The Seybold Report
ISSN 1533-9211
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

STRATEGIC SUCCESSION PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY OF REGISTERED FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS IN SOUTHEAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of succession planning on the sustainability of registered family businesses in Southeast Nigeria. The specific objectives were to; ascertain the extent to which potential successor identification has improved organizational citizenship and the extent to which succession evaluation impacts capacity to deliver. The study adopted a survey research design. The study randomly sampled 498 employees across family-owned businesses in Southeast Nigeria. The study used a validated structured questionnaire for data collection, while data were analysed descriptively for the research question and inferentially using linear regression analysis for testing hypotheses. The study found that identifying potential successors promotes organisational citizenship among employees. Succession evaluation significantly contributes to the capacity to deliver among family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria. The study concluded that succession planning promoted the sustainability of registered family businesses in Southeast Nigeria. The study recommended, among others, that the management team in a family-owned business in Southeast Nigeria should introduce documentation and integrate experts in the execution of their succession planning for business sustainability.

Keywords: Strategic, Succession Planning, Family-Owned Businesses, Potential Successor Identification, Organizational Citizenship, Succession Evaluation and Capacity to Deliver

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations exist to grow. Succession planning involves finding and nurturing talent to replace key employees. Succession planning improves staff. Most succession planning involves replacing a departing leader or CEO, say, Joseph, Tarsha, and Herbert (2018). All key roles need successors. Okeke (2021) said every company should have succession plans to prepare for the unexpected and prevent staff departure concerns. Family-owned businesses' future is automatic leadership emergence.

Agbim (2019) noted that most family-owned businesses make little attempt to appoint family members to crucial positions, which can hurt firm performance. Growth, development, experience, and other benefits must be measured. Record-keeping is succession planning. According to Ogundele, Idris, and Ahmed-Ogundipe (2019), succession planning prepares staff to replace promoted or retiring employees. The management team must keep similar hands on deck throughout production to ensure continuity and sustainability.

Most Nigerian states, including Abuja, have family businesses. Poor performance hinders most family businesses. According to Adedayo, Olanipekun, and Ojo (2016), most family enterprises need transformation due to management inconsistency. Due to insufficient

ISSN 1533-9211
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

continuity measures such as succession planning, the family firm may fail a few years after its foundation. Family-owned businesses plan succession privately. Succession planning is crucial to a firm's success, as many family enterprises have failed due to the death of the owner/manager or key employees. Some family business owners lacked succession planning tools. Family company owners keep succession planning hidden, making it unequal. According to a study, family businesses failed due to inconsistency, indicating that succession planning failed (Adedayo et al., 2016; Emerole, 2015; Ogbechie & Anetor, 2015).

Evident from other research, like Ifekwem (2018), Chibuoke, Monanu, Kelvin-Iloafu, and Maureen (2018), and Akani (2015) show that family firms don't need succession planning for their leadership structures because they may employ competent people with considerable experience to fill specific jobs when a vacancy arises. Some experts don't think succession planning is vital for business sustainability, especially for family-owned enterprises that appoint family members as CEOs. Due to diverse opinions on succession planning's contribution to family business sustainability, it is crucial to research whether it influences family business sustainability in southeast Nigeria, where family-owned enterprises are prevalent. These industries are green. Succession planning affects family businesses in southeast Nigeria.

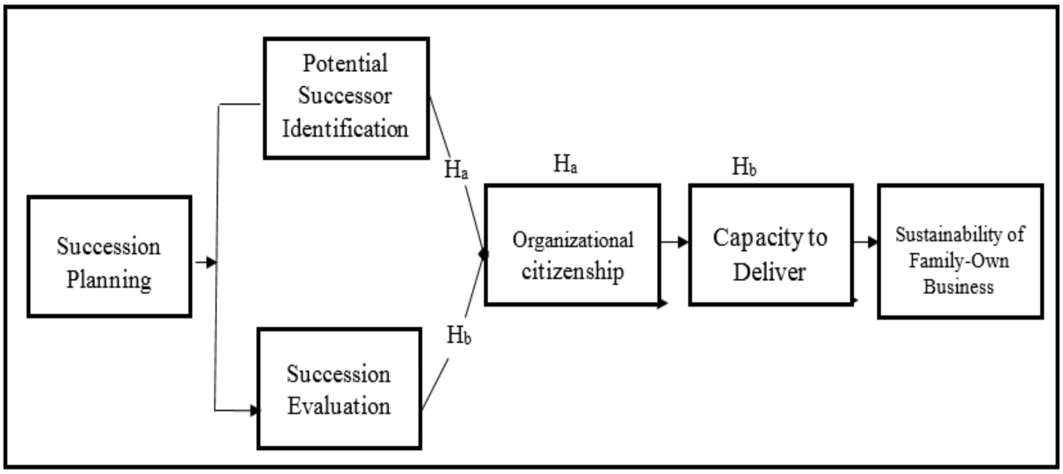

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Succession Planning and Sustainability of Family-Own Business

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Donaldson and Davis' (1989) stewardship theory and Bertalanffy's system theory lend credence to the study (1972). Several theories were combined to support the current inquiry, particularly the established hypothesis. These concepts were combined because they show how succession planning can increase a company's sustainability, especially in family-owned businesses.

