. After data collection, we conducted a Harman's single-factor test. The common variance among our items of job pursuit intention and the family business employer brand attributes reached 27.86% by one general 'response scale' factor. Given this value and the design of the questionnaire we believe that there are no indications for distortions in our measurement due to common method bias.

## **INSERT TABLE 3 HERE**

### **Study 1- Results**

Table 3 reports means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for Study 1. To test H1 regarding perceptions of the components of the family business employer brand, we first evaluated the mean scores for each employer brand attribute. Given that responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale, scores with a mean of 2.49 or below were considered to be perceived as negative, those between 2.5 and 3.49 were considered to be perceived as neutral, and those with 3.5 or above were considered to be perceived as positive. As can be seen in Table 4, participants in the US were likely to evaluate all of the

attributes of the family business employer brand with a mean of 3.13 or above. In particular, participants viewed family businesses as offering high job security, trustworthiness, innovativeness, and thrift. These results do not support H1.

#### **INSERT TABLE 4 HERE**

H2 was tested using a hierarchical regression. Previous research suggests that age, sex, perceptions of size and familiarity with family firms influence attractiveness to family firms (Botero, 2014; Fang et al., 2016; Hauswald et al., 2016). Thus, these control variables were entered in step 1. Instrumental attributes of family business employer brand were entered in step 2, and symbolic attributes in step 3. As can be seen in Table 5 - step 2 (U.S. sample), the addition of instrumental attributes of the family business employer brand significantly increased the variance explained in job pursuit intentions toward family firms ( $\Delta F_{\text{step 2}} = 28.10, p < .001$ ). In the US sample, compensation ( $\beta = .21, p < .01$ ), advancement opportunities ( $\beta = .28, p < .001$ ) and job security ( $\beta = .15, p < .05$ ) were significantly related to job pursuit intentions. The addition of symbolic attributes in step 3 also significantly increased the variance explained in job pursuit intentions ( $\Delta F_{\text{step 3}} = 7.76, p < .001$ ). In this study, dominance ( $\beta = .11, p < .10$ ), thrift ( $\beta = .15, p < .05$ ), and style ( $\beta = .13, p < .05$ ) were significantly related to intentions to pursue a job in a family firm, while trustworthiness and innovation were not. By adding the symbolic attributes the significance level of each of the instrumental attributes decreased but remained significant. This means that H2 was supported for compensation, advancement opportunities, job security, dominance, thrift, and style. The combined predictors explain 40.4% of the variance in intentions to pursue a job in a family firm (Adjusted  $R^2 = .37$ ).

#### **INSERT TABLE 5 HERE**

### **Study 2 - Method**

Study 2 was conducted in Belgium with a sample of 324 students in their final year at KU Leuven Brussels' Campus, faculty of economics and business, excluding the international study programs. The average age of participants was 22.12 years (SD = 1.54), 46% were females, and 97% were full time students. As shown in table 1, there was a high degree of similarity between the two samples regarding

the demographic characteristics and the characteristics of the universities. There was a minor difference in the student to faculty ratio. This difference can be explained by the fact that in Europe education is free, thus there is a higher percentage of students in comparison to faculty.

We used the same data collection procedures as in study 1, and participants were asked to voluntarily participate in the study. Data in Belgium was collected in Dutch. To ensure cross-cultural interpretative equivalence of the scales and translation accuracy, two of the authors translated the scales from English to Dutch and another person back-translated to English. Based on this, the authors reviewed the back translation and asked to make changes in items that could be interpreted differently. This process was repeated until interpretative equivalency of measures was achieved (Kankaras & Moors, 2010). As explained earlier, we conducted multi-group factor analysis to ensure a sufficient level of cross-cultural equivalency of measures.

### Study 2 - Results

Table 6 reports means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for the Belgium sample. To test H1, we followed the same procedure as we did for study 1. As can be seen in Table 4, participants in Belgium were likely to evaluate all of the attributes of the family business employer brand with a mean of 2.83 or above. In particular, participants from Belgium evaluated only job security and trustworthiness as positively perceived attributes. All other attributes were evaluated as neutral. Thus, H1 was not supported.

### INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

H2 for the Belgian sample was tested using the same procedure as in study 1. As can be seen in Table 5, the addition of instrumental attributes of the family business employer brand significantly increased the variance explained in job pursuit intentions toward family firms ( $\Delta F_{\text{step } 2} = 7.58, p < .001$ ). In the Belgian context, advancement opportunities ( $\beta = .25, p < .001$ ) were significantly related to job pursuit intentions, whereas compensation and job security were not. The addition of symbolic attributes in step 3 also significantly increased the variance explained in job pursuit intentions ( $\Delta F_{\text{step } 3} = 12.06, p < .001$ ). In the Belgian context, trustworthiness ( $\beta = .30, p < .001$ ), dominance ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ), thrift ( $\beta = -$

.11,  $p < .05$ ) and style ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were significantly related to intentions to pursue a job in a family firm, while innovativeness was not. By adding the symbolic attributes the positive effect of advancement opportunities remained significant. This means that H2 was supported for advancement opportunities, trustworthiness, dominance, thrift, and style. The combined predictors explained 34.4% of the variance in intentions to pursue a job in a family firm (Adjusted  $R^2 = .32$ ).

### **Discussion**

In the last decade there has been an increased interest in understanding the recruitment challenges that family businesses face and how applicants evaluate family firms as places to work (See: Blombäck & Botero, 2013, Botero & Litchfield, 2013, and Tabor et al., 2018 for comprehensive reviews). However, there has not been an encompassing framework that can help researchers understand what non-family applicants evaluate when considering a family firm as a place to work, how do they evaluate these attributes, and how these evaluations affect their intentions to pursue a job with a family firm. We argue that the family business employer brand framework can be a building block to better understand why family business have challenges when recruiting and retaining non-family applicants. To explain our rationale we developed a project with three goals in mind. First, we wanted to introduce and explain the family business employer brand construct. This paper describes the family business employer brand as a set of beliefs and perceptions that job seekers hold about job and organizational attributes of organizations that explicitly communicate the family's involvement in a firm. Building on the work of Lievens and colleagues (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016), we suggest that the family business employer brand is a combination of tangible (i.e., job security, compensation, and advancement opportunities) and intangible attributes (i.e., trustworthiness, innovation, dominance, thrift, and style) that are relevant in the early stages of the recruitment process. Similar to others, we argue that employer brands are important because they affect the willingness of applicants to work for a firm (Lemmink et al, 2003; Theurer et al., 2018). Second, we wanted to assess how qualified non-family applicants for entry-level post-collage positions evaluated the different attributes of the family business employer brand. Results from this study indicate that applicants from the USA and Belgium

perceived components of the family business employer brand image as neutral or positive. The third goal was to understand how the evaluations of family business employer brand would affect intentions to pursue a job with a family firm. Results from our study indicate that instrumental and symbolic components of the family business employer brand image have unique and significant effects on the intentions that applicants have to pursue a job in a family firm. In particular, compensation, advancement opportunities, trustworthiness, dominance, thrift, and style all have significant, mostly positive, effects on job pursuit intentions.

### ***Research Implications***

The introduction of the family business employer brand construct represents an extension of the work on family business brand systems into the employment context (see: Binz Astrachan et al., 2018). Binz Astrachan and Colleagues argue that the family business brand system has three general levels: the identity level, the image level, and the reputation level. Although the family business employer brand could also have these three levels, the current project focuses on the reputational level of the brand (i.e., it captures how stakeholders view and evaluate the firm as an employer). Focusing on the reputational component of the family business employer brand is important because it can help managers and family business owners better understand the effects of the family business brand in different contexts (see: Binz Astrachan et al., 2018; Sageder et al., 2016). This project introduces the reputational component of the family business employer brand, and provides a baseline understanding of how this brand can be evaluated. Our project also introduces one of the ways to measure the family business brand. Binz Astrachan and Colleagues (2018) argue that an important aspect of understanding family business brand systems is being able to assess them. Thus, we provide one option to assess the reputational component of the family brand in the employment context. Future research should continue to develop a better understanding and explanation of the family business employer brand system, and how to assess the different components of the system.

