

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY OF HOTELS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE.

Danesi Abdul-Ganiyu¹, Yusuf Abdulkarim² & Dr. Macaulay Onovugakpo Augustine³

^{1&2}Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State

³Delta State Maritime Polytechnic, Burutu, Delta State

Email: ausuf.abdulkarim@iuokada.edu.ng

Email: abdul-ganiyu.danesi@iuokada.edu.ng

Email: mclaugustine@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the link between succession planning and business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt. This study employed the cross sectional research design. Thus, the study adopted convenience and judgmental sampling techniques to select 210 managers in selected registered hotels in Port Harcourt. Questionnaire was administered to 210 participants, but only 148 were usable for statistical analysis. However, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation statistical test was used to confirm the three hypotheses. In other words, it was found that mentoring, talent management and supervisor's support significantly influence business continuity in a positive way. Based on the findings, the study concludes that mentoring, talent management, and supervisor's support improves business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt. The study recommends that hotel management should strive to attract talented employees, train and retain them to manage key positions in order to enhance business continuity in the organization.

Keywords: *Succession planning, business continuity, mentoring, supervisor support, Talent management.*

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry such as the Hotels play major roles in the economy by providing employment opportunity, rendering quality services, promoting the tourism sector as well as contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation. Perhaps this industry has been facing tremendous challenges such as poor electricity supply, bad road network and low patronage due to low purchasing power. The industry is also faced with high level of employee turnover arising from retirement, poor managerial style and planning, illness, death, ageing workforce, and search for better opportunities (Samuel & Amah, 2018) caused by a few entrepreneurs with little or no knowledge of the working of the industry (Hospitality Institute Report, 2018), which has given rise to business failures. Thus, scholars have suggested that in order to reduce the level of business failures within the hospitality industries like the hotels, management should resort to succession planning.

Succession planning could be described as the process of designing a long term plan for the smooth replacement of key employees in the organization (Mathis & Jackson, 2006). One of the key rationales of succession planning is that top talent in the organization should be effectively managed for the benefit of the enterprise (Samuel & Amah, 2018) because employees could exit their jobs either intentionally or unintentionally. And when this happened, without a well tailored succession planning measure in place, the organization will suffer strategically by experiencing vacancies in key positions that could be difficult to fill; thereby creating chances for incompetent employees to assume key leadership positions.

However, several researches have proven that there is an apparent lack of systematic approach and willingness to recruit, nurture, groom, and retain potential leaders in most organizations in Nigeria, despite the fact that succession planning is critical to achieving business survival and competitive advantage (Abdulwaheed, 2013). The issue of succession planning is a critical one in

Nigeria where most businesses barely outlive their owners and in most cases a succession plan is seen to be almost none existent and this is common in most small, medium and large scale indigenous companies (Akinyele et al., 2015) like Hotels in Nigeria. In most Hotels, it has been observed that whenever the owner dies or talented employees move away from the firm, promoted or transferred, the organization always suffers. This scenario is very predominant in Hotels in Nigeria, especially in Port Harcourt. The reason is attributed to the fact that there exists a poor succession planning across board by refusing to incorporate career development programs, mentoring, coaching, talent management, supervisor's support, job rotation and so on.

This problem could be effectively tackled by well structured succession planning within the organization because several empirical studies (Samuel & Amah, 2018; Adewale et al., 2011; Chinogunum, 2015) on succession planning and organizational survival have proven so. In other words, it is believed that having a well structured succession planning helps the organization to match present talent with needed future talent in order to meet strategic challenges and ensures the preservation of organizational success.

