

Original Research Article

Succession Planning; A Discourse to Refining Organizational Posterity

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Abstract: This study aimed to qualitatively examine the concept of succession planning and its relevance in ensuring the posterity of organizations. The study adopted a descriptive qualitative method in examining its aim; hence explored relevant related literature on the following themes; organizational management and environment, challenges addressed by succession planning, the role of succession planning in an organization, the role of human resources in succession planning, models for succession planning, methods of developing managers for succession planning, succession planning pitfalls, and the resource-based view theory perspective to succession planning as a strategic tool to organizational posterity. The study made findings, recommendations, as well as developed a succession planning model that is relevant in optimizing the succession planning practices that would guarantee a continued viable posterity for organizations.

Keywords: Organizational posterity, succession planning.

INTRODUCTION

Every organization faces the possibility that it may eventually end or have new management; this reality is independent of the pioneer and present management successes in advancing the organization, and their present success, relevance, and stature in the industry. With organizations encountering increasing complexity and uncertainty in their functioning environments, recommendations are made to move to competent leadership, in a future that is increasingly hard to predict, management will need to see opportunities in changes, recognize patterns in intricacies, uncover optimal solutions to challenges, position strategic goals for the organization and take optimal decisions at right time.

Developing succession planning (SP) and structuring a leadership pipeline is often an undervalued factor of an organization's performance management process [1]. Yet preparing your employee for management in posterity and optimizing their ongoing performance through the feedback of all employee is crucial to an organization's holistic success [2].

The posterity of any organization is a significant quest that most organization that is deliberate of their sustainability strives to accomplish via an effective SP. SP is the identification of future potential leaders to fill key positions. Charan, Drotter and Noel [3] state that effective SP is aimed at enabling a series of reserve competence ready to take over if need be. This ensures a ready supply of capable employees to take key roles in an organization; hence, actively seeking SP guarantees that employees are regularly developed to cover needed roles [4]. As companies expand, lose key employees, provide opportunities for promotion, and increase sales; SP ensures that the organization has employees competent to handle key roles. The correct application of SP decreases the introduction of new talent and thereby reduces the cost of recruiting; through the development of employees, which improves the critical support of employees to organizational posterity.

According to Armstrong [5], good SP gives careful consideration to a range of issues including transparency, development of potential talent, the dilemmas of internal versus external successors, retention, the overall management and execution of such plans. If you don't plan the succession of an organization well, it will mostly fail sooner or later, the greatest tragedy is closely held in organizations that often time's succession is not thoughtfully planned and communicated in an organization [6]. Appraisal of employees is very essential in SP as it has a bearing on the future performance or continuity of an organization. SP enhance competent employee availability for future task.

Within the informal and formal sectors, skills should be transferred; the existence of a lacuna for any necessary skill could lead to the proliferation of its products, loss of market share, and ultimately liquidation of the organization. Hence, this research evaluates the potency of SP as an influence on the posterity of organizations.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Mamat [7] states that SP must be a key organizational strategy; managing an organization risk should be at all levels, however, SP often receives little attention and the board does not allocate sufficient resources to address it, yet it is a primary component of good corporate governance. In the light of this, the high rate of failure inherent in organizations as a result of lack of qualified managers or employees to take up key roles and perform optimally due to miss-understood, unfunded and unjustifiable SP system leading to unattained organization objectives has necessitated this study.

STUDY OBJECTIVE

This study aims to qualitatively examine the concept of SP and its relevance in ensuring the posterity of organizations. The method utilized by this study is the descriptive qualitative method.

The remaining sections of this study will explore the following themes; organizational management and environment, challenges addressed by SP, role of SP in organization, role of human resources in SP, models for SP, methods of developing managers for SP, SP pitfalls, resource-based view theory perspective to SP as a strategic tool to organizational posterity, discussion, findings, recommendations, and conclusion.

The organizational management and environment

Bernard [8] states that in organizations, management is the most influential person(s) to set the tone for optimizing and managing succession. They make the rules and determine the success or failure of the succession system. Ideally, management incorporates the operation of SP concerns into strategic planning; thus ensuring its importance to the achievement of the organizational goal. The management team includes qualified employees who have made themselves relevant in specific areas. He also opined that management has contributed significantly to the collapse of the transition of succession to the next organizations' successors, through;

- i. Provision of limited career growth opportunities.
- ii. Non-transparency in the succession process.
- iii. Ambiguous organizational missions and objectives.

