

Familiness, business strategy and stakeholder engagement: The internationalisation of Spanish olive oil mills

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Abstract

Based on social capital theory and the family-firm context, this paper studies familiness' composition and the result of the overlap of the family and firm systems, analysing their influence on the internationalisation strategies of family firms. In this relationship, the stakeholder engagement becomes at the same time an antecedent and a result when developing family businesses' strategies, being one of the most relevant the internationalisation strategies. Prior research focused on familiness as the result of proxy variables such as the percentage of ownership and management in family hands, or business size, instead of as psychological variables resulting from shared organisational culture and social interactions. Through a qualitative study based on 12 interviews of general managers and/or export managers of Spanish family olive oil mills, this study asserts that the level of familiness influences internationalisation strategies, the reasons underlying a business becoming international and its commitment to activities abroad being the role of stakeholders crucial in those interactions. The higher the level of familiness, the more likely the family business internationalisation and the higher their levels of international commitment. Additionally, the higher the concern about their stakeholders, the higher their levels of international commitment. The family businesses' concern for their stakeholders and their international commitment share a reciprocal relationship. The results regarding the relevance of familiness as social capital resources in sustaining competitive advantages support the decision to promote, develop and nurture social capital when a family business goes international.

KEYWORDS

business strategy, environment, familiness, Gioia methodology, internationalisation, social capital, stakeholder engagement

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1 | INTRODUCTION

In a changing global competitive environment, internationalisation constitutes a fundamental strategy to guarantee business growth and survival (e.g., Gómez-Bolaños et al., 2019), acquiring even greater importance in the case of family businesses (FBs) to ensure their continuity by creating a legacy to be passed on to the next generation (Chrisman et al., 2003). On comparing family and non-FBs, the former is greatly long-term oriented (Doluca et al., 2018), and often, firms' abilities to guarantee long-term continuity depend on their successful internationalisation strategy (Guiso et al., 2006) and stakeholder engagement (García-Sánchez et al., 2020).

The study of the internationalisation strategy of the FB has increased noticeably because of the voluminous work undertaken (Alkaabi & Dixon, 2014; Kontinen & Ojala, 2010; Pukall & Calabrò, 2014). The special characteristics of FBs may affect their internationalisation strategies (Rogoff et al., 2003), as they may demonstrate specific peculiarities that drive them to develop their international expansion for motives different from those of non-FBs (Fernández & Nieto, 2005; Okoroafo, 1999; Tsang, 2001; Zahra, 2003). However, the findings about the internationalisation of FBs are inconclusive.

Thus, numerous authors (Claver et al., 2009; Fernández & Nieto, 2006; Gómez-Mejía et al., 2010) point out that FBs are more reluctant to internationalise compared with non-family companies, although this strategy is an opportunity for these companies (Zahra, 2003) and, in fact, more and more family companies are looking for growth opportunities in international markets (Alkaabi & Dixon, 2014).

The family's influence on the business affects the implementation and development of this strategy. Similarly, works such as that carried out by Mitter et al. (2014) show that the family's influence on the government and management of the company considerably impacts its international activity (\cap -shaped). Particularly, when family ownership levels are low, it encourages international activities, as opposed to higher levels of ownership (Sciascia et al., 2012). Additionally, Sciascia et al. (2013) propose a J-shaped relationship between family involvement in the Board of Directors and international sales whereas Casillas and Acedo (2005) conclude that the level of family involvement in the company indirectly influences its level of internationalisation. Moreover, some work has focused on different factors influencing the decision to internationalise (Alkaabi & Dixon, 2014; Puig & Fernández Pérez, 2009) or the corporate internationalisation decision of and the effect of family ownership on internationalisation (Chen, 2011). Other authors strive to explain the extent to which FB CEOs identify a signal in either the domestic or the international environment for internationalisation as a viable business opportunity (Laffranchini et al., 2016). How divergent preferences (motivations) of a firm's owners affect the firm's propensity to internationalise (Braga et al., 2017; Singla et al., 2017) has been studied as well. However, Alkaabi and Dixon (2014)'s elements are yet to be addressed when identifying reasons for the internationalisation of a FB, emphasising on familiness based on the interaction between

the family and business. Pearson et al. (2008) describe familiness "as resources and capabilities that are unique to the family's involvement and interactions in the business" (p. 949). This definition considers the essence of a FB since it focuses on social capital theory (Liao, 2018).

Social capital (SC) exists among people and organisations and provides its holders with potential opportunities. Therefore, SC is a "unique" resource (Frank et al., 2017) and a strategic driver that FBs must leverage to produce distinctive behaviour (De Massis et al., 2018). Family interactions are unique, rare and inimitable and therefore are a source of the heterogeneity of FBs (De Massis et al., 2018). Herrero (2018) calls for future research about the role played by SC when analysing different behaviours and outcomes from dissimilar strategies such as the internationalisation. Therefore, this paper covers the research gap when studying the influence of familiness in the internationalisation strategy of FBs.

Thus, familiness confers on FBs the competitive advantage or disadvantage for strategic entrepreneurship (Kansikas et al., 2012) and for adoption of the most suitable business strategy (Ghosal, 2013). This dichotomy sheds light on how family interactions in the family and business systems differ among FBs.

Some authors studied the influence of familiness on the internationalisation strategies (Merino et al., 2015), interchanging the familiness with the "family involvement" concept proposed by Astrachan et al. (2002) based on the components approach. However, there is a research gap regarding the configuration of familiness, since this phenomenon cannot be directly observed (Rutherford et al., 2008), as a source of heterogeneity in FBs, representing the first research objective of this paper. The influence of familiness on a firm's decision about whether to become international and on the development of the firm's internationalisation strategy becomes the second research objective of this study. Therefore, this work aims to disentangle the mentioned heterogeneity by extending knowledge about whether a firm's degree of familiness (Rutherford et al., 2008) influences the reasons and the way (i.e., the why and how) it implements and develops the internationalisation strategy.

To achieve these research objectives, we conducted qualitative research, considered by De Massis and Kotlar (2014) to be ideal for enriching research and identifying key elements. We use a multiple-case study approach where our main source of primary information is interviews conducted with managers from 10 Spanish olive oil mills. In the analysis of the information and data collected, in both interview speeches and secondary sources of information, we follow the methodology proposed by Gioia et al. (2013).

Our contributions are twofold. First, we explain the central role of SC in configuring familiness, which becomes the driver of FBs' strategic behaviour, by proposing their familiness' configuration. Second, we show that the higher the degree of familiness, the more likely the FBs are to become international and the higher their levels of international commitment. Therefore, we contribute to social science by identifying relationships and connections that had previously not been suspected (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997) among familiness and the FBs' international commitment.

The paper is organised as follows. After the introduction, Section 2 presents the theoretical background. Section 3 proposes the methodology. Section 4 shows findings and discussion. Section 5 presents conclusions and future research.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Research on the internationalisation strategies of FBs has increased noticeably in the literature during the last decade (i.e., Casillas & Moreno-Menéndez, 2017). Authors such as Zahra (2003) claim a positive relationship between family involvement and the internationalisation of FBs, whereas opposite results were obtained by Fernández and Nieto (2005). Sciascia and Mazzola (2008) attribute these contradictory results to the positive and negative effects for FBs depending on the lack of human resources and SC, as well as the existence of conflicts between family leaders; negative effects can be supplanted by positive effects based on the orientation of supervision and help that characterises FBs.

Similarly, Jorge et al. (2017) note that diverse FB factors contribute either positively or negatively to their internationalisation due to various levels of family involvement in ownership and management. Additionally, Mitter et al. (2014) reveal an \cap -shaped relationship between the two variables such that FBs with medium levels of family influence (in terms of family ownership shares and involvement in management and governance boards) are the most active internationally. Together with family involvement and family influence, other authors have referred to the family dimension (Fernández-Olmos et al., 2016), noting that it moderates the relation between internationalisation and firm performance, providing strong support for the hypothesis that a W-curve stage approach better describes the relation between internationalisation and performance in FBs.

Casillas and Acedo (2005) add that the level of family involvement in a company influences its level of internationalisation through the size of the company and the perception of the risk derived from developing international activities. Cerrato and Piva (2012) conclude that family involvement in the business influences the decision of going international. Therefore, the heterogeneity of FBs explains some of the mixed findings described above. Furthermore, Chua et al. (2012) note that recent studies have started to use moderators and mediators as well as continuous measures of family involvement in recognition of the heterogeneity of FBs.

If we focus on the internationalisation strategies of FBs, due to the above-mentioned heterogeneity, their motives and goals when internationalising could be different. According to Rogoff et al. (2003), FBs' distinctive characteristics, such as the suitability of growing to guarantee business long-term continuity, which depends on their levels of heterogeneity in involvement and on top management teams, may become their reason to internationalise (Fuentes-Lombardo & Fernández-Ortiz, 2012).

However, the literature review stresses that the involvement of the familiness seems to be the key differentiator between family and non-family enterprises, where the term familiness is used

interchangeably with the terms “family involvement” (Farrington et al., 2011) and “family effect” (Brines et al., 2013). Additionally, the family's influence on the business has been considered according to the familiness of FBs. In their measurement, Frank et al. (2017) consider six dimensions of familiness from the new systems theory. Although, within these dimensions, the authors include ownership, direction, control and generational handover that cater to variables considered in the definition of FB itself (Cano-Rubio et al., 2017). The authors include those variables within the dimensions of familiness due to the difficulty of measuring familiness from the perspective of SC, understanding SC as an intangible resource within the resource and capabilities approach, and this theoretical perspective presents such difficulties (Bueno et al., 2004).

These difficulties of measuring familiness are supported by the essence approach (Chrisman et al., 2005), where companies with the same scope of family involvement may or may not regard themselves as FBs, leading to defining them according to their essence and not their components (Chrisman et al., 2005).

Thus, considering familiness as a distinct and unique resource of FBs, the study of its configuration from the perspective of SC, as well as its influence on the internationalisation of the company, is of great interest. Accordingly, previous works such as the one developed by Basly and Saunier (2020) have analysed the relationships between different components of the familiness (specifically, family power, experience and culture, according to the F-PEC scale by Astrachan et al., 2002) and the export activity of the company, calculated from the percentage of sales abroad. Nevertheless, the influence that familiness could have on, first, motivations to internationalise and, second, on the success achieved with this strategy considering the international commitment attained has not yet been analysed.

