

The Impact Behavior of the Predecessor and Successor on the Transmission of Family Businesses in Tunisia

B. Kettana

Abstract—Nowadays, financial and economic crises are growing more and reach more countries and sectors. These events have, as a result, a considerable impact on the activities of the firms which think unstable and in danger.

But besides this heavy uncertainty which weighs on the different firms, the family firm, object of our research, is not only confronted with these external difficulties but also with an internal challenge and of size: that of transmission. Indeed, the transmission of an organization from one generation to another can succeed as it can fail; leaving considerable damage.

Our research registers as part of these problems since we tried to understand relation between the behavior of two main actors of the process of succession, predecessor and successor; and the success of transmission.

Keywords—Family business, transmission, success, predecessor, successor.

I. INTRODUCTION

SINCE the business world exists, family businesses are present. They would be even «the oldest organizations in the world and the most spreading» [1],[2]. Their place is far from being negligible in worldwide economy. Moreover, the global survey from PricewaterhouseCoopers Family Business Survey, conducted in 2007/2008; confirms this. The proportion of the family firms varies between 50 % and 95 % in European Union and American areas; and contributes to 35 % until 70 % GNP.

In Tunisia, nearly of 95 % of companies recorded in the trade register are SARL, are overwhelmingly family [3]; and the interest carried to this topic continue to grow; so several problems were and are currently treated by Tunisian researchers [4],[5],[3],[6],[7],[8],[9],[10],[11],[12],[13].

Nevertheless, the family firms are considered sensitive to the transfers of generations. Indeed, for several years, carrying out statistical survival rates is stable. On the whole, 30 % family firms achieve passage in the second generation, 10 % - 15 % pass to the third and only 3%- 5% survive up to the fourth generation [14],[15].

However, although this statistics sketches a not very encouraging portrait, it could be even bleaker in the next few years. Indeed, many family businesses have been founded after the second World War [16],[15] are now faced, with the

challenge of succession, a challenge that leads to a primordial question of the withdrawal current leader and maintaining of the firm in the family circle, hence the birth of the issue of transfer of family firms.

The transfer of a business is a fundamental aspect in management, because the question of the change of leadership necessarily arises at any time of its history [17]. Decisions which will be made to set it up will be irreversible and influence all other decisions which will initiate the firm. Major stage in the survival of the firm, the transmission of the firm remains a first-rate event because all firms do not achieve their transmission.

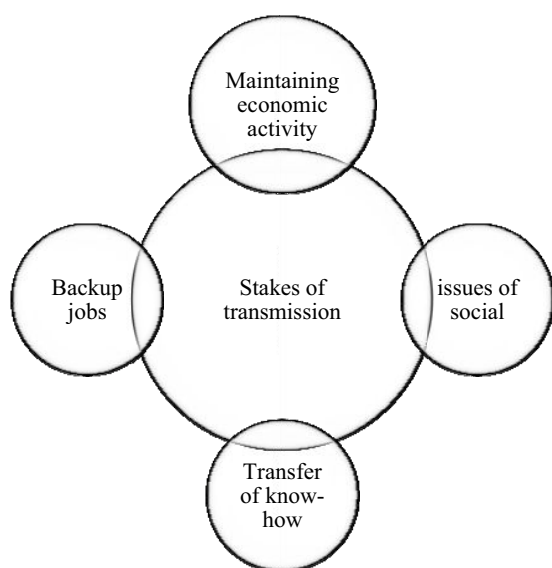
II. TRANSMISSION: PROCESS AND STAKES

A. Stakes of Transmission:

The family firm is particularly fragile during its passage from a generation to another, it isn't only exposed to the threats which touch all types of firms, but must also confront danger peculiar to its family nature.

Indeed, according to an American study conducted in 1973, only 30 % of family firms survive their transfer to the second generation, 10 to 15% would survive such transfer to the third generation and only between 3 and 5 % survive up to the fourth generation. This explains that the transmission of the family firms is often a delicate operation look dangerous for their survival.

So that a firm lives, it has to be profitable that is it exercises its activity with benefit. So, the main objective of transmission is to assure survival and permanence of firms after the departure of the predecessor. This objective throws several stakes such as: the maintaining of economic activity, backup jobs, the transfer of know-how and other stakes concerning the owners of the firm [18].



Source: adapted from Barbot and Richomme-Huet (2006)

Fig. 1 Stakes of Transmission

B. Succession: Processes and Factors of Influence

The transmission of a small family business by succession takes a specific form of Entrepreneurship. Within these firms, succession is not an event but a slow and progressive process during which the individuals perform necessary preparations to assure a family concordance and a continuity of the firm across generations [19],[20],[21].

Succession is considered as being an important stage in the life cycle of family firms, principally for those of which the founder has as primordial objective the continuity assured by one or several members of his family.

Succession is a process composed of stages and events spread out over time requiring preparation and a voluntary step [22].

Moreover, succession is a dynamic process during which roles and functions of two main groups of actors, that is predecessor and successor, [23],[24] evolve in a dependent and overlapped way, in the ultimate purpose to transfer to a member of the next generation the direction of the firm on one hand [23],[25],[26],[27],[28] and property; on the other hand [25],[27],[29],[30].

