



## Research Article

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# Influence of Successor-Related Factors on the Succession Planning Process of Private School Organisations

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## Abstract

Family businesses are important for the global economy, and therefore the transfer of ownership across generations is critical to their survival. This research aimed to determine leadership efficacy in succession planning amongst school leaders in private school organisations. The research explored the stated objectives through a qualitative research methodology. The research used face to face semi structured interviews to generate the research data. The result argues for the need for effective succession planning and indicates that a planned succession can lead to a positive impact on school organisations overall performance while an unplanned succession can disrupt a private school organisation.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Leadership Succession, Succession Planning, Family Business, Nigeria

## 1. Introduction of the Study

MacMillan (1996) argues that leadership succession is the process of transition occurring between a new leader's appointment and the end of his or her tenure as a school manager. Langsberg (1988) indicates that a failure of succession planning is one of the compelling reasons why many first-generation family businesses do not last after their founders. The author mentioned further that succession planning add to an organisation's continuity, and ensures that people have been groomed to replace major jobs within an organisation especially in situations where there is no time to find replacements. Succession planning ensures that persons have been prepared to accept greater responsibility and have been prepped to increase their competency, knowledge and efficiency

(Ibidunni, 2020; Amusat et al., 2022). Thus, being able to identify and develop key talents for leadership roles and positions is a necessity for future organisation.

However, for organisations to be successful and to sustain organisation leaders, Onakpa and Alfred (2022) suggests that they must be able to preserve and enhance their excellent performance. They must also be in the position to identify important leadership positions, strengthen individual advancement and prepare the appropriate leaders for the right post. Ibidunni et al. (2018b) argues that succession planning helps organisations to promote and preserve strong leadership to ensure that all expertise and proficiencies required in the workplace are addressed. It is therefore important that organisations invest time, attention, consideration and planning to ensure the continuity of their skilled talents. When it comes to family businesses, some of the most contentious issues identified are issues related to the chief executive's (CEO) succession choices (Venter et al., 2006). The chief executive transitions play an important role in determining firms' chances. These are influenced by the desires of governing families or family, who struggle between hiring a family member or an unrelated CEO, though a family member as a CEO would probably have access to a higher level of trust than an external member.

Venter et al. (2006) opines that most private school organisations in Africa are family owned businesses. It is argued that family business entrepreneurs are amongst the most important contributors to wealth and employment and family businesses are critical components of most economies (Hunter and Wilson, 2007). Entrepreneurs are changing, transforming and renewing economies globally. Entrepreneurship is now part of the enterprise culture. Family businesses account for two-thirds of all businesses world-wide and between 70-90% of global GDP annually is created by family businesses. These businesses also create 50-80% of all jobs (Akomolafe, 2022; Wubante et al., 2022). It is interesting to note that as much as these businesses are important for the global economy, the transfer of ownership across generations is a critical factor to the survival of thousands of family-owned businesses and the survival of millions of jobs. Successful inter-generational transfer of the enterprise is crucial to the survival of family-owned businesses. Chua et al. (1999) posits that intergenerational transfer is the process of transferring ownership and organisational leadership in a family-owned business from an incumbent leader of one family generation to a chosen younger successor in the same family. Dalpiaz et al. (2014) adds that when this transfer of ownership is not well planned or implemented properly however, the business will not continue across generations as intended.

Fink and Brayman (2004) opines that considering the facts that family-owned businesses constitute a primary contributor of the economic and well-being of most societies, it is surprising then that they lack longevity. It is noted here that internationally, only 30% of businesses survive to the second generation while fewer than 14% make it to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (Ibrahim et al., 2001; Shu'ara and Olaolu, 2023). Hence, the aim of this study is to investigate the role of succession planning in family owned private schools in Nigeria. In this study, the authors try to understand the pattern of leadership succession in private schools in Nigeria. In addition, to what happens to private school organisations after their founder's demise? There have been situations where private school organisations are sold or discontinued after the death of the owner. This study aimed to answer these questions by focusing on the main issues of leadership and governance in private school organisations. The study addresses leadership succession strategies in these schools and, more precisely, examines the influence of school managers' succession on the schools. In this study, the authors followed standard usage and defined government schools as those funded and owned by some level of government, state or local government body. This description enabled the authors to differentiate between private school organisations and government funded schools. In addition, private school organisations are defined as those schools that are privately managed and privately funded (Egounleti, 2022; Dawit, 2022).