Based on SC theory, we highlight that all the definitions of SC refer to a set of possibly valuable current and potential resources associated with lasting relationships that can generate value (Gordon & Cheah, 2014). This capital indicates a relation between the business profile of SC, the value added and the achievement of a stronger competitive advantage in FBs with particularly abundant SC (Kontinen & Ojala, 2010). Specifically, the evidence demonstrates that familiness really does make the internationalisation of FBs different from that of non-FBs (Kontinen & Ojala, 2012), up to the point that the exposure to global capital markets jeopardises the familiness that characterises and creates the special competitive advantages of family firms (Lehrer & Celso, 2017).

SC is characterised by three dimensions: structural, cognitive and relational (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Although some authors such as Herrero (2018) have already explored these dimensions, they have focused their studies inside the firm, comparing between family and non-FBs, without contextualising their behaviours. However, contextualising and considering external FB behaviours, specifically in their relationships to stakeholders, is one of the calls by James et al. (2020). Therefore, we have contextualised the international behaviour of the FBs from the internal decision-making process together with the external relationships. Delving into these three dimensions will allow knowing how the familiness is configured from this theoretical

perspective. Ardito et al. (2019) highlight how these three dimensions help to maintain legitimacy with stakeholders such as the clients and local community, improving the relationships with third parties and organisations. Regarding the structural dimension, Pearson et al. (2008) suggest that families have abundant internal links, which are appropriated by FBs. Close relationships between family members, together with their membership in family and business social systems, generate a familiness learning mechanism, achieved in a unique context in which knowledge and learning occur in a distinctive way (Barros-Contreras et al., 2020). This structural dimension of the SC has been measured with items that consider social interactions among the members of the group from time spent and from close contact (Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2015). However, examining these interactions and understanding why they arise and how these ties bind members are of paramount interest too.

The cognitive dimension includes resources that provide shared representations, interpretations and systems of meaning among parties (Lombardi et al., 2020); a shared vision and purpose; and the unique language, stories, and culture of a collective commonly known and understood but deeply embedded (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This dimension reinforces exclusive identities and group homogeneity, and it is created when relationships are intense and characterised by unique features such as trust, commitment, shared vision and common goals (Herrero, 2018). These relationships explain the importance of business continuity for the family (Pearson et al., 2008). While this vision shared among members could be present to a greater or lesser extent in FBs taking into account various aspects related to the family and/or the company, it is of interest to delve into why they share this vision.

Finally, the relational dimension derived from personal relationships is crucial for creating lasting bonds between individuals within a group (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). These relationships influence behaviour and aspects such as cooperation, trust, communication, commitment, cohesion and the setting of shared objectives (Cano-Rubio et al., 2017), which build distinctive capabilities able to guarantee their success when implementing international strategies (Dayan et al., 2019). Likewise, the climate of family relations is of interest, both in the family and in the company field, studied by authors such as Martín-Santana et al. (2020), for its influence on the market orientation presented by the company. This orientation is considered within the relational dimension of the SC (Cabrera-Suárez et al., 2011). Additionally, when the family and the business imbricate, both the family and the firm become involved in a collective network of relationships. Based on the work of Sharma (2008), we include the interactions of the FB with the environment, where most stakeholders work, in the relational dimension of SC defined by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), whose key facets are trust and trustworthiness.

Regarding the internationalisation of FBs, several theoretical frameworks have been used: transaction cost theory, stage model theory (Uppsala's model), social network theory, Dunning's eclectic paradigm, resources based-view (RBV), agency theory, stewardship theory, institutional theory and stakeholder theory (Segaro, 2012). However, these works are based on the assumption that from the

internationalisation theories, the stage model (Graves & Thomas, 2008), the concepts of born-global or born-again global firms (Bell et al., 2001) and Dunning's eclectic paradigm (Erdener & Shapiro, 2005) are best suited to FBs.

Nonetheless, we study whether SC influences why and how internationalisation strategies are developed. Han (2006) highlights that SC speeds the rate of start-up internationalisation to mitigate foreignness in business relationship learning (Johanson & Vahlne, 2003) and facilitate the development of intra-and inter-organisational relationships (Yli-Renko et al., 2002). Kontinen and Ojala (2011) have applied theory to show how firms can access specific resources that promote internationalisation. In family-influenced firms, SC plays a crucial role in competitiveness (Pearson et al., 2008) and makes them prone to achieve further gains from internationalisation.

Within the literature on the influence of familiness in the internationalisation of FBs, Segaro (2012) determines that distinctive familiness positively influences the internationalisation of FBs and Zellweger et al. (2010) note that an FB's identity may create familiness and hence contribute to its competitiveness. When the family members identify themselves with the business, it creates a unique business identity (Dayan et al., 2019) that allows the exploitation of SC (both domestically and internationally). Other studies have also analysed the influence of familiness on business internationalisation strategies, as a resource that confers a competitive advantage in the development of this strategy (Kansikas et al., 2012), influences the business exporting activity (Merino et al., 2015; Wasowska, 2017) and contributes to the identification of long-term international opportunities (Zaefarian et al., 2016). However, just as FBs are heterogeneous, familiness, understood as an intangible resource that is present therein, may also differ between family companies. In this way, deepening the configuration of the familiness favours the discovery and understanding of the one that favours or hinders the international development of the business in relation to other features (e.g., ownership and/or management) within the company. Thus, analysing the components that configure it from the perspective of the SC to which we have referred above (family social capital, bonding social capital and bridging social capital) will allow us to appreciate the influence of familiness in the international strategy of the FB, taking into account their heterogeneity. Therefore, a literature review shows how a critical mass of evidence and arguments can be gleaned to legitimately configure the research gap (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997) regarding the influence of familiness on why and how firms internationalise, which we try to address by applying qualitative methodology.

3 | METHOD

3.1 | Research design

To achieve our aims, we applied the exploratory qualitative research approach using the Gioia methodology (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). We

needed to study complex social construction processes to focus more on the means by which organisation members construct and understand their experiences and less on the number or frequency of measurable occurrences (Gioia et al., 2013). The social construction process centres on the concept of familiness, the definition of which remains in a formative state (Irava & Moores, 2010). This method certainly satisfies the criteria for systematic analysis, and we extend knowledge about the theory of familiness from the perspective of social capital theory.

3.2 | Cases and context

The case study plays a relevant role in qualitative research into international businesses (Welch et al., 2011), as well as in the study of the FB (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014) and has a high potential to establish causal links and test the existing theories (Welch et al., 2011). Accordingly, Leppäaho et al. (2016) highlight how case study has been of great use in understanding relevant issues in the study of FBs, especially in their internationalisation. The research objectives set out in this work correspond to complex and difficult-to-quantify phenomena. These goals aim to respond to how and why, leading us to focus on the experiences of the actors. Additionally, it is a little-studied phenomenon from which arises the need to discover findings systematically repeated in multiple cases (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

Thus, the research objectives of this work, first, how the FB's familiness is configured and, second, why and how it influences the international strategy of these companies, justify the use of case studies as a qualitative research strategy. While the first research objective aims to broaden and deepen the knowledge of the configuration of familiness from the dimensions of SC, the second objective aims to know the influence of that familiness on the why and how of the international business strategy. Thus, the inductive and deductive

logic of the case study (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) appear, respectively, in the research objectives raised. Indeed, in this theorising process, we interwove theory and observations through the participant's meanings and the manner in which these meanings were constructed. All that implies an interpretive sense making, where inductive and deductive overlap (Welch et al., 2011).

The selection of case studies has followed the recommendations provided by Poulis et al. (2013), who also allude to the importance of case selection in qualitative investigations in international business. Therefore, we have chosen Spanish family olive oil mills for our study. Their selection is due to their relevance to the research objectives of this work. The reasons for this relevance are three. First, Spanish family olive oil mills have already been previously selected in research work focused on socioemotional wealth (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007) or on the family influence on the company (Cano-Rubio et al., 2017), familiness being a determining element of the essence of the FB, an intangible, non-financial resource. Second, in relation to internationalisation, the Spanish sector to which these companies belong stands out in the case of Spain for their foreign trade, in terms of both volume and value (FIAB, 2020). Third, the olive oil sector is considered traditional for the Spanish economy, where it shares values such as the attachment to their territory, care, dedication and love for land and fruit, all values that family companies also exhibit. Commitment, pride and dedication are the result of the efforts of previous generations. Such firms exhibit a deep concern for product quality and customer satisfaction (Binz et al., 2013).

The cases were acquired through theoretical purposeful sampling (Glover & Reay, 2015), by which the subjects to be interviewed were selected based on the relevance of the topic under study. Specifically, we focused our study on 10 family olive oil mills chosen through the authors' personal connections to cases which Gioia et al. (2013) refer to as knowledgeable agents. Knowledgeable agents are members of organisations who know exactly what they are trying to do and can

TABLE 1 Descriptive information of the cases

Firms	Profits outcome (€)	Turnover (€)	No. of employees	Exports (%)	Exports scope (Rs ^a)	Family ownership (%)	Family management (%)
E1	306,445	27,666,371	27	62%	6	100	33.33
E2	25,324	3,845,796	8	3% ^b	5	100	75
E3	118,822	2,262,369	10	2% ²	9	100	33.33
E4	592,905	24,174,966	44	2%	2 ^c	40	30
E5	23,982	13,696,590	22	70%	7	100	33.33
E6	1,263,184	51,257,307	45	12%	4	100	42.86
E7	6,555	1,324,807	4	0%	-	100	75
E8	3,444	186,228	4	0%	-	100	100
E9	13,269	199,683	2	0%	3	100	100
E10	176,983	115,271,343	92	39%	7 ^d	100	20

^aRs refers to regions.

^bThis percentage is related to their entire olive oil production, but it reaches 90% when related to the target production to be exported (extra virgin olive oil & virgin olive oil).

^cThey did not know their partner controlled how many regions they were in since the internationalisation activity.

^dAlthough this firm sold to seven geographical areas, the number of countries in each area they had entered was less than the number that E5 entered.

explain their thoughts, intentions and actions. We sought a detailed understanding of the perspectives of people involved in each company and of each company's internationalisation strategy to delve into certain aspects. Ultimately, 12 informants were interviewed, who were the founders/owners and/or international managers of 10 family firms whose main features are presented in Table 1.