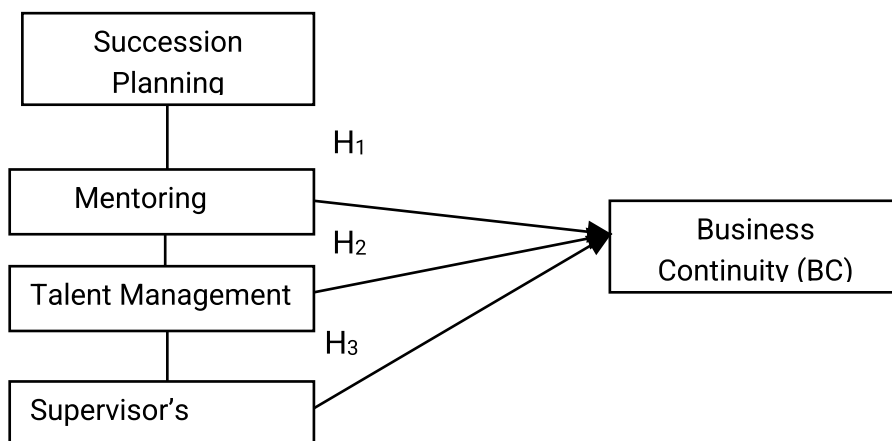
Several studies (Adewale et al., 2011; Chinogunum, 2015; Mary et al., 2017; Samuel & Amah, 2018) have been conducted on succession planning and organizational survival in specific sectors like commercial banks, fast food and restaurant firms, tertiary institutions, transportation, but none has carried out same study on hotels in Port Harcourt. In addition, there are sparse empirical studies that ascertain the relationship between supervisor's support as dimension of succession planning and business continuity; rather most of the studies on supervisor's support are linked with job satisfaction and affective commitment (Baloyi, Waveren & Chan, 2014; Elias & Mittal, 2011; Mohamad & Ali, 2016). This study tends to close these research gaps by examining the relationship between succession planning and business continuity of selected hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Succession Planning

The terms Succession Planning, replacement planning and career planning are often used most times to mean the same thing though some little difference does exist. Cannor and Carson (1982) maintained that succession planning is more than merely climbing the ladder. Kathryn and Martins (1994) in distinguishing between these terms, stated that replacement planning is tied to specific candidates who will fill specific managerial positions, while succession planning is a process of identifying persons with high-potential and ensuring that they receive the needed training and development and job assignments aimed at their strategic growth and development. This difference lies on the technical connotations. Succession planning is quite different from career planning in the sense that career planning is an aspect of human resource planning that is complementary to succession planning. Career planning is concerned with the individual development, while succession planning is concerned with the overall organizational development. Meanwhile, Berke (2005) opines that succession planning is an all-inclusive approach for identifying and building a talent pool that permit an organization to have a list of ample prepared candidates for filling all leadership positions in organization. Similarly, Onyima (2011) assert that succession planning is all about taking deliberate steps to make sure business continuously progress even when the owner or leaders occupying strategic positions exit the business. Based on the above definitions, we can say that succession planning is a conscious managerial action tailored to harness and develop top talents towards effective transition of management to new generation of leaders within the organization.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development



Source: Researchers' Model, 2025.

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework on the Relationship between PL and BC.

Mentoring

Mentoring could be refer to as the systematic use of specially selected and trained persons to provide the necessary guidance and assistance which will help to develop the careers to the people assigned to them (Agulanna & Awujo, 2005). According to William, James and Susan, (2002) describe mentor as someone who supervises, direct and help designated lower-level colleagues by introducing them to the right persons within the organization and generally being their sponsor in the organization. Pitney and Ehler (2004) argue that mentoring is viewed as a means for supporting the growth and possible development of potential leaders, while they are accepted into a field or discipline. Mentoring is a managerial means used to complement learning on the job which of course is the best approach of gathering the necessary knowledge and skills. Mentoring is a developmental relationship that fosters individual abilities and knowledge and increases the understanding of immediate and long-term needs of the organization (Amah & Jaja, 2013 as cited in Samuel & Amah, 2018). Mentoring skills therefore ensures that the mentee is very conversant with the job description, which will in turn enhance his or her performance in order to meet up with the set standards.