He further noted that organizational posterity requires generation to generation transitions. Timeliness in the transition is essential; however, the current management may be unwilling to hand over control and authority at the appointed time to successors. Alternatively, the next successors are not competent to assume responsibility.

Another point identified by Bernard [8], states that the organization may not provide opportunities that fit employees' strengths; thereby, making the employees possess skills or knowledge not necessary to the available position.

Finally, Abonifoh *et al.* [9] note that continuous change in the environments affects organizations especially as it concerns SP. The changes are diverse and pervasive: technological factors, public policies, economic conditions, trade union influences, competitions, suppliers, demographic changes, political-legal factors, social-cultural variables. Change should be managed simultaneously with attention to the management of SP.

CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY SUCCESSION PLANNING

The challenges addressed through SP as identified by Nzube [10]; Pandey & Sharma [11]; Sweeney [12] features.

A. Leadership

To create a powerful cadre of leaders that has the capacity and capability to sustain the achievement of organizational strategic and operational objectives. To provide the necessary support through training, coaching, mentoring, and performance measurement for team leaders to enable the delivery of the operational objectives, including, creating succession opportunities into higher-level roles.

B. Technical Skills

The need to attract, manage and retain critical skills to fill positions that disproportionately contribute to organizational success. Moreover, complex roles (for example auditors, investigators, and risk analysts/ profilers) require high-end skills which are often difficult to attract inside the organization due to a shortage in skills within the country. Hence, the necessity for organizations to implement a talent attraction and retention strategy that differentiates the technique to managing these critical high-end skills from other skills and roles in the organization.

C. Culture

To engender the behaviour and practices that facilitate ownership and accountability for the achievement of organization and individual performance and the building of a robust organizational structure that supports professionalism, integrity, service, and a learning environment. The culture must drive employees towards a positive enterprising attitude fuelled by an urge for learning and self-development. Collectively, these attitudes and culture must drive a strong service ethic.

Role of succession planning in organization

According to Fulmer [13], the demand for effective managers continues to grow; the retirement of baby boomers is producing a sharp decline in the ranks of available personnel. Also, tomorrow's executives need to be competent in initiating technological and global ideas. Hence, the need for strategic replacement plans for roles in all organizational cadres.

Furthermore, Groves [14]; the treasury board of Canada secretariat [15] identified its role to the organization to include;

- i. Enhancement of employee engagement.
- ii. Development of potentially optimized employees to fill significant roles.
- iii. A recognition and involvement of employees by management.
- iv. Strategies to exploit strategic knowledge
- v. Benefits in observing equity in organization goal achievement.
- vi. Increased competence to actualize organizational goals.

Role of human resources in succession planning

Deborah [16] states that SP should be owned by line managers, and should be actively led by the chief executive who has a key role in ensuring that it is given the importance it deserves by other senior managers; ensuring that the continuity of a healthy pipeline of potential leaders is necessary for the posterity of the organization. But the CEOs should not possess sole responsibility. Hence, the human resource function possesses a vital function in navigating the process and involving the relevant parties. When the need for a move at the management cadre is engaged, the human resource shall ensure that all requirements are actualized and communicated to a SP committee [17-18]. Human resource departments also provide career counseling services to employees [11]. The human resources function is likewise centrally focused on the development and management of evaluation procedures and information supply, including the maintenance and development of a digitalized database, and management of talents.

The core of SP is to synergize future organizations' needs with employees' capabilities. Retaining talented employees entails enabling and engaging them with enriched opportunities. Attracting and retaining competent employees is becoming a strategic and economic challenge [13].

Models for succession planning

The following models for SP have been identified;

Model I: the seven-point star model for systematic succession planning and management.