3.3 | Data collection

The primary data collection method involved semistructured interviews with 12 informants since semistructured interviews are a common and powerful way to understand fellow human beings (Glover & Reay, 2015). Initially, and prior to each interview, we obtained preliminary information and additional sources for triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 1994): the website of each business and its competitors, company brochures, press articles, observations, informal discussions and informal telephone contacts. Additionally, we studied several industry reports and those provided by various business databases, including the Sistema de Análisis de Balances Ibéricos (SABI). We searched for data related to growth objectives and international activity, including export intensity, modes of entry abroad and the geographical scope. The design of the issues to be raised in the interviews (see Table 2) considered the previous literature review, taking into account its gaps from which the research objectives arise. Thereby, the final script of the issues to be raised in the interviews was selected after two pilot interviews, which helped us define this script while the questions raised addressed the flexibility required by each interview considering the information provided by each informant throughout the interview.

Prior to the conduct of the interview, we analyse the secondary information available from the sources mentioned above; that is, we analyse the documentation available for each of the companies participating in this study, as well as the people interviewed. Just after each interview, a field journal was prepared where we took notes from the observations of the context where the interview was conducted, as well as observations related to the subjects interviewed. Following Reay's recommendations (Reay, 2014) on the quality and quantity of data, those from secondary sources of information allowed us to describe and know each case, although those corresponding to primary sources of information were broad and in-depth enough to enable the study of the research objectives raised. Thus, with the 10 cases studied and the 12 interviews conducted, new relevant information was no longer obtained, so the theoretical saturation referred to by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was achieved.

Once the cases were selected, the most appropriate people to interview were identified based on the issues contained in the script. Table 3 shows the demographic information of the informants and the number of interviews conducted at each company. The subjects interviewed were family managers responsible for the international activity of the company. However, when a company had a non-family manager responsible for the international activity, we interviewed both the family CEO and that manager. Finally, in one company, two

TABLE 2 Interview guide used in the in-depth interviews

Outlined questions	Family manager	Non-family manager
Perceptions about the past, present and future of the company.	X	
Economic and noneconomic objectives of the company.	X	
Perceptions about the family nature of the company.	X	
Factors that differentiate the company from other family and non-family companies.	X	X
Appreciation of the influence of the family on the company and on internationalisation.	X	X
Impressions about the time and work devotion as resources of family members in the company.	X	
Perceptions of the relationships among family members working in the company and among them and non-family employees.	X	X
Evaluations of the influence of the previously mentioned relations on the achievement of business objectives and on internationalisation.	X	X
Estimates regarding the connections of family members with external agents and the relationship between these connections and the performance of the company.	X	
Considerations regarding the relationships of the FB with its stakeholders and the influence of these relationships in the running of the business.	X	X
Leading motivations for the company to internationalise.	X	X
Key arguments in the selection of destination foreign markets.	X	X
Key arguments in the selection of a mode of entry into foreign markets.	X	X
Perceptions of the different destination markets.	X	X

family members shared responsibility for international strategy, so both were interviewed.

The next step was to conduct 12 in-depth interviews with family managers and/or non-family managers about their internationalisation decision-making processes, during the period from January 2017 to October 2018. Those interviews were conducted by the same person,

TABLE 3 Family business, interview and informant profiles

Firm	Interview	Informant profile
1	E1-1	Executive director, male, board member, family member, shareholder, second generation, average training, no additional languages, seniority in the company of 29 years, no previous experience.
	E1-2	Responsible for export, female, nonfamily, university education, several languages, seniority in the company of 11 years, no previous work experience.
2	E2-1	Director, male, second-generation family, university education, several languages, seniority in the company of 20 years, little previous work experience.
3	E3-1	Director, male, member of the BOD, second-generation family with university education, multilingual, seniority of 12 years, previous work experience in other sectors other than olive oil.
4	E4-1	Executive director, male, second-generation family, medium training, no additional languages, seniority in the company of 16 years (since its foundation), previous work experience.
5	E5-1	Purchasing manager, female, second-generation family, university education, multilingual, seniority in the company of 5 years, previous work experience.
	E5-2	Family member, female, third-generation family, university education, several languages, seniority in the company of 4 years, no previous work experience.
6	E6-1	Family director and owner, male, university education, no additional languages, seniority of 33 years in the parent company (since the beginning of his working life) and less than 1 year in this company.
7	E7-1	Owner and family manager, male, second-generation family, no training, no additional languages, seniority of 30 years in the company.
8	E8-1	Executive director, female, fifth-generation family, owner, university education, multilingual, seniority of 15 years in the company, previous work experience.
9	E9-1	Family owner and manager, male, first-generation family, no university education, no languages, seniority in the company, previous work experience.
10	E10-1	Nonfamily member, male, no university education, no additional languages, seniority in the company of 54 years (since the beginning of his working life).

the coauthor of this work. The interviews lasted from 47 to 130 min. They were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim before being encoded and analysed, a process explained in the following section.

3.4 | Data analysis

Gioia's method is considered one of the most effective in the explanation of the data analysis (Reay, 2014). It enables the creation of links between the different paradigms (Gioia & Pitre, 1990), facilitating the understanding of complex realities, such as that of familiness, a concept that describes and explains phenomena of great interest within the FB literature (Gioia et al., 2013). Additionally, we aim to shed light on the influence of familiness on the internationalisation strategies of FBs, which demand the use of multiple and complementary perspectives (Akhter et al., 2016) that have led us to understand or assign new meanings to this social phenomenon (Nordqvist et al., 2009). Strauss and Corbin (1998) indicate the analysis of the information is initiated during the interview itself, although, once the interview speeches were transcribed, the primary and secondary information of each case was analysed by each of the co-authors who then also individually performed the joint analysis of all the information until the results were obtained.

The transcript of each interview was initiated by indicating the name of the interviewee, date, time and place of the interview and duration and profile of the interviewee. They were on 228 single-spaced pages of text, with font size 11 and a right margin on each broad page (3.15 in. or 8 cm) to be able to perform the same part of the analysis (extract concepts and relationships and point out relevant issues, among others).

The data analysis comprised several stages. The first stage utilised Atlas.ti software for a preliminary analysis of the speeches contained in the interviews, mainly for their coding process. This software allowed classifying and labelling the units of qualitative data into codes and favoured the completion of qualitative data analysis through categorisation, abstraction and integration.

In the second stage, the researchers listened to the interviews and read the transcripts several times as well, performing an individual analysis of the speeches in relation to the research objectives. From the information obtained in the first and second phases, in this third, we built a data display to employ a categorisation strategy corresponding to the Gioia methodology. That is, we defined first-order concepts as the main underlying ideas coming from the informants (Gioia et al., 2010) since these informants did not use our scientific terms. In this stage, we organised the interview data, codes and structure implementing the procedure outlined by Gioia et al. (2013) and Gioia and Pitre (1990), which has been applied in other studies (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015); namely, we reduced the number of first-order concepts since some of them overlapped. We derived 39 first-order concepts directly from the interviews to craft 21 first-order themes. Next, we identified the emerging second-order themes and aggregated dimensions. In this process, we maintained

the integrity of the first-order concepts and developed a compendium of all the first-order themes and second-order themes to identify the main issues related to our research questions, as shown in Figure 1.

We created the data structure to reach theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by cycling the relevant literature, emergent data, themes, concepts and dimensions to determine whether any

new concepts were being discovered (Gioia et al., 2013). Thus, we could re-examine the fit or lack of fit of the data with our emergent theoretical understanding (Locke, 2001) to develop a theory about familiness and its influence on why and how FBs internationalise; that is, we identified the dynamic relationships among the second-order themes in the data structure.

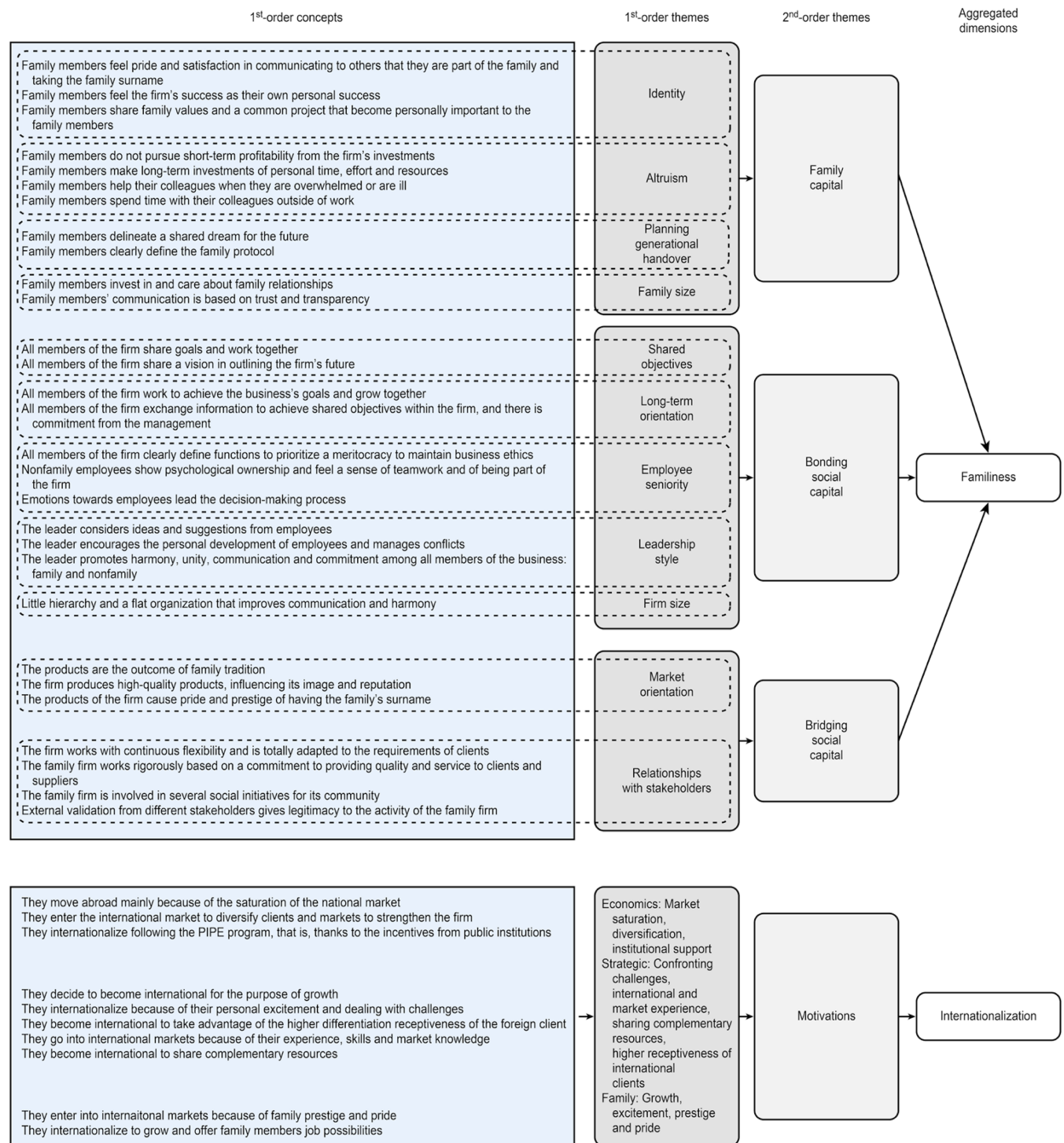


FIGURE 1 Configuration of the aggregated dimensions: Familiness and internationalisation [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

