

Differences in Management accounting between family enterprises and non-family enterprises: A Statistical Approach

Christine Duller¹

Abstract

Management accounting deals with the subject family enterprises rather little in spite of its high economical relevance. This paper questions, whether general objectives of family enterprises differ from those of non-family enterprises. Based on the hypothesis that family enterprises aim at humane objectives to a greater extent and at financial objectives to a lesser extent than non-family enterprises the results of an empirical study for the region Upper-Austria are presented. The conclusion is that apart from the extent of return on equity objectives of family enterprises do not differ much from those of non-family enterprises. The second point of interest is to analyse differences in objectives between medium and large sized enterprises.

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JEL classification: L21, M41

1. Introduction

According to the definition for SME (small and medium sized enterprises) given by the European Union only 0.5 % of the Austrian enterprises are classified as large enterprises (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p. 39). Therefore the vitality, customization and competitiveness of the national economy are borne by small and medium sized enterprises. Moreover these enterprises are of special importance for the national labour market, because 65.5 % of the Austrian employees are part of those enterprises.

Most of the small and medium sized enterprises constitute family enterprises simultaneously. In Austria about 75% of all enterprises are family enterprises, and approximately 70% of all employed persons are working in family enterprises (Pichler, Bornett, 2005, p. 125; Feldbauer-Durstmüller et al., 2007, p. 428; Hasch et al., 2000, p. 62).

In spite of the high economical relevance management accounting deals with the subject family enterprises in empirical research rather little. Theoretical research in management accounting in family enterprises is focused either on foundations or successions of enterprises or on the special socio-economic aspects given by the combination of enterprise and owner family (Feldbauer-Durstmüller et al., 2007, p. 428; Klein, 2004, p. 54 f.).

1. University Linz, Department for Applied Statistics, Altenberger Straße 69, 4040 Linz, Austria - email: Christine.duller@jku.at