Rothwell [19] states that organizations need to plan for talent to assume key leadership positions or backup positions on a temporary or permanent basis; SP and management are implored to effectively ensure such. He further stated that SP should not stand alone; it should be paired with succession management which assumes a more dynamic role in an organization. The seven-pointed star model for systemic SP and management as articulated by Rothwell [19] includes;

Step I: Make the commitment; as illustrated in model 1, the organization decision-maker should commit systematic succession planning and management (SP and M) and enshrine a SP and M programme; the organizations' decision-makers should

- i. Assess challenges and practices.
- ii. Evaluates and demonstrate the necessity for the program.
- iii. Identify the organizations' exact SP and M program requirements.

- iv. Conduct SP and M meetings as necessary to unveil the program and review the progress continually.
- v. Effectively identify employees that need the program.

Managers should be counseled about any SP and M challenges in their domain of responsibility [19].

Step 2: Assess present work/people requirements; decision-makers should evaluate the current role demands in significant positions. Hence, employees are sufficiently competent in the established role for advancement. Decision-makers should identify the vital management post in the firm, and know the needs for effectiveness in the role [19].

Step 3: Appraise individual performance; illustrated above as the third step is appraising individual performance and this refers to how well individuals are currently executing their tasks? The necessity for this is anchored on the assumption that SP and M programs presume that employees are executing their present task sufficiently, hence are approved for advancement. Also, the organization must have a stock/bench of talent via the available human assets [19].

Step 4: Assess future work/people requirements; it refers to a clear statement of the competency or role requirements for the vital future leadership positions, hence, decision-makers should be aware of this need. This ensures future leaders adapt to the changing requirements and strategic organizational goals [19].

Step 5: Assess future individual potential; to what extent are employees refined for advancement? What talents are manifest, and how adequately do those talents match up to future task demands? To address these issues, the organization must enshrine a process to evaluate the future potentials of individuals. The future-oriented procedure must not be baffled with present or past-oriented individual performance assessment [19].

Step 6: Close the development gap; this step connotes how an organization can meet SP and M goals by internally developing employees? To answer this issue, the organization must establish a recurrent leadership development program to internally culture future leaders. Decision-makers should likewise seek alternatives to traditional promotion [19].

Step 7: Evaluate the succession planning program. To improve, the SP and M program should be under continuous appraisal to evaluate its effectiveness. The outcome of the appraisal may be utilized for continuous program advancement and to sustain an assurance to systematic SP and M [19].

MODEL 2 – THE BEST-IN-CLASS PACE MODEL

The use of SP to achieve corporate goals requires a combination of strategic actions, organizational capabilities, and enabling technologies as articulated by the Aberdeen Group [20].

Pressures Driving Succession Planning

To prepare for the loss of key leaders to retirement and prevent the loss of high potential talent to competitors, and strengthen the pipeline in terms of quantity and quality of successors, Aberdeen's best-in-class has placed increased emphasis on SP [20].

Leading Best-in-class Strategies

Pressures to stave off the loss of high potential talent and improve the quality of next-generation leaders are focusing organizations to view SP more as key retention and development enabler. As a result, the leading strategies that Best-in-class is pursuing to address these pressures are establishing a development culture/mindset and improving the company's bench strength for key positions [20].

Capabilities and Enablers

The essential ingredients of a SP strategy that produces top results include the proper mix of process, organizational knowledge, technology, and performance measurement.

Process

Best-in-class organizations understand that a standardized approach to employee evaluation and development helps establish and reinforce an organizations' development culture or mindset. This standardization is critical for creating consistency; consistency that not only negates potential employee dissatisfaction that results from misaligned expectations but also reduces errors in employee development plans and successor identification. These work in tandem to improve employee retention [20].

Organization

To pursue SP, senior management buy-in is critical. So is identifying key positions where SP is (or will be) required. Across all organizations surveyed these two capabilities stand out in the understanding of how changes to the organization (i.e. strategy, goals, or structure) impact the quantity and type of successors needed.

Furthermore, Best-in-class organizations leverage more experienced and/or high-performing employees to connect with and provide guidance to newer workers and/or high potential workers. This not only aids in instilling best-practice methodology but also helps younger workers connect and build relationships with employees they should emulate within their organization [20].