In these schools, pupils don't have to follow the national curriculum though must be registered with the government and inspected regularly. For example, in the UK the Independent Schools Inspectorate inspects schools that are members of the associations that form the Independent

Schools Council (Amaihian et al., 2022; Ohanyelu, 2022). Specifically, the study determined the degree of succession planning, explored succession planning at the school managers' level and explored the role of school managers in the succession planning process in the private school organisations studied. The study specifically aimed to determine leadership efficacy in succession planning amongst school leaders in private school organisations. The next section of this study presents a detailed review of the literature on leadership succession, succession planning, and leadership styles in business organizations.

## 2. Review of Extant Literature

### 2.1 Leadership Succession

Adesina (2011) defines leadership as a measure of control enacted, leading to the attainment of desired purposes: strength to be able to get things done with the backing, collaboration assistance or partnership with other people within an organisation. He adds further that leadership is cooperation between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of a situation and the perceptions and expectations of members. Leadership can also be seen as the process of overseeing and guiding the management of an organisation in carrying out its given functions (Hater and Bass, 1988). Leaders are known to focus more on people, articulate visions, empower colleagues, create change and use influence (Lunenburg, 2011). To Bush and Glover (2014), leadership is a course of action enacted to influence and can lead to the achievement of desired goals. For school leaders to be successful, they must be able to develop visions for their school organisations based on their personal and professional values (Bush and Glover, 2014). They must be able to express this vision at every moment, and thereby influence their staff and stakeholders to share in the vision (Ibidunni, 2019). The philosophy, structures and activities of the school organisation must therefore be organised towards the achievement of this shared vision. From these definitions of leadership, it can be argued that leadership is more about vision, about people buying into the vision, about empowerment and, most of all, about producing useful change (Alanezi, 2016; Shu'ara and Olaolu, 2023).

Hence, the study of leadership is inevitable in school organisations, as school leaders influence their students 'achievements, their teachers' performance, as well as the conditions of the school where they work and are leading (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Leadership succession is therefore important when we think of people being promoted to fill existing vacancies opened up by personnel leaving due to retirement, advancement, or termination of appointments. Hargreaves et al. (2007) stresses that leader succession, succession planning and sustainability are critical processes for management in school organisations. For example, Fuller and Young (2009), found that low retention of school principals is caused by such factors as accountability pressure, the complexity and intensity of the job, lack of support and low compensation. Whilst research on succession planning in school organisations is limited, business organisations have for years recognised the importance of leader succession. It has been a topic of concern in private sector business organisations for decades. Freidman (1987) postulates that in order to meet the demands of a complex environment, organisations would need to have effective human resource strategies. There must be for example a formalized succession system in place and a control of this system to reflect the high priority placed on succession issues. According to Friedman (1987), the management of leadership succession as an important human resource strategy is essential for organisations to compete favourably.

### 2.2 Succession Planning

Theories of leadership succession planning and management have evolved from replacement planning (Rothwell, 2010). Replacement planning was perceived as the identification of anticipated gaps and finding individuals who are recognised as suitable replacements for those leaving their

positions. Groves (2003) opines that replacement planning was seen as a form of risk management with the purpose of limiting the chance of catastrophe, caused by the immediate and unplanned loss of key job incumbents. Rothwell (2010) argues that leadership succession planning is therefore a key business strategy to organisational leaders to deal effectively with the future of their organisations. Apart from replacement planning, succession planning and management also involves development of management capabilities including an emphasis on organisational change and teamwork.

According to Rothwell (2012), succession planning is a bold attempt to make certain the unbroken and consistent continuity of leadership by preparing talent from within the organisation through planned development activities. Succession planning is an important tool for implementing strategic plans. There are therefore similarities between replacement planning and succession planning and management (James & Jonah, 2022; Shu'ara and Amin, 2022). Having an effective succession plan will help to increase the talent pool which contributes to an organisation's strategic plan, thereby increasing the opportunities for high-potential workers, and helps to develop training needs based on likely replacement needs. Furthermore, succession planning and management have a positive effect on organisations and this is likely to serve a role in the development of people and strategic planning. Friedman et al. (1998) conclude that the career development of current and potential leaders is also essential for succession plans, though this is the responsibility of both the organisation and the individual leader.

