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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Development of digitalization of family businesses in Thailand

[version 1; peer review: 1 approved, 1 approved with reservations]

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Abstract

Research background

family businesses play an increasingly important role both in the global economy and the Thailand economy. Family businesses in Thailand are growing rapidly and are now the backbone of Thailand's economy. In 2018, these organizations generated a value of THB 28 trillion, which was about 72% of the value of all businesses in Thailand. In the modern economy, one of the important aspects of the functioning of family organizations is digital technology. The development of the digitization of family organizations in Thailand is very important because it can determine the strength and success of these enterprises in the current world. However, Thai family organizations do not prioritize the digital transformation of their business.

A preliminary analysis of the literature on the subject, within the Web of Science and Scopus databases, revealed only a few scientific publications devoted to this subject. For this reason, the author decided to explore this topic.

Purpose of the article

to indicate and describe the importance and significance of digitalization in the activities of family businesses in Thailand. The article poses a research question: do family businesses in Thailand implement digitalization processes in practice, and if so, to what extent.

Methods

Open Peer Review

Approval Status ✓ ?

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Any reports and responses or comments on the article can be found at the end of the article.

in order to achieve the aim of the study, the method of qualitative research through a critical analysis of the literature on the subject was used, reports (2019-2023) and other statistical and analytical documents were also included.

Findings & value added

the added value in the cognitive aspect of this work consists in systematizing the concepts, indicating the specificity of family businesses and their level of digitalization. The added value in the utilitarian area is related to the analysis of reports, through the presentation of conclusions and indications.

Keywords
family business in Thailand, digitization, digital transformation, development of digitalization.



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Introduction

Family businesses are considered to be the oldest and most common form of entrepreneurship and they are beginning to play an increasingly important role in the modern economy (Marjanski, 2015). Family organizations that are strong and dynamically developing are able to largely determine the ability of individual regions and even countries to be globally competitive (Marjanski, 2015). Family businesses play an important role in both the global economy and the Thai economy – they generate national income, create many jobs, and have an important impact on shaping the organizational culture.

The share of family businesses in the total number of enterprises in global terms is 66%, and in the employment of employees about 80% (Family Business Yearbook, 2015, EY). It should be noted that the number of family organizations varies regionally in different parts of the world.

In the literature, there is a view that the family organization is treated as a *system* that presents the enterprise as three overlapping subsystems: family, enterprise and ownership (Jezak *et al*., 2004). The specificity of family organizations can also be presented by means of two subsystems: the family system and the economic system. Strong connections between these systems affect the goals and the way the organization and family function, which makes them stimulants or destimulants of their development (Martyniuk, 2013). Given that both the family and the company have their own values, the feedback loop between them can be both a source of their development and limitations, an opportunity or a threat. The most important thing is that the values of each system through their mutual cooperation and interdependence support their mutual development (Jezak *et al*., 2004).

Family organizations are characterized by the specificity of the functioning of business activities. Strategic business goals are shaped on the one hand by ownership and family relations, and on the other by control of the organization. Taking into account that the prospect of functioning through generations is the most important challenge of these enterprises, the development of these organizations is of particular importance (Marjanski, 2015). Family businesses as specific business entities combine traditionalism and innovation. Without values, the family organization cannot function, because it is necessary to reconcile feelings and reason and to maintain harmony between the human and economic aspects. The activity of a family organization generally does not assume that it is only a place of work, but results from the enthusiasm to implement plans and the ability to combine aspects resulting from family values with professional and, above all, personal ones (Safin, 1993). The basic goal of the family – as indicated by the philosophical context – is to shape virtues, and the family itself determines a happy life (Szczap, 2013), while the purpose of the enterprise is the creation of material goods and its development (Lichtarski, 2015). Taking the above into account, the specificity of the family organization consists in the simultaneous implementation of both of these goals.

The owners of family businesses are increasingly aware of the economy, which affects the rationality of their decisions, aimed at both the operational and strategic areas of the organization's operations. Managers of family businesses wonder what will affect their success in the future (GUS, 2022; Sobczak, 2014): financial results and modern fixed assets, proper customer relations, professional product brand and a positive image of the company on the market (Bąk, 2011), or maybe all of them together?

The strategies of family organizations are mainly focused on functioning from generation to generation, as well as on long-term value growth. For such enterprises, a development strategy is needed that aims not only to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage, but also to transfer ownership and management of the organization, which take place in the process of intergenerational change (Marjanski, 2015). The foundation of strategic planning in family businesses is primarily family values and the philosophy of the organization. An important role in this process is played by involvement, both in the process of entrepreneurial family activity and in the dimension of the organization's activities (Lewandowska, 2013).

As a result of the recent changes that have taken place in the global economy, there has been a breakthrough in the existing paradigms of operation of business entities. Today, in order to thrive and even survive, they need to have the ability and flexibility not only to adapt, but also to anticipate, given the changing economic reality. For this reason, contemporary organizations place great emphasis on undertaking pro-innovation projects that adapt them to the conditions of the market economy, as well as the dynamics and complexity of their market environment (Borowiecki & Siuta-Tokarska, 2014). In addition, in the modern world, family businesses are struggling with many challenges, e.g. cyberattacks, high costs of raw materials and trade barriers, so professionalization of business is becoming a very important aspect in their functioning. It includes investment and business decisions, ownership issues, and family connections (Family – owned businesses: Leading in a evolving business ecosystem).

Today, one of the important aspects of family businesses is digital technology, which includes digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation.

Therefore, in order for a family organization to be successful, it should focus on business strategy, new technologies and the impact in which it affects society.

Digitization, digitalization and digital transformation are processes that are used by family businesses to improve and adapt their existing organizational solutions, which in turn also contributes to greater smoothness and efficiency of their operations.

Recent years, especially the pandemic period, have shown how important digitization has become in enterprises and that

without investment in digitalization, it is impossible to run an effective business. Digitization is primarily about saving costs and significantly increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, as well as increasing its competitiveness and opening it to new markets and new customers (Flazinski, 2022).

Rapid technical and technological progress, the development of knowledge and globalization have contributed to the fact that the company's strategy in the new economic model focuses on activities based on value innovation, as well as takes into account ethics and corporate social responsibility (Chybalski & Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2012). In order for a modern organization to develop, it should implement a development strategy that takes into account both internal factors of the company: resources, potential and capabilities, and also adapts it to external economic conditions (Skowronek-Mielczarek, 2013).

The specific features of family businesses mean that they also have to face other management problems than in the case of non-family organizations. Family values make not only the owners, but also the employees of a family business feel responsible for its successes and failures. In addition, they are more involved in the organization's activities, sacrificing themselves for it so that it can survive difficult, crisis situations. All this means that family businesses in the modern economy have great opportunities for dynamic development (Zukowska & Pindelski, 2012).

Family businesses in Thailand are now the backbone of Thailand's economy due to their dynamic and rapid growth. In 2018, these organizations generated a value of THB 28 trillion, which was about 72% of the value of all businesses in Thailand. Family businesses, managed by family members, also accounted for more than 50% of organizations registered with SET in 2018 (Family-owned businesses: Leading in an evolving business ecosystem). In addition, family organizations provide employment for many employees in Thailand. In order to have the opportunity to develop and be competitive on the economic market, these enterprises must constantly improve their human capital through the development of talents, at the same time develop their opportunities and cope with threats in functioning on the economic market. Given that both the international, regional and local economic environment is constantly changing, family organizations should not only keep up with them, but be able to anticipate developments (Global Family Business Survey 2019 - Thailand Report).

Family businesses with deep family values that create trust and role models for the communities in which they operate, thus contributing to the long-term sustainability of society (Global Family Business Survey 2019 - Thailand Report).