Our results show that applicants from the USA and Belgium perceived components of the family business employer brand as neutral or positive. These results were not consistent with H1 and other

studies that suggest that explicitly communicating family involvement in a firm elicits negative associations in the employment context (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Botero, 2014; Ibrahim et al., 2008; Miller & Le-Breton Miller, 2003). This is important, because it brings to light the need to better understand why applicants would have positive or negative perceptions about a family firm as a place to work and what drives employer brand perceptions. For example, it may be that the quality of previous direct experiences with employment in a family firm can be an important driver of employer brand perceptions. That is, individuals who had positive previous experiences working for family firms will perceive the attributes of the family business employer brand more positively than those with previous negative experiences. Although this study did not measure the quality of previous work experiences with family firms, we did assess the familiarity that applicants had with family firms based on having worked for a family firm, or haven taken courses about family firms. As can be seen in Table 2 and 5, familiarity was positively correlated with several attributes of the family business employer brand. Based on this, we suggest that future research should explore the direct and moderating factors that influence positive and negative perceptions about family business employer brands. Some of the factors that can be considered are the quality of previous employment experiences with family firms, perceptions of professionalism of the family firm, individual preferences, individual values, and personality factors.

The similar findings across the two cultures regarding family business employer brand attributes are consistent with literature on consumer perceptions about family firms. Previous research has found that consumers are likely to perceive family businesses in a positive light (Binz-Astrachan & Astrachan, 2015; Blombäck, 2009; Craig et al., 2008; Frost, 2008). Thus, an important contribution of our study is that it replicates previous work on family business branding from the consumer context. It seems that, in the recruitment context, family firms may receive similar benefits than they do in consumer contexts (Carrigan & Buckley, 2008; Okoroafo & Koh, 2009; Orth & Green, 2009). Our results point to a “spill-over” or “halo” effect from customer beliefs and experiences to applicants’ perceptions early in the recruitment process (Cable & Turban, 2001; DelVecchio et al., 2007; Schollaert et al., 2017). However, an alternative explanation for the similarity (i.e. neutral to positive perceptions) of results can also be the

social desirability in response patterns of our respondents. Given the limited understanding about individual perceptions about family business brands (Botero et al., 2018), and the mixed claims and results from previous research about perceptions of family firms as employers (Binz Astrachan et al., 2018; Sageder et al., 2016), future research should continue to explore the general effects of communicating family involvement in a firm. This research should also explore how non-family applicants evaluate family business employer brand attributes and under which circumstances (e.g. managerial or non-managerial positions, level of work experience) explicit communication of family involvement influences positive and negative perceptions about a family firm. A starting point to better understand these perceptions and how they differ across samples can be obtained by collecting data about perceptions of family business brands in consumer and employer contexts from multiple samples throughout multiple countries.

At a general level, these results replicate previous work by Lievens and colleagues (2003, 2005, 2007) who found that when applicants are evaluating their intentions to pursue a job in a firm they rely on both tangible and intangible attributes to evaluate a firm as a place to work. Thus, our study extends previous research on recruitment in family firms in particular, by adding the consideration of symbolic attributes in determining the intentions that applicants have to pursue a job in a family firm. Given that our results replicate the incremental contribution of symbolic attributes when explaining the job pursuit intentions in other contexts (Slaughter & Greguras, 2009), future research can benefit from including both tangible and intangible attributes when studying family businesses employer brand.

Although we did not have sound theoretical reasons to expect differences in relationships across the two countries we did note that there are some general important differences to highlight. Our results show that applicants from the USA evaluated attributes from the family business employer brand more positively than participants from Belgium, except for job security. Additionally, while applicants from the USA placed greater value on compensation, advancement opportunities, thrift, and style when determining their job pursuit intentions, applicants from Belgium focused on advancement opportunities, trustworthiness, dominance, thrift, and style when determining their job pursuit intentions. When



combined, these results contribute to our understanding of heterogeneity of family businesses and reinforces the idea of cultural differences. In the context of heterogeneity, our results continue to support the idea that there are differences between family firms (Chua et al., 2012. Nordqvist et al., 2014). As shown in our results, applicants from different parts of the world perceive family firms differently. These differences may be rooted in the variance that exists between family firms or in the variance that exists between how cultures view family firms (Goel et al., 2012). Given these observations, we suggest that future research on job pursuit intentions in the family business context could benefit from including measures to assess differences between family firms and differences in cultural orientation. The addition of these measures can help us better understand the differences between family firms, and the role that culture plays in these differences.

