

## SUCCESSION PLANNING AND ITS IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL

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### Abstract

*One important outcome of human resource planning is succession planning, which is a “process of identifying a long-term plan for the orderly replacement of key employees”. The study examines the effect of succession planning and its impact on organizational survival. The purpose of the study is to find out the effect of succession planning on organizational survival: Empirical evidence of Covenant University. The data required for this study was gathered through the instrument of questionnaire, and personal interview. Fifty (50) copies of questionnaires were administered out of which forty-one (41) copies were retrieved and collated for the analysis representing 82%. However, the focus of the study were top and middle level management. The study adopted both survey and cross –sectional research design. To achieve the objectives of the study, four hypotheses were formulated from the structure of research questions. Pearson correlation coefficient was used for testing these hypotheses. The result shows that there is a significant impact of succession planning on organizational survival. This finding details processes for transferring institutional knowledge and preserving institutional memory, and hence organizational survival. The study confirms that there is a positive impact of career development on organizational survival in Covenant University. Hence employees perceived the need for career development as a requirement for advancement, and meeting the succession needs of the institution, thereby ensuring the perpetuity and survival of the institution. The study recommends that: (i) that the management of the institution place more emphasis on talent management, so as to foster organizational survival, (ii) key importance and concern should be given to career development of employees in the institution, by all parties involved; the employer (Covenant University) and its employees, because of its significant impact on organizational survival. , and (iii) the institution should endeavour to support mentoring; a mentoring culture should exist within the institution and its human capital or workforce, so that the institution would be able to compete and survive with the demands of this 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Keywords:** Succession, planning, survival, mentoring, employees

### Introduction

In practice, the preparation of employees for advancement, to ensure continued (or, in some cases, to restore) high quality performance when successors advance to key positions following exits (retirement, promotion, departure or removal) of incumbents (Farley, 2005). Succession planning from the organizational point of view includes risk assessment in key positions, minimizing risk through appropriate compensation, recognition and management, and assuring the readiness of successors by identifying and training high potential employees (Robb, 2006). Succession planning is usually applied to a small number of key executive positions, but can be expanded according to organizational needs; succession has also continued to be a source of interest in the popular press (Pynes, 2004). Here heavy attention

is placed on leadership, speculation about succession and successors, analysis of succession planning and scrutiny of post succession events and performance (Giambatista et al., 2005). According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), succession planning can be broadly defined as identifying future potential leaders to fill key positions. Hirsh, (2000) defines succession planning as a process by which one or more successors are identified for key posts (or groups of similar key posts), and career moves and/or development activities are planned for these successors. Successors may be fairly ready to do the job (short-term successors) or seen as having longer-term potential (Hirsh, 2000). Furthermore, succession planning is a process whereby an organization ensures that employees

are recruited and developed to fill each key role within the company (Fleischmann, 2000). Through succession planning process, superior employees are recruited, and subsequently their knowledge, skills, and abilities, are developed in order to prepare them for advancement or promotion into ever more challenging roles (Johnson and Brown, 2004). Through succession planning process, superior employees are retained because they appreciate the time, attention, and development that you are investing in them (Ostrowski, 1968). To effectively practice succession planning in organization, there is need to identify the organization's long term goals (Hall, 1986). Recruitment of superior staffs is also required. In similar direction, there is need to identify and understand the developmental needs of employees; it must also ensure that all key employees understand their career paths and the roles they are being developed to fill.

Hall (1986) argued further that there is also a need to focus resources on key employee retention, because the succession planning process can be jeopardized if key employees are not kept by the organization and lost to other competitors. Employers have to be informed of current employment trends in their industry, so as to be able to, know the roles you will have a difficult time in recruiting externally. However 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 and medium companies, also the big indigenous companies are not left-out, although this might not be the case with their multinational counterparts, basically due to their global presence or western influence, where succession planning is part of the organizations strategic plan, and is deeply rooted in the organizations goals, visions, and objectives. Furthermore, organizations do tend to lose their highly skilled human resource much more sooner than they can afford to replace them, it is therefore of utmost importance for success-seeking organization to develop strategic succession plans for the total organization as these will help sustain the corporate structure in the competitive business environment. Succession planning cannot be over emphasized because it is crucial to survival of any organization, institution, firm or company and higher institutions (universities) are not left out.