According to [2], the family firms are determinable by three main criteria: «the firm has to be controlled by at least a member of the family; that exercises real management; and, finally, that there is a firm will at one or several leaders there to transmit property in the following generation. »Besides, what differentiates first a family firm of an individual or not family firm; it is its process of succession, not only of heritage, but also of know-how of the leader.

In available literature on succession in the family firms, two types of process of succession are identifiable: that of property and that of direction [25],[26],[27]. Both processes include each four distinct stages. For the first, it is about the detonator of decision, decision itself, consultation to experts and

revision of the transfer of property. For second, it is incubation, choice of the successor, joint reign and disengagement [24].

Reference [31] performed a synthesis of researches which lean over the understanding of the process of succession and identified that the first type of process (property) describes the evolution of the firm in general, while second (direction) is more particularly interested in evolution and involvement of the main factors that are the precursor and the successor; dimension which represents our research object.

In spite of the dissimilitude of definitions, it would be necessary to suppose that "succession" is a process which includes several stages necessary for its completion [24],[25],[32],[33].

The process starts before the integration of the successor in the firm and ends during the final withdrawal of the predecessor, phases pointed out in the existent models [23],[24],[25],[32],[34] can be summed up by four following that are: introduction; integration; joint reign; and finally the disengagement of the founder.

Let us consider the starting point actuality and big challenge which puts down the question of transmission of the family firms, this study turned to the main actors of this process; namely the study of the impact behavior of the predecessor and of the successor about the success of transmission, this point being not much developed in the context of succession.

Scrutiny of the literature on the transmission process and the successful transition of the family firm from one generation to another, allowed us to identify four variables:

- ✓ The acceptance of the changing role and the grieving process:

Admittedly, the transmission business represents a huge challenge for both the company and its survival but also for its founder. Indeed, the leaders of family firms are often very tied to their firms; they are investing completely [35].

« It isn't uncommon to note that the idea of the transfer of power doesn't always return the leaders very happy » [36]. The entrepreneur often perceives his firm as a true extension of his personality and identifies himself completely to her [37],[38].

Therefore, the posting of their business is a difficult decision and act. Some feel besides during the transmission of their firm, a kind of loss of identity and of power, they feel useless and refuse to face up this feeling that is growing gradually as their withdrawal becomes effective. What explains that some leaders don't miss to implement some form of resistance to the succession [39] which can lead to the "sabotage" of succession to prove its usefulness, or by jealousy and selfishness [40].

A thing is clear for [36], is that: «Succession can't succeed if seller doesn't want to give way. It is it which indeed keeps the key of a successful succession. If it opposes, the process of cession risks lasting for a long time and not an easy task». Thus, it is possible to make a link between the psychological and behavioral characteristics of the predecessor and the transfer of his emotional needs on its firm and to assume that

the predecessor really holds the key of a successful transmission.

✓ The planning of transmission process in the family firms

Planning is often considered to be a reason of failure of transmission especially if it is hastily worked out and in a late way.

According to [22], planning is not a punctual event but rather a slow, gradual and variable process according to the context and the mode of transmission. Rather it begins; better chances will be to succeed. The preparation of planning involves defining the choice of the successor, the mode of transmission as well as the timing of the transfer of management and of property. This process begins then from the awareness of the leader and ends during its real withdrawal.

✓ The concept of commitment

«Commitments develop naturally» [41] and concern mainly both the most important elements of human life, which are family and job [42] who are led to co-exist in a family firm.

Commitment represents an essential component of the family firm [43].

Organizational commitment is therefore explained in terms of psychological and emotional attachment to the organization. Indeed, for [44], organizational commitment is a psychological attachment that individuals feel for the organization.

As for [43], commitment and unit are the key forces of successful family firms. The more successor is hired towards the family firm and the achievement of his objectives, the more succession has chances to succeed.

→ The success of succession depends on the level of commitment of the successor

It is therefore important that the person elected to the transfer and the resumption of the torch, is committed to the firm and its objectives and not compelled or forced. Indeed, it is necessary to let the offspring want to reach the family firm and not push it.

→ Commitment is linked to the circumstances of the entry of the successor firm.

Indeed according to [45], it is imperative to include the intentions of family members before they join business, to make better decisions concerning the most appropriate human resources to the society.

As for [46], they note that intentions give significant acuteness in behavior expected even without noticing real behavior. Consequently, the offspring intentions to join and ensure the business of their parents, particularly if seen as part of the succession process; can act as indication in the future behavior of the offspring. Therefore, knowing their intentions is important to gain a better understanding of the process of succession.

✓ Skills successor

To ensure a heavy responsibility as that of a new leader within a family firm, several criteria are essential. In this sense, [47] focalized his analysis on the successor and his

development; since it is he who will lead the company in future [33],[48],[49],[50],[51].

The principal cares of the new leader consist in being accepted by employees and the external stakeholders of the organization and in persuade them to adhere to its plan.

The training and learning which the successor receives will influence his development as a leader and throughout affect chances of success of the succession process.

Nevertheless, to avoid a capacity crisis during and after transition, successors need a pre-succession development [25] [32] and a post succession development [52].