### ***Practical Implications***

At a practical level, our findings suggest that signaling family ownership in the recruiting market does not result in negative perceptions about a family firm among potential applicants aiming at entry-level post-college positions in the USA or Belgium. Thus, when family businesses are recruiting applicants to fill these entry-level positions, they are not likely to be negatively affected by presenting themselves as family firms. In addition, given the neutral to positive perceptions on family business employer brand image among the university students in our sample, it might be helpful for family firms to target universities as one of the resources to recruit from. Taken together, our results can help family business managers and human resource representatives by providing information regarding the types of attributes that they could communicate to students who are looking for employment after finishing their university degree.

### **Contributions and Limitations**

This study has two important contributions. First, it introduces family business employer brand as a construct to better understand applicants' perceptions about family firms, and how these perceptions affect intentions to pursue a job in these contexts. To our knowledge, this is the first paper to explicitly define and incorporate family business branding into the recruitment context. Second, this study provides

an initial understanding of the associations that individuals have with the term “family business” in the employment context. The findings from our study suggest that contrary to previous research, family businesses are not perceived negatively in the employment context. In particular, our results provide a baseline understanding of the evaluations of family business employer brands, and continue to help researchers understand how family involvement can serve as a differentiating factor for family firms.

Our study also has several limitations. First, the data is cross-sectional in nature and focus on the initial stages of the recruitment process. As we highlight early on in the paper, this project focuses on generating applicants for the organization. Although this stage is important, the recruitment process has three stages and different types of factors influence applicants’ choices at different stages (Barber, 1998; Uggerslev et al., 2012). By taking a cross-sectional approach and focusing on one stage of the recruitment process, we provide a partial picture of the challenges family firms face in recruiting non-family college applicants in the initial stages of the process. With this in mind, future research can benefit from a longitudinal design that can incorporate different stages of the recruitment process and the different factors that might play a role in each stage. For example, researchers can work with a family firm to explore who applies to their jobs, and follow the applicants throughout the recruitment and selection process. Additionally, researchers could work with family firms to help them carefully plan different recruitment materials and then explore how applicants react to the materials. Both of these approaches could help us better understand the whole recruitment process.

A second set of limitations is related to the characteristics of our sample. This project focused on non-family applicants for entry-level post-college positions. For most applicants this would be their first full time professional job. Thus, it may be that promoting family involvement in the business, as suggested in family business branding literature, may positively influence job seekers who have limited work experience and are focusing on entry-level positions. Their lack of previous experience with a full time job can lead to biased expectations of the things that might be relevant and important in their job choices. It may be that experienced workers are less motivated to join family firms because the “family first” principle is more salient in higher managerial positions, or for people with a wider set of

experiences (Sharma & Nordqvist, 2008). That is, more experienced applicants may perceive that there are fewer opportunities for advancement within the firm, or may have relevant comparison points when evaluating their perceptions about family firms. It might be that the ‘spill-over’ of positive consumer perceptions is less pronounced when the applicant has more work experience and previous perceptions to rely on. With this in mind, we suggest that future research can also explore the perceptions of other types of applicants toward family firms. For example, it would be interesting to compare applicants for non-managerial and managerial positions and how they evaluate family firms, or to compare how recent graduates evaluate family firms in comparison to applicants who have been in the workforce for 5 or 10 years. It is likely that due to exposure to a wider range of work experiences and organizations, perceptions about family firms as employer can evolve over time and affect job pursuit intentions (Jin & Rounds, 2012). This might enable family firms to address different cohorts of applicants in the most appropriate way to enlarge their pool of potential applicants.