### **Statement of research problem**

In the last three years Covenant University has witnessed a return of graduates termed the "Eagles" in the Covenant University context. These Eagles have taken up lecturing (academic) jobs as well as non-lecturing (non-academic) jobs, and some of these eagles occupy key positions in the university. For example: The present dean of student affairs is a graduate of the institution, which makes him an Eagle. He returned to pick up lecturing appointment, and he is currently a doctoral student. However it is essential to note that he was the Student Council Chairman, he is also the Alumni President, before he was appointed as the Dean of Student Affairs. It is evident that the management must have been grooming him for his current position. Also the institution shows a great preference for recruiting graduates that have passed through the university. This is because, these graduates are aware of the University's values (its core-values) and the universities culture/policies. The vision of Covenant University is "creating a new generation of leaders", and these 'Eagles' who once were students are believed to know how best to guide the present students in attaining the vision of Covenant University.

The overall concern of this study is succession planning and organizational survival. The problem here is that succession planning might not necessarily lead to organizational survival, because they have been some organizations that have survived without a succession plan, while some organizations had planned but failed. Therefore, this study tends to establish the relationship between succession planning and organizational survival, its effect and to what extent it is practiced in Covenant University.

### **Literature review**

#### **Relationship between human resource planning and succession planning**

Human resource planning is both a dynamic process and combines a number of possible ways forward (Ivanchevich, 2007). The first stage is simply that of stocktaking. It must identify how many people are needed at every level of the organization business objectives- in line with overall strategic plans-and what kind of knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) these people need. If the first phase is stocktaking, the second phase is forecasting (Gallagher, 2000). Armstrong (2006) breaks this into two sub-phases, forecasting future people needs (demand forecasting), and forecasting the future availability of people (supply

forecasting). One important outcome of human resource planning is succession planning, which is a “process of identifying a long-term plan for the orderly replacement of key employees” (Mathis and Jackson, 2006). Mathis and Jackson (2006) explain that succession planning is the process of assessing and auditing the talent in the organization in order to answer the three fundamental questions:

- 1.) Are there enough potential successors available and supply of people coming through who can take key roles in the longer term?
- 2.) Are they good enough?
- 3.) Do they have the right skills and attributes for the future?

Succession planning is based on the information supplied by talent audits, supply and demand forecast, and performance and potential review. In some large organizations in which demand and supply forecasts can be made accurately, highly formalized succession planning processes based on the sort of management succession scheduled.

### **Behavioural theory**

The Behavioural role theory (Katz and Kahn, 1978) suggest that human resource policies and practices with firm strategy, employees will be better able to “meet the expectations of role partners within the organisation (i.e., supervisors, peers, subordinates), at organisational boundaries (e.g., customers), and beyond (i.e., family and society)” (Jackson and Schuler, 1995).

Resource-based theory (Barney, 1991; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990) suggests that resources that are rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable provide sources of sustainable competitive advantage for the organisation. Several researchers argue that, if strategically managed, a firm’s “human resource deployments” have the potential to meet these conditions and thus provide the firm with an advantage in terms of its human, social and intellectual capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Wright and Mchan, 1992). In the past, succession planning was equated with replacement planning. At General Electric each manager was required to identify four backup candidates for their positions (Charan et al. 2001). Peter Drucker disagrees with the concept of replacement planning because it does not adequately prepare incumbents for long-term leadership success. According to Drucker, leaders should enter a corporation with the

intention to outlive it (Charan et al. 2001). If succession planning is not the same as replacement planning, what is it? Charan et al (2001) defined succession planning as follows: Succession planning is perpetuating the enterprise by filling the pipeline with high-performing people to assure that every leadership level has an abundance of these performers to draw from, both now and in the future. According to the above definition, succession planning is viewed as a leadership pipeline that increases leadership effectiveness over time. Four principles that emerge from this definition are; (1) the focus should be performance. (2) The Pipeline demands a continuous flow. (3) The Pipeline turns must be fully understood and (4) Short term and Long term must be considered simultaneously. This definition is dynamic because it is futuristic. Scharmer (2007) calls this outlook co-creating, a transformational stage during which leaders explore the future by doing. From Garmen and Glawe’s perspectives (2004), succession planning is a structured process involving the identification and preparation of a potential successor to assume a new role. The word “structured” emphasizes the need for the Top Management Team and the board to prepare for succession ahead of time instead of a reacting to a “just in time” need. While this definition by Garmen and Glawe is concise and to the point, it lacks the energy and future pull of Charan et al. Howe(2005) adds her definition: “Succession management is the development of a pool of talent with the skills, attributes, and experiences to fill specific, often high level positions”.