Family organizations primarily implement long-term management strategies, due to plans to pass the company on to the next generation. A study conducted by the Global Family Business Survey 2019 – Thailand Report found that 76% of family organizations in Thailand have already passed the succession stage and are managed by a new generation – Figure 1.

Digitalization of family businesses in Thailand presented in the literature on the subject

The bibliometric analysis of articles on this topic was conducted in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. It was conducted based on thematic scope, fields of science and years of publication. It shows little intimacy with this topic. The analyses carried out are shown in Figure 2–Figure 13.

Digital economy

The 21st century brought with it the fourth industrial revolution, based primarily on digital transformation. Technical means

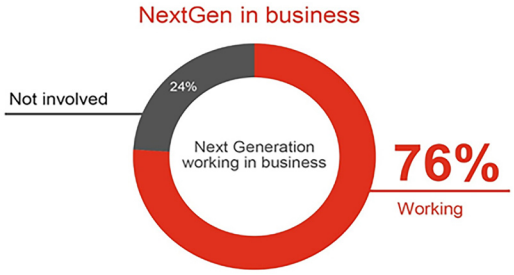

Figure 1. Involvement of next generation in business. Source: Global Family Business Survey 2019 - Thailand Report.

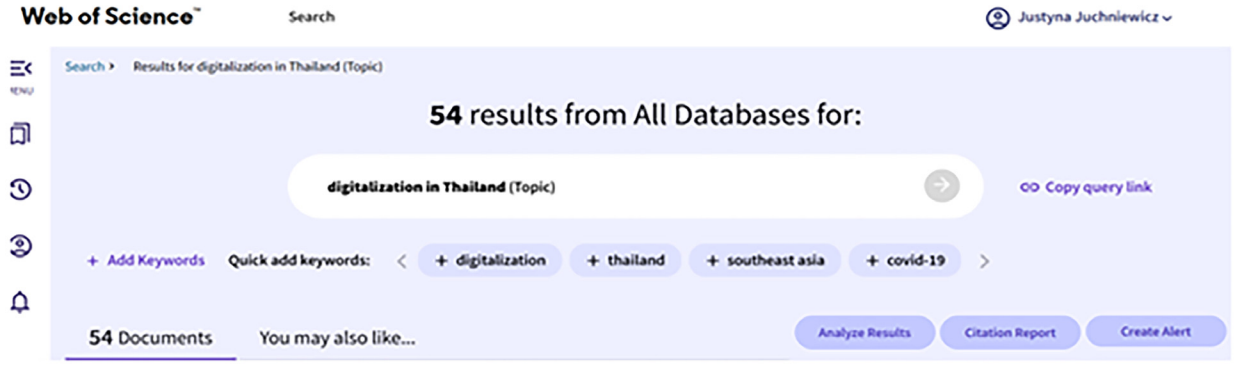

Figure 2. Number of publications indicated based on criteria in the Web of Science database. Source: own research.



Figure 3. The article authors indicated based on criteria in the Web of Science database. Source: own research.



Figure 4. The areas of articles indicated based on criteria in the Web of Science database. Source: own research.

enable the rapid sharing and processing of digital text and graphic content. The environment of digital reality on the one hand allows better access to knowledge, and on the other hand, the creation of new knowledge, which is particularly important in the modern world. In addition, digitalization also allows for the creation of new organizational and technical solutions in enterprises, contributing to strengthening their competitive position on the market.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is based on the following technological developments and trends, i.e.:

- **Big Data and Business Intelligence – a technology that allows you to collect, store and analyze huge amounts of data**, which are then used to determine production imperfections. These tools enable **data processing** and drawing conclusions, which then support business activities.
- **Autonomous robots** – robots that are more flexible, self-reliant than current robots, and are also able to interact with humans and other robots.
- **Simulation** – Designers and system operators have the ability to use real-time data to map **the physical world into a virtual model** that can connect people, products, and machines.
- **System integration – the possibility of vertical and horizontal integration of various functions and**

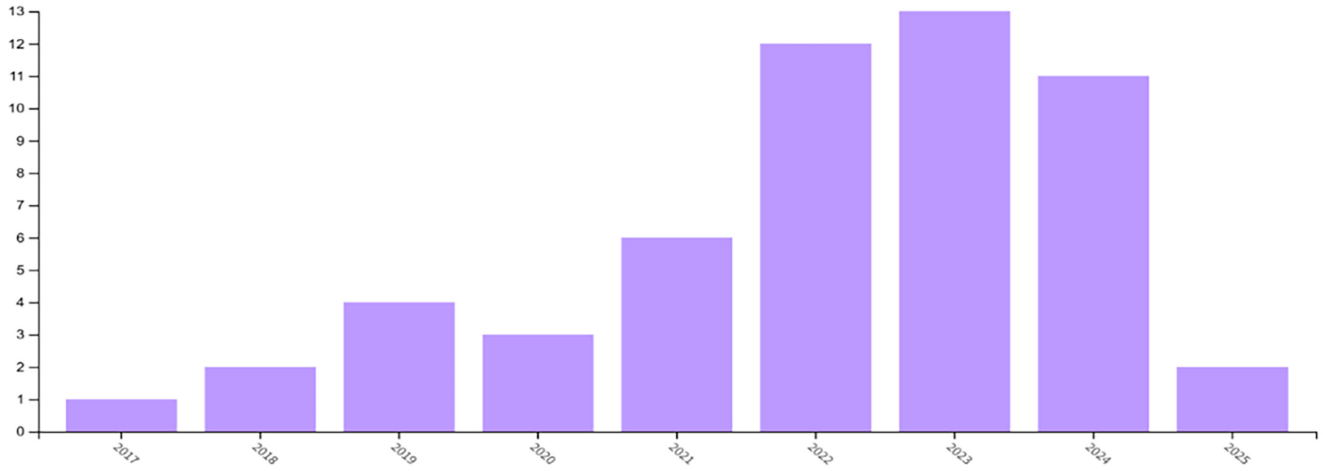

Figure 5. The years of publication of articles indicated based on criteria in the Web of Science database. Source: own research.



Figure 6. Number of publications indicated based on criteria in the Web of Science database. Source: own research.

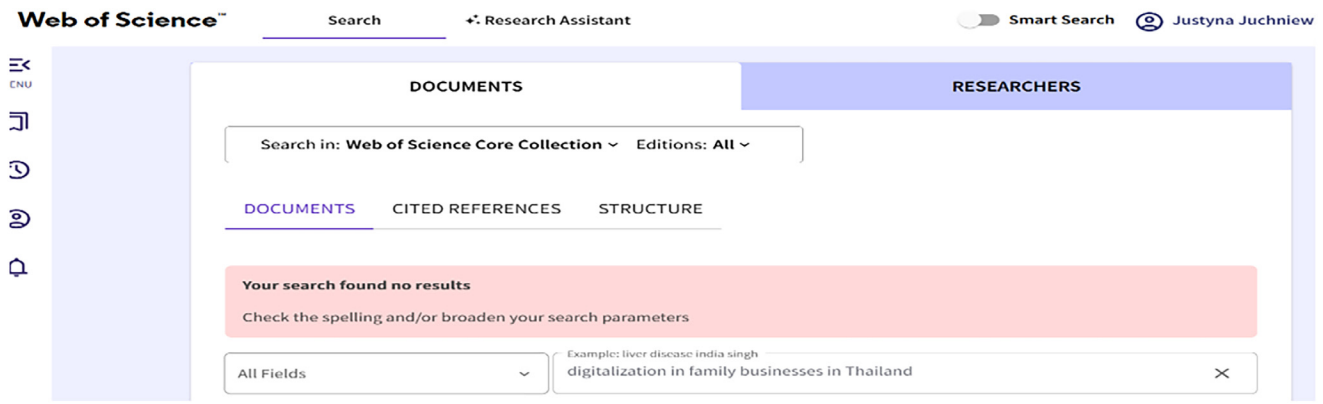

Figure 7. Number of publications indicated based on criteria in the Web of Science database. Source: own research.

departments in the company, enabling automated value chains and enabling the use of digital data at the management and production level.