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The Stewardship Theory

Donaldson and Davis developed the stewardship theory (1989). According to stewardship theory, stewards self-actualize and take psychological ownership (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2014). Stewardship theory explains principal-steward-manager interaction (Dais et al., 1997, cited in Sharma, Chrisman & Chua, 2018). It investigates behaviour and government. It explains man's humanity (Corbetta & Salvato, 2014). It recognises that employees can be solid stewards through civic behaviour (Drakopoulou, Dodd, & Dyck, 2015). According to stewardship theory, employees and employers must have a trusted relationship to benefit all stakeholders (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2015). Stewardship depicts family businesses' generosity (Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson, 2017). Stewardship theory identifies "excellent" family businesses (Waldkirch & Nordqvist, 2016). According to Thompson (1960), Miller, Steier, and Le-Breton (2018), managers are owners' stewards. Family businesses must prioritise employee interests (Chrisman, Sharma & Yoder, 2009). Stewardship theorists believe family managers enhance worker innovation. Family business owners and managers sharing non-financial aims preserve staff loyalty (Chrisman et al., 2009). In a nutshell, a leader's decision to designate a successor should be based on the firm's interests and to promote organisational citizenship. This supports the study's hypothesis that identifying desired successors can influence organisational citizenship.

System Theory

Bertalanffy's 1972 system theory. Every functional system has input and output, according to system theory. Mele, Pels, and Polese (2020) defined systems theory as an interdisciplinary theory of every system in nature, society, and many scientific areas that gives a framework to explore phenomena with inputs and predicted outcomes. Every system has inputs, outputs, and intervening factors. The external world reacts to a system's outputs through a feedback loop, which becomes an input and fundamental system input. System theory is relevant to this study because it focuses on the efficiency and efficacy of input and process, which include employee training and development programs aimed at effective succession planning. Thus, knowledge transfer and evaluation serve as input and feedback to the succession planning system, which should improve R&D and organisation capital. Therefore, it seems natural to expect variances in employee training and development based on the role expected of such individuals as successors. Variation can affect output (productivity). System theory supports this study's hypothesis that evaluating a succession plan that directly impacts the capacity to deliver.

3. SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning entails recruiting and developing talent to replace critical staff. Succession planning develops current personnel. According to Joseph, Tarsha, and Herbert, most succession planning focuses on replacing a departing leader or CEO (2018). All significant company roles should have successors. Rothwell (2017) distinguished succession and replacement planning. The line can blur, say most authors. Distinguish. CEO succession is planned. Succession planning prepares workers for future vacancies.

ISSN 1533-9211
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Ogbechie and Anetor say succession planning benefits a few companies (2015). They don't plan on time for key employees to quit or resign, forcing the company to panic. Ofobruku and Nwakoby said staff departures aren't always apparent (2015). If an employee departs or quits, the organisation requires a succession plan. Thus, succession planning can aid a company if done correctly and on time. Planning employee departures and promotions ensure business stability.

Family-owned businesses follow a standard succession plan. Common strategy favours close associates (Trepanier & Crenshaw, 2013). Favoritism and godfather influence impair traditional succession planning (Ali & Mehreen, 2019). Resentment, lack of passion and attention, and little or no knowledge transfer might result from non-traditionally recruited workers (Ji-Chai & Wang, 2016). Organizations need strategic succession planning, noted Trepanier and Crenshaw (2013). Nigerian family-owned businesses lack succession planning. The owner's or management's death can impact family businesses without a succession plan. Onuoha (2013) claims that 94.2% of Nigerian businesses lack a succession strategy.

Asiado (2020) noted that not all family-owned businesses are not considering succession, but most are wary. The difficulty may be transferring the business to a relative who cannot manage it responsibly or to children who lack the interest or skills to do so. Bedosky (2018) stated that mentorship doesn't always work in family-owned businesses because family members frequently refrain from business affairs after a manager is in place.

4. FAMILY OWNED BUSINESS

A family-owned business is run by at least two family members (Singh & Bhar, 2016). Thus, a firm is a family business when family members related by blood, adoption, or marriage significantly affect the organization's performance, productivity, survival, and expansion. Agbim defines family firms as single-family-owned, with non-family employees and an independent board (2019). Family business recruits relatives. A family corporation is owned by and inspired by family ties to realise the family's vision over generations (Agbim, 2019).

Family-owned businesses are among the oldest in business history. De Alwis (2018) says family-owned businesses are the oldest and most common worldwide. Despite being the oldest and largest economic producers, few survive more than one generation. Ogundele, Idris, and Ahmed-Ogundipe (2019) said the survival rate of family-owned businesses beyond the founder's generation is poor, especially in Nigeria. Ifekwem, Oghojafor, and Kuye (2017) add that only 30% of family-owned businesses are likely to survive the transition from the first to the second generation, 12% are likely to remain after the third generation, and only 3% survive the fourth generation and beyond. Less than one-third of family enterprises survive into the second generation, and just 13% survive into the third.