Howe’s definition represents future oriented organizations that assess and forecast for future leadership needs. In this regard, this definition broadens the scope of succession planning by introducing a dynamic need for change. Howe(2005) further reported that 67% of companies do not have a succession plan and 45% have no executive development plan in place. This leadership crisis can be alleviated by an implementation of executive succession training programs by the Top Management Team. These programs can start by instilling a corporate vision, followed by training on the business plan (goals and strategies), succession plan (target positions required, competencies and high potential candidates) and lastly, career development plans (specific knowledge, skills and experiences). Regardless of the nature of industry or organization, it is the primary responsibility of the board and TMT to ensure that there is a succession

plan in place. This ensures organizational continuity and stability. Succession planning, according to Rothwell (2001), is “the process that helps ensure the stability of tenure of personnel.” Further, he states that succession planning includes “any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, and department or work group by making provision for the development, replacement and strategic application of key people over time.” Through such a program, succession planning helps an organization match present talent with needed future talent, meets strategic challenges, and insures the preservation of institutional memory. It is a proactive approach to developing talent from within the organization through planned training activities (Rothwell, 2001).

According to Schall (1997), succession planning “involves preparing the agency for a change in leadership, but it also includes assessing what has been valuable and how that can be preserved and transferred to the subsequent regime.” Fayol was one of the first writers to recognize and stress the organizational need for succession planning. If this planning did not occur, key positions would be filled with people who were not prepared or equipped to do the job (Rothwell, 2001). Contemporary authors have taken Fayol’s thoughts a step further by arguing that succession planning is vital to an organization’s survival in today’s world (Buckner and Slavenski, 2000; Buzotta and Lefton, 1997; Caudron, 1999; Hesselbein, Goldsmith, and Beckhard, 1996); Hawkins, 2000; Morris-Lee, 2001; Rothwell, 2000; Schall, 1997; Tichy and Cohen, 1997; Vouglas, 1998; Wellins and Byham, 2001). Primarily, succession planning provides continuity of leadership, which is essential for companies to survive as CEOs and Senior Management positions become vacant due to retirement. Succession planning allows organizations to strategically place the right people in the right leadership positions for the future (Rothwell, 2001).

### **Research methods**

The data analyzed in this paper were collected through a survey of workers within top and middle level management in Covenant University. The population of the study is from both academic and

non-academic staff of Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State. The data required for this study was gathered through the instrument of questionnaire, and personal interview. Fifty (50) copies of questionnaires were administered out of which forty-one (41) copies were retrieved and collated for the analysis. The research design that was used in this work is the quantitative research design as numerical data will be generated from the questionnaire drafted. Research design encompasses both the structure and strategy of investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationship to one another. The survey was administered in 2011, under the auspices of a well trained research assistant. The convenience sampling method, according to Newman (2004), amongst other reasons, is to be used when selecting unique cases of respondents that are especially informative.

The respondents were asked to provide the following data regarding their jobs and personal histories: age; gender; years and area of education; professional memberships; professional conferences attended in the previous 4 years; job title, whether their job was full-time or part-time; the number of years employed in their current position; previous rate of succession planning carried out; and their salary and associated benefits. Questionnaires were distributed only to those who qualified and agree to participate in the study. The researcher then briefly explained the nature and requirement of the survey before the respondent filled up the questionnaire. Typically, assessment of reliability in terms of internal consistency cannot be computed for single- item measurement (De Vaus, 2002; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003; Soderlund and Ohman, 2003). Though Churchill (1979; Frankurt and Nachmias, 1996; Ojo, 2003) argued that single items are unreliable, Pallant(2005) opposed this by demonstrating that the main issue is the validity problem rather than reliability problem. The study adopted a five-point Likert scale. The statistical package for social science, Windows version 17.0(SPSS 17.0) was used to analyze the data collected.

### **Analysis and discussion**

Table 1: Returned questionnaires

Questionnaire	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Completed	41	82
Uncompleted	9	18
Total	50	100

**Test of hypothesis one**

Objective 1: To determine the relationship between talent management and organizational survival in Covenant University.

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between talent management and organizational survival in Covenant University?

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between talent management and organizational survival.

Table 2: Correlations

		The concept of identifying, developing and retaining talents should be understood by employees and employer	Institutions affiliations with other entities like banks, e-tranzact, e.t.c. has facilitated its competitive advantage
The concept of identifying, developing and retaining talents should be understood by employees and employer	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 41	.477(**) .002 41
Institutions affiliations with other entities like banks, e-tranzact, e.t.c. has facilitated its competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.477(**) .002 41	1 41

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

The correlation of  $r = .477$  means 22.7529% shared variance between talent management and organizational survival.

The relationship between talent management and organizational survival was investigated using Pearson's correlation coefficient. There was a

significant positive correlation between the two variables { $r = .477$ ,  $n = 41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ }. The correlation ( $r = .477^{**}$  between talent management and organizational survival is significant at the 0.01 level, thus we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between talent management and organizational survival.