Oke et al. (2016) argues that for succession plans to be effective, there must be an alignment between the career plans, interests and capabilities of individual employees and the opportunities available in an organisation. The authors add further that development opportunities available can help to develop the leadership capabilities of potential leaders that might be needed to attain for future organisational goals. It can also act as a hindrance to leaders appointing future leaders that closely reflect the current leader's own values, experiences and attitudes, preventing class prejudice or other forms of discrimination (James and Jonah, 2022). Another important factor when it comes to succession planning is retention. To increase the pool of high quality applicants for positions, school organisations will need to retain high quality teachers (Oke et al., 2016). For example, a shortage of teachers can lead to a shortage of potential leaders. School organisations have to retain an adequate supply of teachers at all times, in order to be able to identify potential leaders within that pool (Murphy, 2005). Having a succession planning strategy in place will help to prepare, develop and retain potential young leaders (Jurkiewicz, 2000). It will help to ensure that organisations have same opportunities in place for both current and future leaders. Ibidunni et al. (2018a) conclude that by also promoting career development and ensuring actions are taken to further leaders' career development, organisations can provide opportunities to ensure that current leaders develop the capabilities that will be required to meet future organisational needs.

When compared with business organisations, there is generally a lack of evidence on the existence of succession planning in school organisation systems. Fink and Brayman (2006) argue for the need for school system leaders to strategically plan and manage the succession of school managers or principals. In their study on four Canadian Schools, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) finds that good succession planning strategies would have plans in place that have been prepared long before the leader's anticipated departure or even from the onset of their appointment; the plans will give other people time to prepare; are incorporated in all school improvement plans. The plans are the responsibility of many rather than the right of lone leaders, they are based on a clear diagnosis of the school's existing stage of development and future needs for improvement and are transparently linked to clearly defined leadership standards and competencies that are needed for the next phase of improvement. Hargreaves (2005), further suggests that change of leadership is one of the most significant events in the life of a school organisation. Change of leadership is so important and necessary for the life of a school that not having a succession plan in place can arguably be equated to a leader's manipulation and self-centeredness (Hargreaves, 2005). Therefore, there is the need to investigate the importance of understanding what leadership really is and leadership styles in order to prevent the mismanagement of leadership succession.

### 2.3 Leadership Styles

Leadership succession is not just a temporary episodic problem in individual school organisations, but rather pervasive. Hargreaves et al. (2007) in a study on eight high schools in the United States and Canada found that one of the factors affecting the life of any school organisation and the sustainability of its improvement efforts is leadership succession. Fink and Brayman (2006) posits that school organisations count on their leadership to build fruitful and creative futures through continuous renewal. Though there are differences in how leadership is practiced in different schools, the leadership styles of school leaders can cause employees to leave their positions and their school organisations. For example, bad leadership can result in teacher dissatisfaction or high turnover. Bush and Glover (2003) argue that school leadership is a process of influence that leads to the achievement of desired purposes.

School leaders must therefore be able to develop and articulate a vision for their schools and at the same time must be able to influence their staff based on their own personal and professional values (Senge et al., 2000). Their vision, in order to be influential for staff to share in this, must be articulated at every opportunity possible (Amaihian et al., 2022; Ohanyelu, 2022). The philosophy, structures and activities of the schools must be geared towards the attainment of this shared vision for the school organisations to be successful. The importance of school leadership has also been associated with theory development, with the emergence of new models and traditional approaches being further developed and redefined (Bush and Glover, 2014). This paper is therefore grounded in a comparison of three conceptions of leadership—transformational, managerial and distributed leadership. Transformational leaders are acknowledged popular leaders who can turn around failing school organisations (Ibidunni et al., 2018b). While distributed leaders focus on leadership that spreads across organisations without diminishing the importance of the leader's role.