Methods of developing managers for succession planning

Kim [21]; Celestine [22] identify the diverse methods of developing managers, which organizations can also implore to enhance the potency of SP on employees. These methods are grouped into two;

A. Organizational methods: this involves

- i. **Job rotation:** This is executed to enable an employee (trainee) understand the challenges that are peculiar to different departments, and likewise enhance opportunities to learn from diverse superiors. This practice facilitates adequate compression and open communication [22].
- ii. **Coaching:** connotes constantly guiding, motivating, and inspiring employees by the management cadre or immediate supervisor; this facilitates development and growth.
- iii. **Assistant to:** denotes a staff function. The employee (trainee) executes assigned tasks and is accountable to a superior. He understudies and learns from the superior with the aim of taking over such position and role in posterity [22].
- iv. **Multiple management:** connotes the utilization of a committee in making decision. This involves the participation of diverse management cadre who facilitates the formulation of policies, decision making and execution [22].

B. Ex-organizational method: this involves

- i. **Special courses:** These are initiated and prepared for the management cadre. In these courses, strategic techniques in management are analyzed. Structured courses include real-life scenarios to enrich the management understanding of responsibilities and achieve optimal results. This method utilizes discussions and lectures.
- ii. **Membership of professional bodies:** the journals published by professional bodies expose empirical and practical findings in diverse industries. They like reveal recent ideas and techniques, analyses problems and solutions on conference or seminar platforms. Members engage in annual meetings where ideas are exchanged and sources of strategic advantages are recommended.
- iii. **Evening programs:** Some organizations sponsor their management cadre to attend special management programmes organized by the academia or management consultants.
- iv. **Sensitivity training:** The goal of sensitivity training is to enable employees to be sensitive to other's feelings to achieve a heightened degree of self-awareness and to be more conscious of the short-comings of others. It enables cooperation and accommodation amongst employees.
- v. **Business games:** The rationale is to provide employees the chance to make effective decisions in a simulated situation. The game is played in a manner that players (i.e. employees) compete in making decision. The group or player (i.e. employees) who makes an optimal decision that offers the organization strategic benefits wins the game. The game revolves around all functional areas of interest to management. The business game equips the players to enhance their analytical and critical skills.
- vi. **Membership of a committee:** This offers the employee an opportunity to relate and collaborate with experts as a team. The employees gain exposure to significant and controversial matters and learn how to solve them.
- vii. **Special assignments:** This importance on a special assignment enables employee to analyze a challenge and postulate recommendations. The employee is equipped to understand the strategies needed to handle assignments. The employees learn to be accountable for his/her task and performance. The employee is encouraged to make inquiries and seek the counsel of other employees/managers.

SUCCESSION PLANNING PITFALLS

Kesler [23] identifies these pitfalls to include;

- i. Bench strength drains optimal utilization of brains.
- ii. Lack of formal/explicit written action-plan for individual key position.
- iii. A rigid, inflexible plan not tailored to the abilities and needs of the personnel involved.
- iv. Execution of succession is exclusively on meeting organizational needs and mostly ignoring employee interest.
- v. Its procedures may create confusion and lack transparency, which may cause employees to exit.
- vi. The hiring of outsiders is executed without consultation with insiders.

Resource-based view theory perspective to succession planning as a strategic tool to organizational posterity

The theoretical premise of this research is the resource-based view theory of the firm. The RBV exposes how organizations' internal capabilities and resources are associated with sustained competitive niches and advantages [24-26]. The RBV theory offers management an effective structure of evaluating potential factors (i.e. SP practices) that could be utilized to generate and sustain a niche competitive edge for their organization in their industry. RBV theory exposition reveals that not all resources are capable of providing a significant advantage that project the optimized essence of an organization's mission, hence comprehending the framework of the RBV theory guarantees the effective explorations of organizational resources which are refined to possess valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) edge [27]. From a RBV spectrum, successful SP can be credited to the competence of building a VRIN resource (i.e. employees) coordinated by the organization and this competence will enhance the optimal performance and sustainable organizational posterity [24, 25].