In Nigeria, closures are widespread, especially among family-owned businesses. According to Kielstra (2019), the problem of family businesses closing in Nigeria is much worse, as many promising and dynamic family-owned enterprises have folded early at the death of their founder. Several family-owned enterprises worldwide have failed for many reasons. Lack of

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preparation, economic ignorance, lack of cash, and reckless expenditure are causes. Importantly, these businesses lack succession planning. According to Goel and Jones (2019), many family-owned businesses fail due to poor succession planning. Small to medium-sized family-owned enterprises should not disregard succession planning (John, 2019). Succession is a crucial component in family-owned business sustainability.

5. CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability means maintaining something's position or existence. Fatunmbi (2017) said sustainability applies to concepts that demand constant quality assurance. It allows an organisation to compare its existence to its creation time, which evaluates how far its life span can be extended while attaining its objective.

A business is sustainable if it can operate despite hurdles. Sustainable firm leadership may also increase market share, talent, stakeholder benefits, minimise operational costs, and reduce personnel turnover (Banker, Mashruwala & Tripathy, 2014). Nkam, Sena, and Ndamsa (2017) define sustainability as a company's ability to last. If a company's economy, community, and environment are healthy, it can absorb disturbance and survive. Sustainability determines a company's ability to compete, survive, and persist despite industry changes. Sustainable development links human and environmental action (Wilshusen & MacDonald, 2017). The ability to foresee and respond to changes, running the business as a separate entity, which requires separating personal accounts and assets from business accounts, and ensuring a good enough structure independent of the family can affect family-owned business sustainability (Ogundele, Idris, & Ahmed-Ogundipe, 2019). (2017).

Banker et al. (2014) said a succession plan ensures organisation continuity and sustainability. Thinking systemically impacts succession and sustainability. Thinking systemically means viewing problems holistically. Companies that want to maintain their standards must ensure employee advancement regardless of promotions or departures. Onuoha (2016) said managers in any organisation, especially family-owned enterprises, should prepare for succession. No company can prosper if key employees go—brain drain. Long-term thinking affects employee succession and resource allocation. Onuoha (2016) claimed that tying sustainability to business strategy demands a long-term attitude that shows workers must be retained and maintain high performance, notwithstanding labour change. Mhlongo and Harunavamwe (2017) said a firm that wants to abandon short-term planning should consider succession.

Businesses that incorporate sustainability must be open, honest, and transparent, especially when replacing senior management and staff. Transparency involves informing and engaging employees. Emerole (2015) cautioned that organisations risk losing clients if they don't reveal their succession plan. In some circumstances, clients acquire accustomed to certain staff, and their departure or promotion may discourage consumption. Management must create a succession plan to show customers that the company cares.

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Leadership cannot claim that leaving staff won't affect customer loyalty or patronage. These employees usually advocate the company's interests and function as a contact with clients (Muriithi, Waithira & Wachira, 2016). As employees leave, some customers may feel uncomfortable or question the successors' ability, which could affect their business. The management anticipated replacing specific personnel to protect all stakeholders' interests.

Engaged employees who can transmit the company's sustainability message are crucial to success; their departure could deter customers. Firms must keep their best employees, which is only possible with a convincing succession plan. According to Chiesa (2018), companies need sustainability ambassadors who train other employees. Effective management-employee partnerships are needed to ensure employees are committed to the succession plan and work with potential candidates. According to Nidumolu, Prahalad, and Rangaswami (2019), the succession plan might be done in partnership with the workforce, and their comments on the workers' characteristics could assist limit down potential penitential successors. Mahajan and Montu (2018) say a corporation must allow collaboration so each employee can offer a distinct perspective on a replacement.

6. DIMENSION OF SUCCESSION PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS

The independent variables are succession plan steps/dimensions (identification of potential successor and evaluation of succession plan). Social, economic, and environmental factors determine organisation sustainability. This study revealed family-owned firms' economic sustainability. Sustainability is the dependent variable (organisation citizen and capacity to deliver). Potential Successor Identification, Organization Citizens, Succession Evaluation, and the Capacity to Deliver were evaluated.

Relationship between Potential Successor Identification and Organisation Citizen Sustainability

Potential Successor Identification

Plan succession. Management begins succession planning after identifying key employees and functions. Identify skills needed to fill vacancies. Leadership, caution, and judgment are inborn. Professional skills. Training or experience. Experts may take up additional tasks or fill vacancies. Bjuggren and Sund (2018) argue that other qualities may be assessed than experience. Family-owned businesses may list skills without giving positions. Define talent and skill to find the ideal person. To fill a vacant position, other talents may be needed. Rajapalase and Kiran (2017) mentioned that once a business examines each position and determines the critical tasks, the following step is identifying the competencies for each post. Define talents, qualifications, and personality attributes. Creating a success profile helps the firm understand the role's expectations. It helps the firm train potential successors.

