

Succession Planning and Firm Continuity in Professional Surveying Practices: Evidence from Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This research explores succession planning and firm continuity problems of Small to Medium-scale Enterprises. Despite the fact that a large number of firms are struggling with how to effectively devise succession strategies in ways that avoid falling into leadership vacuums, threatening to upset operational efficiency and confidence among stakeholders, succession planning remains a critical concern for modern organizations. The types of mechanisms that affect the operation of succession planning include relay succession, non-relay succession, boomerang succession, and outside succession, while key determinants include personal characteristics, organizational structure, and environmental variables. In this paper, a cross-sectional survey based on responses from 100 practitioners of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors comes up with significant barriers to succession planning awareness, resistance to change, and cultural issues. Most notably, relay and non-relay succession mechanisms are highly related to firm continuity; hence, there is a need for strong internal succession frameworks. This research therefore emphasizes that it is quite necessary for appropriate training and proactive strategic planning to help raise succession performance as a means of enhancing business sustainability within the study area.

Keywords: Succession planning; Firm continuity; Professional surveying firms; Leadership succession; Business sustainability.

JEL Codes: L26, M10, M12

1. Introduction

Succession strategies have always remained an essential but oft-overlooked component whenever an entity envisions its future path to success, most clearly observed among family-owned enterprises as well as Small to Medium-Scale enterprises generally (Abaddi, 2025). This is despite their acknowledgment as an essential tool for achieving future objectives, as most organizations face major challenges with succession strategies (Chia *et al.*, 2021). This challenge is quite evident whenever successions change frequently among enterprises without due care and strategic focus to their importance for ensuring smooth operations and the entity's continued existence. Succession strategies help organizations avoid either frantically searching for succession candidates for vacant

stock positions or having to deal with organizational voids that may threaten future goals and objectives (Balogun, 2024).

The implications for succession planning need to be understood, and these implications have far-reaching and multidimensional effects. If succession-related problems do occur, a power vacuum could result in an organization experiencing inefficiency in business processes and a lack of direction. It could also create confusion and frustrate employees, given an unclear direction and lack of leadership resolution. Additionally, the absence of leaders could mean the loss of institutional insights and client trust, both of which are important for running business processes (Clement & Anthony, 2025). Financially speaking, organizations that don't have succession plans may be forced to part with some extra expenses during recruitment and recruitment procedures for their next generation of leaders. On the other hand, such organizations face the risks of decline should succession not be well managed due to the disrupted process of continuity. When succession is involved for family-owned organizations, emotions play an important role in influencing the decision-making process for choosing the successor to run the organization. This may act as an impediment to objective selection of the next generation of leaders for such organizations, leading to clashes between stakeholders and putting the company at greater risks of decline. Ultimately, every company's contribution to the economy may be threatened by poor succession planning practices (Arinze, 2022).

Various organizations and industry bodies have, therefore, identified frameworks and best practices that may work in ensuring that succession is less traumatic. Most firms recently understand the need to have strategic succession planning policies that offer early identifications of people with leadership potential and train them with mentorship programs to prepare them for the top seats. Some companies are facilitating workshops and seminars focused on succession planning to empower their leadership teams and foster a culture of continuity (Odiachi & Sulaimon, 2023). Thirdly, there is the option of consulting agencies that offer specialized advice on the analysis of the organizational structure, followed by advice on the development of appropriate succession strategies. There are also government agencies or organizations that are dedicated to ensuring that the population is educated on the significance of succession planning, with most efforts being directed towards educating the owners of businesses on the same. However, whereas some organizations have adopted the above strategies, their level of adoption remains inconsistent amongst all, especially smaller organizations that cannot support succession planning strategies (Salau & Nurudeen, 2022).

Nevertheless, most organizations still face *ss* to carry out succession planning effectively due to various underlying factors. Firstly, most organizations view succession planning as a mere administrative responsibility instead of a strategic imperative. This leads to a scenario whereby organizations put more pressure on solving operational issues on a day-to-day basis than on planning succession management in good time (Okoro & Iheanachor, 2020). Secondly, organizations may fail to have appropriate structures to draft a good succession plan. For instance, in family-owned enterprises, there is often a tendency to become emotionally involved in making decisions, thereby failing to decide on the potential successors' abilities. Lastly, most organizations might not recognize the need to incorporate succession planning until a change in leadership is imminent (Monyei *et al.*, 2021). In addition, all of these problems may be furthered by forces of change and knowledge about the benefits inherent in succession planning. In other words, an

emphasis on short-run management, an absence of resources, and an inability and/or lack of willingness to engage difficult conversations about the future of leadership and organizational continuity all advance succession planning and firm continuity problems (King, 2023).