Senge et al. (2000) mention that transformational leadership helps to raise participant's level of commitment, helps to encourage staff to reach their full potential and supports them in going beyond their own self-importance for a larger good of the school organisation. Transformational leaders are the glue that binds leaders and followers in the transformation process (Amaihian et al., 2022; Ohanyelu, 2022). Researchers must be aware however, that transformational leadership does not happen overnight, it takes time and commitment for leaders to build trusting relationships, to develop and articulate their vision, to boost followers' emotional level and empower them to fulfil the organisation's vision (Tafvelin et al., 2014). The Managerial leadership style in its own case presumes that leaders must focus on functions, tasks and behaviours (Bush and Glover, 2014). To promote and facilitate the work of others, these functions must be carried out competently. Managerial leadership assumes that the behaviour of organisational members is mostly rational and that the leaders influence through their formal authority and through the status of their positions in the organisational hierarchy.

Leithwood et al. (1999) conclude that the positional powers of these managers when combined with formal organisational policies and procedures also add to their influence on other employees or subordinates. According to Crawford (2012), distributed leadership style, which is perceived in this study as the third leadership style focuses on leadership that spreads across organisations without diminishing the importance of the leader's role. The argument is that leadership happens in everyday practices in school organisations, through formal routines and informal interactions (Spillane, 2012). While transformational and managerial leadership focus on individuals, specifically leaders, distributed leadership focuses on shared approaches to leadership (Crawford, 2012). Shared leadership styles became popular as a result of the well-documented failures of high-profile so called 'superheads' in England schools, leading to doubt about individual or heroic leadership. The next section of this study presents the methodology adopted in this study.

### 3. Methodology of the Study

This study adopts the qualitative methods based on the inductive and phenomenological approach for data collection. In adopting a qualitative approach, the study was able to use a method of conducting research that has been widely associated with the inductive approach to generate research theory (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Through the qualitative research method, the research hypotheses were generated rather than tested, thus enabling the researcher to explore, describe and generate theory from the research data and therefore, helped to explain the phenomenon of succession planning by focusing on the subjective consciousness of interviewees (Remenyi et al., 1998; Ajagbe and Ismail, 2015). As indicated above, all information needed was collected using participant observations and in-depth interviews. This gave importance to the involvement of the researchers in the research setting and their efforts to uncover the import and significance of the social phenomena for people in those settings. The qualitative method especially offered the advantage of providing proper representation of the school organisations and managers studied, with the researchers invariably understanding the school organisations' through the interviewees' eyes. Ekanem et al. (2017) posits that the qualitative method permitted detailed inquiry into the issues of succession planning in great depth, it allowed for careful attention to detail. Collecting the research data needed here was not in any way constrained by any predetermined analytical categories, adding to the breadth of the inquiry.

#### 3.1 Sampling

The population chosen for the study included all school managers of private or independent primary and secondary school organisations in Lagos, Nigeria. These set of leaders were thought to be in positions of leadership that allowed them to make strategic decisions for their school organisations and therefore were thought would be involved in the succession planning process and corporate governance of their school organisations. Purposeful sampling is the dominant strategy in qualitative research. Patton (2015) opines that purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in-depth. This study used the purposeful sampling technique to select the final research respondents. This technique was chosen because according to Patton (2015), it requires a focus on selecting respondents who are willing to give information when asked, giving an advantage of getting unbiased answers from the respondents in question. Using purposeful sampling was also beneficial for this research for its minimal cost, reduced time advantage, logistics and easy accessibility to the research participants (Ajagbe and Ismail, 2015). The final sample used was twenty school managers of fifteen private school organisations. The only strict criteria the schools were asked to fulfil was that they must be at least 10 years old at the time of the interviews.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

The interviews lasted between 30-45 minutes on average; the shortest interview was 30 minutes, while the longest lasted about 45 minutes. All the respondents showed an understanding of the questions by answering the posed questions with ease. Not all the interviewees could provide the same type of information, however, their inclusion in the study was to provide breadth and depth of information (Ajagbe and Ismail, 2015). Thus, the direction and scope of some of the interviews changed depending on what the interviewees could add. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face in order to achieve a natural conversation. Questions used for the interviews were developed from the literature review and were piloted prior to being used for the final interviews. The purpose of this pilot was to clarify various aspects of the research tool in relation to the research population under the environmental conditions in which the main fieldwork would take place (Hoinville and Jowell, 1989; Ekanem et al., 2017). The pilot helped to test the feasibility of the interview questions, improve the validity and reliability of the research design and

the questions to be used in the main fieldwork. Notes were taken during the interviews and some of the answers given were also recorded with the permission of the interviewees