Past empirical studies (Abomeh & Peace, 2015; Chinogunum, 2015; Mary et al., 2017; Samuel & Amah, 2018) have revealed that mentoring significantly influenced firm survival. For instance, Chinogunum (2015) and Samuel and Amah (2018) discovered that mentoring impact positively on corporate survival in the aspect of adaptability, dynamic capability and performance standard.

Based on the above premises, we theorized that the following proposition that:

H₁: Mentoring positively influence business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Talent Management

The concept of Talent management cannot be effectively discussed without giving credence to the term "Talent" which the concept was coined from. The term talent describes people with exceptional ability or gifted qualities to achieve extra-ordinary accomplishments (Ansar & Baloch, 2018). In general, talent in the workplace is approached in multiple ways in the sense that it describes innate or mastered skills, but is also used to define high-performing and high-potential employees. Hence, the exact meaning of talent in a business setting varies according to the context and point of reference. As such, Talent Management as a concept is sometimes referred

to as Human Capital Management, Employee Relation Management and Workforce Management among others (Khartvi, Gupta, Gulati & Chauhan, 2010).

However, in existing literature there is no general accepted definition of talent management being provided by management researchers, therefore the conceptualization of talent management suffers from a scarcity of formal definition (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). Although some researchers have made some considerable contributions as regards to the conceptualization of talent management. For example, Collings and Mellahi (2009) opines that talent management is the efficient recognition of strategic positions, the development of talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents and the improvement of differentiated human resources architecture. In same vein, Tutorial points (2017) maintained that talent management is a deliberate approach implemented to recruit or hire, develop and retain people with required aptitude or skills to meet the present and future goals or needs of the organization. Thus, we can say that talent management is concerned with acquisition, retention and development of talented employees in order to guarantee incessant flow of these persons to achieve organizational objectives.

However, prior studies (Arif & Uddin, 2016; Obeidat, Yassin & Masadeh, 2018) have demonstrated that activating effective talent management practices would influence business performance and survival. Al Aina and Atan (2020) confirmed that the practice of attracting, developing, retaining, and inspiring as well as rewarding skilled employees, have been viewed as talent management practices that result in sustained competitive edge.

Based on the above premises, we theorize the following proposition:

H₂: Talent management significantly influence business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Supervisor's Support:

The term supervisor's support could be defined as the behavior of supervisor in helping employees to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and attitudes received from the training program (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). According to Griffin, Patterson & West (2001) maintained that supervisor support can be defined as the extent to which supervisors provide encouragement and support to employees within their work groups. The support could be emotional, instrumental and at the same time support which are provided before and after the training program (Putter, 2013) as well as feedback whereby the supervisor identify which area of employee's needs require improvement in relation with the job (Qureshi & Abhamid, 2017). Admittedly, it is observed that supervisor's encouragement and advice makes the workers to feel more secure while performing his or her job and it trickles down to the employees' perceptions of organization support (Elias & Mittal, 2011). This is because the supervisor is like an agent representing the organization, when employees are effectively supported, the employees' will develop the perception that the organization is actually supporting them and this could give rise to organizational citizenship behavior (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006).

The Supervisors play an important role in any organization because without the supervisor's support the employees might not be committed or lost focus in the work processes and this could hamper productivity. Supervisors are responsible for not only meeting corporate goals, but also bridging the gap between upper management and front-line employees (Omisere, 2014). Perhaps in as much as supervisor support is important, it is also delicate if it is not effectively carried out by the supervisor or monitored by management because it could result to negative consequences on the productivity of employees and that of the organization (Omisere, 2014).