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is on the challenges of succession planning and firm continuity evidence from a survey analysis. The specific objectives are to:

- (i) explore the mechanisms of succession planning employ by firms in the study area.
- (ii) investigate the determinants of succession planning in the study area.
- (iii) analyze the challenges of succession planning among firms in the study area.
- (iv) examine the relationship that exist between succession planning and firm continuity in the study area.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model of succession planning remains a comprehensive understanding of the various techniques through which the leadership transition for the firm to continue can be managed. It has three major parts, which include: Challenges of Succession Planning, Determinants of Succession Planning, and Mechanisms of Succession Planning.

Succession planning is a complex process that ensures the continuity of leadership in any organization. A well-designed process identifies several succession mechanisms that are crucial in the succession planning process because they determine the outcome. One such mechanism is the 'relay succession,' which focuses on the continuity process without any interruption. This mechanism recognizes the value placed on certain key attributes by every person, including their ages, gender, family issues, preferences, and background. On the contrary, the 'non-relay succession' mechanism ensures that the succession process can happen in any manner—abruptly or otherwise—by leveraging distinct strategies that are suited specifically for handling the situation. This mechanism identifies several key attributes that are related to the organization culture, structure, as well as formal or informal attributes. All these attributes determine the effectiveness with which the succession process takes place.

Outside succession allows the organization to utilize leaders from other external sources. Outside succession is determined by factors which are environmentally dependent. These factors establish the external financial, social, and market factors affecting the organization. These factors affect the capacity of the organization to hire the most eligible and competent personnel. These personnel have to understand the market similarly to how they understand the organization's conditions. There is the boomerang succession where employees are rehired with the intention that they return with new knowledge and information. Such a succession can greatly favor the organization, as the employees are likely familiar with the organizational conditions.

This framework also identifies the key determinants on the effectiveness of the succession planning process, facilitating them into three main groups. One of them is the personal characteristics that relate to the attributes or characteristics that are possessed or expressed by the potential successor. Generally, the succession planning process focuses on the key attributes that are crucial in the process of managing the company. Moreover, the organizational characteristics refer to the key

elements present internally that are essential in the succession planning process. This can relate to the culture, policies, or structure formed that can either support or hinder the process. A favorable culture that accommodates the whole process can greatly help the organization in the implementation of succession planning strategies. On the other hand, the environmental characteristics relate to the external elements that can either hinder the succession planning process. This can offer some challenges that can hinder the process.