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Organization Citizenship

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) describes beneficial employee acts outside their job description. Corporate citizenship is non-contractual activity, per Olufemi (2021). Since the late 1970s, organisation citizenship has been studied. Staff practices must alter to improve sustainability since organisational behaviour influences efficacy. Poor succession planning might reduce employee loyalty. Verlinden (2022) claimed that a succession plan could demotivate employees and lead to less organization-focused behaviour. Akpan and Ukpai (2017) said worker commitment doesn't reflect organisational citizenship because workers are expected to achieve well. Citizen worker protects the company's image. Without education or supervision, self-dedication creates a positive, strong image.

Organ (1988) defines organisational citizenship as "discretionary action not recognised by the formal incentive framework." Organ's notion of corporate citizenship centered on three sustainability concerns. First, organisation citizenship behaviours are non-work-related actions employees choose. Organization citizenship behaviours boost performance across job descriptions. Leaders can influence, but not compel, organisational behaviour. Employee behaviour is affected by leaders, supervisors, positions, duties, and succession. Verlinden compared CSR to contextual performance. Companies do more than work. It must help the company. Also, organisational citizenship performance is optional. Contextual performance and organisational citizenship behaviour have some overlap. Organizational citizenship isn't recognised like contextual performance. Organ (1997), cited by Olusola (2020), argues that organisation citizenship behaviours may lead to indirect and unclear benefits. Contextual performance doesn't require extra-role, merely non-task behaviour. There are subtle variations between contextual performance and organisation civic behaviour. Existing literature on the effects of organisational citizenship on employees is tense. Allowing employees to perform outside their formal responsibilities may improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions and actual turnover (Adedayo et al., 2016). These benefits of corporate citizenship seem to come at a price. Emotional weariness and home-work conflict are higher for conscientious employees, and these impacts are stronger for high-performing individuals (Deery, Rayton, Walsh, and Kinnie, 2016).

$H0_a$: Potential successor identification do promote organisation citizen among family business southeast Nigeria

Relationship between Succession Evaluation and Capacity to Deliver Sustainability

Succession Evaluate

To properly plan succession, firms must monitor each candidate's development plan. Hastings (2015) said evaluation helps companies decide if a candidate is a good fit. The report could also help the organisation examine alternate succession management techniques. Yoo, Schenkel, and Kim (2014) advised evaluating new hires monthly to highlight their accomplishments and adapt succession plans. The succession plan evaluation gives feedback. Sarbeng (2016) said reviewers may discover disparities between expectations and actions. Management must decide if the variant creates opportunities or hampers performance. Some

ISSN 1533-9211
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

employees have unique features and personalities that can't be reproduced; this isn't abnormal. All succession stages and methods must be reviewed, not just during implementation. Each stage's evaluation reveals neglected concerns and what to include. Terry (2018) said succession review doesn't entail dismissing new officials. Hastings (2015) said that review lets you practice the procedure, hear objections, and make changes. It's not always easy for a firm, especially a family-owned one, to hire the correct person due to changing conditions, client tastes, and competition. Examining succession plans might create new roles and obligations.

Capacity to deliver

Capabilities are intangible, strategic assets that management employs to conduct work, execute strategy, and pleasure consumers. Ayatu (2021) noted that skill delivery takes teamwork. Akpan and Ukpai (2017) argued that delivery capability is often internalised. Delivery requires expertise, knowledge, procedures, methods, talents, systems, technologies, or unique adaptive features. These assets distinguish a corporation from competitors. Each company integrates capacity attributes into its culture, making them hard to detect and imitate. Organizational growth must emphasize delivery. Successful businesses have distinctive qualities. Most organisations do well despite their structures. Innovativeness and adaptability make organisations trustworthy and relevant, according to David (2021). Wigmore (2021) linked delivering to business success. The report credited employee and stakeholder collaboration. Correct organisational traits help organisations run efficiently and please clients.

The capability to deliver enhances competitive advantage. Effective resource and information management helps companies offer unique products and services (Mierzal, Ritz, Torres & Bergfeld, 2019). It causes market dominance and outperformance. Deliverability helps transform. A company that aligns with employees, consumers, trends, and markets may better plan for the future. Corporate performance improves with delivery. Investing in an organisation strengthens a company's identity. Harnessing intangible value increases stability and contributions. It improves company performance and brand acceptance (Schmidt, Foerstl & Schaltenbrand, 2017).

Capabilities to deliver include strategic capability. Strategy and vision are related, say Mokhber, Rasid, Vakilbashi, and Seng (2017). Both strategy and vision show how well a CEO runs a company. Strategic skills realise concepts. Dynamism is needed to build, integrate, and reconfigure competencies in a changing corporate environment (Mokhber et al., 2017)—change-adaptability dynamism. A firm's context skills establish a clear HR development and promotion path. It depends on replacing departed or promoted workers. HR context skills assist companies in coping with workforce shortages and talent gaps. Core capability is paramount for service delivery. Workers' value and connection to essential operations must vary in every organization. Singh and Bhar (2016) suggested maintaining core and non-core competencies to beat competitors. Core capabilities are vital to a company's business and competitive edge and are held in-house. Non-core capabilities can be outsourced to a strategic partner that runs some business aspect on behalf of the firm.