However, supervisor support to employees needs to be effective to produce positive outcomes and business success. Thus, several empirical studies have been carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of supervisor support to the employees and the organization and it was proven that supervisor support has positive relationship with employee's job satisfaction, affective commitment and organizational performance (Elias & Matti, 2011; Baloyi et., 2014; Mohamed & Ali, 2016; Qureshi, Hamid, Jeihoony, Ali, Brohi, Magsi & Shah, 2018). According to Cakmak-Otluglu (2012) reinvigorated that there is a strong relationship between supervisor support and employee

outcomes. Similarly, another empirical study was carried out by Sharma & Jyoti (2006) and it was confirmed that supervisor support has positive relationship with employee job satisfaction and employee performance which in turn reduces employee turnover in the organization.

Based on the above discussion, we theorize the following proposition:

H₃: Supervisor support significantly influence business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Business Continuity

Business continuity is regarded as one of the measures of business survival. Business continuity could be defined as the capability of an organization to continue delivery of its products or services at acceptable predetermined levels (Mary et al., 2017). According to Punla (2017) opines that business continuity is a continuous process designed to ensure that business operates efficiently when times are normal and also thrives when times are not. From the above definitions, it is pertinent to say that business continuity is the ability of the organization to thrive persistently in spite of challenges. Perhaps what underpins the firm capacity to survive despite prevailing threats or disasters is the resilience nature of the organization. Organizational resilience is the ability of the firm to bounce back more efficiently than its initial state before the disaster or challenges occurred.

In management literature, business continuity is discussed within the domain of business continuity plan (Punla, 2017) or business continuity management (Alsalman, 2018). Business continuity management is a holistic management process that provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its stake holders (Business Continuity Institute, 2005, p6), while business continuity plan is the process of creating systems of prevention and recovery to deal with anticipated threats to a company (Punla, 2017). Business continuity can be measured in terms of longevity, resilience, recovery, and sustainability (Eric, 2006; Abdulwaheed, 2013; Mary et al. 2017). Thus, whatever measure that is being taken, the major focus of the organization is to achieve organizational objectives such as business survival.

METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative and cross-sectional correlation survey research design in nature. This is because data were collected from large number of respondents within a specific time period and the report was presented immediately. All 442 registered hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State constitute the population of this study ([www.http://hotels.ng/hotels-in-rivers/portharcourt](http://hotels.ng/hotels-in-rivers/portharcourt)). The Taro Yamene's sample size determination method was used to determine the sample size of 210 hotels. However, purposive sampling technique was used to select the targeted the 210 participating hotels. Specifically only the managers of the selected Hotels were chosen for the survey because they are in a better position to respond to the issues raised in the study. Well-structured questionnaire was the instrument for soliciting for response.

Thus, the instrument was developed with three key components of succession planning and business continuity by using multi-item scales as adapted from the works of Abomeh and Peace (2015); Adewale et al (2011); Al Aina and Atan (2020) and Arif and Uddin (2016); Chinogunum (2015); Elias and Matti (2011); Mary et al (2017); and Mohamed and Ali (2016) Samuel and Amah (2018) and measured with a Likert scale type ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree(1) using ordinal scale. The scales are listed below:

- Mentoring: Mentoring was measured with three (3) items scale as adapted from Samuel and Amah (2018) and Chinogunum (2015) such as: Learning from my boss has helped to increase my knowledge on the job. I am versatile in my job having gained skills from my boss. I share new knowledge gained in my job with co-workers.
- Talent Management: Talent management was measured with three (3) item scale as adapted from the works of Al Aina and Atan (2020) and Arif and Uddin (2016) such as: My

company support employees training and career progression; In my company an in-house development program is commonly used; We used an effective leadership style and careful with how we handle employee issues.

- Supervisor's support: Supervisor's support was measured with three (3) items scale as adapted from the works of Adewale et al (2011); Elias and Matti (2011) and Mohamed and Ali (2016) such as: My supervisor helps employees to improve on their job in the company. My Supervisor takes prompt and fair corrective action towards employees. My supervisor also establishes plan and work objectives with employees.