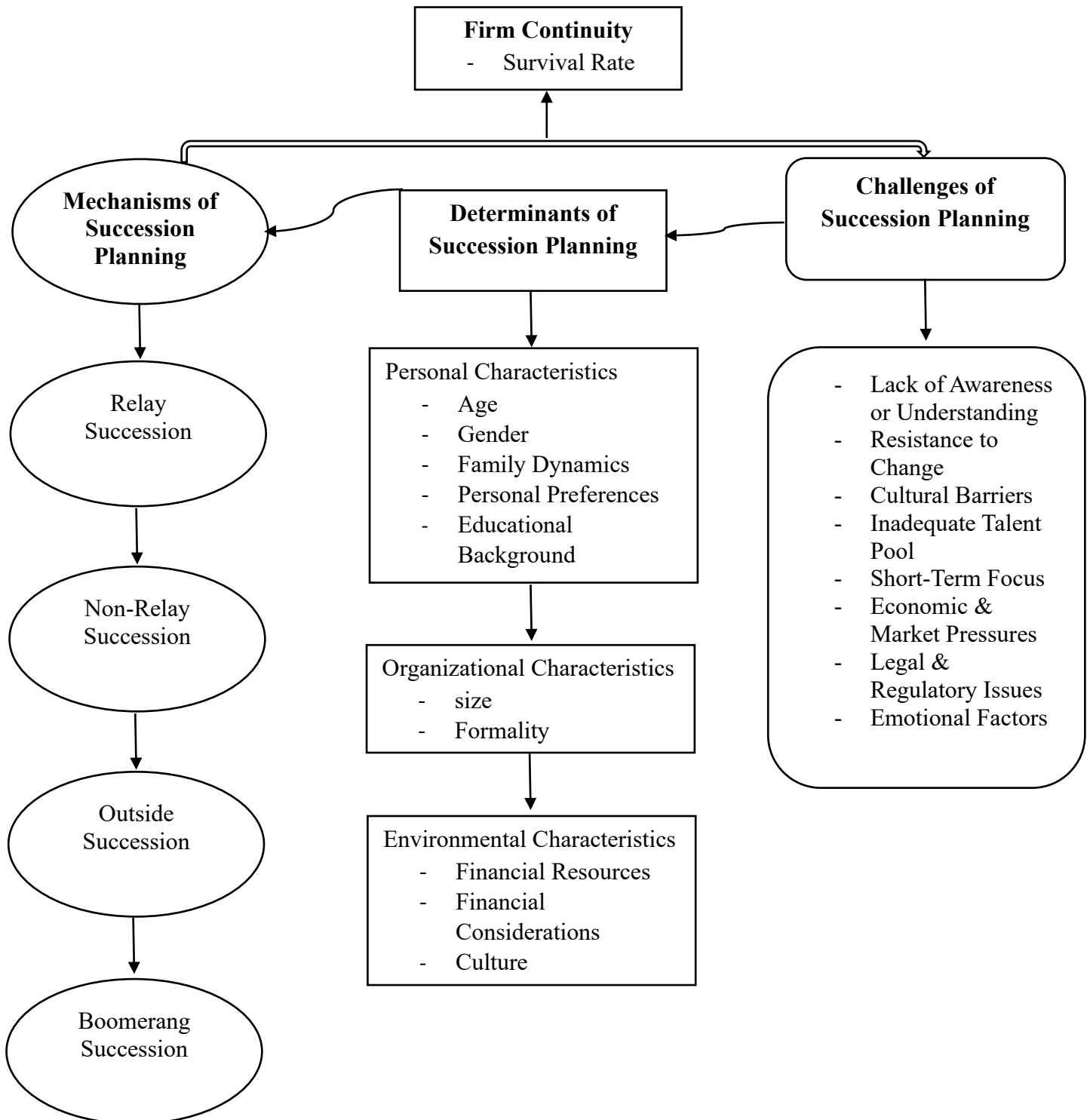


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework on Succession Planning

This framework would also help in an understanding of some of the challenges that an organization could face when it comes to succession planning. It should be understood that knowledge and appreciation of succession planning are some of the greatest challenges that an organization is likely to face when it wants to implement succession planning. This could undermine an effective process of implementation or execution of succession planning in an organization. There are also chances of cultural barriers coming up when an organization wants to implement succession planning. This could come up mainly due to cultural changes that make it difficult for stakeholders of an organization to accept changes when it comes to effective leadership. One of the greatest cultural changes would come up when an organization wants to implement a short-term strategy as opposed to considering long-term strategy planning. Economic and market forces are major challenges to recruitment and retaining qualified candidates, and organizations face the challenge of working with these external factors to build a robust succession plan to meet these challenges. The issue of laws and regulations comes in to present challenges in the area of compliance with various regulations and succession plans. Lastly, emotional factors are often a complicating factor in succession plans. Resistance to role changes in positions occupied in an organization can complicate succession plans.

2.2 Theoretical Review

Resource-based view, human capital theory, contingency theory, dynamic capabilities theory, relay race theory, social role theory, family business theory, agency theory, upper Echelons theory and family system theory.

2.2.1 Resource-Based View

The resource-based view posits that organizations can attain organizational success in terms of sustainable competitive advantage by application of valuable, rare, inimitable, and unsubstitutable resources (Gerhart & Feng, 2021). Talented leadership is a type of resource that can thrive under management (Ployhart, 2021). Succession planning can thus represent a type of internal talent development (Chukwuma *et al.*, 2022).

2.2.2 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital theory states that investment in employees through education will positively contribute to their performance/productivity as well as to the value added to the organization (LeCounte *et al.*, 2017). Succession planning is considered an HR tool to leverage leadership capital, facilitating the continuation of knowledge and culture in the organization (Siambi, 2022; Mukhama, 2023).

2.2.3 Contingency Theory

From the contingency perspective the success of effective management depends on the particular internal and/or external environment (Pertusa-Ortega *et al.*, 2010). Thus, the effect of succession planning in ensuring organizational continuity hinges on the firm's structural type, size, as well as culture (Di Prima, 2024). This is the reason succession planning works in the context of multinationals but not family-owned businesses (Olalekan & Bienose, 2021; Akinyele *et al.*, 2015).

2.2.4 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Cragun & Ulrich (2024) introduced the dynamic succession planning theory using the existing dynamic capabilities' framework. This approach considers succession planning as an evolving

capability that helps organizations change their talent management practices in response to changing strategic requirements (Michels, 2011). Accordingly, succession planning is recognized as an enabler of talent identification and development of HR practices (Véronneau *et al.*, 2013).

2.2.5 Relay Race Theory

The theory of relay race (Barnes & Hershon, 1976) presents an example of transfer of control in business entities using baton passing as an analogy (Whyte *et al.*, 2016). Planning and effective communication are essential for smooth transfer of control and business continuation regarding effective succession in family-owned businesses (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2005).