#### 4. Results of the Study

##### 4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

**Table 1:** Demographic Data of the Schools

School Code	Type of School	Year Founded	Estimated Number of Students/Pupils
R1	Primary	2007	200 Pupils
R2	Secondary	2008	170 Students
R3	Secondary		78 Students
R4			
R5	Primary Secondary	2005	86 Pupils 78 Students
R6	Primary Secondary	1996	359 Pupils 350 Students
R7	Primary Secondary	1999	114 Pupils 76 Students
R8	Primary Secondary	1989	250 Pupils 270 Students
R9	Preschool Primary	1988	300 Pupils
R10	Secondary	2011	100 Students
R11	Secondary	1988	3000 Students
R12	Primary Secondary	1996	150 Pupils 200 Students
R13	Primary Secondary	2008	229 Pupils 31 Students
R14	Secondary	1995	206 Students
R15	Primary	1990	150 Students

##### 4.2 Thematic Analysis

###### Theme 1: Succession Planning Factors

The first theme that arose from interviewees is the factors to consider when deciding on issues of succession planning. They argued for succession planning as a critical factor in their schools' successes and sustainability. That for there to be continuity in schools, succession planning strategies and management ideas must align in order to develop future leaders and should act as a catalyst for the career path of employees. This argument supports Hargreaves and Fink (2006) point, that one of the key forces influencing continuity in the long term is leadership sustainability and leadership succession. The interviewees voiced that the issue of succession should be treated as a strategic one, in which school managers ensure a mentoring process. They argued for succession planning to be an ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing and developing organisational leadership. That is, mentorship should be an important element in learning and career success (Soohee, 2003). Respondents also noted that formal mentoring programs in their school organisations act as systemic approaches to bringing together both senior and experienced people with junior or inexperienced people for the purpose of developing learning partnerships for the advantage of the schools.

Moreover, the respondents suggest that there is a relationship between high-quality leadership and school improvement and student outcomes (Bush, 2009). The recurring narrative here seems to be that the school organisations all have set criteria in place that helps them in determining the right

person for leadership succession. For example, demographic characteristics such as level of education, years of experience and work experience are considered as important criteria in choosing a leader. Managerial skills, level of intelligence, trustworthiness, innovativeness, creativity are also considered important attributes for a leader to have. Also, to them a leader must act as a mentor to employees and must be able to motivate them. Furthermore, the respondents discussed at length challenges and their experiences when recruiting for a school leader. There are differing views here, with some respondents arguing for the importance of recruiting leaders internally, whilst others talked about the advantages of bringing in experienced leader external to the organisation.

According to some of the respondents, from their experience, it has sometimes been impossible to appoint leaders with the right skills or attributes even after rigorous recruitment processes. This has led to them taking the option of recruiting leaders from inside the organisation, and using mentoring, training to develop their own cohort of leaders. In doing this, they are able to get the right people in place to do the job as required, they can easily make sure a leader's job is done well, and the school organisation itself can make sure they support the ability of the leader to achieve organisational goals, promotion and objectives. They also argue for the promotion of internal staff to positions of leadership, arguing that promoting internal candidates can help to improve organisational performance in the long run and is sometimes reflected in employee career development in their organisations (Shen and Cannella, 2002; Zhang and Rajagopalan, 2004). In essence, one can argue that promoting internal candidates can help to relax the need to search for an external candidate who understands the organisation's vision, mission, and culture. On the other side, using external leadership recruitment may create conflict within the organisation as prospective internal candidates may face tight competition from external candidates. Such competition may reduce internal candidates' chances of promotion and may demotivate prospective internal candidates with regard to applying for leadership positions. Respondents also argue for the need for successors to believe in the vision of their schools, that they must be committed to the strategic plans, must be able to use discretion, must be trust worthy, willing to go the extra mile. One respondent argued for the importance of age as one of the most important issues to take into consideration when considering leadership succession.