- **Internet of Things** (IoT), **which provides real-time data sharing** between all parts of the system, **connecting** embedded devices, offices, organizations, and manufacturing plants.
- **Cybersecurity** – enabling **reliable and secure communication**, as well as identity and access management to users and machines.
- **Cloud computing** – allowing for much **greater data sharing between websites and company boundaries**. In addition, a large part of IoT communications and large-scale data will be able to be delivered through

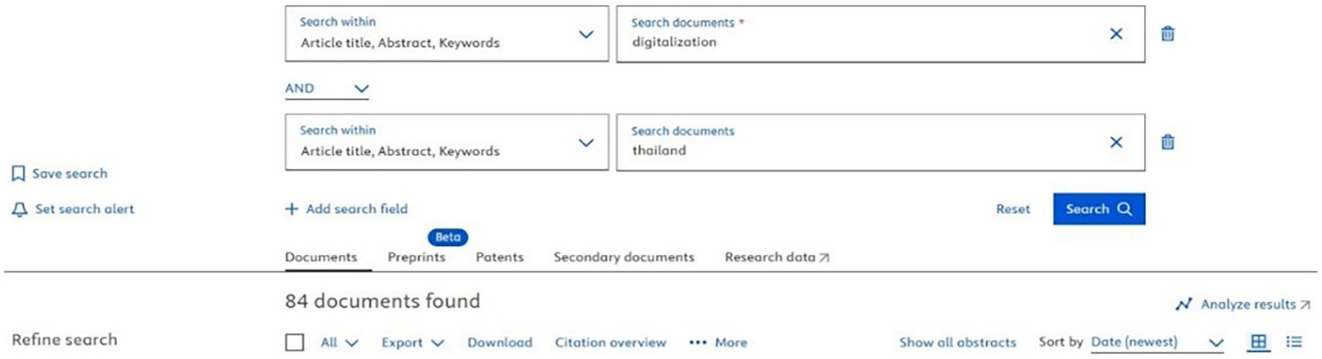

Figure 8. Number of publications indicated based on criteria in the Scopus database. Source: own research.

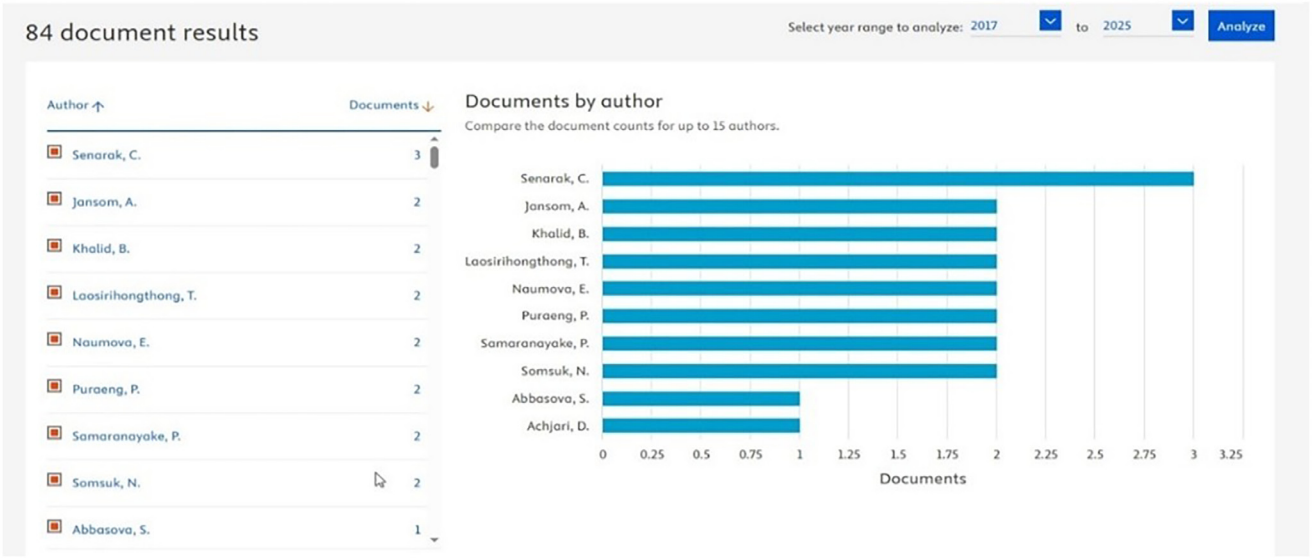

Figure 9. The article authors indicated based on criteria in the Scopus database. Source: own research.

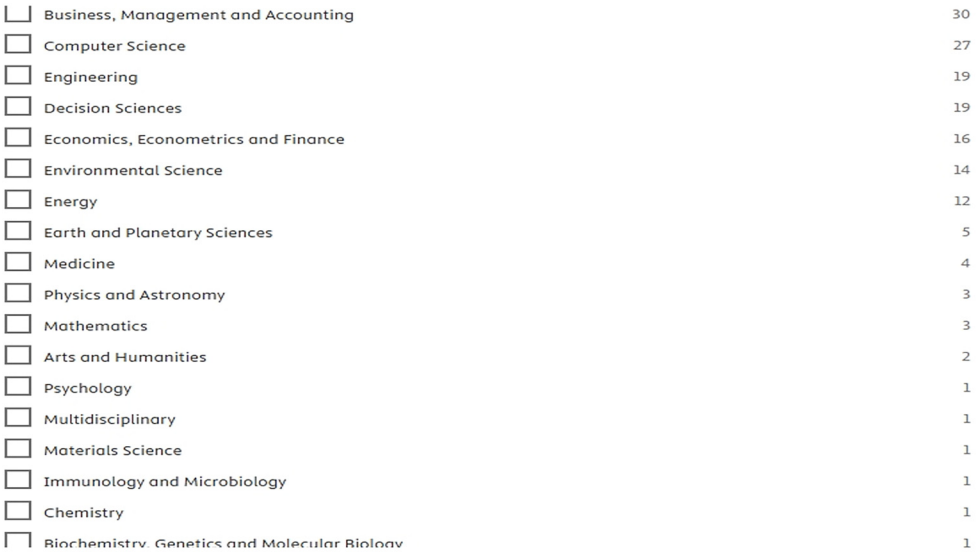

Figure 10. The areas of articles indicated based on criteria in the Scopus database. Source: own research.

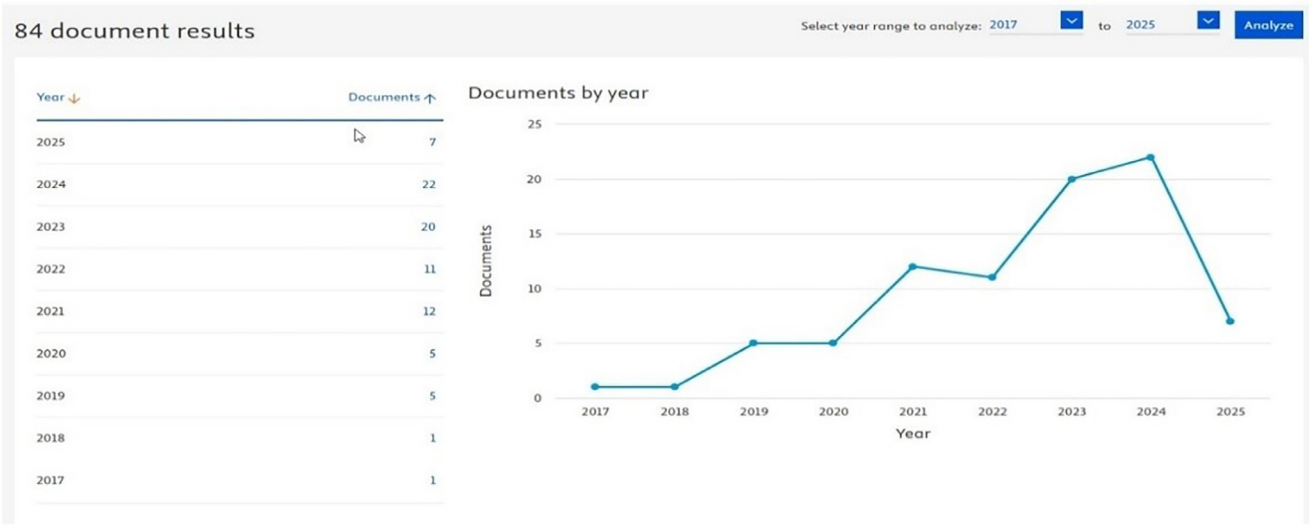

Figure 11. The years of publication of articles indicated based on criteria in the Scopus database. Source: own research.