ISSN 1533-9211

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The capability to deliver involves behavioural and structural capacities. Structure affects performance: business analytics, leadership, and project management. Employees' qualities and methods are behavioural competencies. Cross-functional, leadership collaboration, employee engagement (Miroshnychenko, De Massis, Miller & Barontini, 2020; Bokhari, Muhammad & Zakaria 2020). Leadership is needed within and externally. Employee leadership saves time and effort. Buang, Ganefri, and Sidek (2018) said leaders must be informed. So, describe expectations. Effective leaders may sacrifice short-term goals for company goals. Early involvement reduces production miscommunications. Self-evaluation and gap analysis are organisational strengths. The company's leaders must assess its current and future state. Such gap and capability evaluations need a plan and prioritisation (Adedayo, Olanipekun, and Ojo, 2016). Each capability's importance and difficulty can be ranked. Complex skills may require a well-funded team. Sorting capabilities help establish an action plan. A company must track progress and follow up to meet delivery goals. Success requires measuring and reviewing every initiative. Companies need tangible goals and milestones for abstract capabilities. It allows the manager's track plan progress (Michael & Mark, 2016).

$H0_b$: Succession evaluation makes an impact on the capacity to deliver among family businesses in southeast Nigeria

7. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The survey design was used in the investigation. The study's target population is 1136, which includes the management and staff of the 41 registered family businesses in Southeast Nigeria, with the following numbers by state: Abia 79, Anambra 129, Ebonyi 91, Enugu 129, and Imo 75. Given 15 family-owned enterprises, a random sampling technique of three family-owned businesses was used in each state. As a result, 498 employees from the 15 selected family-owned firms were purposefully chosen as a sample size for this study. In addition, the study purposefully sampled top managers from 15 selected family-owned enterprises in Nigeria's Southeast region. As a result, the sample size increased to 513 people, who are senior managers and employees from the 15 selected family-owned firms in southeast Nigeria.

The proper design of a structured questionnaire and pre-test ensured content validity. The questionnaire included the opinions of three senior academic staff members from the Department of Management at the University of Nigeria Nsukka in Enugu State and six family-owned businesses from each state in the southeast to ensure face validity. The reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Data were examined using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferential statistics such as product-moment correlation. At a 5% significance level, simple regression analysis was utilised to test the hypotheses using SPSS version 25.

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8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In line with the sample size, the study administered 498 questionnaires to family-owned business employees in southeast Nigeria, and 479 were returned. The study got 96.2% responses. Employees of family-owned businesses in five southeast Nigerian states. 21.50% of respondents had secondary education (SSCE), 42.80% had OND or NCE, 31.73% had HND or BSc, and 3.97% had MBA or MSc. It means respondents were educated. Overall, 31.32% of respondents had 1-5 years of experience. 40.08 percent had served between 6 and 10 years, 19.00 percent between 11 and 15 years, and 9.60 percent for more than 15 years. Overall, the sampled employees from family-owned businesses in Southeast Nigeria were educated and had experience in their roles. Thus, their education and experience qualify them to comment on succession planning and its effects on their organization's performance.

Analysis of Items in the study scale

The combined variable distribution responses to items in the research instrument are presented below:

Table 1a: Respond Distribution on Rate of Identification of Desired Successors

S/n	Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Mean ± SD
1.	Appointing a new officer into a post is always based earlier assessment of potential successors	Strongly Disagree	32	6.68	4.19 ± 0.54
		Disagree	41	8.56	
		Undecided	35	7.31	
		Agree	66	13.78	
		Strongly Agree	305	63.67	
2.	The leaders usually choose an option among many potential successors based on clear-set criteria	Strongly Disagree	203	42.38	2.66 ± 0.85
		Disagree	38	7.93	
		Undecided	67	13.99	
		Agree	61	12.73	
		Strongly Agree	110	22.96	
3.	Organisations make it clear to all employees the rationale for choosing individual workers as the successor to others	Strongly Disagree	68	14.20	2.72 ± 0.18
		Disagree	201	41.96	
		Undecided	67	13.99	
		Agree	84	17.54	
		Strongly Agree	59	12.32	
4.	Seeking for a successor among employees in my firm is usually done consistently with merits	Strongly Disagree	88	18.37	3.59 ± 1.57
		Disagree	56	11.69	
		Undecided	45	9.39	
		Agree	66	13.78	
		Strongly Agree	224	46.76	
5.	The plan for identifying potential successors is always made known to every member of the organisation	Strongly Disagree	16	3.34	4.11 ± 0.37
		Disagree	67	13.99	
		Undecided	31	6.47	
		Agree	101	21.09	
		Strongly Agree	264	55.11	
	Grand Mean ± SD	3.45±0.7			

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

ISSN 1533-9211
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

Table 1a presents the response distribution on the identification rate of desired successors in a family-owned business in southeast Nigeria. The results showed across the items, the weighted mean values of 4.19; 3.59; and 4.11 for items 1, 4, and 5, respectively, which indicated the agreement view of respondents to these items, while items 2 and 3 have mean values of 2.66 and 2.72 respectively which are both less than 3.0, indicating that respondents disagreed to the assertions that the leaders usually choose an option among many potential successors based on clear-set criteria. Also, respondents disagreed with the assertion that organisations make it clear to all employees the rationale for choosing individual workers as successors over others. Meanwhile, the overall mean value of 3.45 indicated that the family-owned business has moderate efforts to identify desired successors.