### **Theme 2: Important Factors for Leaders Succession**

In this theme, respondents identified some factors to consider when determining suitable leaders. Although some of the respondents seem to have a low confidence in their school organisation's succession planning processes, they argued at length on the factors that are important in their choice of leaders. There seems to be an emphasis on individual's attributes and skills and on the gender of the leader, which in some school organisations play a prominent role (Shu'ara and Olaolu, 2023). Although the literature opines that a person's gender is one of the ways individuals can be excluded from accessing and exercising leadership, there is a general consensus amongst respondents that women's style of leadership are open, supportive, caring and so they are better suited to managing younger children, whilst men in their care are known to be more decisive, authoritarian, determined, challenging and so can manage the organisation, older classes and children better. Moreover, there is a general perception amongst these respondents of the ability of women leaders to diffuse situations where male colleagues or parents - were angry. It is believed by respondents that women can handle aggressive situations more easily than a man, who might feel that he has to be stricter, be able to stand up to anger and return aggression in kind. Furthermore, from some of the arguments tailored by respondents however, gender is not an issue when accessing leadership (Coleman, 2007). These school organisations focus more on attributes and skills of potential leaders. Respondents suggest succession planning is about the special efforts school organisations put in place to invest in the best, highest performing or highest potential talents. They spoke at length of the advantage of having a structured program in place involving the identification and preparation of potential leaders and the fact that identifying and understanding leadership talent is more important.

### **Theme 3: Factors that Enhance or Deter Succession Planning**



Here, respondents identified the factors that are observed to enhance or deter the succession planning process in the school organisations being studied. Respondents described challenges they had observed to succession planning in their schools. One of the key concerns for some of the respondents seemed to be family interests. According to Giamarco (2017) one of the chief concerns facing family business owners is how to develop an orderly and affordable transfer of the business to next generation and/or key employees. Organisational politics and internal conflicts were identified by respondents as some of the main issues that prevent or deter from effective succession planning. Respondents spoke at length about complications from the unexpected influence of family relationships. They noticed difficulties in the recruitment of competent and talented people to take the reign of leadership, some respondents argue that there are difficulties in finding successful leaders even in families who are the owners. And for some of the school organisations, respondents noticed a lack of clarity in terms of future needs or in identifying their future needs which makes it difficult for them to develop any concrete plans for the future. Moreover, the long tenure or terms of leadership by current leaders are seen as deterrent, as to them, no one would want to hang around for an incumbent leader to step down or retire. This might subsequently lead to a high turnover of teachers. Furthermore, though succession planning has been seen to have a long history in business organisations, there has been little attention within school organisations. This is noted might be due to the fact that most schools would rather do a national search in the media in order to identify potential skilled or experienced candidates for leadership positions rather than promoting internally. As at times external candidates are considered to have more skills and experience. Another point of contention is that, due to the fact that some leaders stay in their roles for a long time, there is a tendency for qualified internal candidates to leave and move on to other school organisations with opportunities for a leadership position. Tsoulouhas (2007) argues that the school board of trustees should only select leaders based on superior capabilities. Insiders should have an advantage over outsiders if they have better skills, otherwise outsiders are liked best. It is definitely hard to satisfy all stakeholders when it comes to succession planning.

#### **Theme 4: Influence of Leadership Roles and Traits on Succession Planning Process**

This theme identified the influence of leadership roles and traits on the succession planning process in school organisations. Respondents specified the style of leadership/management skills which they considered to be important when considering succession planning. The argument here was that succession problems were related to relationship problems such as family conflict and leadership issues. Sorenson (2000) argues that there is a relationship between leadership styles and success of both business and family. He found that, for example, autocratic leaders retain all key information and decision-making authority, and they are very reluctant to share their power. Participative leaders are more group oriented and their relationships are based on trust. Status and power are not so important to this type of leaders. Laissez-faire/misison leaders have high levels of trust in their employees, authority is shared, decisions are made together, and goals are met as a team. Sorenson (2000) also found that participative leadership had a positive impact on family and business outcomes as well as employee satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, respondents do not argue that anyone that want to lead school organisations in future cannot blindly follow the organisation and believe the organisation has their best interests at heart, nor can they be motivated by compensation alone. To retain the best people for leadership roles, organisations must focus on; cultural alignment; value congruence; a fit between organisational and individual identity; a commitment to common goals and vision; personal relationships which link one's individual efforts to that of the organisation. Moreover, there were arguments that leadership styles adopted by a school leader can influence career development, and can invariably have a significant relationship with the implementation of succession planning. Transformational leadership style seems to be the style widely adopted, with rewards such as praise, recognition linked to positive performance. Respondents widely suggest that the more transformative the leadership style, the more importance is placed on succession planning, indicating that transformative leaders have high regard for others and generally place a lot of trust on their employees nor are they reluctant to talk about and plan for

succession planning. To these leaders, succession must be an endeavour that is made easier and may yield more fruitful results (Shu'ara, 2021a; Shu'ara, 2021b).