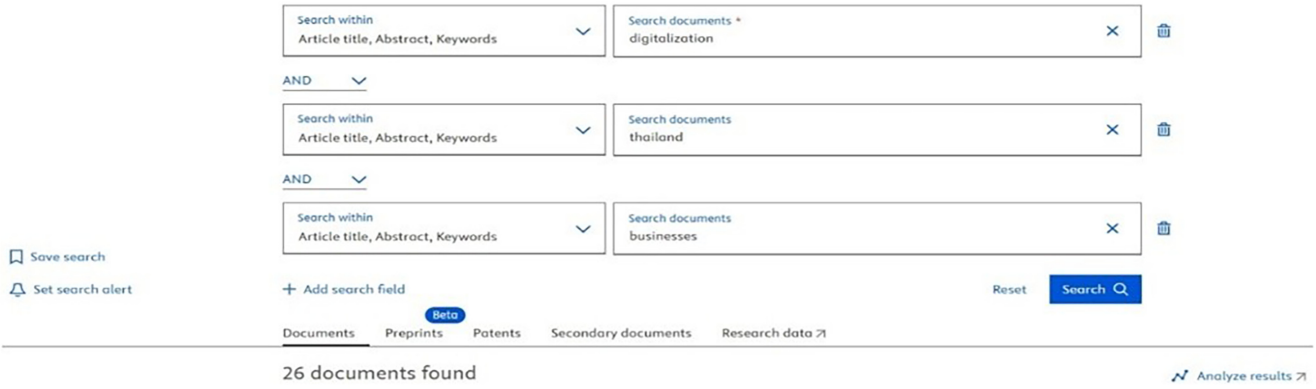

Figure 12. Number of publications indicated based on criteria in the Scopus database. Source: own research.

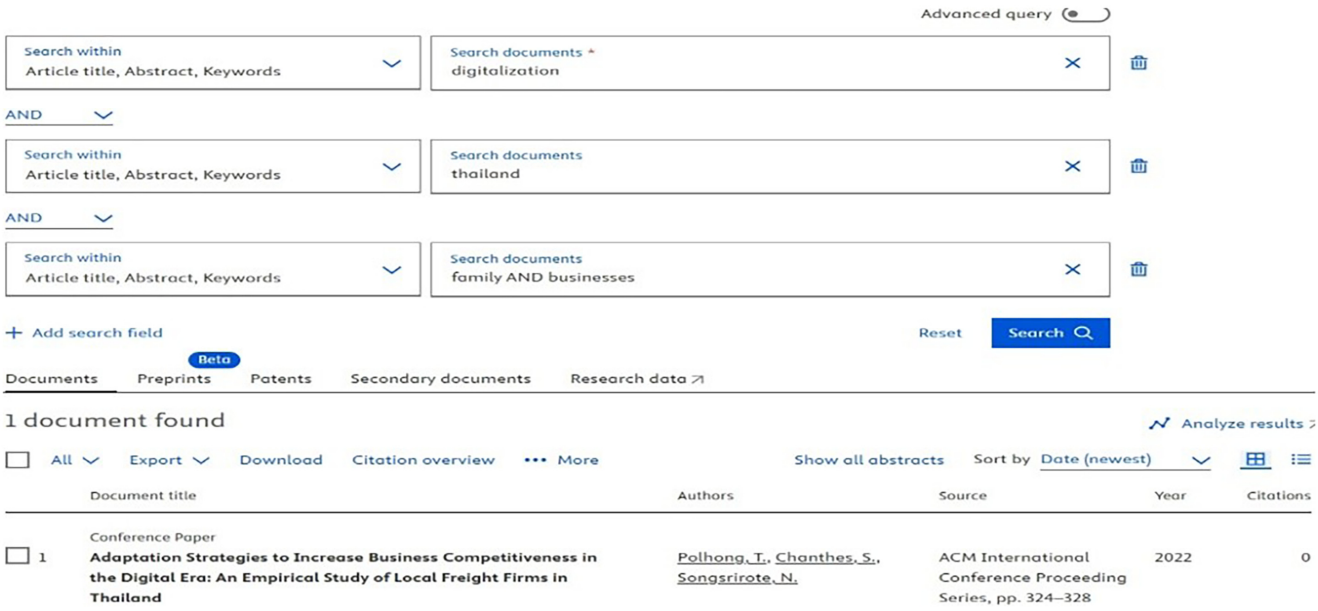

Figure 13. Number of publications indicated based on criteria in the Scopus database. Source: own research.

this cloud, enabling other services based on production data as well.

- **Additive manufacturing** – through **3D printing, it gives the possibility of quick design changes and the production of small batches, which leads to reduced raw material inventories and lower transport costs.**
- **Augmented reality – systems based on it can support various services**, e.g. selection of parts in the warehouse via mobile devices (Cichorzewska *et al*., 2020).

The digital economy has emerged in recent years as a new type of economy, as digitization processes have a universal and global reach and are used not only by organizations or selected sectors, but also by entire economies, societies, and also concern the relationships between societies and countries in the world.

Changes in the field of digital transformation, which are a consequence of technological development that are taking place in the modern global economy, are taking place at a very fast pace and have an important impact on global economic processes. In addition, the development of ICT technologies is one of the most important aspects affecting the functioning of modern business in the world. Digitization penetrating the economy and society is a very dynamic change, thanks to which new opportunities in m.in the sphere of production are created (Boratyńska *et al*., 2021).

It should also be pointed out that digitization, harmonizing the real and virtual worlds, is becoming a fundamental creator of change and innovation, covering most sectors of public administration, local government units, and the entire economy (Boratyńska *et al*., 2021).

However, digitalization also causes uncertainty, risk and various types of opportunities and threats for example related to the social effects of robotization and automation of processes in the economy and public administration, as well as security. To meet this, both entire sectors and individual enterprises, public administration, society, and national economies should carry out the so-called digital transformation (Boratyńska *et al*., 2021).

Digitalisation is also a major challenge for family businesses. In a study conducted by KPMG (Wu Hong, 2017) – this factor was indicated by 64% of family organizations – Figure 14.

Thailand Policy 4.0 in the context of the evolution of the Thai economy

Advanced Industry 4.0 solutions will allow for the production of a variety of and individualized products that are able to meet the different needs of customers. This is particularly important in the functioning of family businesses, which will be able to adapt to the specific needs of their customers to a large extent.

The Thai government aims in its political activities to fully integrate the Thai economy into the Thailand 4.0 economic model (Wiboonyasake, 2018) by modernizing the production structure and increasing the level of prosperity of the Thai people. This policy aims to create new organizations, including family organizations, which will generate higher incomes, as well as to reduce the import of technology and create innovative products. Through innovation, creativity, technology, and research and development, these enterprises will be able to increase their advantage to become more competitive in the economic market.