2.2.6 Social Role Theory

Social role theory, based on the study by Eagly & Wood that was reported in 2012, asserts that a person is influenced by societal attitudes based on social position, thereby leading to masculine and feminine socialization traits, where men take on leadership roles while women take on caregiving responsibilities social roles (Kimaru & Kinyua, 2018; Kitur & Kinyua, 2020; Peprah *et al.*, 2019).

2.2.7 Family Business Theory

Family business theory, according to Sharma *et al.* (1997), has been developed to study the distinct feature of family businesses, where the business ownership rests with family members, followed by generations too. Family business theory, as observed in the study by Panigrahi *et al.* (2021), has focused its interest in understanding how family businesses, in pursuit of managing decisions, have been affected by family values, especially in matters concerning strategy, while appreciating that at some point, balancing family needs has been a challenge, especially in transition from one leadership to another (Roulet & Bothello, 2021; Şenik & Uzun, 2022; Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

2.2.8 Agency Theory

Agency theory according to Meckling and Jensen (1976) focuses on principal-agent conflicts where the successor may have their own objectives as opposed to the company's objectives. This will lead to inefficiencies in family business management and decreased performance as noted by Abaddi (2025) and Agrawal *et al.* (2025). Succession planning will help to align goals and agency costs as noted by Motylska-Kuzma *et al.* (2023).

2.2.9 Upper Echelons Theory

Upper Echelon theory was proposed by Hambrick and Mason in 1984. This theoretical perspective suggests organizational outcome is dependent on the demographics of the individuals in the core manager group. In family businesses too, the level of education and experiences of the family successors are the key factors in overcoming the succession hurdles and achieving cohesive family goals (Agyemang *et al.*, 2025; Duetsch & Oestreich, 2025).

2.2.10 Family System Theory

The Family Systems FS theory considers a family as a unified, collective, and interrelated whole that can significantly affect succession planning. The family's interactions, family roles, family communication, etc., can have an impact on succession management, ensuring business continuity (Prest & Protinsky, 1993; Erdem & Safi, 2018). The outgoing chief's inclination to let go is a major aspect to consider for a successful succession.

2.3 Empirical Review

However, succession planning has established itself as an imperative theme in discussing organizational sustainability, especially in family businesses, indigenous organizations, and service organizations. The dominant debate from succession planning studies has been that succession planning is not about replacing the leader of an organization, but rather about ensuring sustainability and survival. In succession planning studies carried out in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, there has been an emphasis on approaching succession planning from a cultural, structural, and strategic viewpoint. However, there is a synthesis of ideas from multiple studies on succession planning, and some studies have been compared and contrasted as discussed. Yates (2025) highlights the importance of macro- as well as micro-level challenges that organizations are dealing with in strategic succession planning, considering the pressures that are affecting these entities from both inside and outside, owing to demographic, technological, as well as market-related pressures; one such macro-level challenge, as has been stated by Yates (2025), has been the absence of a systemic process in succession planning, which leaves organizations at a critical crossroad in matters concerning operational continuance; in another related article, Chia *et al.* (2021), highlighted a case study concerning succession planning in Malaysian public universities, where bureaucratic inertia has been a pressing issue that affects its successful implementation.

Al Suwaidi *et al.* (2020) examines the elements related to executive succession strategies in public organizations and interventions in the form of political unpredictability and inflexibility in organizations. The information in this article further justifies the claim made in Yates (2025) that external influences do have a major impact on succession strategies in organizations. Coffie *et al.* (2025) familial study shows that personal/intimate relations become barriers in succession strategies in family-owned organizations. The microscopic view differs in character compared with the general scenario depicted in organizations in the macro level. In family-owned organizations, having good academic and professional credentials enables a smoother mitigation of challenges in succession strategies (Anzagira, 2022) study. On the other hand, successors may find it difficult to cope with disruptions in operation if they lack related experience. Asamoah (2023) established that successors' educational level and experience influence the way they deal with succession-related issues effectively, implying that companies have a higher chance of profitability and adaptability when they are effectively managing succession.

However, as Nwuke & Adeola (2023) recognize, the attributes that define the successor can serve as a catalyst that causes conflict among the leadership, mainly because the generational gap creates tension. Family businesses are the clear leaders in the succession planning discourse because they are the most susceptible to changes in their leadership. Notably, the Arab family businesses, as discussed in the study carried out by Abaddi (2025), experience having their succession planning caught in the gap that exists between the cultural heritability patterns and the more conventional governance mechanisms adopted in the modern world. This study appears to advocate that the inclusion of conventional governance mechanisms can make the succession process more stable among the generations that are transitioning. Coffie *et al.* (2025) discussed the style that guides the leadership in the Ghanaian family businesses, noting that the leadership does not only determine the outcome of the succession planning but also defines the identity that the organization bears. This differs notably with the study carried out by Klaczak *et al.* (2025), which emphasizes the conventional strategies that constitute the inclusion of a governance board in the succession planning process in Polish organizations.