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To conclude this data analysis, the triangulation of information from all case studies was obtained from the use of different sources of information (business webpages, industry reports, firm profiles and news published in the press, among others) and from the results obtained by different researchers not only co-authors but also two researchers (fellow experts in the subject of study, FB and/or business internationalisation) to determine that speech analyses offered similar results. Thus, when we observed some divergences in the findings found individually, the analysis of the speeches and the rest of the information was repeated, opening a debate that allowed unanimous agreement on the results. Therefore, we minimised errors and biases, achieving reliability in the study (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

4 | FINDINGS

Figure 1 illustrates the structure and ordering of the data from the specific, first-order concepts used by the informants to the more general, researcher-developed first-order and second-order themes, which formed the basis for knowing the configuration of familiness from SC dimensions. The first research result allows us to know the configuration of the familiness (aggregated dimensions) from the perspective of SC. Those constituents are three, the second-order themes reflected in Figure 1. The first corresponds to the family social capital (FSC) configured from the following first-order themes: identity, altruism, planning generational handover and family size. The second category corresponds to the bonding social capital (BSC) determined from shared objectives, long-term orientation, employee seniority, leadership style and firm size, all of which are first-order themes. Finally, the third component is bridging social capital (BrSC), formed from the first two-order themes market orientation and relationships with stakeholders.

Each first-order theme, the result of integrating a set of first-order codes, has been generated taking into account parts of the discourses contained in the interviews in relation to common and equivalent meanings. Table 4 presents representative quotations identified by the first-order codes and substantiate the first-order and second-order themes we identified to be defining elements of familiness.

Second-order themes. Family social capital (FSC). Delving into each of the three components of familiness, our results show that managers highlight the role played by the family in the evolution of the FB, the elaboration of the product and the creation and development of brand image, where the family name is inherently associated with it. The family represents the foundations of the FB impregnating each small activity with its philosophy, its way of doing things, the love of the product, the land from which it comes and its know-how and its tradition. These emotions shape the engine of the FB, requiring a great deal of time and resources to invest in the long term, a horizon in which it is expected to work with future generations and to relay it to them. This desire for continuity highlights the objective of survival of the company and the search for business growth, often pursued by the parallel growth of the number of family members to be able to offer them, at least, the same opportunities for employment and

personal and professional development as the previous generation had. Therefore, identity, altruism, the desire of handing over the business to the next generation and the size of the family will configure the structural dimension of familiness. Some of them such as altruism and the identity variables have been studied previously in the literature but independently of one another. However, in this study, both previous dimensions together with the generational handover and family size configure the so-called FSC, theme 1 of our study.

Bonding social capital (BSC). On the other hand, family managers and other family members involved in daily decisions and work in the company should transmit as much information as possible, not only to each other, but also to non-family members, about the objectives to be achieved and actions to be developed. They should make them see that their work, ideas and suggestions are very valuable for developing the company's product. This derives not only from love and enthusiasm that family members bring but also from the passion and know-how of all the members of the company. All this enhances the degree of involvement of the worker with the company, which leads them to seek the convergence of their individual objectives with the organisational ones shared by all. This shows the company's desire for continuity and survival in the long term. It becomes a game where everyone wins and the worker is offered a long-term project where seniority in the organisation not only makes them develop know-how but also achieve his/her goals overlapping with the company's objectives up to the point that workers feel that it is their own company; they feel like owners of the company and its destiny. Those interactions between the individuals within an FB provide "meaning" to the firm, which could be easily transmitted when a strong and effective leader exists. Some of the interviewees exhibited that which they referred to as an essential component of inducing a group to achieve shared goals. Additionally, our interviewees referred to the close ties created when a firm is not large because of the informal hierarchical structure and the manner in which the structure influences the business atmosphere and the achievement of the FB's objectives. Furthermore, the higher the employee seniority, the stronger the commitment to shared goals and the feeling of belonging to the FB. Therefore, shared objectives, long-term orientation, employee seniority, leadership style and firm size will become the defining dimensions of the theme 2 of this study, BSC.

Bridging social capital (BrSC). Additionally, the time worked in the company, that is the employee's tenure, should lead to specific know-how about the activity, the processes and the best practices within the sector. All that materialises in the development of a high-quality product and a concern for a good customer service. The business strategy pivots on both objectives because the customer's satisfaction will affect not only the prestige and image of the company but also the family's reputation. This source of competitive advantage will be strengthened through relations with other stakeholders, apart from clients, such as the community where the company is located, because of the attachment to the land and territory that FBs have, in general, and olive oil mills, in particular. These strong ties will boost the communication channels with the stakeholders, improving trust and cooperation with them and helping family olive oil mills to explore business

TABLE 4 Representative quotes for familiness from family social capital, bonding social capital and bridging social capital

FAMILY SOCIAL CAPITAL	Identity
	“The consumer who buys the brand XX [family surname] relates the product with the firm and with the family: the business is the family, and the family is the brand.” E1-2
	“... to involve the family with that, at the end, the quality and all that stuff ... It's a way of doing things, of working; it's a philosophy, of becoming immersed in, of enjoying, because, fortunately, the product is food, then you enjoy it ... In XX [the brand of the product], there is much of that ... of enjoying this ... you many times put many emotional aspects ... family issues ... ahead of strictly economic ones ... To interpret things with a high level of excitement, with passion, I do not know how to say it ... We often do things not looking for profitability but to do those things that we really like ... with which we feel at ease” E2-1
	“... we are what we are because there are some foundations ... built by the previous generations ... my father ... who ... received a tradition, a love for the land, for the olive oil ... a family firm model ... it's a mixed model ... If tomorrow a big group wants to buy a part of the equity of our firm, this would be an ideal world ... It gives you original energy ... financial stability, a better image, new contacts, new ideas, new business opportunities which help you to grow faster and professionalize the company ... tradition is relevant, first because of feelings, and second, it is a key element for family businesses ... after he was 40 years old [when they relieved their father], it was very natural, not forced, and we worked enthusiastically ... the past is crucial because ... there were affective ties; we felt part of a common project, of the land” E3-1
	“Our firm directly influences daily activities; the day to day of the family firm leads the development of the business. I think that it's very different when a business has family roots ... there was an option to sell 100% to several firms, but we thought that there was an objective because most of them did not consider maintaining the facilities either here or at the production plant; however, with V [the name of the family business with which they cooperated], we agreed. I think it's very positive for both parts ... additionally, it will allow us to maintain productive facilities. That is fundamental for family businesses” E4-1
	“... family members ... we practice what we preach; we are the first ones if we have to help employees ... because none is afraid of getting his/her hands dirty” E5-1
	“... it's important to follow this tradition ... since we are the fourth generation and to be able to continue with the family tradition, coming from our great-grandparents, from our grandparents ... it is a firm coming from your parents, from your uncles and aunts, from your grandparents, which has taken a good deal of effort ... you have seen it every day since you were a child; you have seen the real effort that has been put into to go ahead ... Thus, you feel the firm as something very personal, as a more intense feeling of firms.” E5-2
	“I'd like ... that the only male nephew goes on with the family tradition since all ..., I suppose it's the same in all family businesses, is based on emotions. Maybe we are very romantic; that's what leads us not to be productive, is not it? ... for us, people go before the business ... what happens is that the business is the extension of the family ... My family is made up of my father, my mother, my brother, my nephews and nieces and my plants, in this order ... Then, it's an extension of our living room” E7-1
	“... this is an olive oil mill ..., we have had it forever; we have got land and agriculture to maintain the land ... because it has belonged my whole life to our family, and in the end, you try to maintain it ... I maintain the land because it belonged to my grandfather to my great-grandfather, but this mindset is going to change. That is, it's necessary to make it profitable” E8-1
	Altruism
	“Every day, he [family general manager and president] is the first one to wake up, and he is the last leaving the firm, and, obviously, he is very involved” E1-2
	“This is a job that requires 350–345–348 days of daily jobs ... even the weekends are a period of hard work ... since this is an open industry” E3-1
	“This firm is the result of a person [the founder/his father] with full confidence in himself since he was the most knowledgeable in Spain about this industry, and working, there was nobody as competitor ... we are and have been completely involved with the firm ... I've been working in growing my whole life; the work has been my first objective. the partner for travelling (the spouse) the travel companion seems not to have been suited to bringing up our children, as I paid more attention to the importance of the work ... an apartment's been built for me here, because never in all my life during the olive season have I left on any Saturday without coming to work ... throughout the 5 months of the olive season, I'll come every Saturday and Sunday, and I've got hobbies as well ... but the first [the olive growing] is the first ... and this is my ambition” E6-1
	“... here, my father [invested] much time, a huge amount of effort, hard work, as we did when we took over the business ... when we started to run it, everything was ruined, and I would not have wanted all this to disappear” E7-1
	“We have been working without receiving wages ... we know that this project will be profitable, but in the long-term. When I refer to the long-term ... I am talking about looking for ... the generational handover” E9-1

(Continues)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Generational Handover Planning

“Generational handover is easier from the first to the second generation ... in my particular case, it was essentially done at home, and because my father and I have worked closely with each other ... my career has been developed at the same time. Therefore, logically, I have lived it, the same as my father ... When the generational handover goes from the second to third generation, it is the most difficult step since [the problems] become multiplied” E1-1

“We've got this family responsibility that makes the main objective be to offer to the succeeding generations at least the same opportunities and possibilities we had” E2-1