An important part of Thailand's 4.0 policy, which supports the organization's processes and business activities, is digitization. The basic assumptions of the Thailand 4.0 model are the following aspects: striving to make Thailand a rich, sustainable and stable country, developing the economy through technology, creativity and innovation, as well as striving for synergy

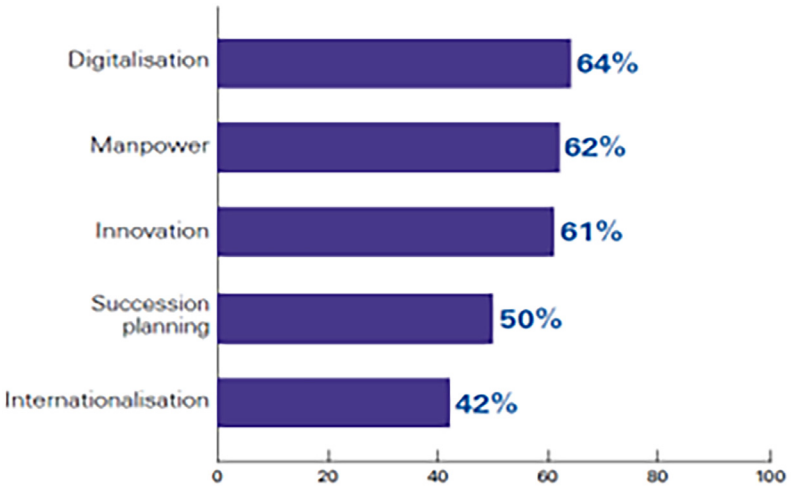

Figure 14. Main challenges for a family business. Source: Wu Hong, Family Businesses in the Digital Economy, 2017. KPMG Services Pte.Ltd.

involving all economic sectors (private sectors, banks, people, research and educational institutions) connecting them with a network of business alliances.

Thailand 4.0 is also strongly promoted among SMEs, family businesses and start-ups (Louangrath, 2017). through the rapid development of technology, it is possible to operate high-quality telecommunications and communication structures, which enables Thais to gain access to the Internet, as well as effective networking between all economic sectors. It is important that the goal of the transition of the economy to newer technologies is achieved through the cooperation of all economic sectors, for example SMEs, family businesses and start-ups. However, it should be noted that in order to grow faster, family organizations should implement highly developed technologies, while maintaining their own business capabilities. In addition, it is particularly important in this process that the owner of the organization skillfully supports the training and improvement of employee qualifications, as well as properly manages and develop talents, especially in the aspects of analyzing and solving problems.

Digital transformation, digitalization and digitization of family businesses

The development of technology is particularly visible in the modern economy, as today's world is increasingly connected by digital technologies, i.e. digital transformation, digitalisation and digitization. Digital transformation by implementing technology into channels within an organization aims to create a digital business to achieve a new goal or a new market (Ashwell, 2017). Digital transformation is an innovation that allows people to interact with technology that is strongly correlated with the digitization process. It allows the family organization to better recognize the ever-changing behavior of customers.

The Gartner Research Institute has identified ten key technology trends for 2024. His opinion indicates that sustainable technology and intelligent applications are already the norm in the modern world, and engineering platforms and GenAI, which are developing dynamically, create new opportunities in the economic market. In addition, the concept of an expanded and connected workforce and customer-machine (10 trendów technologicznych Gartnera na 2024 rok) also plays an important role in the development of the working environment and customer relations.In addition, the Institute divided trends into 3 areas: protecting and preserving past and future investments, creating optimal solutions for the right stakeholders at the right time, and offering value to the changing segment of internal and external customers (10 trendów technologicznych Gartnera na 2024 rok) existing in the economy.

It is worth noting that in the process of implementing new technologies in an organization, the skill level of its owner is also important, who in this process should be a digital leader and support employees and the company.

One of the main pillars of Thailand's 4.0 policy is digitalization. Its main goal is to develop the economy, its security, and moreover, in the long run, to achieve sustainable development of the country. In addition, digitalization can help an organization improve its processes, models, and business functions, by using digital technology in operations or knowledge (Anchalikasite, 2017).

Family businesses should be aware of the appropriate investment of financial resources in the development of technology, especially digitization, which will enable them to increase organizational innovation, as well as strengthen their competitive position on the market and increase revenues. However, according to research conducted by Deloitte (Kark *et al.*, 2017), organizations invested only 16% in business innovation - Figure 15.

Digitalization of family businesses in Thailand – research results

Research conducted by PwC's 11th Global Family Business Survey: Thailand Report showed the level of digital opportunities in family organizations in Thailand and around the world. They pointed out that Thai family organizations are not prioritizing the digital transformation of their operations and that their digital capabilities are still limited, while enterprises around the world are transforming their organizations in the context of digitalization and to tailor customer-centric experiences (Figure 16). Only 27% of family business respondents in Thailand indicated that they consider improving digital capabilities to be a top priority (44% globally), and only 25% of organizations believe they have strong digital capabilities (42% globally) (PwC Global Family Business Survey, 2023).

The research also revealed that in most Thai family businesses, ESG and DEI are not the focus of their attention, as shown

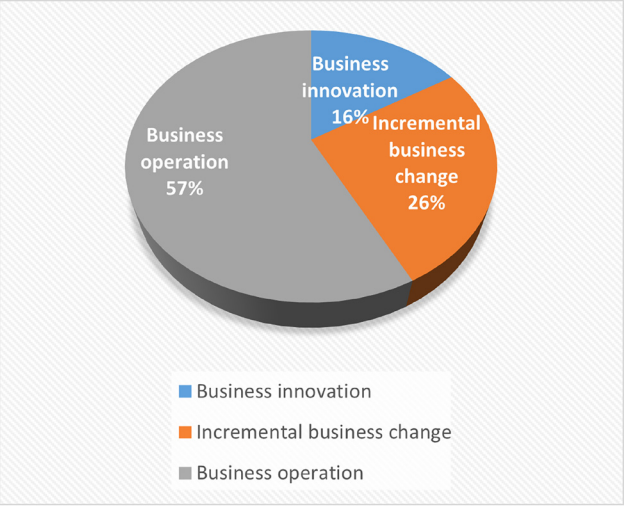

Figure 15. Allocation of technology budgets. Source: own studies based on K. Kark, A. Shaikh, and C. Brown, Technology budgets: From value preservation to value creation, 2017.

in Figure 17. Only 27% of organizations indicated that they actively communicate and protect their data usage (29% globally), and only 14% of enterprises respond effectively to data privacy breaches (27% globally).

Family organizations in Thailand are aware of the important impact of digital technology on their business. However, the results of a survey of businesses in Thailand and Asia-Pacific (APEC) indicated that family organizations in Thailand are not yet prepared for digital transformation (Global Family Business Survey 2019 – Thailand Report).

The majority of Thai family businesses (64%) felt vulnerable to digital disruption, given that it is the norm in the modern world – Figure 18.

Surveys of Thai family businesses also found that the majority (61%) believe their organizations are vulnerable to cyberattacks – Figure 19.

New technologies have led to fundamental changes in customer behavior by affecting their daily lives. New communication and marketing channels have also been created that allow customers to communicate and flow data instantly, meaning they have many choices for products and services. In addition, customer needs and expectations have increased significantly, posing challenges for businesses that need to find a way to meet these demands while maximizing revenue (Global Family Business Survey 2019 – Thailand Report).

Therefore, in order for Thai family organizations to continue to function, strengthen their competitive position on the market and develop, they must have a vision and think ahead. In addition, they should not only skillfully use current business opportunities resulting from the development of technology, but also be able to properly plan their activities in the future (Global Family Business Survey 2019 – Thailand Report).

In order to properly implement solutions related to digitization, it is necessary to have the right competences of employees in Thai companies. The results of another study on digital transformation in Thailand indicate the direction of soft skills development in the Thai market – Figure 20.