School training: it can be useful because it provides a set of systematic experiments that promote the development of some skills, knowledge and problem resolving [53].

Getting a business experience outside the family firm [52], and the capacities of the successor will be judged with greater objectivity. Personal development, self-confidence and achieving success outside the society prepare the successor as a competent manager with a broader perspective in the business environment.

It is obvious that this exhibition dices youth to the family company and summer jobs constitute a valuable experience encouraging the successor to get knowledge pre-succession. As a result, the successor gains knowledge of the nature of business and the employees, and develops necessary specific skills for business. This encourages the acceptance of the successor, allows him to create credibility, and reinforces important business reports [54].

The continuation of the training throughout career within the family society [55] by taking the responsibility of stains, rotation of posts and participation with the foreign shareholders [53],[56]→ Intellectual Extension.

It is necessary to underline that it is needed on average between two and four years so that the successor develops an image of credibility to his peers [54] and to be accepted by the staff and the organization.

H1: The succession planning on behalf of the predecessor has an impact on the success of the transmission of the family firms.

H2: The acceptance of the role change on behalf of the predecessor has an impact on the success of the transmission of the family firms.

H3: The concept of commitment at the successor towards the family firm has an impact on the success of the transmission.

H4: The experience and skills of the successor have an impact on the success of the transmission of the family firms.

III. EMPIRICAL WORK

As already enunciated, this research is aimed at understanding better the impact of behavior of the predecessor and his successor on the success of transmission; registers as part of an exploratory approach. Quantitative method seemed to us the most appropriate to answer this objective. The strategy for which we opted is the questionnaire.

The use of the questionnaire as a data collection tool has numerous advantages, among these advantages it is possible to name: speed of administration, flexibility, versatility, economy of time and of money ...

Nevertheless, the questionnaire must answer the problems of concerned subject satisfactorily. For this reason, it is necessary to be sure that put down questions allow us to satisfy our problems.

So, four stages were followed when drafting the questionnaire:

- Precise definition of the problem of work
- The determination of the corresponding sub-objectives, that is to say hypotheses named in the literature reviews.
- The choice of necessary variables to measure hypotheses to be assessed
- The development of questions in the questionnaire.

A. Sampling:

As part of this research, the selected firms are Tunisian family firms run by the second generation for at least 4 years.

For this reason, we had recourse to the directories of firms to choose firms having mention« and son» in their corporate name, then we undertook a selection of the family firms which were transmitted to the successors.

TABLE I
THE SELECTED FIRMS

Industry	Small and medium companies	Larges Companies
Industry	16	5
Commerce	32	6
Service	4	0
		Total=63

B. Drafting the Questionnaire

As already stated, the objective of this study is to study the impact of two main actors of the family business succession process. A thorough literature review we identified four essential factors: planning, acceptance of change of role for the predecessor, the concept of commitment; and skills and trainings for the successor. Following stage consists in checking if the result of the transmission of a Tunisian family firm varies according to these hypotheses. To be made, each of these hypotheses will be measured by some variables determined from our literature review.

Concerning the first hypothesis, the planning of the operation of transmission, two explicative variables were mobilized:

- The preparation of transmission (VA1)
- The instant of the beginning of planning (VA2)

As for the second hypothesis, the acceptance of the role change, it will be assessed from four explicative variables:

- The participation of the predecessor in strategic decisions of the firm after leaving (VB 1).

- The transfer of skills and of knowledge (VB2).
- The presentation of the successor to various internal and external partners of the firm (VB3).

- The level of acceptance of the change of role by the predecessor (VB4).

The third hypothesis, the concept of commitment among the successor, is assessed from four variables:

- The interest of the successor for the family firm from youth (VC1)

- The participation of the successor in the job of the family firm before joining it (VC2).

- The intention of the successor to join the family firm (VC3).

- The resumption of the relay voluntarily (VC4).

Finally, the fourth hypothesis is competences and trainings of the successor will be assessed by four variables:

- The grade of the successor (VD1).

- Practice in other firms before joining the family firm (VD2).

- Acquisition of skills during experiments outside the family firm (VD3).

- The management style adopted after the departure of the predecessor (VD4).

For each of these variables we had fight necessary information to assess their importance, their attribution and impact on the operation of transmission.

The questionnaire was administered to the concerned firms directly or by e-mail.

C. Data Processing

We are above all going to undertake an exploratory factor analysis through Principal Component Analysis (PCA), and then we are going to perform a confirmatory factor analysis to test reliability and construct validity.

1. Exploratory factor analysis

❖ Principal Component Analysis

Data were treated at first with the aid of SPSS software. To reduce initial data, we had recourse to PCA which is part of multivariate descriptive analyzes. The purpose of this analysis is to sum up the maximum of possible information by losing the least possible; it facilitates the interpretation of a large number of initial data and to give more sense to the reduced data [57].

After introducing our database on SPSS, the step of PCA was followed and following results were obtained:

✓ Factor Analysis of Planning

We are above all going to look at the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) that allows us to appreciate the importance of links between variables, it is significant if it is superior or equal to 0,5. For our first variable: succession planning from the predecessor, KMO = 0,5; it is legitimate to say that planning has an impact on the smooth running of succession. It is even possible to say according to the second table that planning explains in 74,119 % the success of succession.