“Which business model do we look for? ... by this time in 300 years, when we will not be here, someone from the family is here, runs the business ... and the main advantage of the family business is that they will create lots of jobs because we do not try to downsize to reduce costs ... Additionally, our philosophy is earning money, the philosophy of generational handover” E3-1

“... if they (siblings) decide to join the firm ... we are training for that ... this is the leitmotif of our family business ... We're looking for the generational handover.” E7-1

Family Size

“When you pass on from the second to the third generation, there are more family members ... then there is high risk of becoming divided as well as of being successful within the business ... How could you avoid that? One possible solution could be clearly defining the functions of each person ... or the function of one compared with that of the others. Then ... the problem is the number of people ... which means the number of opinions” E1-1

“... here, we are my brother and me, two people who work, and ... the management is very customized ... Our business philosophy has allowed us to survive.” E7-1

“... it's not the same for seven brothers and sisters to agree as it is for only two ... they are faced with ... more complex problems overall because there is not a close relationship, the bonds like we have” E3-1

**BONDING SOCIAL
CAPITAL****Shared Objectives**

“In this firm, the relationships positively influence internationalisation since, if you have encumbrances in another department ... you go in a wrong way. We should all go in one way” E1-2

“... we want people (the employees) get involved and feel they belong to the firm ... They feel they are working to build something important and share ... When you have a project based on self-imposed demand to build quality things, unless all employees agree, there's a serious problem” E2-1

“We would like employees to become involved and perceive themselves to be part and parcel of the firm ... they feel they are working to create something important. When you have a self-imposed demand to do high quality products, unless everybody gets involved, we will find a serious problem ... Up to now, employees identify themselves with the firm, but there has not been easy work” E3-1

“In a family business, it's necessary to look for general objectives instead of individual ones; the group objectives have to come before your own objectives. Then, everything works properly ... While a person fights for his/her own firm, a foreigner does not; then, according to this assumption, we try to ensure that several areas and departments fit in with each other, but it is not necessary that [they are family members] ... you have to look for the best added value ..., our employees are people highly involved with [the business], because we have transmitted to them this involvement, this responsibility and this love for the business.” E5-1

“I've tried to build values, principles; whether there are either values or principles, there aren't any objectives. This [the firm] belongs to everybody and each one, in his/her job, has to become the best one, because, otherwise, there is no way to grow” E6-1

Long-term Orientation

“... you can see a business that continues to work, it can be redirected in any point ... but if you see that there is continuity and there is a strong desire to continue and to grow” E1-2

“... the excellent quality-level olive oil is the result of ... investments of human resources, investments in training, investments in corporate social responsibility, in strategic planning, financial resources” E3-1

“Nowadays, part of the second generation works here, but those who are around them we consider public workers if the employees feel the firms as their belonging, then they take care of it, and there aren't any problems; everybody is involved, they know that their earnings are here ... I think that the human resources is the best of our firm.” E10-1

Employee Seniority

“... I can compare [the FB] with bigger firms where the hierarchical structure is much more distant, less personal; here ... our relationships are more personal” E5-2

“... having been working here fifty something years ... it [the FB] seems like it belongs to us” E10-1

“We work with people who feel part of [the business] since they are like family members as well ... I see that they are involved in the business, completely integrated” E7-1

TABLE 4 (Continued)

	<p>Leadership Style</p> <p>“The basic decision-making process is based on the three; they made the decisions. However, they take into account all of us, as there is an advisory council where all the departments are included, and they consider all of us ... we join to discuss issues, decisions, objectives, but the bases are ... the roots are built on the father, then the general manager [the SO], who makes most of decisions, but they three make the decisions ... The relationship among the family and the employees is very good ... based on complete confidence ... The family promotes good relationships among employees to configure a working team, where all of us get on well each other ... which makes you feel supported by the managers ... you feel a part of the team.” E1-2</p> <p>“The management team inspires us ... to be able to see each detail full of hope, with passion ... we work looking for those things that we like, we feel good with and comfortable with” E2-1</p> <p>“... all of us think that unless family members from the succeeding generation are skilled enough, they will not run the company. Otherwise, among many other things, you will lose credibility from your team I strongly believe in meritocracy, and I would not be able ... to [pass leadership to] my sister or son for having my surname ... I'd break a part of business ethics I had since I started to work” E3-1</p> <p>Firm Size</p> <p>“We are small family; it's not the same to agree among seven brothers as it is between two. I know other firms with seven brothers and sisters, and they have their problems ... on the contrary, the relationship in our family is very close” E3-1</p> <p>“... here there's much communication in relationships. There's a short distance to communicate each other ... maybe because our family is small” E5-2</p> <p>“We work with people who feel part of [the business] since they are like family members as well. Then, the relationship is very close, personal, direct ... since the firm is very small” E7-1</p>
BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL	<p>Market Orientation</p> <p>“... the image of the bottle, of the product is influenced by the family tradition ... it's a source of competitive advantage to offer to our clients” E5-2</p> <p>“... I'd establish the following order, first quality and then service ... relationships based on a very direct service, face to face and of a high quality level.” E7-1</p> <p>“What three concepts do we work to maintain with our brands in a very high-quality market with a very high level of expression? First the quality ... second, organoleptically, we try to make the client fall in love with our olive oils ... adapting our product to the client's taste ... third, we try to envelop everything with identity ... by pride, prestige, by the quality of our products, we have to be able to do the same as other competitors” E9-1</p> <p>“[In the market] you have to get adapted to the customer in order to get a perfect outcome” E10-1</p> <p>Relationships with Stakeholders</p> <p>“I try to meet and know all clients and visit them ... to build and strengthen commercial relationships ... since it helps ... although nowadays we have digital advances in communication ... the personal face-to-face contact ... we talk about many different business issues that are not related to olive oil ... this reinforces this commercial relationship” E1-1</p> <p>“... the family is well known in the area ... they hire employees from the area they take an active part in promoting football, giving funds for the material” E1-2</p> <p>“Within social responsibility, one of the main elements is identification with the territory in the area where you are working and with the wishes and worries of your community. We're a very proud of having such growth with our staff [from this area] ... skilled people, with a history, with emotions, spirit ... people who want to make this company grow. Therefore, our connection is very strong and each time stronger and stronger ... working with the university, cooperating in any activity that points out the value of our company, definitely, highlighting the relevance of N [where the company is set up] since pointing out the value of the firm means highlighting the value of N.” E3-1</p> <p>“I think it's very different when a business has family roots than when it's a business holding with ... investors ... we do not look only for profitability ... we look for many others objectives: the business per se, the area where it's been set up, the work that is developed, the employment created in the community, the personal relationships with all employees” E4-1</p>

opportunities not only in the domestic market but in the international markets as well. The orientation to deliver superior value to clients through the highest quality product possible represents the market orientation dimension, which together with the relationship with other stakeholders configures the BrSC, theme 3 of this study.

A second research result shows us the heterogeneity of the family found in the companies studied. Thus, the presence in the

company of each of these first- and second-order themes, the relevance attributed to these themes by respondents, the way in which they are expressed to a greater or lesser extent, the attributes they present and their descriptions result in a unique level of familiness in each FB. Therefore, each company presents several and unique elements of familiness described as follows.

E1 is a second generation company. It is the result of the joint work, knowledge and sectoral experience of two generations. It is a company owned exclusively by the family, whose financial autonomy and freedom in decision-making leads them not to want to open their ownership to external/non-family members. Its FSC is characterised by the rise of family social status and the prestige associated with the company, for which investing significant time and money were necessary. The investments did not seek immediate profitability but the growth of business and family wealth in the long term. It is about designing and working on “your life project.” The second generation identified with all the values enshrined by the founder and embarked wholeheartedly on that process, which has closed the doors to the entrance of outside personnel. However, this continuity is not seen in the third generation, where the children are still young and, it is not clear that they will continue with the company. If there were more family members, communication and the business transfer process would be even more complicated, since the greater the number of family employees, the greater the number of opinions. A small family has fluent communication, but when they deal with business issues this communications is scarce and focus on the importance of the business in the maintenance and growth of family wealth. As for its BSC, the company is characterised by the strong commitment of its employees, family and non-family, with the company, when pursuing common objectives. The continuous and lasting relationships associated with seniority in the company make the individual objectives overlap the organisational ones, such that the non-family members contribute their vision within the advisory board to the family members in decision-making. Likewise, some family members do not work in the company, but still bring their vision, knowledge and experience to the business. Finally, their BrSC is marked by their orientation to the market and the customer, leading them to pay close attention to the quality of their product and the brand image to compete in the market. Its location in the largest olive oil-producing area in the world contributes to this image. Likewise, they are committed to close relationships, trust and respect with their customers and suppliers, which makes stable and lasting relationships. Moreover, they formulate policies and actions to contribute to the socio-economic development of the community where they operate.

The FSC of this E2 fifth-generation FB is marked by the olive oil tradition present since the late 18th century. In fact, the family member's childhood are clearly involved in business activity in general and in the FB in particular. All generations seek to transmit the stories of and with their parents to the next generations. That is, each generation, without forgetting its roots and traditions, has tried to innovate to adapt to the needs of its time. The current generation stands out for a more innovative spirit, trying to transfer ideas from others to the activity of the FB, however, conditioning the business objectives to the relatives, that is, to grow in such a way that the next generations can, at least, live off this activity. Regarding the bonding social capital, this company highlights the overlap of values between those of the employees and the company since they inhabit the same village in which they have grown up and shared life experiences. Additionally, these employees have developed their professional life in the company.

It is a small company where communication is fluid, clear and transparent between all members, and where employees, regardless of their family nature, can contribute ideas and suggestions. Considering that marketing the product requires doing things right, its bridging social capital is characterised by a high market orientation. That is, try to satisfy the consumer with the best possible product without shortcuts, reaching quality standards that positively affect the image of the product. On the other hand, this company emphasises that the external environment is negative because there is no business culture, nor politics, nor administration to properly develop the activity in this sector. Therefore, they define relationships with stakeholders as very negative. However, they do contribute to the empowerment of the cultural sector in the area, developing CSR actions by total conviction.