Madhani [28] posits that organizations encounter difficulty in identifying resources that provide success and the ones that offer sustainability, much more difficult is to recognize one that offers both simultaneously. In addressing this observation, Dasgupta and Gupta [29] assert that management should focus on internal capabilities and resources (i.e. human resources) for success, competitive advantage, and sustainability. Hence, management having been provided a guide on what to focus on, have to invest in acquiring, creating, sharing, and applying strategic knowledge to optimize human resources competencies [27], via effective SP practices. Hence, for organizations to achieve a competitive niche in their industry they first have to optimize their internal resources [27]; the sustainability of organizational posterity is anchored on the level of competence that is VRIN. This is further reinforced by Barney [24] who asserts that an organization attains sustainable posterity when it executes a value-addition strategy (i.e. optimized competencies of successors) that is VRIN.

DISCUSSION

The volatility of an organizations' environment may affect the organization indirectly or directly, pressures management to act effectively toward responding or manipulating these trends. The optimization of effective action by the management allows the organization to survive another day. These skills possessed by the present management have to be impacted to the subordinates (potential managers) to arm them properly for tomorrow's challenges. Management should enable employees with a relative free opinion which must be given appropriate consideration and relative implementation; this inspires the employee (potential manager) to accept his/her role and stay in the organization. Thus, encouraging a viable transition in the SP process to managers eager and competent, to serve the organization.

SP is implemented to aid organizations in avoiding anticipated future needs which are vital to their operation. Firstly, leadership can be taught and learned as a skill to potential managers to ensure that the qualities inherent in it do not depreciate. This is addressed by SP development programs; job rotation, seminars, etc. thereby providing an organization with appropriate skills for its posterity.

Also, a technical skill that is required to handle non-managerial employees is important in an organization as it effectively accomplishes goals set by the top and middle manager which is also addressed through SP.

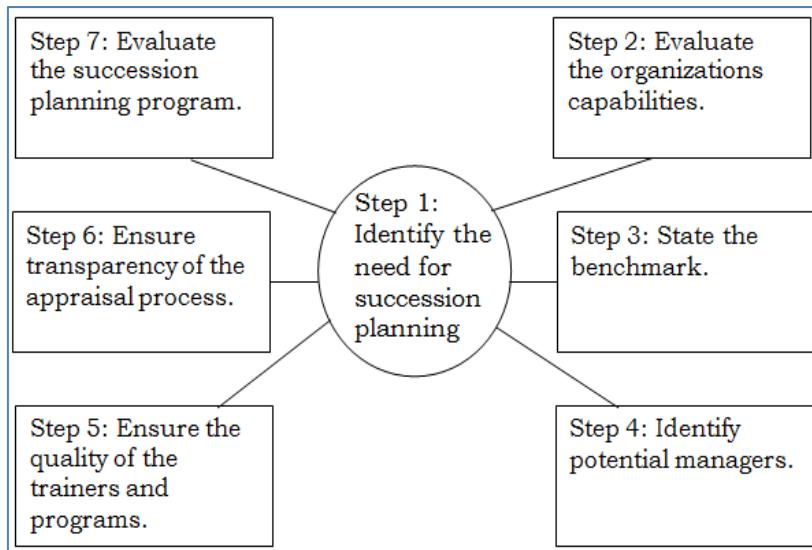
Furthermore, an organizations' culture is an essential feature that cannot be neglected, it is vital to every organizational beat. SP encourages and sustains healthy culture in organizations for its continuous and smooth operation.

In addition, SP addresses challenges of conceptual skills, human skills, current operating practices that ensure cost-benefit, relevant implementation of business ethics, etc. which ensures organizations' posterity.

SP through its proper implementation plays a significant role, which some organizations seek to explore. Its roles in the organization involve the transfer of relevant skills to next-generation managers, cost-benefit in terms of reduction in recruitment, enhancing the level of employee development, and encouraging employees' patriotism for the organization.

The human resources department can effectively enhance the culture of SP in organizations, through collaborative efforts with the first-line managers and support from top management, as well as evaluating programs of other organizations. The human resources through its diverse functions which are primarily centered on the employee directly or indirectly enhance organizational posterity via enhancing potential identified talent possessed by these employees (potential managers).

The models shown in this research highlights core important areas or factors that necessitate the successful implementation of SP when utilized. From its outlined features, the researchers developed a model termed "the valiant succession model." Below is the model, its features, and its explanation.