Now, we pass to Bartlett's test to verify that variables aren't correlated. It is significant because its probability is equal to $0,04 < 0,05$.

TABLE II
INDICATION KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF PLANNING

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,500
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	,078
	df	
	Sig.	,004

TABLE III
THE EXPLAINED VARIANCE OF PLANNING

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1,482	74,119	74,119	1,482	74,119	74,119
2	,518	25,881	100,000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

✓ Factor Analysis of the Acceptance of the Changing Role

For our second variable: acceptance of the change of role, $KMO=0,733 \geq 0,5$, it is significant. It is possible to say therefore that the acceptance of role change on behalf of the predecessor has an impact on the success of the transmission of a family firm; it participates in 64,703 % to the explanation. Moving to Bartlett's test, it is equal to $0 < 0,05$, it is significant: both variables aren't correlated.

TABLE IV
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHANGE OF ROLE

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,733
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5,036
	Df	
	Sig.	,000

TABLE V
THE EXPLAINED VARIANCE OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHANGE OF ROLE

Total Variance Explained						
COMPONENT	INITIAL EIGENVALUES			EXTRACTION SUMS OF SQUARED LOADINGS		
	TOTAL	% OF VARIANCE	CUMULATIVE %	TOTAL	% OF VARIANCE	CUMULATIVE %
1	2,588	64,703	64,703	2,588	64,703	64,703
2	,698	17,448	82,151			
3	,428	10,707	92,858			
4	,286	7,142	100,000			
EXTRACTION METHOD: PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS.						

✓ Factor Analysis of the Concept of Commitment

The third variable is the concept of commitment; has an effect on succession since $KMO=0,762 \geq 0,5$, this variable explains the success of transmission in 64,007 %. As for Bartlett's test, it is significant because it is equal to $0 < 0,05$, therefore both variables aren't correlated.

TABLE VI
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF THE CONCEPT OF COMMITMENT

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,762
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5,441
	Df	
	Sig.	,000

TABLE VII
THE EXPLAINED VARIANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF COMMITMENT

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2,560	64,007	64,007	2,560	64,007	64,007
2	,752	18,796	82,803			
3	,415	10,372	93,175			
4	,273	6,82	100,00			

		5	0			
Extraction	Method:	Principal				
Component Analysis.						

✓ Factor Analysis of Skills and Experiments

Let us look now to the fourth variable; skills and experiments of the successor, which initially represented a $KMO=0,412 < 0,5$ (therefore not significant).

TABLE VIII
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF SKILLS AND EXPERIMENTS (BEFORE)

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	Measure of Sampling		412
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		0,875
	Df		
	Sig.		012

TABLE IX
THE EXPLAINED VARIANCE OF SKILLS AND EXPERIMENTS (BEFORE)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1,488	49,588	49,588	1,488	49,588	49,588
2	1,077	35,907	85,495	1,077	35,907	85,495
3	,435	14,505	100,000			
Extraction Method:	Principal Component Analysis.					

They undertook the elimination of the items which didn't explain this variable (VD3 and VD4) to improve the model, and we obtained following results:

TABLE X
INDICATION KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF SKILLS AND EXPERIMENTS (AFTER)

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	Measure of Sampling	500
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	,252
	Df	
	Sig.	004

TABLE XI
THE EXPLAINED VARIANCE OF SKILLS AND EXPERIMENTS (AFTER)

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1,487	74,344	74,344	1,487	74,344	74,344
2	,513	25,656	100,000			
Extraction Method:	Principal Component Analysis.					

Now we can say that the variable skills and experiments, has an effect on succession since the $KMO=0,5$, which explains the success of succession in 74,344 % and Bartlett's test is significant because it is equal to 0,004 < 0,05.

Let's pass now to the test of the reliability of the measurement scales through Crombach's Alpha.

❖ The Reliability of the Measurement Scales

According to the table, all the values of Crombach's Alpha vary between 0,6 and 1, which allows us to find a good reliable of measurement scales.

TABLE XII
RELIABILITY INDEX

Variables	Alpha de Crombach
Planning	0,862
Acceptance of role change	0,813
Concept of commitment	0,808
Skills and experiments	0,655

Let's pass to the second stage: the confirmatory factor analysis by the structural equation modeling (SEM) that tests hypothetical linear relations between several variables. This method is going to be treated with the aid of software Statistica.

2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis:

❖ Normality

It is the condition of application of the SEM. To check if variables follow a normal distribution, we are interested in the Skewness and Kurtosis indices.

TABLE XIII
NORMALITY INDICES

	A 1	A 2	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	D 1	D 2
skewness	,4 34	,7 07	,7 95	,2 63	,6 80	,3 93	,8 81	,6 33	,9 11	,3 86	0, 4	0, 0
kurtosis	1, 81	1, 5	0, 66	1, 65	1, 15	1, 46	,2 54	1, 47	,6 14	,3 22	1, 8	1, 9

As shows in the table, the indices of different variables lie in the interval [-3; +3] then normality is confirmed. All variables follow a normal distribution.