Business Continuity: Business continuity was measured with three (3) items scale as adapted from the works of Mary et al (2017) and Samuel and Amah (2018) such as: My company has a resilience attitude in protecting against future threats. My company always recovers immediately whenever there are challenges. Performance appraisal is being conducted at any given time in my company.

The cronbach alpha was used to test reliability of the research instrument and all the variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7

The Spearman Rank Order correlation coefficient bivariate analysis as use to determines the monotonic relationship between the variables.

Results and Findings

Analysis of Response Rate

The total of 210 questionnaires was distributed to the targeted respondents but only 148 were usable for statistical analysis, which represents 70.5% rate of response.

Analysis of Respondents Demographics

Table 1: Respondents' Demographics

Variables	Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	93	62.8
	Female	55	37.2
Age	Below 20 years	4	2.7
	21 -30 years	33	22.3
	31-40 years	41	27.7
	41-50years	56	37.8
	51- above years	14	9.5
Educational Qualification	PhD Degree	2	1.4
	M.Sc.	27	18.2
	B.Sc.	71	48.0
	HND	31	20.9
	OND	12	8.1
	WAEC/SSCE	5	3.4
	FSLC	-	-
Marital Status	Married	83	56.1
	Single	61	41.2
	Divorce	4	2.7
Working Experience	Less than 1 year	26	17.6

1-5 years	82	55.4
6-10 years	33	22.3
11-15 years	7	4.7
Total	148	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As shown in table 2, majority of the respondents are male with a percentage of 62.8% (N=93), while 37.2% are females (N=55). Thus, many of the participants fall within the age bracket of between 31-40 years old at 37.8% (N=56). In respect to educational qualification, majority of the participants hold B.Sc degree at 48% (N=71). Meanwhile, in the aspect of marital status, most of the participants are married at 56.1% (N=83). Finally, most of the participants at 55.4% (N=82) have between 6-10 years working experience.

The Univariate Analysis: Descriptive Statistics

The univariate analysis deals with the descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode and standard deviation. In this study we are going to analyze only the mean and standard deviation.

Table 3: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

S/N.	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Mentoring	3.13	1.52
2.	Talent Management	3.25	1.51
3.	Supervisor Support	3.07	1.49
4.	Business Continuity	2.89	1.40

Source: SPSS Result, 2025.

As shown in table 3 from the SPSS results, the mean scores of mentoring, talent management, supervisor support, business continuity are 3.13, 3.25, 3.07 and 2.89 respectively. On the other hand, the standard deviation of mentoring, talent management, supervisor's support and business continuity are 1.52, 1.51, 1.49 and 1.40 respectively. From the results, it is obvious that talent management dimension has the highest mean score among all the dimensions. It therefore means that talent management is the predominant succession planning practice being adopted in majority of the hotels in Port Harcourt, followed by mentoring. The respondents are of the opinion that the industry is doing more of firing but most talented employees in the industry are being nurtured by the organizations not to leave as a result of their skills in service delivery.

The Bivariate Analysis: Test of Hypotheses

In this section, the various hypotheses proposed for this study were subjected to statistical tests using the Spearmen Rank Order Correlation statistical tool.

Test of Hypotheses 1, 2 & 3

H₁: Mentoring significantly influences business continuity of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

H₂: Talent management significantly influences business continuity of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

H₃: Supervisor's support significantly influences business continuity of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Correlations

Variables		Mentoring	TM	SS	BC
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.065	.499**	.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.441	.000	.000
	N	148	148	148	148
Talent mgt	Correlation Coefficient	.065	1.000	.382**	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.441	.	.000	.000
	N	148	148	148	148

SS	Correlation Coefficient	.499**	.382**	1.000	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	148	148	148	148
BC	Correlation Coefficient	.499**	.617**	.414**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	148	148	148	148

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Result of Hypothesis one: The results in table 4 show a moderate association between mentoring and business continuity which is statistically significant at $\rho = 0.499^{**}$, $n = 148$ and $p < 0.01$. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis H_{a1} and reject H_{o1} which is the null hypothesis on the basis of significant level of association. The results show that 49.9% of business continuity can be easily influenced by mentoring. This result supports the theoretical assumption of hypothesis H_1 in the literature review.