Models-3: The Valiant Succession Model

Source: The Authors

STEP 1: Identify the need for succession planning: This is the core area that entails the adoption of other steps. Once the need for SP is known, SP becomes a necessity and managerial responsibility for achieving such need and satisfying organizational posterity.

STEP 2: Evaluate the organization's capabilities: This involves the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the organization; gaining top management support, the culture prevalent in the organization, as well as general and strategic information associated with the organization's operations.

STEP 3: State the benchmark: This denotes setting a standard that will be utilized as a yardstick to assess performance in the SP program and its effective execution.

STEP 4: Identify potential managers: Employees appraisal usually recorded by the human resources department enables the knowledge of potential managers through their skills, abilities, achievements, development attained, etc. which is vital to the SP process.

STEP 5: Ensure the quality of the trainers and programs: The trainers for the SP program have to be qualified in terms of knowledge, technical know-how, experience, and other relevant factors to the SP program. The program itself must be in line with the organizational objectives, and purpose of the succession program.

STEP 6: Ensure transparency of the appraisal process: This denotes an equal playing field and rule for the participants of the SP program, who may evaluate their performance; it reduces bias and unnecessary sentiments.

STEP 7: Evaluate the succession planning program: This measures the achievement of the purpose for the program; evaluates if its purpose was achieved, if there is a need for adjustment, and make appropriate correction where necessary.

The methods identified by Celestin [22], exhaustively treated the important methods involved in developing managers, which were grouped into Organization and Ex-organizational methods as noted in the research framework. The organizational methods are achieved primarily from the internal organization's daily operation, while the ex-organization method is external to the organizations' operations but inherent to the smooth internal organizational operation to achieve continuity.

The SP pitfalls denote the defaults inherent in the SP as a result of its abuse or improper application to organization effectiveness and posterity. These pitfalls as identified by Kesler [23] which is noted in the research framework note the important pitfalls to be avoided in the application of SP as a strategic tool to organizational posterity.

FINDINGS

This study aimed to examine the nexus of SP with relation to the posterity and continuity of organizations. From the above-reviewed literature, it is vital to observe that SP is eminently important to any organization posterity, having analyzed the organization management and environment, challenges it addresses, role in the organization, the role of the human resources in its implementation, model associated with it, method of developing managers, its pitfalls, and the RBV perspective. SP is comprehensively an essential knowledge that every organization conscious of its survival cannot neglect. Two models were reviewed in the literature and based on these models a seven-step model termed “the valiant model” for SP was developed by the researcher.

The following findings were discovered via the analysis of information reviewed;

- a. The study revealed that effective implementation of SP contributed to organizational posterity.
- b. The study also showed that the proper development of employees aid in organizational posterity.
- c. It was found also that proper funding of the SP process, enables its effective and efficient utilization.
- d. It also confirmed that employees benefit from SP programs as it develops their skill for career growth.
- e. It was also discovered that it is highly important for organizations to implement a formal SP system.

Based on the research so far, it revealed that the application of SP has a significant impact on organizational posterity; enhancing the achievement of the organizational objectives via employees with highly developed skills, values, and competence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are put forward to the management of organizations. Firstly, management should ensure adequate support and funding of the SP process, to ensure standard employee development and posterity of the organization.

Also, timeliness in the transition of vital positions must be observed and ensured by management and communicated to the parties concerned.

Furthermore, management should be relatively responsible for employee career development, as this increases employees' satisfaction and performance for such an organization.

In addition, designers of the SP requirements and its process should properly evaluate the organizational needs programs, and ensure transparency in the SP process and implementation. As well as utilize the appropriate model.

More so, pitfalls, as well as negative influences to SP, should be avoided by the management. Equally, management should ensure that the SP practice in their organization is not an ad-hoc committee practice, but that a department (i.e. SP department) should be set up or mandated for such purpose.

Finally, management should ensure that the SP engaged in their organization is effective and efficient through regular and timely evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The researcher sets out to find out the relevance of SP as a strategic tool to organizational posterity. Reviews of related literature have shown that SP effective execution depends on the organizational management; both the employees and the management must cooperate. SP is very important in organizations; it has more to do with the development of employees' capability and skills, sustainable quality bench strength, and these most significantly ensure the posterity of organizations.

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