$H_1$ : There is a significant relationship between talent management and organizational survival.

Findings from this research showed that there is a significant relationship between talent management and organizational survival.

**Test of hypothesis two**

Objective 2: To examine the impact of career development on organizational survival.

Research Question 2: Does career development have an impact on organizational survival?

Hypothesis 2: There is an impact of career development on organizational survival.

Table 3: Impact of career development on organizational survival

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly agree	23	13.7	9.3
Agree	15	13.7	1.3
Undecided	3	13.7	-10.7
Total	41		

Field survey, 2011

Test statistics

	There is an impact of career development on organizational survival
Chi-Square(a)	14.829
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.001

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 13.7.

Given a degree of freedom (df) of  $n-1 = 3-1 = 2$

Where  $n = 3$  and at  $\alpha$  level of 0.05 we obtained a tabulated value or critical value of  $X^2 = 5.991$  while the computed value of  $X^2 = \sum(o - e)^2 / e = 14.829$

The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected if the computed value of  $X^2$  is higher than the critical or tabulated value. Since the computed value is higher than the critical or tabulated value of  $X^2$ ; we reject

the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). From the above findings, we can conclude that there is an impact of career development on organizational survival.

**Test of hypothesis three**

Objective 3: To examine the influence of mentoring on organizational survival.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of mentoring on organizational survival?

Hypothesis 3: There is an influence of mentoring on organizational survival.

Table 4: Influence of mentoring on organizational survival

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly agree	18	10.3	7.8
Agree	19	10.3	8.8
Undecided	1	10.3	-9.3
Disagree	3	10.3	-7.3
Total	41		

Field survey, 2011

Test statistics

	There is an influence of mentoring on organizational survival
Chi-Square(a)	26.805
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 10.3. Given a degree of freedom (df) of  $n-1 = 4-1 = 3$

Where  $n = 4$  and at  $\alpha$  level of 0.05 we obtained a tabulated value or critical value of  $\chi^2 = 7.815$  while the computed value of  $\chi^2 = \sum(o - e)^2 / e = 26.805$

The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected if the computed value of  $\chi^2$  is higher than the critical or tabulated value. Since the computed value is higher than the critical or tabulated value of  $\chi^2$ ; we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). Findings from this research have shown that there is an influence of mentoring on organizational survival.

From the results of the field survey, it was found that there is a significant impact of succession planning on organizational survival, and this is in line with the findings of Garman and Glawe, (2004) that Succession planning is a plan an organization uses to fill its most critical leadership and professional positions. It involves forecasting vacancies, developing a talent pool, and selecting the right personnel for those critical positions in order to support the organization's strategy. Succession planning also details processes for transferring institutional knowledge, preserving institutional memory, and hence organizational survival.

## Conclusion

This research work has contributed to existing literature and knowledge on succession planning and organizational survival, as demanded by (Kesner and Sebor, 1994; Fayol, 1998; Fazel and D'itri, 1997,1999), for progress to be made in the field of literature concerning succession. The findings validate the significant relationship between succession planning and organizational survival. In the course of this research, questions were strategically drawn and asked, which covered the research question, hypotheses and all other relevant questions needed. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument for carrying out the field survey in order to satisfy the research objectives and the research hypotheses. The following are findings derived from the survey: Firstly, in relating the relationship between talent management, which is a variable from the independent construct; succession planning and organizational survival. A positive relationship

was found to exist as regards the analysis of hypothesis one ( $H_1$ ), in Covenant University. Secondly, in ascertaining the impact of career development on organizational survival, as contained in hypothesis two ( $H_2$ ), the research analysis confirms that there is a positive impact of career development on organizational survival in Covenant University. Hence employees perceived the need for career development as a requirement for advancement, and meeting the succession needs of the institution, thereby ensuring the perpetuity and survival of the institution.

Finally, in order to examine if there is either a positive or negative influence of mentoring on organizational survival hypothesis three ( $H_3$ ), during the course of the analysis positive result was derived, which further achieved one of the objectives stated in chapter one, of this research work. Therefore it is assumed that the influence of mentoring on organizational survival, amongst employees of the institution is positive.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research work, the following recommendations are made on succession planning to improve on the survival of organizations: It is important that the management of the institution place more emphasis on talent management, so as to foster organizational survival. Also, key importance and concern should be given to career development of employees in the institution, by all parties involved; the employer (Covenant University) and its employees, because of its significant impact on organizational survival.

The implication is that the institution should endeavour to support mentoring; a mentoring culture should exist within the institution and its human capital or workforce, so that the institution would be able to compete and survive with the demands of this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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