E3 is a company founded by two generations, but they consider that they have seven previous generations associated with land and cultivation. Therefore, they highlight the importance of its trans-generational legacy as a source of competitive advantage, while each generation tries to innovate and contribute its bit for the advancement and growth of the company, due to its visionary spirit. Its FSC is characterised by a foundation laid by his parents who received training that was clearly a tradition, a love for the land, for the olive grove and for the oil. Their roots stand out of those affective bonds, bonds of feelings, of feeling part of a common project, of a land. They consider the need to dedicate themselves to this work 360 days a year, investing effort and time to achieve an adequate and profitable activity in the long term that can be bequeathed to the next generation. Additionally, the small family makes it easier to reach agreement and decide thanks to transparency in communication and governance, because when giving information, there are no problems either in the family or in the FB. Regarding its BSC, note that the CEO of the company considers that the personal circumstances of the employees must be taken into account, although above all, it has to transmit enthusiasm, desire and the feeling that this company belongs to the people, but neither can make see that everything they do is worth it. In fact, in this company, effort is valued, and the meritorious are promoted. The company is small, but communication between all employees is fluid, facilitating decision-making and initiatives. The BrSC of this company stands out, first, because its orientation to the market has allowed a continuity and a consistency over the years, whereby the company has shown more recurrence and more stability over time. It is in a *permanent revolution*, where you can never think that you have already tasted success, but constant investment in innovation and research is something crucial to its survival. In the market where they operate, both contacts and relationships with stakeholders and with complementary companies represent a source of competitive advantage. In fact, the company is defined as rigour, product quality, quality in its human resources, quality in its management, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, involvement with the environment, correct and cordial relations with the administration, and good governance. Now, it is worth noting that, unlike most FBs, this company is prouder of the company itself than of its products, since that represents the external validation of your activity, i.e., an intangible asset of the company.

In E4, this company is the result of the union of two FBs that share values to achieve the objectives of both, this company being a 40% owner. Four members of two generations are the shareholders who together with the members of the other FB make up this company. Its FSC is characterised by not counting in the management all the family members but only 50%, who influence the future of the company. They highlight the difference in the company when it has family roots, rather than many partners, or simply investors. This materialises in the search for other objectives from the company itself, the area where it is located, the work developed, the employment in the area, and the personal relationships with all the workers who have been working in the company for some time. To achieve such goals as the firm growth and its survival, they decided to join another FB and, in this way, attain the size or critical mass to compete in the market. However, the fact of sharing family values has been a fundamental reason for the cooperation agreement between the two firms. However, this company is not the result of the generational transfer or change, nor is it related to the previous activity of the company. Furthermore, there is no strong identification by betting on the family name. The emotional goals, in this case, are on a plane beyond the economic goals. In fact, only the director highlights patient capital, those investments developed without waiting for short-term return but the willing long-term value and the continuation of a family business tradition, as a fundamental part of business growth, but not all family members consider it important. Within the configuration of its BSC, R&D represents an important part in the functional organisational chart of the company, mainly motivated by decisions made within the family, due to the agile and flexible structure that characterises small FB where there is great communication. However, non-family members also stand out for their commitment to the company and its evolution, in which they have been for a long time and of which they want to remain part. In relation to its BrSC, it is worth highlighting the way they have delegated all commercial and market activities in the hands of the other family company, losing information and control over the final product. We can therefore indicate that this market orientation is low. However, with regard to the relationship with their environment, it is highlighted in their interest in the socio-economic development of their community, which materialises through the creation of employment, collaboration with local associations and institutions, and the promotion of the product and its consumption.

The E5 firm comes from their relationship with olive oil since previous generations. In fact, the founder came to own many factories, although later he changed sector without junking olive oil production. Thus, the FSC shows how this fourth generation wants to take advantage of past tradition to build the future. The new generations have been incorporated into the business because of the great identity with the company that previous generations have passed on. This is reflected in the enthusiasm with which they take to this enterprise that belongs to their parents, their uncles, their grandparents, who have had a hard time moving forward. Family employees feel the company as something very personal, as a much more intense feeling of company than any other employee. However, the ownership of this

company is also in the hands of the partner company, a family firm as well, to take advantage of its productive capacity, which was idle. For this, contacts and relationships have been fundamental, as well as the overlapping of objectives, seeking the common good, rather than the individual objectives of each family. However, family values and culture are reflected in the ability to fight, in their patient capital, and in their resilience to overcome adversity and keep the company afloat, as a family member fighting for their own company not as an outsider. That is in terms of ownership, because in terms of functions, more than four-fifths of the employees are non-family members, but they consider the company as their own, since the family has passed on that involvement, that commitment to this common project. Leadership based on the acceptance of suggestions and delegation of tasks and initiative help to foster the motivation and, therefore, the commitment of all employees. To achieve these objectives, the education and training of these employees are essential. The fact that the organisational structure is not so hierarchical, due to its size, makes the relationships more fluid and personal between all employees and facilitates the success of the company. Regarding their relationship with stakeholders, they highlight the need to maintain relationships of friendship and loyalty of both customers and suppliers to achieve success. Although they work with distributors, they sometimes lose control of the final product, so the market orientation, although elevated, is not the maximum. Likewise, they try to charge a fair price to suppliers, while attending to the needs of customers, trying to infuse the company with a human quality.

The split of the previous company, in which parents and siblings worked together, marks the FSC of the E6 company. This new company is already in the hands of a single-family branch. Although the reasons for this segregation vary, they highlight the divergence of objectives between the two brothers, the problem of succession and employment of family members of the third generation. In this way, this company complies with the two thirds of those companies that disappear in the generational handover from the second to the third generation, but in which there is desire for the generational handover to take place since the children already work in the FB. One of the fundamental aspects that the founder highlights is the difference in values, sacrifice and work culture of the following generations (his children) perhaps because of the comfortable life they have lived. It is a small family, but their communication is not as fluid as it is supposed since the father is the one who makes the decisions and is not yet able to delegate functions or hand over initiative to the children. The non-family members, who make up BSC, highlight the entrepreneurial vision of the founder of the second generation, his ability to work and his investment of time and effort without expecting short-term returns. In addition, family members highlight the shared goals of all non-family members with those of the family. The company is medium size where there is non-delegation of functions and the lack of initiative ceded by the founder, innovations that generate a source of competitive advantage cannot be incorporated. In relation to BrSC, this company does not control the final destination of its products, to the point that, in many cases, it does not know who the final consumer is. The relationship with suppliers focuses on transactions

complying with established quality standards always based on honesty. Finally, it highlights its distrust of the role played by institutions in the competitiveness of the sector.

This E7 company has a FSC from the co-ownership of the second family generation with the first. Management bases on the values and love of the product and the land, which parents have instilled in their children. The effort and investment in time and hours of work are the means by which they express that sentimentality that allows them to maintain this company. In fact, they regard the company as an extension of the family. At present, they have no prospect of a generational handover, which has never happened. Finally, the fact that it is a small family makes communication between them more fluid, reaching agreements more easily about the future of the company. Related to BSC, in this micro company there are two non-family employees with whom they have been working for some time. Therefore, it is easier to have shared objectives when there is a very personal and direct treatment to set and achieve those objectives in the long term. Many dimensions of this type of SC overlap with FSC. Finally, the company sells the product without controlling its end. The orientation to the market is nil, thus shaping its BrSC. However, relationships with their stakeholders, mainly suppliers, are based on trust, honesty and contact time between them. They have not yet been able to obtain loyalty from customers. Additionally, they try to promote activities in their community and the socio-economic development of the municipality within the scarce resources available to them.

The FSC of E8 micro-enterprise stands out for a clear identification with the family, since it is the result of the work of five generations. However, of this fifth generation, only one of the sisters has continued with the FB. She is characterised by her concern to present an altruistic behaviour, investing time and effort in the company even though it is small and lacks the resources and critical mass necessary to compete in the market. It is due to the sentimentality associated with an activity that has always been in the family, for which the previous generation had fought. They have not planned the generational handover, to the point of not knowing if their children would want to dedicate themselves to it. The non-family employees that the company has for several years have been working such that they are considered a fundamental constituent of the company. However, all the objectives, decision-making, ideas and suggestions originate from the family businesswoman, thus shaping the company's BSC. The configuration of its BrSC is characterised by its concern for the product it intends to place in the market, without attending to the needs of its customers. In short, it presents a production orientation, rather than towards the market. On the other hand, it considers that the competitiveness of the industrial sector depends on promotion and aid from local institutions because bureaucracy and requirements mean that companies do not even apply for them. However, other entities meet the needs for information and advice. Finally, it highlights the need to concentrate companies in the sector since the Spain brand is an intangible asset to compete around the world.

The president of E9 company defines it as a FB farm whose ownership and management is in the hands of three brothers. Its FSC is characterised by a full sense of identification of family employees with

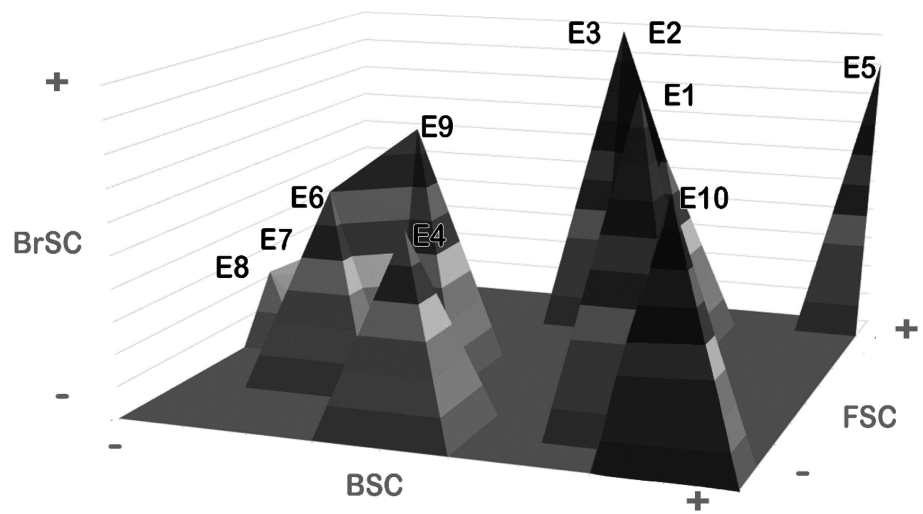
the values and culture of effort and love for the product and the printed land across generations. It highlights the investment in tangible and intangible assets that family members have made, thus materialising the long-term orientation of the family. All this is so that the company survives and the generational handover occurs, one of the main objectives. They highlight the importance of the FB model, valued in many countries where the family model is not so remarkable, so close and so valuable. Therefore, the members of the FB must get along for the company to survive in the long term. In fact, quality and perseverance are determining values of the identity of this business family. The president highlights the importance of human capital in achieving business success. In this BSC, the seniority of the employees in the company is of special relevance. In fact, non-family employees eventually embrace the company's goals as their own. The product is deeply known and can be marketed. Furthermore, most are friends since childhood, and have grown up together in the same parentage group, sharing values, artefacts and goals. Regarding BrSC, the concern for the product offered to the end customer is a constant in the company looking for ecological products. Customers are loyal and trust the product and the company. However, the lack of resources and their size means that they do not invest in product promotion and communication with the market. At this point, the contacts of complementary companies represent an intangible asset generating competitive advantage. Additionally, the family food industry does not have the potential to allocate a person exclusively to research and development due to the scarcity of resources. Although they expect more participation from the administration and the university, the times are not the same and they lose competitiveness.