The results of the survey showed that Thai companies most often indicated the ability to think analytically in the digital

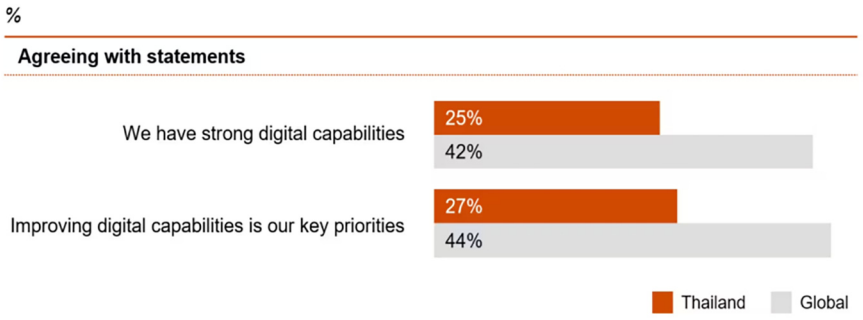

Figure 16. Digital opportunities for Thai and global family businesses. Source: PwC Global Family Business Survey, 2023.

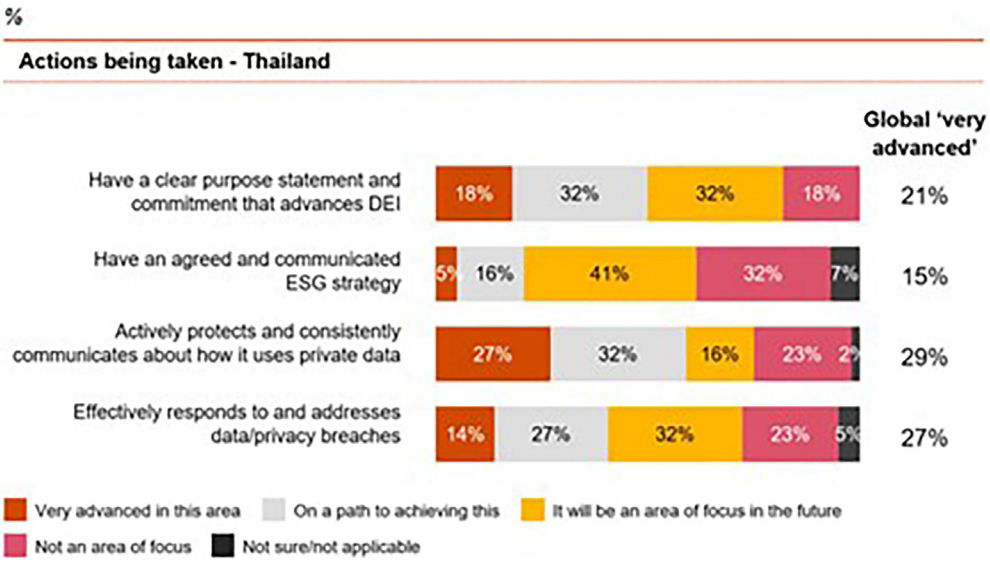

Figure 17. Data management skills of Thai family businesses. Source: PwC Global Family Business Survey, 2023.

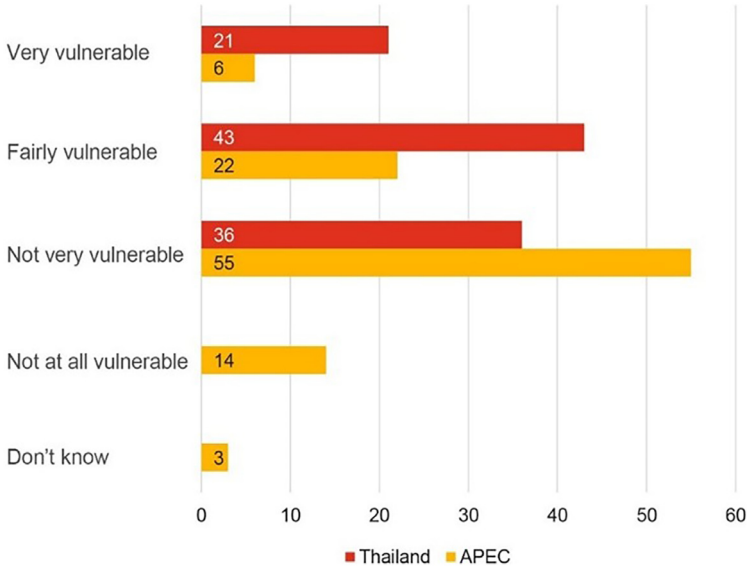

Figure 18. Business vulnerability of Thai family to digital disruption. Source: Global Family Business Survey 2019 - Thailand Report.

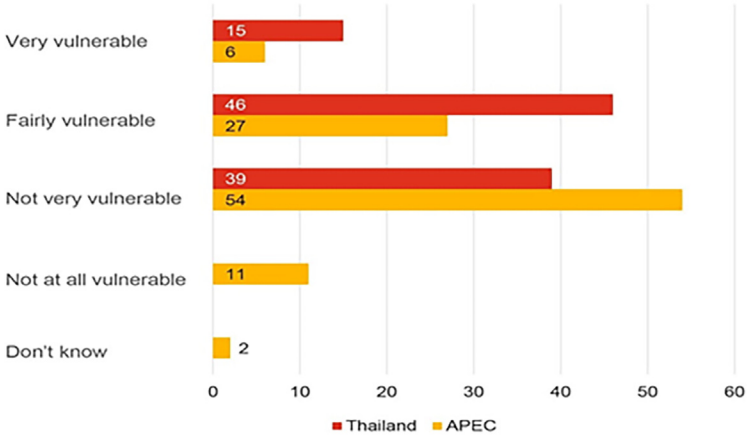

Figure 19. Business vulnerability to a cyberattack. Source: Global Family Business Survey 2019 - Thailand Report.

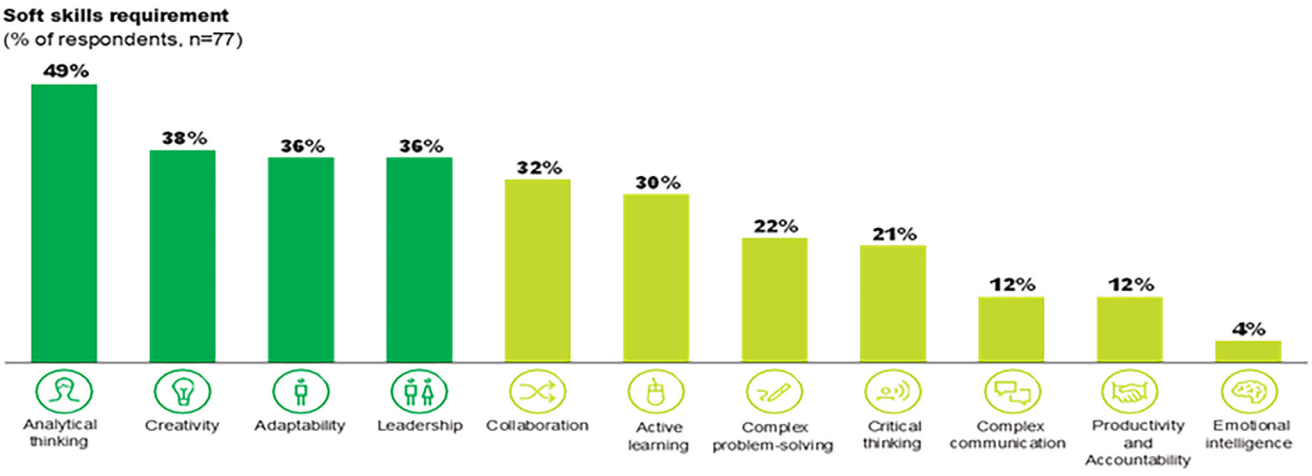

Figure 20. The most in-demand soft skills for digital transformation in Thailand. Source: Thailand Digital Transformation Survey Report 2020.

transformation process (49%). This means that as technology evolves, you need to invest in continuous learning in order to acquire the skills you need to succeed. People with such skills are able to logically analyze information and properly solve professional problems (Leopold *et al.*, 2018). In addition, they have the ability to introduce innovative solutions and ideas.