Another issue related to our sample is that we did not assess whether participants were working for their own family business to be able to control for this. Although we asked about their familiarity with family businesses, we did not assess whether they were next generation members that can potentially take over the business. This is important because there might be differences in the perceptions of family and non-family members regarding the family business employer brand. Future research should assess whether participants have and work in their family’s firm. We also collected data from a sample of participants that were located in one location within each country. Thus, we are assuming that participants from other parts of Belgium and the US would not vary in their perceptions. Given the differences in cultural characteristics within countries, we recommend that future research should also strive to collect information from different parts on one country to understand whether the perceptions of family business employer brands vary within a country.

Another limitation is the focus on family firms as one group without differentiating between the heterogeneous types of family firms. As we know, family firms differ in the degree of involvement that the family can have in the business (Chua et al., 2012). In this study we focused on the general perception

towards family businesses. This might not be reflective of all the variety of family involvement in a firm and might not reflect how different levels of involvement will impact perceptions about the family firm. Although we believe that potential applicants who are close to graduating from a university are likely to consider family firms as one group without any sensitivity to the heterogeneity (in line with Binz-Astrachan, 2014; Binz Astrachan et al., 2018), it would be interesting if future research could explore the perceptions of family firms with different levels of family involvement. It is important to note that our paper only focuses on perceptions of family firms without a comparison to non-family firms. Thus, it would be interesting for future research to contrast perceptions about family firms with those of non-family firms to see if there is a “family effect” in the context of employment. Having the same individuals rate both family and the non-family firms, would be a good test to compare whether there is a family effect to the family business employer brand.

A final limitation is the scope of the family business employer brand measure. For our study we focused on 8 elements of the family business employer brand. These elements did not include any components of the family business dimension (i.e., the differentiating factor that the family brings to the business). Thus, they provided a limited view of the intersection of the family and the business characteristics. With this in mind, and building on the ideas of Binz Astrachan and colleagues (2018), we suggest that future research should continue to build a better assessment of the family business employer brand that is able to capture not only the characteristics of the business, but also the unique contribution of the family as a differentiator for the business. This can be done by adding dimensions of the values that the family brings to the business, and may include flexibility, family culture, social contribution, and responsibility towards others.

## **Conclusion**

Family businesses have a hard time attracting qualified non-family applicants to work in their organizations. Using a sample of Belgian and U.S. students we developed a survey to assess perceptions about the attributes of the family business employer brand and the willingness to work for these firms. Our results suggest that both instrumental and symbolic factors of the family business employer brand

play a role in determining the intentions that applicants have to work in these organizations. We found that applicants tend to have neutral to positive perceptions about family firms. Additionally, we found some evidence that country of the sample played a role in the importance that participants paid to the attributes of the family business employer brand when deciding if they would work for a family firm. Based on these results, it seems that the difficulties that family business owners have for recruiting non-family entry-level talent into the family firm is not due to negative perceptions from applicants. Future research should explore how previous experiences with family firms affect evaluations of the family business employer brand, how different types of qualified applicants (i.e., recent graduates vs. 5 to 10 years in the workforce; or managerial vs. non-managerial applicants) view firms with various levels of family involvement; and whether applicants value different types of information at different points of the recruitment process.

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**Table 1 – Demographic Information**

<b>Sample Characteristics</b>	<b>U.S.</b>	<b>Belgium</b>
Males	51%	54%
Females	49%	46%
Full Time Students	98%	97%
Age	M = 20.83 SD = 2.84	M = 22.12 SD = 1.54
<b>University Characteristics*</b>		
Size (annual total enrollment)	30,473	44,412
Location	Urban	Urban
Student to Faculty Ratio	17:1	37:1
Type of University	Public	Public

\* This information is based on data from 2017 obtained from university websites and related academic sources