Similarly, another study by Okeke (2025) presents a pan African viewpoint on family businesses. The study concluded that succession planning does not simply depend on family relations and blood ties. It requires development of a strategy and focus on competencies. Although there is a common recognition among researchers of the need and importance of succession planning in family businesses, its rigor and approach can widely vary. For family businesses in the UAE, Jasir *et al.* (2023) found succession planning success is linked with the owners' values and their approach to delegation. Isichei (2025) has examined transgenerational orientation and how it is related with succession. The author concluded that succession planning is all about developing an approach that helps family businesses focus on their values. Ringo & Kibambila (2025) highlighted how family leader hesitance could be an obstacle when building family businesses.

There is a unique set of challenges in succession planning in public sector organizations. Al Suwaidi *et al.* (2020) identifies specific determinants of succession planning in executive roles and demonstrates the hindrances posed by politically appointed individuals. The same authors, however, indicate that there is difficulty in succession planning in universities in Malaysia because of rigid hierarchies. Gabriel (2020) extends the debate on succession planning principles, including dimensions of organization size and structure. Jackson & Dunn-Jensen (2021) further expand succession planning by considering digitalization and inform their argument on the core principles of sustainability with innovation and competency. Siambi (2022) recommends the implementation of proactive succession planning measures, which can be fully integrated within the entire organizational planning to avoid impactful changes in the event of transition. Sanchez-Bonilla & Cronin-Gilmore (2025) examine the application of the learning management systems towards the implementation of effective succession planning, thus affirming the premise advocated by Jackson & Dunn-Jensen (2021) on utilizing technology to implement leadership development. These studies confirm the evolution of succession planning from being simply static towards the application of dynamic succession planning.

Odum-Boateng (2024) dwells on the relevance of family ties in Ghana but emphasizes the importance of organizational culture in facilitating leadership succession. Klugah *et al.* (2025) introduce the mediating effect of succession issues and point out that proper handling of these factors can positively enhance SME performance in emerging markets. They second Jackson & Dunn-Jensen (2021) support for the inclusion of digital tools within succession planning. Gender roles, too, play their role in shaping succession practices. Odum-Boateng (2024) points to differences in preferences between female and male owners/ managers; Abaddi (2025) suggests that gender-inclusive strategies could be one of the means for entrenching succession planning. Technology also increasingly has been recognized as a driving force behind the doors of succession planning. Yates (2025) suggests that, along with challenges, technological progress can provide opportunities for new approaches. Coffie *et al.* (2025) remind that tech-enabled leadership is one of the critical drivers to modernize family business. Monyei *et al.* (2021) pointed out the negative impact of succession management on SMEs' sustainability-a poorly designed succession management leads to high firm mortality rates. Thus, it is evident how closely interwoven socio-economic obstacles are with succession problems.

Further emphasizing cultural reluctance, Museta & Mwanza 2023 identify barriers in Zambian SMEs by citing that discussion around succession are usually discouraged due to taboos represented for such discussions. Klugah *et al.* (2025) investigate the nature of succession attributes in Ghana's

hospitality sector. These authors find that family influence and successor characteristics mediate the impact on organizational performance. This is opposed to Guyo & Inamdar 2025, who name market competitiveness as an outcome for Kenyan hotels-a different setting ensures a different set of challenges. Governance structures play a recurring role in the enhancement of succession planning completion. Li *et al.* (2025) show that the adoption of formal governance mechanisms positively affects succession outcomes in Chinese family firms. In the family, relations are just as important, with Umans, Braun, & Rabl (2020) arguing that emotional factors are critical outcomes for succession planning. Hafnidah *et al.*, (2025) state that strategies are critical with regard to organizational needs, saying that succession needs to be effective and in line with digitalization. Nurinaya & Marhumi (2025) highlight the importance with regard to overall leader development strategies with succession in view and the ever-changing succession.

The challenges that are continually experienced by various companies have significantly affected succession planning. These have been described by various researchers, such as Azmi *et al.* (2025), who mentioned that succession can be affected by various challenges, including an organization's lack of commitment to succession, resource challenges, as well as succession team preparedness. Chidi-Abali & Tamunomiebi (2025) also agree with other researchers that succession planning is designed to allow the continuity to be proactive and clear. This also affirms that succession planning is essential in ensuring continuity, noting that its design is critical. Succession planning can also be affected by leadership reluctance, according to Ringo & Kibambila (2025). In addition, succession planning is affected by various challenges, including macro- and micro-level challenges, mentioned by Yates (2025), instrumental in digital succession strategic planning. Upadhyaya & Kuknor (2025) affirm that succession is affected by culture, noting that culture is responsible for making succession planning complicated, especially if a rigid form of governance.