The next most important skills indicated by the respondents are: creativity, adaptability and leadership. This indicates that skills such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, and emotional intelligence are important. With the above in mind, organizations in Thailand will need to incorporate talent management into their organizational strategies in order to remain competitive in the market, in the face of rapidly changing employee skill requirements (Schwartz *et al.*, 2017). Recognizing that the key to the professional future lies in ever-evolving human skills, talent management should lead to the continuous seizure of opportunities to develop one's skills that evolve to fit into a rapidly changing environment (Thailand Digital Transformation Survey Report, 2020).

Another study conducted by The Thailand Digital Transformation Survey referred to the ranking of the types of digital talent that organizations consider very important in the context of the digital transformation of their companies and those that are a recruitment challenge for them. The results of the survey indicated that the most difficult and important talents to attract for organizations are: Data Analysts and Scientists, Digital Transformation Specialists, Data Science Specialists, Marketing and Digital Strategy Specialists, as well as Software and Application Programmers and Analysts, Process Automation Specialists, and User Experience Designers. On the other hand, digital competences that are less important to the organization and for which they have no problem recruiting are Cloud and IT Infrastructure Specialists (Thailand Digital Transformation Survey Report, 2020).

In the modern world, technology plays a very important role in business, as it improves business processes, which significantly affects customer service.

In the study conducted by Deloitte Tech Trend 2019, key technologies were divided into two groups. The first is core technologies: digital experiences, analytics, and the cloud, which have already been implemented in most organizations. The second advanced group consists of newer and more advanced trends: digital reality (AR, VR and IoT), cognitive technologies (AI and Robotics) and blockchain, which are rapidly gaining importance (Figure 21). However, research shows that the full potential of these technologies is still largely untapped, due to the fact that these technologies are constantly evolving and therefore not easy to understand (Thailand Digital Transformation Survey Report, 2020).

The research has shown that the main users of blockchain and AL technologies are sectors such as financial services, media and telecommunications, and technology. In contrast, IoT technology is generating more interest among consumers because they are more likely to use it in their organizations (Figure 22).

However, for young organizations, implementing such technology is not easy, due to the variety of functions it includes. Thus, talent selection will be a challenge for organizations, both in terms of lack of knowledge, skills, and experience (Thailand Digital Transformation Survey Report, 2020).

Conclusions

The digital economy is: network society, digital transformation and the data economy. Its specificity results from the closely related processes of datafication and networking, which have been changing dynamically in recent years, as a result of the implementation of new technologies for processing, collecting, analyzing and using data. In addition, artificial intelligence is

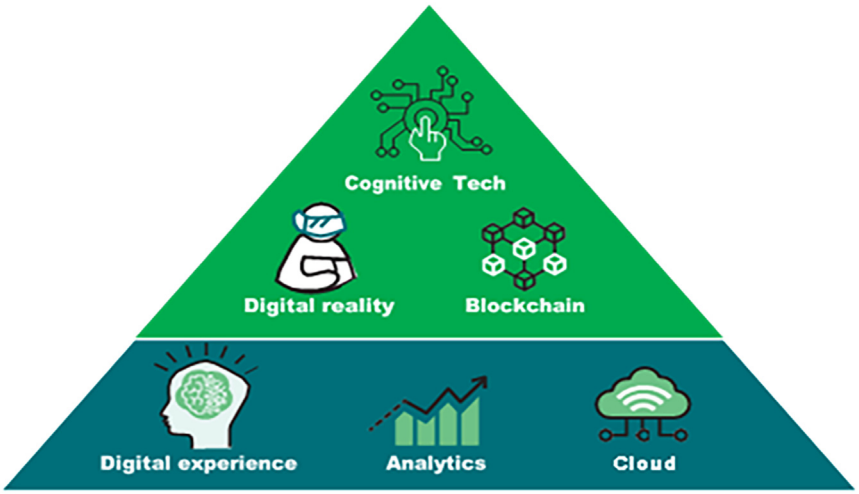

Figure 21. Indication of basic and advanced technologies. Source: Thailand Digital Transformation Survey Report 2020.

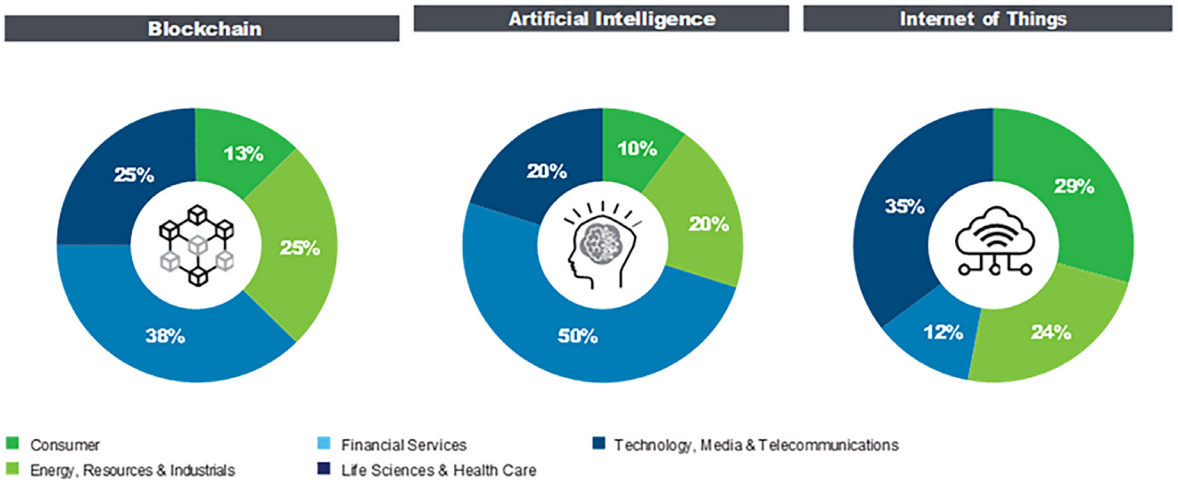

Figure 22. Adoption of advanced technologies by industry. Source: Thailand Digital Transformation Survey Report 2020.

also developing, enabling the personalization of products and services to the needs and expectations of individual recipients.

In the modern world, the digitalization of enterprises is becoming a necessity, because without investment in digitization, it is impossible to run an effective business.

Digitalization means, above all, cost savings and an increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of the company, as well as an increase in its competitiveness and opening up to new markets and new customers.

Businesses around the world are advancing digital transformation that leads to streamlined organizational processes. However, Thai family businesses, despite understanding the importance of digitalization in the functioning of their organization, still have fewer digital capabilities.

Research has shown that few Thai family organizations surveyed have high digital capabilities. And when considering the key priorities of Thai family organizations, only 27% said that improving digital capabilities is their business priority, compared to 44% of family organizations globally.

Digital technology is one of the megatrends that plays an important role in business in the modern world. Only a few Thai family organizations believe that they have a strategy to support digital change, and this is a big challenge for them to succeed.

Most management strategies for Thai family organizations lack both knowledge and understanding of the importance of the impact of digitalization on their functioning. As a result, the adaptations of business processes of these organizations are slower than those of other enterprises, which in turn affects the competitiveness of the family organization on the market. It is important that the new generation of Thai family business owners who are acquiring a business begin to recognize the importance of digital technology in the functioning of their organization, start investing in new technologies and use them in the management of the organization.