❖ Adjustment of the Total Model

We will focus on the following indices:

- $X^2/ddl = 0.004417 < 5$
- $RMSEA = 0.0167 < 0,08$
- $GFI = 0,9458703 \approx 0,9$
- $AGFI = 0,74603363 \approx 0,9$
- $NFI = 0,79464416 \approx 0,9$
- $CFI = 0,89853008 \approx 0,9$

We note that the indices are all close the threshold, the model is therefore allowable.

❖ Adjustment of the Measurement Model

The valuation of the measurement model passes at first by the valuation of reliability and validity.

✓ Construct Reliability

As we saw him before, Cronbach's Alpha is included between 0,6 and 1 for all variables, the reliability of the constructing is proved.

✓ Construct Validity

According to [58], convergent validity is the capacity of a measure to give results similar to those of other measures of the same constructs. So we will look at the test T which is

significant if it is superior to 2 in absolute value and its probability $P < 0,05$ and in ρ of convergent validity which must be superior to 0,5 ($\rho = 1 / p \times \sum (\lambda_i)$).

TABLE XIV
VALIDITY CONSTRUCT INDICES

	T Statistic	Prob Level	carré des estimations	rho convergente
(planning) [VA1]			0,46152563	0,54055399
(planning) [VA2]	3,55628412	0,00037614	0,61958236	
(acceptance of role change) [VB1]	2,23520156	0,02540412	0,20260601	0,93479735
(acceptance of role change) [VB2]	6,44047937	1,1885E-10	1,08264198	
(acceptance of role change) [VB3]	476483884	8,8818E-16	1,9042359	
(acceptance of role change) [VB4]	-3,33367081	0,00085708	0,54970549	
(concept commitment) [VC1]	2,95783546	0,05024932	0,80706224	0,52097274
(concept commitment) [VC2]	3,43897291	0,66068116	0,35033064	
(concept commitment) [VC3]	2,30141376	0,02136825	0,3827557	
(concept commitment) [VC4]	2,48427327	0,01298161	0,54374239	
(skills experience) [VD1]	1099973997	8,8818E-16	0,63393466	0,52097274
(skills experience) [VD2]	4,22534091	2,3901E-05	0,43692216	

According to this table, we point out that of the test t values are superior to 2 and Rho of convergent validity is superior to

0,5, so we can say that the quality of the model of measure is acceptable.

IV. THE STRUCTURAL MODEL: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Now that the adjustment of the global model and of estimated model of measure are acceptable, it is possible to assess the adjustment of the structural model.

- $X^2/ddl = 1,2026118 < 5$
- $RMSEA = 0,0103 < 0,08$
- $GFI = 0,86817465 \approx 0,9$
- $AGFI = 0,8095856 \approx 0,9$
- $NFI = 0,81880282 \approx 0,9$
- $NNFI = 0,75761332 \approx 0,9$
- $CFI = 0,82765723 \approx 0,9$

The adjustment indices of structural model are close to the threshold, the structural model is acceptable.

TABLE XV
ESTIMATE OF PARAMETERS

	Parameter Estimate	T Statistic
Planning → succession	0,3267039	2,05291783
Acceptance changement role → succession	0,28693266	2,68636279
Concept commitment → succession	0,62635662	7,50878717
Skills and experiences → planning	0,19578544	1,75030786

• H1: The succession planning by the precursor has an impact on the success of the transmission of family firms.

According to the table $T = 2,05291783 > 2$, hypothesis is verified. Planning the succession process has a positive effect on the transmission of the family firms in Tunisia.

The preparation of planning: the definition of the choice of successor, the mode of transmission as well as the timing of the transfer of management, favors the success of transmission process. Indeed according to [22], earlier planning begins; the better the chances of succeed. A transmission badly planned (due to illness or a sudden death) may affect the smooth running of succession and therefore the future of the family firm.

• H2: The acceptance of change by the predecessor has an impact on the success of the transmission of the family firms.

Test T is equal to 2,68636279, hypothesis is verified. Psychological work which the predecessor does on himself is as important as planning in Tunisian context. The entrepreneur often perceives his firm as a true extension of his personality and identifies himself completely with it [37] [38], fact to lose grip and to give up its firm to the successor asks for courage and for an important psychological work, it is the mourning

process. This process makes the task to the successor and allows him to become more familiar with his new role and collaborators.

H3: The concept of commitment among the successor towards the family firm has an impact on the success of transmission.

According to the table $T = 7,50878717$, hypothesis is verified. The concept of commitment by the successor towards the family firm has a positive impact on transmission in Tunisian context. Indeed, the interest of the successor dices its youth for the family firm reinforces his feeling of membership. This feeling accentuates in turn the attachment to the family firm and the desire to preserve it.

According to [43], the more the successor is committed towards the family firm and the achievement of its objectives, the more the succession has chances to succeed.

• H4: Experience and skills of the successor have an impact on the success of the transmission of the family firms.

The test $T = 1,75030786 < 2$, hypothesis is rejected. Skills and experience of the successor don't have influence on the success of the family firm in Tunisian context. Empirical results show that even if the successor doesn't have academic training or professional experience can manage the family firm successfully. Therefore the variable skills and experience of the successor doesn't have impact on the succession process contrary to what we could determine according to available literature.

Thus, the results can be outlined as follows.