In summary, the literature reveals that though succession planning is essential, its implementation challenges are vastly different in various cultural settings.

2.4 Gaps in the Literature

Where other scholars have conducted multiple publications on succession planning for family-owned organizations, SMEs, among other entities, the aspect of succession for indigenous professional services, such as surveying, tends to receive minimal or even a blatant lack of focus and application of the theoretical aspects for knowledge development. For example, where Agrawal *et al.* (2025) discuss the issue of succession planning, the authors explicitly focus on the issue without considering the role of other sectors within the aspect of indigenous services.

Furthermore, informal dynamics such as community networking and apprenticeship roles remain to be widely investigated when combined with boards as formal mechanisms. Notably, research as in Al Suwaidi *et al.* (2020) normally focuses only on individual aspects without addressing their interconnectedness. Such an interplay is essential to build effective successional instruments that align with cultural and practical realities.

This study poses the distinct advantage in the measurement of the continuity level among indigenous surveying practices which will be determined via the survival rates, an area which has not yet been tested. This study hopes that in highlighting the quantitative achievements, better awareness can be generated about the contribution level of the indigenous survey practices on the overall firm continuity concerning the future succession strategies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study deployed descriptive and case study research designs in gathering data through surveys (Menard, 2002). The descriptive approach of research is an accurate representation of reality, with emphasis on the "what" and "how," without going deeper into the issue of causation. It is an approach that can accommodate both quantitative and qualitative approaches in research. In doing so, it is popular with the use of surveys. The use of surveys is one of the advantages of using the descriptive approach. The use of surveys in research can help provide adequate data since Neuman (2014) states that it is popular among quantitative and qualitative approaches. The case study is an in-depth study of certain persons, groups, or occurrences. It is multi-dimensional and involves gathering data through several measures, normally an interview, document review, and direct observations (Neuman, 2014).

3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

In particular, the research design was based on the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, specifically within the Ogun State branch at Abeokuta. The particular branch was chosen with a view to the challenges private surveyor's encounter. A sampling of 100 was surveyed via a questionnaire and stratification.

3.3 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Questionnaire is the primary tool to collect the relevant information, focusing on the aspects of the validity of the tool including content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity. Expert scrutiny was conducted to ensure the relevant aspects were covered within the tool (Almanasreh *et al.*, 2019). Construct validity is confirmed through factor analysis to ensure the constructed tool is in the right group as expected (Colliver *et al.*, 2012). Reliability is checked through aspects including the consistency of the results through the use of the tool over time, where attaining a Cronbach alpha of 0.7 is considered to be produced by the tool (George & Mallery, 2018; Tang *et al.*, 2014).

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

For the study, a data collection method that entailed a structured questionnaire is to be employed. A structured questionnaire is a collection of questions that are mostly closed-ended, a feature that makes it efficient for data collection (Czaja *et al.*, 2014). The method is particularly effective in identifying trends as far as succession planning and continuity challenges are concerned. A Google form is to was used to collect the data.

3.5 Method/Procedure for Data Analysis

This data collected from an organized questionnaire was cleaned and analyzed using SPSS tools (version 25). Descriptive and inferential statistics are used to drive insights. Descriptive statistics used here are frequency and percentage calculations that help stakeholders grasp business insights better (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2019). These statistics are important to interpret business trends and patterns to stakeholders' comprehension (Alem, 2020). Inferential statistics used here are chi-square and correlation calculations to prove variable relationships and drive conclusions regarding succession planning and business continuation in the study area (Queirós *et al.*, 2017).

4. Result and Discussion

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Category		Frequency	Percent
Role in the Business	Owner	72	75
	Manager	24	25
	Total	96	100
Gender	Male	80	83.3
	Female	16	16.7
	Total	96	100
Age Bracket	Up to 30 Years	16	16.7
	31 – 45 Years	56	58.3
	46 – 60 Years	24	25
	Total	96	100
Educational Qualification	HND/Diploma	16	16.7
	Degree	16	16.7
	Postgraduate	64	66.7
	Total	96	100
Working Experience	Yes	80	83.3
	No	16	16.7
	Total	96	100
Form of Business	Sole Proprietorship	40	41.7
	Partnership	8	8.3
	Company	40	41.7
	Joint Venture	8	8.3
	Total	96	100