**Table 2 – Items and CFA Structure**

Measure	Item description	Loading*	AVE	Composite reliability
<b><i>Job Pursuit Int.</i></b>	I would accept a job offer from a family business	.70	.60	.88
	I would request more information about family businesses as places to work	.70		
	If a family business visited campus, I would want to speak with them	.75		
	I would attempt to gain an interview with a family business	.87		
	I would actively pursue obtaining a position with a family business	.83		
<b><i>Compensation</i></b>	Family businesses offer good salaries			
<b><i>Advancement opportunities</i></b>	Family businesses offer a lot of opportunities for advancement	.74	.49	.74
	Family businesses offer prospects for higher positions	.71		
	Family businesses offer the possibility to build a career	.65		
<b><i>Job Security</i></b>	Family businesses offer the possibility to hold a permanent position	.81	.57	.79
	Family businesses offer job security	.70		
	Family businesses offer prospects for a certain future	.75		
<b><i>Trustworthiness</i></b>	Family businesses are friendly	.80	.55	.88
	Family businesses are attentive to people	.76		
	Family businesses are personable	.73		
	Family businesses are helpful	.75		
	Family businesses are honest	.72		
	Family businesses are reliable	.67		
<b><i>Innovativeness</i></b>	Family businesses are innovative			
<b><i>Dominance</i></b>	Family businesses are influential			
<b><i>Thrift</i></b>	Family businesses are cost conscious	.85	.60	.82
	Family businesses are budget conscious	.82		
	Family business are economical in their spending	.63		
<b><i>Style</i></b>	Family businesses are stylish	.70	.58	.85
	Family businesses are fashionable	.73		
	Family businesses are hip	.77		
	Family businesses are trendy	.84		

\*: The reported loadings are standardized loadings based on asymptotically distribution-free estimates for the combined sample (n =576, list-wise deletion).

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study 1 - US Sample

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Job Pursuit Int.	3.42	0.77	(.90)												
Compensation	3.27	0.80	.42**												
Advancement	3.28	0.73	.45**	.40**	(.73)										
Job Security	3.57	0.75	.37**	.44**	.39**	(.75)									
Trustworthy	3.91	0.50	.36**	.23**	.25**	.32**	(.87)								
Innovation	3.43	0.86	.39**	.25**	.27**	.19**	.37**								
Dominance	3.41	0.87	.42**	.32**	.40**	.29**	.37**	.45**							
Thrift	3.80	0.56	.41**	.30**	.25**	.33**	.61**	.37**	.30**	(.74)					
Style	3.13	0.70	.40**	.19**	.31**	.14*	.31**	.48**	.44**	.25**	(.88)				
Familiarity <sup>a</sup>	3.21	0.74	.26**	.14*	.19**	.13*	.19**	.15*	.17**	.19**	.31**	(.68)			
Size <sup>b</sup>	2.41	0.62	.02	.11 <sup>t</sup>	.11 <sup>t</sup>	.03	-.21**	.03	.12*	-.17**	.04	.04			
Sex <sup>c</sup>	0.51	0.50	.02	.08	-.06	.02	-.01	.04	-.03	-.03	.13*	.09	.05		
Age	20.83	2.84	-.06	-.05	-.03	-.16*	-.11 <sup>t</sup>	.02	-.11 <sup>t</sup>	-.05	-.02	.07	-.01	.02	
Student <sup>d</sup>	0.98	0.15	.04	-.01	.12 <sup>t</sup>	.05	.04	.08	.04	.08	-.04	-.04	.02	-.05	-.49**

Reliability in Diagonal, pairwise deletion

<sup>a</sup> Familiarity (average of three items on knowledgeable about family businesses, reverse coding of not being familiar with family firms, and familiar with products and services of family firms)

<sup>b</sup> Size (average of 2 items on perception of family firms as large firms)

<sup>c</sup> Sex: Female = 0, Male = 1

<sup>d</sup> Full Time Student no = 0, yes = 1

\*\* Correlation significant at least at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

<sup>t</sup> Correlation significant at 0.10 level (2-tailed)

**Table 4 – Assessment of Family Business Employer Brand Image**

Variable	US		Belgium		Mean Differences <sup>a</sup>
	M	SD	M	SD	
Compensation	3.27	.80	3.29	.69	-.03
Advancement	3.28	.73	2.85	.73	.44***
Job Security	3.57	.75	3.71	.68	-.15*
Trustworthy	3.91	.50	3.55	.47	.37***
Innovative	3.43	.86	2.92	.74	.50***
Dominance	3.41	.87	2.83	.88	.58***
Thrift	3.80	.56	3.49	.62	.31***
Style	3.13	.70	3.00	.56	.14*
Job Pursuit Int.	3.42	0.78	3.22	0.77	0.21**