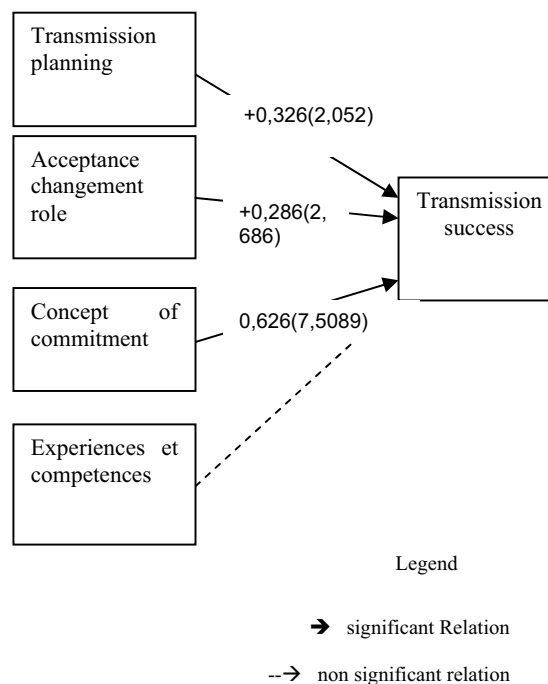


Fig. 2 Results of the structural model

V.CONCLUSION

This research was orientated to the study of key success factors in the transmission process. We were interested in four variables which seemed to us the most important according to the review of existent literature. The results of our research showed that in Tunisian context, the planning by the predecessor proves to be a factor favoring succession. Similarly, the acceptance of role changes on behalf of predecessor; in relation to the loss of its firm; also facilitates the successor task and therefore the smooth running of succession.

Concerning the successor, the concept of commitment towards the family firm is as important as the previous variables.

Nevertheless, experience and skills of the successor doesn't have effect on transmission in Tunisian context. This result presumes that even if the successor doesn't have experience or skills, he can take in hand the family firm and follow the job of his predecessor.

So these results offer adequate and pertinent solutions to those concerned: the leaders of family firms. It is appropriate to recommend a succession planning process and a psychological work on behalf of the predecessor, which can last for a long time to accept his separation of the firm he founded. For the successor, his commitment towards the family firm is very important; insofar as his integration dices its youth in the life of the family firm increases his commitment and involvement and therefore the chances of success transmission.

But it is necessary to underline that the present research has some gaps from whose main follows fundamentally from strategy favored namely the use of the questionnaire. This tool dresses an impersonal aspect compared to the case study or interviews which allow direct contact with respondents to better surround their answers but still require a much longer time than that demanded by the questionnaire.

In terms of future involvement of this research, it would be interesting to examine more in detail the stage of disengagement of the precursor who can constitute a source of resistance and that was widely studied in French and Canadian context [31] which was not treated in a Tunisian context.

A second line of research to explore is the quality of parent-child relationship to the extent that could be considered as an indicator mattering on evolution and on completeness of the process of succession.

For it, it is necessary to measure the importance of the quality of communication and trust between the two main groups of interested actors when they will meet in a business relationship. Later, it would be possible to measure the influence of parent-child relationship on the succession process.

Appendix 1: PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

Information about the nature of the business:

Corporate name:.....

Region:.....

Industry :

- ☐ Industry ☐ Trade
☐ Service ☐ Other

Legal form :

Staff :

- ☐ Less than 10 employees
☐ Between 10 and 50 employees
☐ More than 50 employés

Please specify your relationship with the predecessor:

- ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ Other

Appendix 2 : QUESTIONNAIRE

1-Your predecessor has recognized the need to pass the baton long before the transmission:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

2-Your predecessor has prepared the transmission of the family firm:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

3-Your predecessor participates in strategic decisions of the company after leaving:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

4-It has been a transfer of skills and knowledge between you and your predecessor:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

5-Your predecessor has introduced you to the various internal and external stakeholders of the company:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

6-According to you, your predecessor has actually accepted the role change:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

7-You had an interest in the family business at your young age:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

8-You have participated in the work of the family business before joining:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

9-You had intention of joining the family firm:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

10- You have taken over voluntarily:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

11- What is your academic level?

- ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Academic

12-You have requested the following internship experience before joining the family business:

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral
☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

13-If yes, have you acquired skills during your experience outside the family business??

- ☐ Technical skills
☐ Managerial skills
☐ Technical and managerial skills

14-What management style de you adopted after the departure of your predecessor?

