

# CHALLENGES AND MOTIVATION OF DAUGHTERS IN SUSTAINING LEADERSHIP ROLES IN FAMILY BUSINESSES

SALSABILLA NADHFAH, DR DWITYA AGUSTINA  
UNIVERSITAS ARY GINANJAR, INDONESIA



## INTRODUCTION

Family businesses contribute significantly to Indonesia’s economy, accounting for 82% of national GDP and 95% of existing enterprises. Despite this central role, succession remains a persistent challenge, with only 30% of businesses surviving into the second generation and 13% into the third. Within this landscape, daughters encounter unique difficulties shaped by gendered expectations, legitimacy struggles, and cultural norms that often limit their access to leadership. As more women gain higher education and enter professional environments, addressing these obstacles becomes crucial for building an inclusive and sustainable family business succession framework. This study offers a focused examination of the gendered succession dynamics that influence daughters’ pathways to leadership—highlighting their challenges, motivations, and agency in transforming family enterprises.

## OBJECTIVES

This research aims to (1) identify the specific barriers daughters encounter in assuming leadership roles, (2) explore the motivations and enabling factors that strengthen their intention to lead, and (3) propose strategic pathways to enhance their leadership readiness and contribution to long-term business continuity.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### MATERIALS

**Family Business Theory**, which emphasizes the integration of ownership, management, and family relationships across generations.

**Gender and Leadership Theory**, highlighting the distinct leadership traits of women—empathy, collaboration, and transformational influence—that contribute to sustainable business management.

**Human Resource Management Theory**, focusing on leadership development, empowerment, and role balance in organizational succession.

Succession Planning Theory, **which underlines the importance** of systematic transition processes, communication, and family governance to ensure business continuity.

### METHODS

A descriptive qualitative design was employed, involving eight purposively selected female participants from the Second Generation Program at Universitas Ary Ginanjar who were actively involved or preparing for involvement in their family enterprises. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, analyzed using thematic analysis via NVivo 15, and validated through triangulation between interview data and program documentation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Daughters possess strong potential to become transformative leaders in family businesses when supported through structured mentorship, empowerment, and clear governance systems. Overcoming generational and gender barriers requires self-awareness, innovation, and formalized family alignment. Inclusive and well-planned succession processes will not only sustain business continuity but also enhance women’s contribution to long-term economic and family harmony.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

### Challenges Experienced by Daughters in Taking Leadership Roles

The study revealed that daughters in family businesses face three dominant challenges: generational mindset differences, leadership legitimacy, and role conflict.

**First, the generational mindset gap** between founders and successors often limits innovation. Founders tend to uphold traditional practices and centralized decision-making, whereas daughters bring modern, technology-driven perspectives. This difference can cause friction and delay leadership transfer.

**Second, issues of confidence and legitimacy emerge as a result of gender stereotypes.** Daughters must work harder to prove their capabilities because leadership is still culturally associated with men. This constant need for validation creates psychological pressure and can undermine self-efficacy.

**Third, dual role conflict becomes a persistent struggle.** Many daughters juggle responsibilities as leaders, mothers, and wives simultaneously. The expectation to prioritize domestic duties restricts their professional focus, leading to emotional fatigue and reduced productivity. Collectively, these barriers reflect the patriarchal and hierarchical nature of many family firms, where leadership succession is not yet gender-neutral.

### Motivational and Supporting Factors Empowering Female Successors

Despite such challenges, the study identified several **key supporting and motivational** factors that strengthen daughters’ capacity to lead.

Foremost is **self-awareness and personal resilience**. Many respondents described that understanding their own values, strengths, and leadership style became the foundation of confidence and emotional balance. This inner stability allows them to handle criticism and resistance constructively.

Equally important is **family and environmental support**. Open communication and trust from parents, especially from the founder generation, give daughters legitimacy and a sense of belonging in the leadership structure. When fathers act as mentors rather than gatekeepers, the transition process becomes more collaborative and sustainable.

In addition, **innovation and technology adoption serve as empowerment tools**. By mastering digital marketing, financial technology, and e-commerce platforms, daughters prove their managerial competence through measurable results. Their contribution to modernization not only validates their leadership but also improves business performance.

Lastly, training, education, and networking opportunities equip female successors with managerial insight and confidence to make strategic decisions, bridging traditional and contemporary management paradigms.

### Strategies to Overcome Barriers and Strengthen Leadership Competence

The first is **leadership and emotional intelligence development**. Continuous coaching and mentoring programs help successors build adaptive leadership styles rooted in empathy, communication, and confidence.

Second, **professionalizing management systems reduces bias and dependency on personal relationships**. Establishing objective performance indicators, clear organizational structures, and transparent evaluation mechanisms ensures that leadership selection is based on merit rather than gender or seniority.

Third, **the creation of a family constitution is essential**. This governance framework clarifies ownership rights, leadership succession rules, and conflict resolution mechanisms, ensuring fairness and stability across generations.

Furthermore, families should promote **inclusive succession planning**, where both sons and daughters are equally prepared for leadership from an early stage.

Finally, **promoting work-life balance policies**—such as flexible schedules, shared household responsibilities, and supportive family dynamics—helps female leaders maintain productivity without sacrificing personal well-being.

RESEARCHER:

SALSABILLA NADIFAH

DR DWITYA AGUSTINA

FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN FAMILY BUSINESS  
IS NOT A CHALLENGE TO TRADITION,  
BUT AN EVOLUTION OF LEGACY