Table 1b: Respond Distribution on Rate of Organisation Citizenship

S/n	Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Mean ± SD
1.	The process of choosing a replacement for departing or promoted employees is always to enhance a sense of belonging among employees	Strongly Disagree	43	8.98	3.60 ± 0.4
		Disagree	53	11.06	
		Undecided	36	7.52	
		Agree	267	55.74	
		Strongly Agree	80	16.70	
2.	It is usually a case in my firm that choosing a new officer among employees do project positive attitude among the rest of the workers	Strongly Disagree	66	13.78	2.73 ± 1.65
		Disagree	209	43.63	
		Undecided	43	8.98	
		Agree	108	22.55	
		Strongly Agree	53	11.06	
3.	The mode of transition among officers usually encourages a supportive attitude among the rest of the staff	Strongly Disagree	72	15.03	3.22 ± 1.12
		Disagree	89	18.58	
		Undecided	33	6.89	
		Agree	232	48.43	
		Strongly Agree	53	11.06	
4.	The process of appointing successors has consistently helped in breeding trust among workers	Strongly Disagree	79	16.49	3.32 ± 1.81
		Disagree	58	12.11	
		Undecided	23	4.80	
		Agree	271	56.58	
		Strongly Agree	48	10.02	
5.	The succession planning in my firm play a positive effect on employees' loyalty	Strongly Disagree	43	8.98	2.66 ± 0.36
		Disagree	251	52.40	
		Undecided	43	8.98	
		Agree	110	22.96	
		Strongly Agree	32	6.68	
	Grand Mean ± SD	3.81±0.7			

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 1b presents the response distribution on the rate of organisation citizenship among family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria. The results showed that across the items, the weighted mean values of 3.60; 3.22; and 3.32 for items 1, 3, and 4, respectively, which indicated the agreement view of respondents to these items. Meanwhile, items 2 and 5 have mean values of 2.73 and 2.66, respectively, which are less than 3.0, indicating the disagreement

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view of respondents to the two items. The grand mean value of 3.81 indicated that at a moderate level, family-owned businesses are gaining organizational citizenship among their employee.

Table 2a: Respond Distribution on Rate of Evaluation of Succession Plan

S/n	Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Mean ± SD
1.	There is a timely review of the activities of the newly appointed successor to give input where necessary	Strongly Disagree	65	13.57	3.54 ± 1.59
		Disagree	89	18.58	
		Undecided	69	14.41	
		Agree	36	7.52	
		Strongly Agree	220	45.93	
2.	My firm always gage the contribution of newly appointed successors with overall overhead cost to adjudge succession effectiveness	Strongly Disagree	34	7.10	2.71 ± 0.42
		Disagree	254	53.03	
		Undecided	66	13.78	
		Agree	69	14.41	
		Strongly Agree	56	11.69	
3.	The observation made during the assessment of the successor's efforts are always put as part of recommendations for going forward activities	Strongly Disagree	43	8.98	3.94 ± 1.64
		Disagree	61	12.73	
		Undecided	32	6.68	
		Agree	89	18.58	
		Strongly Agree	254	53.03	
4.	In the process of evaluating the succession plan, efforts are always made to judge new successor officers based on their level of experience	Strongly Disagree	88	18.37	3.50 ± 1.25
		Disagree	76	15.87	
		Undecided	45	9.39	
		Agree	49	10.23	
		Strongly Agree	221	46.14	
5.	Evaluation of succession planning in my firm is usually done with objectivity, not to bring down the officer	Strongly Disagree	77	16.08	3.72 ± 0.57
		Disagree	46	9.60	
		Undecided	43	8.98	
		Agree	81	16.91	
		Strongly Agree	232	48.43	
	Grand Mean ± SD	3.48±0.7			

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2a presents the response distribution on the rate of evaluation of succession plans among family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria. The results showed across the items, the weighted mean values of 3.54; 3.94; 3.50, and 3.72 for items 1, 3, 4, and 5, respectively, which indicated the agreement view of respondents to these items, while item 2 has mean value 2.71 which is less than 3.0. It showed that sampled employees of family-owned businesses disagreed with item 2. However, the overall mean value of 3.48 shows that family-owned businesses in the study area are moderately effective in evaluating succession plans.