### **Theme 5: Roles of Corporate Governance Structures in Facilitating Effective Succession Planning**

This last theme identified the role of corporate governance. Corporate governance according to Mulili and Wong (2011) is the process by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. Corporate governance is about the authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, direction and control exercised in the process of managing organisations. Here the respondents spoke at length on the importance of governance structures in facilitating effective succession planning in school organisations. It was interesting to note that the school organisations targeted have either a board of trustees or a proprietor base that govern the affairs, control, manage and direct the schools. These boards have the decision-making authority on issues of succession; they have the final say on whether to promote internally from the employee base or to recruit an external candidate into leadership positions. Some of the respondents see corporate governance as the structures, systems and processes concerned with the overall direction, control and accountability of their school organisations. From all indications, it is actually these boards that determine who a successor will be. Where there is a proprietor base, the proprietor liaises with the principal, where there is one or with other management staffs to make succession decisions. The respondents also noted that whoever is chosen to lead will not only help to enhance the performance of their organisation, but their style of leadership will also be reflected in the career development opportunities available in the organisation. Not only this, the style of leadership is also reflected on the training, motivation, performance evaluation and on strategic planning within the school organisations.

## **5. Discussions of the Study**

This study identified a number of key themes in the data analyses and is able to contribute to knowledge on educational leadership and the succession planning literature. In the first objective, we were hoping to find out more about the extent to which private school organisations plan ahead for leadership succession. The results identified some understanding amongst the respondents of what succession planning is perceived to be. It indicates that when it comes to leadership succession, the plans are handled by a school's board of trustees, proprietor base, or other form of leadership as recognised in individual school organisations. It was interesting to note that most of these respondents had no direct impact on the succession planning process. Effective succession planning was perceived as important and is directly proportional to the level of competitive advantage a school can have. The respondents argued for the importance of having a succession plan in place that will help to motivate employees, and will help to reduce turnover. Succession planning is seen as critical to schools' successes and sustainability. Respondents argue that for a school to be successful and have a competitive advantage, it must employ high performers with the right skills and attributes to fill key positions and to meet future talent needs, supporting Santora et al. (2015) arguments that for organisation sustainability there has to be succession of key talents to fill key positions.

There was a general consensus that a leader must have some specific features for employees to follow such individuals. Some of the respondents emphasised that effective leaders must demonstrate good behaviour, must be trustworthy to gain the confidence of their employees. At the same time must be able to emphasise a work environment and a work ethic that is safe and fair. Santora et al. (2015) stresses that lack or low succession planning can have a negative impact on the sustainability of school organisations, which might be what the respondents meant when they argued for school leadership to emphasise a clear career development plan for all employees. Educational research in the past decades has emphasised on teacher motivation, especially for teacher's instructional practices and student learning. It is important for teachers to continuously improve their teaching skills (Janke et al., 2019). In terms of the second objective, which focused on factors that can help to enhance succession planning? The authors find that succession must be a continuous

process, where the organisation focuses on identifying and developing organisational leadership through mentoring schemes. Mentoring plays a positive and critical role in teacher training and socialization. A mentor can assist teachers in learning and adapting to the daily challenges of a teacher. As mentor the leader can advise in planning, help to improve teaching skills and professional development.

Respondents opines that a successful organisation must emphasise professional development of employees, emphasising the role of mentorship as an important element in learning and career success (Soohee, 2003). This is because teachers can impact student learning and achievement (Bardach and Klassen, 2020). Improving education, identifying attributes can contribute to teacher effectiveness. Focus should however not only be on the organisation but also on the skills and attributes of the leader and individual employees. This is because anyone in line for succession must apart from having the right experience, also have both the skill and talent to take the organisation into the forward. For succession planning to be effective and for a chance to improve the survival of the school organisation as a family business, there has to be a relative degree of responsibility and experiences garnered outside the family business. Moreover, it is also noted here that the progression or change in family businesses can be as a result of the changing external environment. Things like economic demand, and conditions can affect transitions in family businesses. Poplavska et al. (2019) found that organisation choices are affected by the uncertainty, dynamics and complexity of the external economic environment.