In this work, the research problem has been solved and the aim of the work has been achieved. In addition, through the implementation of this article, the research gap was filled and the planned added value was obtained.

The added value in the cognitive aspect of this work consists in systematizing and detailing the concepts, indicating the essence and specificity of family businesses and their level of digitization. This was done on the basis of literature on the subject.

The added value in the utilitarian area is related to the analysis of reports, through the presentation of conclusions and indications resulting from them, including relevant recommendations, which may be an important element of knowledge to be used by entrepreneurs in the future in the field of vision of the development of their organization in the light of the volatility of the economic market and the conditions of their operations. An important recommendation in this regard is the organization of conditions for entrepreneurs, through consulting, training and contacts with specialized institutions that would encourage and support them in the implementation of solutions in the field of digitalization, as well as enabling entrepreneurs to co-finance in this area.

Ethics and consent

Ethical approval and consent were not required.

Data availability statement

No data are associated with this article.

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Current Peer Review Status: ✔ ?

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José Ramón Saura
Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid, Spain

The manuscript *Development of digitalization of family businesses in Thailand* presents itself as a study on a highly relevant and underexplored topic, but in its current form it is not suitable for indexing and requires major revisions.
The most critical issue is the lack of methodological rigor. The article claims to answer a research question on whether and to what extent Thai family businesses implement digitalization processes, but it does not provide any primary data collection or systematic empirical analysis. Instead, it relies almost entirely on secondary reports, surveys, and literature reviews without applying a clear analytical framework or research design. The so-called “qualitative research through a critical analysis of the literature” is in reality a compilation of descriptive information from existing studies. As a result, the findings are superficial, anecdotal, and not supported by any robust methodology. Without empirical grounding—through interviews, case studies, or surveys—the paper cannot convincingly claim to contribute new knowledge.
A second major weakness is the overly descriptive and repetitive writing style. Large sections of the manuscript reproduce general statements about the importance of family businesses, their economic role, and the relevance of digitalization, without offering new insights specific to Thailand. The text is filled with long expository passages that summarize well-known aspects of Industry 4.0, digital economy trends, or family business definitions. These generic sections read more like a textbook overview than a peer-reviewed research article. The redundancy between introduction, literature review, and conclusion sections severely undermines clarity and impact.
The structure of the argument is unfocused and fragmented. The article jumps from global family business statistics to general features of digital transformation, then to Thai government policy (Thailand 4.0), and then back to surveys by PwC and Deloitte. There is little coherence or integration. The so-called “research results” are not original findings but a re-reporting of PwC’s and Deloitte’s surveys. Presenting external reports as if they were original results is academically misleading and diminishes the credibility of the paper.
Another serious limitation is the absence of a theoretical contribution. Although the paper mentions concepts such as digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation, it does not build a conceptual model nor position its analysis within established theories of family business or digital innovation. The article lacks a theoretical lens to explain why Thai family businesses lag

behind in digital transformation, how family ownership influences adoption decisions, or what cultural and institutional factors are specific to Thailand. Without such anchoring, the manuscript does not advance scholarly debates but merely reiterates descriptive observations.
The conclusion section is weak and unconvincing. It restates obvious facts—that digitalization is important, that Thai family firms have low capabilities, and that consulting and training could help—without offering substantive recommendations grounded in the analysis. There is no critical reflection on the limitations of the study, no identification of structural barriers in Thai family enterprises, and no roadmap for future research. The repeated claim of “added value” is not substantiated, as the article does not provide either conceptual novelty or methodological innovation.
Finally, the quality of academic writing is substandard. The paper is weighed down by awkward phrasing, grammatical issues, and a tendency to repeat the same ideas across multiple sections. Citations are uneven and sometimes outdated. Many references are Polish-language sources that are not directly relevant to Thai family businesses. This reliance on tangential sources gives the impression of padding rather than rigorous engagement with the most recent international scholarship on family firms and digital transformation.
Thus, the article suffers from fundamental flaws: (1) no primary empirical evidence, (2) absence of a systematic research design, (3) lack of theoretical framing, (4) excessive descriptiveness and redundancy, and (5) poor academic writing quality. To become indexable, the author would need to redesign the study completely: formulate a clear theoretical framework, collect original empirical data on Thai family businesses, engage critically with international literature, and significantly tighten and professionalize the writing. In its current state, the manuscript reads as a descriptive report rather than a scholarly article and cannot be accepted without very substantial reworking.
I would also urge the authors to read and cite the articles listed below before completing the manuscript revision. The author will understand that the article background and structure can be improved as well as the method development. Also, there is still a gap on the added value of your work in the context of proper and current research (up to 2025). Please consider adding new references and cite: [Reference 1], [Reference 2] and [Reference 3]

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Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it engage with the current literature?
Partly

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?
Partly

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Partly

Are all the source data and materials underlying the results available?
Partly

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Partly

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?
Partly

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Business Economics, Marketing, International relations,

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Reviewer Report 29 August 2025

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Mateusz Janas
The Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

The article addresses an extremely important and timely issue, namely the role of family businesses in the modern economy and their transformation in the face of digitalization and Industry 4.0. The author presents the significance of family organizations in a coherent and multifaceted manner—both on a global scale and in the context of the Thai economy. Already in the introduction, their impact on competitiveness, employment, organizational culture, and economic development is emphasized.
Particularly noteworthy is the extensive discussion of the theoretical foundations of family business functioning—presenting them as a system of interconnected subsystems: family, ownership, and corporate, as well as considering the specificity of family values and their influence on the company's strategy. A strong point of the text is the emphasis on the duality of their functioning—the simultaneous pursuit of both economic and family goals, which makes them unique entities in the economic landscape.
Another strength of the paper is the combination of theoretical perspective with practical analysis. The author extensively uses industry reports (PwC, Deloitte, KPMG, EY, Global Family Business Survey), comparing international research findings with the Thai reality. Particularly valuable are the data on the share of family businesses in Thailand's GDP, their level of digitalization, threats (cyberattacks, digital disruptions), and the insufficient prioritization of digital transformation by

owners. Numerous charts and bibliometric analyses (Scopus, Web of Science) provide an important complement to the narrative and enhance the cognitive value of the article.
A further asset of the paper is the reference to the *Thailand 4.0* concept—a government development policy that highlights the strategic importance of digitalization and innovation in building economic competitiveness. The author rightly points out that this policy also creates opportunities for family organizations, which can strengthen their market position through it.
The added value of the article lies in identifying barriers and challenges related to the digitalization of family businesses in Thailand—especially the low level of digital skills, difficulties in recruiting technological talent, and lack of awareness of the strategic importance of digital transformation. The need to develop soft skills (creativity, adaptability, leadership, analytical thinking) and to build the role of the digital leader in the management process is rightly emphasized.
From a structural perspective, the article is clear, logical, and well-organized. The author moves smoothly from the theoretical part to the empirical section, and finally to conclusions and recommendations. The summary clearly indicates both cognitive value (systematization of concepts, identification of the specificity of family organizations) and utilitarian value (recommendations for entrepreneurs and supporting institutions).
A certain drawback of the work is the at times excessive elaboration of theoretical descriptions and the repetition of some threads concerning digitalization. In several sections, the cited literature could be supplemented with more up-to-date sources from 2023–2024, which would further strengthen the article's relevance. It would also be worthwhile to highlight the comparative aspect more strongly—how the situation of family businesses in Thailand compares with other countries in Southeast Asia.
In conclusion, the article constitutes a valuable study that makes a significant contribution to the discussion on the role of family businesses and their digital transformation. It contains solid theoretical foundations, rich empirical material, as well as practical conclusions and recommendations. It is of high value both for the academic community and for management practitioners in the field of family entrepreneurship.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it engage with the current literature?
Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?
Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Are all the source data and materials underlying the results available?
Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Innovation management, Digital transformation and Industry 4.0, Human resource management and generational diversity

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.