Result of Hypothesis two: The results in table 4 show a strong association between talent management and business continuity which is statistically significant at $\rho = 0.617^{**}$, $n = 148$ and $p < 0.01$. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis H_{a2} and reject H_{o2} which is the null hypothesis on the basis of significant level of association. The results show that 61.7% of business continuity can be easily influenced by talent management.. This result supports the theoretical assumption of hypothesis H_2 in the literature review.

Result of Hypothesis three: The results in table 4 show a moderate association between supervisor’s support and business continuity which is statistically significant at $\rho = 0.414$, $n = 148$ and $p < 0.01$. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis H_{a3} and reject H_{o3} which is the null hypothesis on the basis of significant level of association. The results show that 41.4% of business continuity can be easily influenced by supervisor’s support. This result supports the theoretical assumption of hypothesis H_{a3} in the literature review.

Discussion of Findings

In regards to the hypotheses tested, the results are discussed within the context of existing literature of succession planning and business continuity of selected Hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. From the first hypothesis, the finding revealed that mentoring significantly and positively influenced business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt. This finding is in agreement with that of Mary, Onyinye, Emmanuel & Ekene (2017). They found that mentoring give rise to business continuity. In addition to this finding, Ogunyomi (2013) assert that effective mentoring of employees will definitely reduce the problem of succession of strategic positions of key players and will promote business continuity and growth. Perhaps the goal of every organization is continuity and it is anchored on effective succession planning through mentoring of employees into strategic positions.

In the second hypothesis, it was revealed that talent management is significantly and positively related to business continuity; which implies that talent management improves business continuity of Hotels in Port Harcourt. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Abdulwaheed (2013) that a well-articulated succession planning through recruitment, nurturing, grooming, and retention will definitely give rise to business continuity, though not empirically validated but it has been empirically proven in this study. Perhaps it is admitted that talent management helps to promote the continuity of strategic leadership positions that enhance business continuity and survival.

Finally, the third hypothesis revealed that supervisor’s support has significant relationship with

business continuity; which means that supervisor support business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt. This finding is in strong agreement with the finding of Mohamed and Ali (2016) that supervisor's support give rise to employee commitment and job satisfaction. This means that employee who is given high level of supervisor's support will be motivated and translate it to high performance standards.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research outcomes, it is important to infer that succession planning improves business continuity in positive ways. This is because the three dimensions of succession planning such mentoring, talent management and supervisor's support being empirically examined in this study positively influences business continuity. Indeed, talent management has a robust positive influence on business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that hotel management should strive to attract talented employees, train and retain them to manage key positions in order to enhance business continuity in the organization. Additionally, the management should identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual employees and mentor them to improve on their weaknesses and skills. Finally, supervisors are expected to provide the necessary assistance and guidance by encouraging staff to perform their job diligently and effectively rather than demonstrating autocratic tendencies towards them.

Limitation of the Study

The study empirically examined the link between succession planning and business continuity of selected hotels in Port Harcourt. Thus, the study has some few limitations. Firstly, the components of succession planning used in this study are not exhaustive. Secondly, the study only examined business continuity as criterion measure. Thirdly, the study was restricted to only Hotels in Port Harcourt, which could undermine the generalization of the findings. Finally, the study only investigated the managers from the selected hotels, other employees were not examined to have broader perspective of the issues raised.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Based on the limitations of the study, we suggest that other researchers should explore other dimensions like career training and development as well as coaching to ascertain whether they could give rise to business continuity in other sectors like fast food and restaurant firms, supermarkets, chain stores and private owned institutions. In addition, it is also suggested that more empirical researches are needed in the areas of supervisor's support and business continuity, because scanty research still persist in these domain and more studies are needed to close these gaps.

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