Finally, E10 is owned by the second family generation, although more than 50% of the management is in the hands of outsiders. Therefore, the family identity is not very manifest in the interviews, perhaps because it is two brothers who are in the company, the rest being non-family employees. The FSC has been diluted with the incorporation of non-family members, although strengthening its BSC. This is characterised in this company by the seniority time of employees of more than 50 years. This allows them to share of the FB to maintain and build a common project and to allow all employees, family and non-family, to have initiative, development ideas, and new projects in search of the long-term growth of the company. As for the BrSC, this company is not focused on its brands, yet it maintains the relationships, visits and direct contacts with its clients to know their needs and to be able to satisfy them. Although their speeches do not stand out in their excessive market orientation, they share very good relationships with suppliers, with whom they maintain a relationship of trust and loyalty. Additionally, they have cooperation agreements with other companies, which relationships bring them synergies and enhanced detection of business opportunities in other markets.

Figure 2 shows the heterogeneity of familiness among sample firms following the higher or lower presence of each second-order concepts to configure their familiness.

Familiness and reasons to become international. One of the main results showed that the level of familiness influences the export propensity of FBs since only FBs with higher levels of familiness had

FIGURE 2 Heterogeneity of familiness



deployed strategies. The degree of internationalisation of FBs with lower levels of familiness was quite low or even null. Table 5 presents representative quotations that substantiate the second-order themes identified as motivations to internationalise.

Family motivations, e.g., prestige and family pride, excitement, and the need for growth and ownership advantages such as full identification with the product, international experience and cosmopolitanism could constitute the basis for firms with higher levels of familiness being the only firms that consider committing more resources to internationalisation.

Familiness and export propensity. We conclude that the level of familiness influences the tendency of FBs to internationalise (see Table 5). Although some firms had conducted operations, whether specific or one-off operations, in foreign markets, such firms were considered non-internationalised, and they presented lower levels of familiness. On the other hand, FBs with higher levels of familiness noted that they had always aimed to become international since the initial years of their business activity and/or from the moment they identified a business opportunity abroad, and those with average levels of familiness were more likely to cooperate with other firms. Here we highlight how these companies with a greater influence of BrSC show an advantageous position to compete abroad.

Familiness and international commitment. Familiness and export intensity. Firms with low levels of familiness were considered to have no export intensity, whereas those with higher degrees had international sales between 39% and 89% of the firms' total sales. It is worth noting that resorting to cooperation agreements allowed FBs to achieve higher levels of export intensity.

Familiness and geographical scope. Regarding the relationship between familiness and business geographical scope, firms with lower levels of familiness focused their international sales only on one country within the European Union. Conversely, firms with high levels of familiness conducted their international operations in three or more different geographical areas, including mainly Europe, the Americas and Asia, and thus had a broader geographical scope. The analysis of the interviews consistently showed that the United States was the

best foreign market for the firms' products, whereas there was disagreement regarding the Chinese market, which some family executives considered lacking in future potential.

We highlight certain countries "distant" in cultural and geographical terms experiencing significant growth in olive oil consumption where consumers are willing to pay for product differentiation. These countries include the Arab countries and South Africa, which are emerging destinations for firms with higher levels of familiness, which behave proactively towards international business opportunities.

Familiness and entry modes. The results show that the most commonly used international market entry mode of FBs consists of individual and/or joint exporting, but the qualitative differences in these modes depend on the firm's level of familiness. Firms with a lower degree of familiness chose indirect export because the end client arrived at their facilities to resupply or because they conducted sales with brokers or agents in charge of closing the final sales, losing information and control over the final product.

FBs with higher degrees of familiness combined all individual and joint direct exports. They engaged in direct export activities whose end clients included mainly importers and distributors, together with supermarket chains. Executives from these companies pointed to the stable character and seamless communication they maintained with these clients in addition to a high level of trust as the main characteristic of their commercial relationships.

Regarding FDI, firms with lower familiness did not even contemplate this option when discussing internationalisation entry modes. However, firms with higher degree shared an interest in developing FDI within a maximum period of 2 years through a 50% joint venture in the target market or through a local sales office that could boost sales in international markets or even drive the growth of the company.

Although these variables should be considered by quantitative analysis, the information extracted from the interviews showed differences among the firms studied. Table 6 presents representative quotations that substantiate the second-order theme identified as international commitment.

TABLE 5 Representative quotes for motivations to become international

INTERNATIONALISATION: MOTIVATIONS
Differentiation
“One should be in a continuous revolution; you cannot ever think you have reached your objectives. You're a successful case because when you have just arrived, you have started to die ...” E3-1
Pride and Full Identification with the Product
“We enjoy doing well; we enjoy taking the product all over the world, to the market. We enjoy seeing the family proud of having its surname ... my olive oil is sold in ... Japan, or my olive oil is sold in New York and that they see it and travel and ... they achieve this kind of satisfaction that is not measurable, obviously. But I think that the family's background, the olive oil's background, of managing all the stuff properly, it's a matter that is being passed on from one generation to the next ...” E2-1
“... if there aren't values and principles, there aren't any objectives ... the (international) consumer comes to you because they know you will not lie to him/her, because your product's the reflection of your values and has a high level of quality ...” E6-1
International Experience and Cosmopolitanism
“I remember when I travelled a lot to Italy, and I saw a lot and different olive oil mills ... I saw how they used different systems of breaking up ... I remember how I came back to Spain with this in mind ...” E2-1
“... our international experience that we have gained. Having lived and traveled abroad, speaking languages well ... having training background, knowing the idiosyncrasy of each country. It's about a slow process ... my sister in the USA, I've got international experience ... this helps us, this background ... that helps us to make international contacts” E3-1
Complementary Resources
“... to maintain and strengthen the firm ... it was preferable to be with a strong partner ... to make us grow, instead of walking alone and taking the risk of ...” E4-1
“We have a lack of marketing and financial resources ... to build the infrastructure in a different place or to take part in international exhibitions ... we cannot build loyalty in one market ...” E7-1
Institutional Support
“... the public government supports large firms, especially cooperatives ... which is a detriment for private firms, especially small ones, since we do not have any promotion activity, any commercialization compared with that of a huge olive oil group ...” E7-1
“It's true that many agro food firms export a lot, but for a small firm to export to those countries ... unless there'll be real support by public institutions with skilled people, it becomes very complicated for us ...” E8-1
Market Saturation
“The national market is very competitive, and you need to compete with huge amounts of volume. If you are not a brand, you have to compete based on prices ... I see the national market as very limited, and, then, we decided to go abroad ...” E1-1
“[We sell abroad] because in Spain the olive oil is a mature product, so it's very difficult to sell in Spain; however, there's still a lot to do ...” E5-1
Diversifying
“... there are several factors ... one is the issue about exports in general ... the diversity of clients in the market you have makes the firm stronger, and at the same time, it is not comparable with the client base of another firm that is focused in only one market ... If you sell to about 30 countries, you do not feel the crisis period as others do ... because when you sell in more than 30 countries, if one markets fails, you have another one ...” E1-1
“... we are focused on a client with a high purchasing power. Then, for the family firm it's clearly easier to focus on a very concentrated customer from a limited area than vague one in many countries, which are so big ...” E9-1
Networking
“[Taking part in ...] international exhibitions is very relevant since they are a meeting point from which you find a lot of clients ...” E5-2
“... we understood we were complementary because V [the family firm with which they cooperated] was strong in exports, but we did not export heavily ... we did not export ... so our great weakness is exporting, which was only 10% of our sales ...” E4-1
“We (family members) think that through cooperation agreements with several importing companies, our international activity accelerates and grows faster ...” E6-1

5 | DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our results are of paramount importance to the existing familiness literature, since they show how familiness, as a single and specific resource of the FB, may differ among family companies. Therefore, it can be regarded as source of competitive advantage for some

companies, while it may hinder others FBs' growth and survival, depending on what each dimension influences. The review of the literature on the internationalisation of the FB reveals that most studies examining these issues employ a family versus non-family comparison, while our main contribution is that we have focused only on FBs and their heterogeneity. Additionally, the literature stresses the key role of family involvement when differentiating family and non-family enterprises. However, this level of family involvement

