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Abstract: Family Ownership and Green Innovation: Does Emission Type Matter?

This paper examines how family ownership shapes corporate green innovation using a panel of listed firms from 42 countries over 2010–2023. We exploit the distinction between Scope 1 (direct operational) and Scope 2 (purchased electricity) emissions to identify when family ownership amplifies or constrains the incentive to invest in green innovation. We find that family firms respond selectively: as Scope 2 emissions rise, family firms are more likely than non-family firms to increase green patenting, and their patents attract more forward citations. This response is concentrated in energy-related technologies and in countries with greater renewable energy availability. In contrast, family firms show no comparable response to Scope 1 emissions, which require costlier changes to core operations. Board composition, leadership structure, and the policy environment shape the strength of this response. These results show that the green innovation response of family firms depends on the interaction between ownership-specific motives, adjustment costs, and the surrounding institutional environment.