- ☐ The same style of management
☐ The same style with some improvements
☐ A new style quite different

Thank you for your cooperation

REFERENCES

- [1] C.E. Aronoff, J.L. Ward, "Another Kind of hero : preparing successors for leadership", *Family Business Leadership Series*, no. 3, *Business Owners Resources*, Marietta : Georgia, 1992 .
- [2] P. Hugron, " La régie d'entreprises familiales, " *Revue Internationale de Gestion*, 23(3), 37-40, 1998.
- [3] S. Ben Jemaa, " L'entreprise familiale tunisienne : structure financière et problèmes de financement. " *Cahiers électroniques de l'ERCCI IAE - © Cahier 29 – 2008 N° ISRN IAE 33/CRECCI-2008-29-FR*, 2008.
- [4] B. Aouadi Zaier, E. Pezet, Z. Mamlouk, " Transfert des connaissances et transfert intergénérationnel de l'entreprise familiale : Une revue des enjeux et facteurs d'influence", *7ème Congrès de l'Académie de L'Entrepreneuriat et de l'Innovation Paris*, 12-15 octobre 2011.
- [5] S. Basly, " Internationalisation of family firms in a knowledge-based view, " *Communication au Workshop on family firm management research*, Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping, Suède, 9-11 juin, 2005.
- [6] K. Ben Kahla, " *Les profils des jeunes entrepreneurs tunisiens* ", CJD, Tunis, 2006.
- [7] A. CHELLY, " *Les processus de génération d'opportunités entrepreneuriales : une recherche exploratoire auprès d'entrepreneurs tunisiens* ", Thèse de doctorat, Université du Sud Toulon Var, 2006.
- [8] W. Eloumi, " Etude comparative des environnements propices ou hostiles à la création d'entreprise: cas de Sfax et Gafsa", *Les Cahiers de l'ERGE n°7*, 2000.
- [9] J. Gherib, Ben Boubaker, L. Souissi, " Processus de décision stratégique et performance de l'entreprise : Cas des entreprises familiales tunisiennes du secteur des services", *Communication présentée lors de la 13 ème Conférence de la l'AIMS*, Normandie, Le Havre, du 2 au 4 Juin, 2004.
- [10] H. Karray Ellouze, " L'entrepreneuriat, clés de développement stratégique d'une entreprise familiale tunisienne", *2èmes journées Georges Doriot*, 15 et 16 Mai 2008.
- [11] I. MZID, L. Mezghani, " La transmission de la direction et le développement de l'entreprise familiale en hypogroupe", *XVII^e Conférence de l'Association internationale de management stratégique (AIMS)*, du 28 au 31 mai, Nice, 2008.
- [12] R. NABLI, " Les paradoxes de l'entrepreneuriat familial : le cas des entrepreneurs sfaxiens", *11èmes Journées scientifiques du Réseau Entrepreneuriat*, 27, 28 et 29 mai 2009, INRPME, Trois-Rivières, Canada, 2009.
- [13] R. Zghal, " *La culture de la dignité et le flou organisationnel*", CEPU, Tunis, 1994.
- [14] C.E. Aronoff, "Understanding family- business survival statistics", *Supply House Times*, 44(5), 34- 35, 2001.
- [15] FFI, "Facts and Perspectives on Family business", *Family Firm Institute*, 2001.
- [16] J. Allouche, B. Amann, " La confiance : une explication des performances des entreprises familiales", *Économies et sociétés*, 8(9), 129-154, 1998.
- [17] S. Haddadj, A. d'Andria, " Mesurer les phénomènes agissant sur la transmission des PME familiales", *Revue Française de Gestion*, janvier-février, 11-22, 2001.
- [18] M.C. Barbot, K. Richomme-Huet, " L'accompagnement de la transmission des entreprises artisanales", 2006.
- [19] J. Allouche, B. Amann, " L'entreprise Familiale : un état de l'art", *Revue Finance, Contrôle, Stratégie*, Vol. 3, n°1, , pp. 33-79, Mars 2000.
- [20] L. Cadieux, J. Lorrain, R. Hugron, " La succession dans les entreprises familiales : Une étude de cas exploratoire faite auprès de quatre PME manufacturières fondées et dirigées par des femmes", *Communication CIFEPME*, Lille, p 20 , 2000.
- [21] L. St-Cyr, R. Inoussa, " La planification de la relève dans la PME ", *revue de littérature et avenues de recherche*, *5e Congrès International Francophone sur la PME*, Lille 25,26 et 27 octobre, 2000.
- [22] M. Bayad, M.C. Barbot, " Proposition d'un modèle de succession dans les PME familiales : étude de cas exploratoire de la relation père-fille", *6ème congrès international francophone sur la PME*, HEC-Montréal, octobre, 2002.
- [23] W.C. Handler, "Succession in Family Firms : a Mutual Role Adjustment between Entrepreneur and Next-generation Family Members", *Entrepreneurship. Theory and Practice*, vol. 15, n° 1, Fall, p. 37-51, 1990.
- [24] P. Hugron, C. Dumas, "Modélisation du processus de succession des entreprises familiales québécoises", *Cahier de Recherche n°GREF-93-07*, HEC, 1993.
- [25] N.C. Churchill, K.J. Hatten, "Non-market-based transfer of wealth and power: A research framework for family businesses", *American Journal of Small Business* 12, pp. 53–66, 1987.
- [26] P. Hugron, "L'entrepreneur et la succession d'entreprise : analyse de douze processus", *Cahier de recherche no. GREF-93-03*, Hautes Études Commerciales, 1993.
- [27] M.H. Morris, R.O. Williams, J. A. Allen, R.A. Avila, "Correlates of Success in Family Business in Transition", *Journal of Business Venturing*, 12, 5, pp.385-401, 1997.
- [28] P. Sharma, J. Chrisman, J. Chua, "Dimensions of Succession Planning in Family Firms : An Empirical Assessment", *Actes du congrès annuel de l'Association des Sciences Administratives du Canada, section de l'Entrepreneuriat*, vol. 19, part 21, L'Association des sciences administratives du Canada, 67-79, 1998.
- [29] D. Ambrose, " Transfer of the Family-owned Business", *Journal of Small Business Management*, 21, 49-56, 1983.
- [30] B. Dunn, "The Family Factor : The Impact of Family Relationship Dynamics on Business-owning Families during Transitions", *Family Business Review*, XII, 1 41-55, 1999.
- [31] L. Cadieux, J. Lorrain, "Le processus de succession dans les entreprises familiales", *6ème congrès international francophone sur la PME*, octobre, HEC, Montréal, 2002.
- [32] J. G. Longenecker, J.E. Schoen, "Management Succession in The Family Business", *Journal of Small Business Management*, vol. 16, p. 1-6, 1978.
- [33] W.C. Handler, "Managing the family firm succession process: The next-generation family member's experience. Thèse de doctorat, Université de Boston, UMI Dissertation Services, 1989.
- [34] L.B. Barnes, S.A. Hershon, "Transferring power in family business", *Harvard Business Review*, 105-114, 1976.
- [35] H. Baumert H, "Succession dans la PME familiale : prévoir pour réussir", *Les Editions d'organisation*, 1992.
- [36] J. Lievens, J. Lambrecht, "Quand vient le temps de tirer sa révérence". *Management PME*, p: 2, 2004.
- [37] B. Catry, A. Buff, "Le gouvernement de l'entreprise familiale", *Publi-Union Editions*, 1996.
- [38] B. Duchéneau, " Les dirigeants de PME", Maxima, *Laurent du Mesnil Editeur*, 1996.
- [39] W.C. Handler, K.E. Kram, "Succession in Family Firms : The Problem of Resistance", *Family Business Review*, 1, 4, pp.361-381, 1988.
- [40] J. Sonnenfeld, "Heroes in Collision : Chief Executive Retirement and the Parade of Future Leaders", *Human Resource Management*, vol. 25, n° 2, p. 305-333, 1986.
- [41] J. Meyer, N. Allen, "Commitment in the workplace. Thousand Oaks", CA: SAGE Publications, 1997.
- [42] E. Gersick, A.D. Davis, M. Mc Collom Hampton, I. Lansberg, "Generation to Generation: Lifecycles of the family business", *Harvard Business School Press*, 1997.
- [43] M.A. Gallo, J.M. Estapé, "The family Business in Spanish Food Beverage Industry", *IESE Research paper*, N° 265, 2004.
- [44] C. O'Reilly, J. Chatman, "Organizational Commitment and Psychological Attachment : The Effects of Compliance, Identification