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 4.1 gives a clear insight into a general description of the demographics and qualifications of the respondents. The respondents consist of 75%, who are owners of the business, while 25% are managers. In addition, the respondents are majorly males, with a percentage comprising 83.3%. The percentages comprising females are only 16.7%. In regard to the age range, the major percentage is distributed across individuals aged between 31-45, forming 58.3%, then aged between 46-60, forming 25%, while 16.7% are aged less than 30. Under educational qualifications, while 66.7% of participants have postgraduate qualifications, an equal 16.7% have either HND/Diplomas or bachelor’s qualifications. The survey indicates that 83.3%, which translates to a majority, have working experience, thus creating a pool of a well-experienced workforce in society. Finally, from the perspective of structure, 41.7% have a sole proprietor structure, while 41.7% have a company structure, followed by 8.3% each in partnerships/joint ventures respectively.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics on Continuous Variables

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Provide the total number of full-time staff you engage	96	2	22	7	5
How many years has your firm been in existence?	96	2 years	31 years	8 years	8 years

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 4.2 displays some descriptive statistics on the continuous variables of the studied firms. The first continuous variable is the total number of full-time employed people in the firms. The least number of people employed in the firms as full-time workers is 2, while the maximum is 22. On the other hand, the mean number of people employed as full-time workers is 7, while the deviation is 5. The second continuous variable is the number of years the firms have been in existence. The least number is 2 years, and the maximum number of years these firms have been in operation is 31. The mean is 8, and the deviation is 8. It means some firms have just formed in the last year, and others have been formed a long time ago.

4.2 Inferential Analysis

Four research objectives were analyzed which are the mechanisms of succession planning employ by firms in the study area; the determinants of succession planning in the study area; the challenges of succession planning among firms in the study area and the relationship that exist between succession planning and firm continuity in the study area.

Table 4.3: The Mechanisms of Succession Planning Employ by Firms in the Study Area

	Relay Succession	Non-Relay Succession	Outside Succession	Boomerang Succession
Chi-Square	16.000 ^a	10.667 ^b	44.000 ^a	12.000 ^c
df	6	7	6	8
Asymp. Sig.	0.014 ^{**}	0.154	0.000 ^{***}	0.151
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$ & * $p < 0.1$				

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the results in Table 4.3, it was evident that Relay Succession is statistically significant at the 5% level since $\chi^2 = 16.000$, $df = 6$, and $p = 0.014$; hence Relay Succession is a highly meaningful relationship to succession practices. On the other hand, Outside Succession is highly significant at the 1% level, $p = 0.000$, and $\chi^2 = 44.000$; hence a very strong relationship exists between succession and Outside Succession. Conversely, the χ^2 for Non-Relay Succession was 10.667, $df = 7$, $p = 0.154$ and did not pass the testing for a statistically significant relationship compared to succession. The χ^2 for Boomerang Succession was 12.000, $df = 8$, and $p = 0.151$; hence these values did not pass the testing for a statistically significant relationship compared to succession. These findings reinforced the message learnt from the entire exercise, i.e., the major influence of the Relay Succession model and also the Outside Succession model; hence a good implication exists for considerable influence, and consequently, both the non-relay model and Boomerang Succession model have minimal

influence on succession planning practices for the firms under investigation. These findings ratified the appropriate insights garnered from Agrawal *et al.* (2025) and Duetsch & Oestreich (2025).

Table 4.4: Determinants of Succession Planning in the Study Area

	Personal Characteristics	Organizational Characteristics	Environmental Characteristics
Chi-Square	24.000 ^a	22.500 ^b	25.333 ^c
df	8	7	6
Asymp. Sig.	0.002***	0.002***	0.000***
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$ & * $p < 0.1$			

Source: Field Survey (2026)

From the results obtained so far in Table 4.4 above, it was established that the three aspects under consideration—Personal Characteristics were statistically significant at the 1% level of significance with $\chi^2 = 24.000$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.002$, Organizational Characteristics were statistically significant at the 1% level of significance with $\chi^2 = 22.500$, $df = 7$, and Environmental Characteristics were statistically significant at the 1% level. This indicates that the influence of each determinant on the succession planning process is considerable in nature, so the probability of the achievement of the said results by mere chance is very low. What the above data indicates is that the succession planning in the concerned region is impacted by a combination of the individual qualities of leaders in the region, the inner organizational aspects of the region, and the environmental aspects of the region. Of course, this finding can be aligned with the theoretical assertions presented in the scholarly articles from Al Suwaidi *et al.* (2020) and Klugah *et al.* (2025).