Furthermore, having a reliable succession plan in place can help to enhance the culture and character of an organisation. A strong culture can take the organisation into the future, with the next generation building on the legacy. For this to be possible however, organisations must build on the culture of strong and sustainable succession planning as early as possible. Furthermore, the third objective focused on the role and traits of leaders. An important finding here is that succession planning is affected by the characteristic of the leader. There is a relationship between transformational leaders and effective succession planning. That is, leadership style can determine individual career path and the execution of the succession process. Past research indicates that most family firms are not only focused on profit and wealth generation (Umans et al., 2019). Apart from financial goals, family firms wish to meet social and emotional needs. This is also important when making decisions. Leadership succession planning is mostly done for the continuity of the family. Since the continuity of the business is accompanied by the well-being of the family, succession planning is done for the greater good of the family. Trans generational succession intentions are the main driver of the level of succession planning in family businesses and as expected in these private school organisations. When some of the schools are focused on transferring within the family, we observe that they focus on action to take and follow in order to plan their succession.

They agree to an extent that succession planning is valuable to them if they hope to have a successful transition. We believe that the private school board or proprietor base will be more likely intent on making long-term decisions that will benefit the future generation rather than be only focused on the short-term interest of the school. They will obviously want to protect the values and interests of the family business. But this cannot however be done without there been a high-quality relationship between non-family school managers and the successor. There has to be a high-quality relationship between these two. This quality relationship is a valuable asset to have in the succession process (Umans et al., 2019). When a non-family school manager is supportive, loyal, and trustworthy and collaborates with the successor, the effect of trans generational succession impact on succession planning is higher (Umans et al., 2019). Non-family school managers are inclined to collaborate with the successor because they might feel their future is also dependent on their relationship with the successor. And when we think of it they too contribute to the schools' culture and the family's continued influence and impact on the business. Further observations; show an understanding of the harmony between planning for the next role and decision-making power. The school board are important patrons who have to be on board with the succession process for it to be considered effective. Also, whilst planned successions on the one hand can lead to relatively smoother

transactions and positive impact on the organisations performance after a succession, unplanned succession on the other hand can disrupt the organisation and can influence an organisation's leadership succession

## 6. Conclusions and Implications of the Study

In conclusion, this study has provided a basis for the understanding of succession planning and leadership succession in private school organisations. In this study, the authors have been able to argue that there is a need for organisations to prepare prospective leaders by developing, training a group or team of individuals with a mixture of leadership skills for the future of the organisation. This would give them a competitive advantage. The focus should be on the future needs of the school and having in place a group of high performing individuals who can be called upon at any time to meet future demands. These individuals must be nurtured to encourage them to stay with the organisation. Private school organisations must ensure their practices give support to the recruitment, development and retention of capable individuals by for example inspiring leadership aspirations and having succession management programs in place. Finally, the authors suggest that private school organisations should not only have a succession plan in place, they must also have an adequate and competent succession strategy that is actively engaged with the succession planning process.

Despite its contributions to the educational leadership literature, this study is not without limitations. There are limitations to the study and there are weaknesses in the way the findings have been interpreted. Still, these limitations provide compelling pathways for future research. First, our results are based on the responses of one individual in the private school studied (single case study approach). This is because of the research constraints in terms of access to the schools and availability of funds to travel to as many schools as possible. This may have led to cognitive and subjective bias. Using only qualitative research method here may have led to one of the challenges of a qualitative study, that is, a researcher has to be sure that it is the voice of the research subjects speaking through the data and not the researcher. Nonetheless, future research can continue from where this study has left of and integrate different points of view into the research aim and objectives. For example, there is no way different stakeholders can perceive the succession process in the same way. Future research can include the views of other stakeholders using mixed research methods approach, of in-depth case studies, quantitative surveys, and/or multiple face-to-face interviews.

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