- and Prosocial Behavior”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 71, No. 3, August, pp. 429-499, 1986.
- [45] E.T. Stravou, “A Four Factor Model: A Guide to Planning Next Generation Involvement in the Family Firm”, *Family Business Review*, XI, 2, 135-141, 1999.
- [46] N. Krueger, A.L. Carsrud, “Entrepreneurial Intentions: Applying the Theory of Planned Behavior”, *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 315-330, 1993.
- [47] K. Cabrera-Suárez, “Leadership Transfer and the successor’s Development in the family firm”, *the leadership quarterly*, 16: 71-96, 2005.
- [48] Dumas, “Daughters in family-owned businesses, An applied systems perspective”. *UMI Dissertation Services*, 1989.
- [49] S.D. Goldberg. “Research note: Effective successors in family-owned businesses: Significant elements”, *Family Business Review* 9, (2), pp. 185–197, 1996.
- [50] S.D. Goldberg, B. Wooldrige, “Self-confidence and managerial autonomy: Successor characteristics critical to succession in family firms”, *Family Business Review* 6 (1), pp. 55–73, 1993.
- [51] Jr. Swogger, “Assessing the successor generation in family business”, *Family Business Review*, (4), pp. 397–411, 1991.
- [52] Ward, “Keeping the family business healthy”, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 1987.
- [53] M.D. Mumford, M. Marks, M.S. Connelly, S. J. Zaccaro, R. Reiter-Palmon, “Development of leadership skills: Experience and timing”, *The Leadership Quarterly* 11, (1), pp. 87–114, 2000.
- [54] J.A. Barach, J. Ganitsky, J. A. Carson, B.A. Doochin, “Entry of the Next Generation : Strategic Challenge for Family Business”, *Journal of Small Business Management*, vol. 26, no 2, p. 49-56, 1988.
- [55] M. Fiegener, B. Brown, R. Prince, K. File, “A comparison of successor development in family and non-family businesses”, *Family Business Review* 7 (4), pp. 313–329, 1994.
- [56] Holt-Larsen, “In search of management development in Europe: From self-fulfilling prophecies to organizational competence”, *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 7(3), pp. 657–676, 1996.
- [57] Ludovic Le Moal, “L’analyse en composantes principales”; [http : www .lemoal.org/spss](http://www.lemoal.org/spss), 2002.
- [58] P. Roussel, F. Durrieu, E. Campoy, A. El Akremi, “Méthodes d’équations structurelles : recherche et applications en gestion”, *Economica*, 2002.