ISSN 1533-9211
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

Table 2b: Respond Distribution on Rate of Capacity to Deliver

S/n	Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Mean ± SD
1.	Change in officeholder usually lead to the creation of a new line of business	Strongly Disagree	271	56.58	2.13 ± 0.4
		Disagree	42	8.77	
		Undecided	55	11.48	
		Agree	56	11.69	
		Strongly Agree	55	11.48	
2.	The transition of a particular officer is usually done to promote brand repositioning for my firm	Strongly Disagree	54	11.27	3.45 ± 0.15
		Disagree	61	12.73	
		Undecided	43	8.98	
		Agree	257	53.65	
		Strongly Agree	64	13.36	
3.	Process for the replacement of key officers in my company is usually done to enhance service delivery	Strongly Disagree	78	16.28	3.47 ± 0.61
		Disagree	45	9.39	
		Undecided	21	4.38	
		Agree	243	50.73	
		Strongly Agree	92	19.21	
4.	Succession planning arrangements in my firm usually project a new organizational look amidst competing business	Strongly Disagree	78	16.28	3.08 ± 1.01
		Disagree	65	13.57	
		Undecided	87	18.16	
		Agree	237	49.48	
		Strongly Agree	12	2.51	
5.	The execution of the succession plan in my firm allows for effective and continuous product distribution	Strongly Disagree	73	15.24	3.25 ± 0.87
		Disagree	82	17.12	
		Undecided	54	11.27	
		Agree	194	40.50	
		Strongly Agree	76	15.87	
	Grand Mean ± SD	3.50±1.03			

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2b presents the response distribution on the rate of capacity to deliver among family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria. The results showed that across the items, the weighted mean values of 3.45; 3.47; 3.08, and 3.25 for items 2, 3, and 5, respectively, indicated the respondents' agreement view of these items. Meanwhile, item 1 has a mean value of 2.13, which is less than 3.0, indicating the disagreement view of respondents to assertion that the change in officeholders usually leads to the creation of a new line of business. The aggregate mean value of 3.50 indicates that family-owned businesses in the study area are moderately able to deliver as expected through succession planning.

Test of Hypotheses

Potential successor identification does promote organisational citizenship among family businesses in southeast Nigeria.

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

Table 3a: Consolidated Responses to Questions Related to the Second Objective

Responses	Potential Successor Identification	Organisation Citizenship
Strongly Disagree	407(16.99)	303(12.65)
Disagree	403(16.83)	660(27.56)
Undecided	245(10.23)	178(7.43)
Agree	378(15.78)	988(41.25)
Strongly Agree	962(40.17)	266(11.11)

Source: SPSS version 25.

Table 3b: Outcome of Regression Analysis on Potential Successor Identification of Organisational Citizenship among Employees of Family-Owned Businesses in Southeast Nigeria

r = 0. 512 R^2 = 0.262						
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**p-value**
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	.317	.008		40.032	.000
	Identification of Potential Successor	.231	.018	.512	13.042	.000
a. **Dependent Variable:** Organisation Citizenship						

Source: SPSS version 25.

The results in Table 3a showed the consolidated responses to questions related to the study's second objective, which sought the extent to which potential successor identification has improved organizational citizenship among employees of a family-owned business in Southeast Nigeria. The results showed that 40.17% of respondents strongly agreed that identifying potential successors among employees in their firms is high. In comparison, 41.25% indicated that the culture of organisational citizenship among family-owned business employees is high in Southeast Nigeria.

More so, the outcome of regression analysis in Table 3b revealed an R-value of 0.512 R^2 value of 0.262, which showed some moderate relationship between the dependent variable (organisation citizenship) and independent variable (identification of potential successor). Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficient β 0.231, t-value 13.042 at p-value 0.000, less than hypothetical p-value 0.05, showed that the independent variable (identification of potential successor) could predict about 23.1% of variations in the dependent variable (organisation citizenship). The study rejected null hypotheses and retained the alternative hypothesis, stating that potential successor identification promotes organizational citizenship among family businesses in southeast Nigeria.

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

Succession evaluation make an impact on the capacity to deliver among family business in southeast Nigeria

Table 4a: Consolidated Responses to Questions Related to the First Objective

Responses	Evaluation of Succession Plan	Capacity to Deliver
Strongly Disagree	307(12.82)	554(23.13)
Disagree	526(21.96)	295(12.32)
Undecided	255(10.65)	260(10.86)
Agree	324(13.53)	987(41.21)
Strongly Agree	983(41.04)	299(12.48)

Source: SPSS version 25.

Table 4b: Outcome of Regression Analysis on Impact of Succession Evaluation on Capacity to Deliver among Family Businesses in Southeast Nigeria

r = 0.314 **R^2 = 0.099**						
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**p-value**
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	.420	.062		6.822	.000
	Integration of Hiring Strategy	.494	.068	.314	7.243	.000
a. **Dependent Variable:** Shared Value Creation						

Source: SPSS version 25.

The results in Table 4a showed the consolidated responses to questions related to the fifth objective of the study, which sought the extent to which succession evaluation impacts the capacity to deliver among family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria. The results showed that 41.04% of respondents strongly agreed that evaluation of the succession process is high in their firms. In comparison, 41.21% indicated that the capacity to deliver among employees of family-owned businesses in southeastern Nigeria is high.