TABLE 6 Representative quotes for international commitment

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES, EVENTS AND ARCHIVAL ENTRIES FOR SECOND-ORDER THEMES	
INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT	
Intensity of export	<p>"... currently, commercialization [achieved] abroad is basically 90% ..." E2-1</p> <p>"... nowadays, we have 75–80% of our production exported to more than 40 countries; we are talking about million and a half, a million and eight hundred in turnover abroad, in 42 countries ..." E3-1</p> <p>"... exporting is complex; finding the ideal person, here, building working teams is not always easy. It'd take time and, up to this moment, export represented a very small part of our activity, less than 10%, obviously not enough ..." E4-1</p> <p>"... taking into account that 95% of our market is abroad, all our objectives are focused on the export client more than the national one ..." E5-2</p> <p>"Although, we have previously exported 80% of our total production, now we have exported 60–70% ..." E9-1</p> <p>"Nowadays, we sell 40% [of the total sales] abroad, and we are growing since we have highly promoted the export department ... that was born 10–15 years ago" E10-1</p>
Scope	<p>"When we started ... we always made mistakes. The more you sell, the higher prices the mistakes will have. Then, we started in a close market with high potential power ... to be honest, selling abroad is a challenge. The first sale was to Mexico, when we had not even taken part in the PIPE program ... to be honest, it was exciting ... when you achieve it [your product] arriving to a country, when you see it on a shelf at the supermarket ... this is restorative ... in China, one has to think about everything from the beginning, then ... we have had a small market share, but we'd like to tackle it from a more active perspective ... in the coming years. We've realized that Arab countries are very good ... There we have invested resources ..." E1-1</p> <p>"... our sales ... we are in 42 markets ... our first client is England ..., then our five main countries are, we are talking about Japan, Germany, Scandinavian countries, and the USA, which obviously have grown exponentially, and the United Kingdom. But also, India, although it does not represent too much for a firm like ours ... maybe we could have a higher turnover, but we are in restaurants, supermarkets, shop ... this atomized growth has allowed us ... to gain confidence ... and not be dependent on a single client ... there is no client who can sink us ... this web-growth has given us strength since we are not dependent on a client ..." E3-1</p> <p>"... to China, Japan, we sell a lot to other oriental countries. Maybe we are making less effort to come into these markets because it's a product that they have just started to consume ... In the USA ... we have lots to offer since the quality of our olive oil has nothing to envy compared to the Italian one. However, the Italian market share in the USA is amazingly high ..." E5-2</p> <p>"The only ... way to grow is to seek consumers ... to look for clients where they were" E6-1</p> <p>"Now, we are exporting to France, Switzerland, Holland, Luxembourg, Germany, and Denmark ... We're working on a very beautiful project that we have just started in Ukraine ... We export to Japan and are trying to enter Russia and China, well, into Hong-Kong ..." E9-1</p> <p>"We sell in Asia, in almost all countries, and the USA, all over the world, because we want to grow ... we sell to 50–60 countries" E10-1.</p>
Mode	<p>"One of the first markets we entered was Japan, where we have sold since 10–15 years ago, and we have all kinds there; that is, we work with supermarkets, warehouse importers, HORECA distributors, clients of the pharmaceutical industry, a wide range of everything ... Until now, there has been no project to set up a commercial subsidiary abroad ... because of the loss of control unless you have a trustworthy person there ... here, we can find the most substantial reticence ... The risk of losing control now is higher than the expected profits from setting a subsidiary there" E1-1</p> <p>"... we adapt to the country ... we work with specialists in food service ... with master importers ... with brokers and distributors ..." E3-1</p> <p>"As a general rule, we do not know always where the product ends up ... we do not know completely where our product is distributed ... maybe in the near future, if everything goes right, if everything goes as it's supposed to ... sending one of our employees to the USA to sound out whether we have an opportunity with a subsidiary ... to be less psychologically and geographically distant ..." E5-2</p> <p>"... [in the future] we will buy another French company or make a 50% agreement (joint venture) ... I think the future should be based on such positions in other countries, setting up headquarters, because it'd be easier since abroad, I do not know why, love for the land, love for the flag reigns; here [in Spain], it does not happen. Here, everyone runs his/her own kiosk ..." E6-1</p> <p>"... when the time comes to sell, there are some commercial agents, trade agents, brokers as we call them here ... and they are who put consumers in touch with us; we give him/her samples to be delivered to their clients ... and that's how most of us work: they come and buy the product here directly ... the most usual practice is by means of commercial agents ..." E8-1</p> <p>"... there are distributors, there are supermarkets, and there are white brands. There are many people who have their own brand and what they want you to do is work with their brand ..." E10-1</p>

resulting from the application of the F-PEC scale, through the variables of power, experience and culture (Merino et al., 2015) is necessary but not sufficient to define a company as an FB.

Our main contribution stands out in extending knowledge about familiness through understanding the relationships that characterise a family firm and in determining whether they affect its internationalisation. As far as the configuration of familiness is concerned, identity becomes a crucial element, determining the mere definition of a family firm. In fact, a firm with a soft link between family identity and the business can be said to be a family firm (Rutherford et al., 2008). Although, altruism is related to the intention and wish to care for family members and employees, it also exposes a dark side under the agency theory (Schulze et al., 2003). However, in the case of FBs, their organisational culture is defined by the application of stewardship practices from the top down, which leads to members of a group staying together out of mutual interest from the development of commitment, trust and loyalty, becoming a culturally embedded way of life in a FB (Pearson & Marler, 2010). Altruism is considered as a factor that could harm the longevity and economic viability of family-controlled businesses (Anderson & Reeb, 2003; Carney, 2005; Kets de Vries et al., 2007; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2005) when there are agency problems (Schulze et al., 2003). Arrègle et al. (2007) suggest that organisational identity influences the development of the SC of the firm, positively influencing its performance (Craig et al., 2008). We analyse how familiness may vary between firms in terms of identity, altruism and family ties as well as communication within the family (Lubatkin et al., 2005), which depends on the number of family members and a planned generational handover to encourage the long-term growth and survival of this kind of firm. To survive, the communication process plays an important role to encourage shared information, to increase the flow of information (Craig & Dibbrell, 2006), to enhance trust among employees, both family and non-family employees, (Chirico & Salvato, 2016; Nordstrom & Steier, 2015), and to facilitate the flow of resources pertinent to family firm performance (Herrero & Hughes, 2019; Mani & Lakhali, 2015). Arrègle et al. (2007) discuss the formation of BSC from isomorphic business practices with respect to the family institution promoting easiness of communication, frequent interactions and mutual trust among family members. Thus, when the degree of familiness is high, even kinship and BSC could substitute and complement formal governance structures and contractual enforcement and can help mitigate problems associated with moral hazard, adverse selection and asymmetric information (Ang et al., 2000; Eisenhardt, 1989). Specific objectives for creating value in these businesses (Mignon & Mahmoud-Jouini, 2014) can be shared by all business members and enhance BSC. Additionally, a long-term orientation (Zahra et al., 2004) helps to create BSC since such an orientation involves more attention to business longevity (Dunn, 1995) and the transfer of family values to the FB (Brice & Richardson, 2009). Regarding leadership style, some of the interviewees referred to it as an essential component to induce a group to behave in the interest of achieving common goals. Furthermore, our interviewees referred to the close ties created when a firm is not large because of the informal

hierarchical structure and the influence of this structure on the business atmosphere and the achievement of the FB's objectives. Moreover, the higher the employee seniority, the stronger the commitment to shared goals and the feeling of belonging to the FB.

Finally, we have to pinpoint BrSC as the third configuring element of familiness. Our interviewees describe how the building and strengthening of relationships with stakeholders become essential to achieve business performance. In fact, business and family systems may form effective and lasting relationships (Huybrechts et al., 2011) with stakeholders, supporting SC that enables a FB to obtain resources from these networks or connections (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003), thus creating BrSC. These links lead FB managers and employees to focus on quality and the delivery of superior value to clients. It is relevant to highlight that family bonds also create strong social ties with the whole community (Berrone et al., 2012) where a FB is deeply embedded since families have unique advantages in developing BrSC with the stakeholders of an FB (Cabrera-Suárez & Olivares-Mesa, 2012). Leadership, investment in time and resources, and commitment could lead to an effective community engagement, where the family firm exhibits its sustainable long-term plans for their community. This reciprocal engagement could bring several mutual benefits. In the case of FBs, they could enhance business reputation and image, attract talent and build brand capital from these strong relationships; they could create a lasting and sustainable legacy, through which these social bonds boost trust and cooperation, as well as favour the development of business skills (Dayan et al., 2019). All of them are worthy when developing some business strategies such as the internationalisation.

Many different variables have been used to evaluate international commitment. They are export intensity, domestic market sales in proportion to the total sales volume (Fernández & Nieto, 2005), the mode of entry in international markets (indirect or direct export, foreign direct investment, FDI, joint ventures) (Brouthers & Hennart, 2007), the geographical scope of the internationalisation, the number of countries or areas where the business sells its products (Cerrato & Piva, 2012), and the speed of the business internationalisation process (Casillas & Moreno-Menéndez, 2017). In this work, international commitment has been assessed through export intensity, the geographical scope of internationalisation, and the choice of international entry mode, considering the need for internationalisation to be studied as a continuous variable (Park, 2018). Therefore, another important result to pinpoint is that the higher the level of familiness the greater the international commitment of the firm, which is contrary to some of the main literature studies (Fernández & Nieto, 2005). Therefore, one future line of research is to investigate why FB do not develop FDI abroad if international commitment increases. Another future line could be to find out whether there are differences in the international success of FBs depending on the level of influence each second-order theme exerts.

Our study contributes to the examination of the essence of FBs highlighting how the level of family involvement is insufficient to determine their essence (Hubler, 2009). For example, some of the firms in the studied cases with similar degrees of familiness behaved

in completely different ways, depending on the level of influence of each configuring dimension of familiness. This suggests that familiness influences FBs' internationalisation strategies and therefore their growth and survival; depending on the degrees of familiness, the reasons for internationalisation differ as well. Many of the analysed FBs may have shared the same economic and strategic motivations for going international but not the same family reasons to internationalise such as guaranteeing the control of the business in family hands and transferring a "healthy" business family generation after family generation (Dal Maso et al., 2020). Additionally, more experienced family members develop an international strategy more easily, becoming more involved than their less experienced counterparts (Maitland & Sammartino, 2015).

Furthermore, higher levels of familiness lead to higher degrees of international commitment, that is, higher international sales volume, higher resource commitment of international entry modes and broader geographical scope. All these factors should lead these companies to promote familiness, which favours the development of their competitive advantage through the relationships among different systems. These systems are individuals, family, business and stakeholders engaged in the environment where companies are operating. Through creating SC, familiness may help to manage the heterogeneity and complexity of FB system interactions.

The main practical implication of our study is the fact that SC is crucial for FBs with long-term continuity goals, for which transfer and management are the most important activities (Steier, 2001). The results regarding the relevance of SC to sustained competitive advantages support the decision to "promote, develop and nurture" SC when a FB becomes international and commits to international activities. These results must also reinvigorate the proactivity of public administration in this sector to promote intercompany collaboration agreements (e.g., the creation of export consortia), which generate SC and, therefore, familiness. Additionally, if academics want to develop their knowledge about FBs, a focus on different degrees of familiness could allow the exploration of behavioural patterns and their heterogeneity.

The main limitation of our study is the use of qualitative methodologies, which do not allow the generalisation of the results. We do not know how broadly our findings will apply beyond the Spanish olive oil industry, which constitutes another future research avenue. Furthermore, an empirical quantitative study would be interesting to cross-check these results and increase their generalisation.

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