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> The mean difference yields the average score for U.S. sample (n=268) minus average score for Belgian sample (n=308). The mean differences are rounded at 2 decimals. Significance of independent samples t-test for U.S. - Belgium.: <sup>t</sup> p <.10; \*p <.05; \*\*p <.01; \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 5 – Regression Results for the Effect of Family Business Employer Brand Image Attributes on Job Pursuit Intentions <sup>a</sup>**

Regression Variables	U.S. sample			Belgian sample		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<b>Step 1: controls</b>						
Familiar	.26***	.16**	.09 <sup>t</sup>	.24***	.22***	.15**
Sex <sup>a</sup>	-.003	.007	-.004	-.07	-.08	-.07
Age	-.08	-.03	-.02	-.14*	-.13*	-.11*
Size	.01	-.04	-.02	.19**	.11 <sup>t</sup>	.04
<b>Step 2: Instrumental</b>						
Compensation		.21**	.15*		.06	.01
Advancement		.28***	.17**		.25***	.21***
Job Security		.15*	.10 <sup>t</sup>		-.01	-.09
<b>Step 3: Symbolic</b>						
Trustworthiness			.02			.30***
Innovation			.09			-.07
Dominance			.11 <sup>t</sup>			.11*
Thrift			.15*			-.11*
Style			.13*			.21**
$\Delta R^2$	.07**	.24***	.10***	.14***	.06***	.14***
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	.06	.29	.37	.13	.19	.32

All values presented are standardized  $\beta$ .

$N_{U.S.}$ (list-wise deletion) = 256

$N_{Belgium}$ (list-wise deletion) = 299.

<sup>t</sup> $p < .10$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

<sup>a</sup>0 = Female, 1 = Male

Maximum Variance Inflation Factors do not exceed 1.62 for the Belgian sample and 1.93 for the U.S. sample.

**Table 6 – Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study 2 -Belgian Sample**

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Job Pursuit Int.	3.22	0.77	(.87)												
Compensation	3.29	0.69	.16**												
Advancement	2.85	0.73	.34**	.27**	(.72)										
Job Security	3.71	0.68	.11 <sup>t</sup>	.16**	.19**	(.83)									
Trustworthiness	3.55	0.48	.33**	.18**	.06	.32**	(.81)								
Innovation	2.92	0.74	.17**	.15**	.22**	.06	.16**								
Dominance	2.83	0.88	.30**	.11 <sup>t</sup>	.23**	.02	.09	.29**							
Thrift	3.49	0.62	-.04	-.03	-.14*	.08	.34**	-.10 <sup>t</sup>	.02	(.73)					
Style	3.00	0.56	.41**	.16**	.28**	.12*	.32**	.47**	.40**	.05	(.82)				
Familiarity <sup>a</sup>	3.03	0.91	.27**	.08	.14*	.17**	.22**	.10 <sup>t</sup>	.17**	.08	.19**	(.81)			
Size <sup>b</sup>	2.38	0.79	.26**	.07	.31**	-.01	.02	.17**	.31**	-.21**	.24**	.20**			
Sex <sup>c</sup>	0.54	0.50	-.06	.06	.00	-.01	.05	.05	-.04	.04	.00	.14*	-.08		
Age	22.12	1.54	-.17**	-.12*	-.09	-.10 <sup>t</sup>	.00	-.03	-.06	.14*	-.13*	.00	-.16**	.06	
Student <sup>d</sup>	0.97	0.17	.13*	.08	-.01	.01	-.05	.01	-.01	-.09	.03	-.00	.03	.03	-.25**

Reliability in Diagonal, pairwise deletion

<sup>a</sup> Familiarity (average of three items on knowledgeable about family businesses, reverse coding of not being familiar with family firms, and familiar with products and services of family firms)

<sup>b</sup> Size (average of 2 items on perception of family firms as large firms)

<sup>c</sup> Sex: Female = 0, Male = 1

<sup>d</sup> Full Time Student no = 0, yes = 1

\*\* Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

<sup>t</sup> Correlation significant at 0.10 level (2-tailed)