Table 4.5: Challenges of Succession Planning among Firms in the Study Area

	There is a significant lack of awareness or understanding of succession planning among employees in our organization.	Resistance to change within the organization poses a challenge to effective succession planning.	Cultural barriers significantly hinder our organization's succession planning efforts.	The organization faces challenges due to an inadequate pool of talented succession planning.	A short-term focus in the organization undermines effective succession planning.	Economic and market pressures create significant challenges for our succession planning initiatives.	Legal and regulatory issues complicate our approach to succession planning.	Emotional factors, such as fear of losing one's job, affect individuals' openness to succession planning.
Chi-Square	16.000 ^a	37.333 ^a	16.000 ^a	5.333 ^a	5.333 ^a	16.000 ^a	50.667 ^b	30.667 ^b
Df	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.001***	0.000***	0.001***	0.149	0.149	0.001***	0.000***	0.000***
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$ & * $p < 0.1$								

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 4.5 shows the results of the chi-square test on the challenges of succession planning among firms in the study area. The following emerge as significant barriers. Lack of awareness or understanding, $\chi^2 = 16.000$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.001$, resistance to change, $\chi^2 = 37.333$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.000$, cultural issues, $\chi^2 = 16.000$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.001$; similarity in case of economic/markets, $\chi^2 = 16.000$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.001$, legal/regulatory, $\chi^2 = 50.667$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$, fear of loss of job itself, $\chi^2 = 30.667$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$; therefore, the importance of these factors may be stated. On the flipside, in case of lack of adequate talent, $\chi^2 = 5.333$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.149$, focus in the short term, $\chi^2 = 5.333$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.149$; it may be stated that, in essence, these are not the significant factors influencing succession planning in the firm. This brings us to the conclusion that succession planning per se is significantly hampered by factors of awareness issues in conjunction with organizational as well as cultural issues and pressures from the outside along with legal issues, as well as emotional issues driving succession planning. Talent availability and the focus of the organization in the shorter term do not figure so prominently in succession planning. This gives us an insight as discussed in the work of Azmi *et al.* (2025) and Upadhyaya & Kuknor (2025).

Table 4.6: Relationship that Exist between Succession Planning and Firm Continuity in the Study Area

		Firm Continuity	Relay Succession	Non-Relay Succession	Outside Succession	Boomerang Succession
Firm Continuity	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	96				
Relay Succession	Pearson Correlation	0.476	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***				
	N	96	96			
Non-Relay Succession	Pearson Correlation	0.457	0.355	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***			
	N	96	96	96		
Outside Succession	Pearson Correlation	-0.118	0.080	-0.025	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.253	0.437	0.812		
	N	96	96	96	96	
Boomerang Succession	Pearson Correlation	0.170	0.456	0.279	0.176	1

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.098*	0.000**	0.006***	0.087*	
	N	96	96	96	96	96
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$ & * $p < 0.1$						

Source: Field Survey (2026)

As demonstrated by Table 4.6, the correlations between Relay Succession and Non-Relay Succession and firm continuity were statistically significant at the 1% level of significance or better [($r = 0.476$, $p = 0.000$); ($r = 0.457$, $p = 0.000$)], respectively. That means such mechanisms are strongly supportive of firm continuity. Structured succession through relay or non-relay succession approaches may intensify organizational stability. Contrary to what was expected, Outside Succession recorded an extremely poor correlation with no statistical significance at an R-value of -0.118 and an R-square of -0.253 . This indicated that firm continuity would not be promoted through the role of entry to facilitate succession. On the part of Boomerang Succession, it recorded a weak correlation that was only statistically significant at the 10 percent level with an R-value of -0.170 , and an R-square of -0.098 . This points to the relatively minor role that this succession mechanism would play in the promotion of firm continuity in comparison to the role that both the relay and non-relay succession mechanisms would play in this regard as indicated by the work of LeCounte *et al.* (2017) and Klugah *et al.* (2025).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study, the following conclusions were made: Succession planning for the different firms in the study area could thus be better enhanced through the adoption and use of both the concept of relay and non-relay succession since the two become major supports for the continuance of business in different firms. While the value or significance of external succession mechanisms is acknowledged, succession planning cannot benefit from the continuity implications that define the determinants or value of the external succession mechanisms. On the other hand, the significance or value that defines the determinants of the use of the boomerang succession mechanism is minimal. Succession planning involves both personal, organizational, as well as environmental determinants, all calling attention to the multifaceted nature or complexity that defines succession planning. Thus, the development or strengthening of internal succession mechanisms is crucial in supporting the continuity or survival of organizations in the study area.

Accordingly, the policy recommendations that are derived from the study are:

1. Governments and industry associations should introduce training programs to increase awareness of succession planning, especially regarding SME and family businesses. Training programs like workshops and seminars are effective mechanisms to provide needed knowledge to business heads.
2. An organization has to adopt and develop succession processes using a combination of relay and non-relay mechanisms. These processes would help businesses effectively identify and groom succession candidates.
3. Special attention should be directed at providing incentives that encourage business leaders to focus on sustainable succession strategies instead of immediate needs of the business. This can be done through the development of policies that offer rewards for succession planning initiatives.

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