More so, the outcome of regression analysis in Table 4b revealed an R-value of 0.314 R^2 value of 0.099, which showed some moderate relationship between the dependent variable (capacity to deliver) and independent variable (succession evaluation). Furthermore, the unstandardized coefficient β 0.492, t-value 7.243 at p-value 0.000, less than the hypothetical p-value 0.05, showed that the independent variable (succession evaluation) can predict about 49.2% of variations in the dependent variable (capacity to deliver). The study rejected null and retained alternative hypotheses, stating that succession evaluation impacts the capacity to deliver among family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria.

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ISSN 1533-9211

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

9. DISCUSSION

The study examines the effect of succession planning on registered family businesses in Southeast Nigeria. The descriptive analysis of four hundred and seventy-nine sample responses showed a relative balance in the survey respondents, indicating that sample responses can be valued. The findings showed that family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria promote organisational citizenship by identifying potential successors. Because a company can't find a replacement among its current or newly hired employees, it must look elsewhere. Olufemi (2021) found that every organisation must replace existing employees. It helps choose the best office worker. Olatunbosun and Onuoha (2020) found that the best succession planning involves specific employees. Key employees leaving or dying could force the company to start over. Every company should target specific employees as office replacements. Having a potential successor allows for developmental grooming and boosts worker morale, according to Odom et al. (2019). Verlinden (2021) and Ungerer and Mienie (2018) proved that selecting a replacement for a high post among workers boosts morale because the remaining workers hope for a better position. Recruiting or replacing vacant posts through succession planning can boost employee interaction, belonging, and positive organisation citizenship. Having a potential successor means effective time management and choosing someone familiar to the firm's employees. Such efforts could also make members feel represented, and since employees could reach their new leader when needed, they could be ready to work voluntarily for the new emerging leader. Olufemi (2021) said corporate citizenship is voluntary, and no company is responsible. Trust is built by promoting an employee. According to Verlinden (2022), in Germany, succession planning can increase workers' dedication while going against the rest of the workers can demotivate them. Akpan and Ukpai (2017) found that worker commitment does not imply organisational citizenship. A worker excels. Without instruction or supervision, successor planning can boost self-dedication and company image. Organizational citizenship is discretionary, not directly or explicitly rewarded, and promotes organisation functioning, according to Olusola (2020). Leadership appointments may affect this behaviour.

Also, the result of the succession evaluation improves family businesses' delivery capacity in southeastern Nigeria. A timely review of succession planning may reveal errors. According to Wigmore (2021), succession planning assessment redresses workers in the UK. They are creating a way to access the overall program to correct incorrect succession planning steps. This study found that using a successor's effort assessment observations could boost employee morale, task completion, and service delivery. Without succession planning, the leader may make mistakes. Inconsistent leadership can demotivate employees. Ogbechie and Anetor (2015) linked succession assessment with strategic asset management to do work, execute business strategy, and satisfy customers. Thus, Ayatu (2021), in "Capacity to deliver and firm sustainability," established that delivery capabilities cannot come from a single effort or individual but from employees under leadership they all support. Akpan and Ukpai (2017) said that delivery capability is usually internal. Strong succession and firm/asset growth indicate a need to reevaluate roles and responsibilities. Forming a company's identity to differentiate it from competitors requires an objective mind, ready to correct mistakes.

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ISSN 1533-9211
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8315015

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the effect of succession planning on registered family businesses in Southeast Nigeria. The study relied on relevant literature that justified the need for the study. Based on the findings, we conclude that succession planning affects the suitability of family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria. Also, the study concludes that it is insufficient to determine the position ahead of the need for succession. The management needs to determine potential successor for particular positions or roles. Having a potential successor implies chances to easily attain a succession plan and waste minimal time on staff replacement since the firm does not engage in blind searching. The study showed that succession evaluation directly affects the capacity to deliver among family businesses in southeast Nigeria. Specifically, a timely review of overall succession planning could reveal some misdeeds during succession planning that can be rectified. Succession planning requires a stepwise process that cannot be bypassed if firms must build organisational citizenship, shared leadership, shared value, and innovativeness among employees. The study validates stewardship theory and system theory, which contributed to knowledge. The result recommends the following.

(i) The leaders in family-owned businesses in southeast Nigeria should set clear rules and conditions that make choosing potential successors free from bias or favoritism and encourage development of organization citizen behavior among the rest of the employees.

(ii) The family-owned business in southeast Nigeria should engage the services of experts in human resources management to evaluate the successor process in their firm at every interval to give room for adjustment where necessary and offer recommendations for better practices.

11. BUSINESS SUCCESSION IMPLICATION AND LIMITATIONS

This study focused on family businesses that have achieved some level of operational standard, which could influence the succession process, whereas many family-owned businesses are still emerging. This study may not explain how succession affects small family businesses' sustainability. As small family-owned businesses approach maturity, they benefit from this study, according to the study. Furthermore, the nature and peculiarities of family-owned businesses, choosing a successor has always been thought to be relatively easy since few family members hold leadership positions. The current study refutes the idea that leadership is customized. Rather, choosing and replacing leadership in family-owned businesses requires succession planning, sometimes requiring expert services.

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