

Effective Succession Planning Practices Pose Challenges within African Establishments.

*Salim Omambia Matagi

Department of Health Information and Research Kenya Medical Training College P.O. BOX 30195-00100
Nairobi, Kenya.

Abstract

There has been a growing demand for equilibrium in the worldwide high dependency ratio. The overall increase in lifespan with a corresponding decrease in fertility rates has resulted in a populace that is predominantly composed of senior citizens. At times, institutions tend to prioritize their own organizational requirements above the needs and interests of their individual employees. Such an approach often results in the exclusion of employees and their willingness to transfer, assume new positions, or participate in developmental activities being overlooked. This can lead to demotivation among employees and ultimately impact the overall performance of the institution. Succession planning must have the full cooperation of all involved parties to succeed. If organizations want to be successful, particularly in realizing their vision-mission, it is important to find the right people who will be part of their journey toward greatness. Achieving success today requires both hard work and smart work, not just one or the other. In our interconnected world, organizations are no longer isolated entities. To ensure continuity, succession planning is a deliberate process that prepares employees for promotion within the organization. This tool helps management identify critical roles and individuals possessing the necessary skills. Typically, employees are hired based on their knowledge, rather than their ability to perform tasks. Passing on organizational knowledge to potential successors can significantly reduce the amount of time needed to adapt to a new position.

Keywords: Succession Planning (SP), Effective Succession Planning Practices (ESPP), Employee Retention (ER), Organizational Effectiveness (OE), Performance Goal Orientation (PGO), Supervisor Support (SS), Working Environment (WE), Rewards (REWD), Work-Life Policies (WLP), Career Development (CD),

Introduction

There are still a majority of people who live under the rock on succession matters. It takes hard work and smart work to succeed not just either of the aforementioned. We no longer live in a segregated world or where organizations are a vacuum. Succession planning is a targeted process that prepares employees for movement within an organization. It is a valuable tool that helps leadership identify key roles and individuals with the necessary skills. Employees are often hired for what they know rather than what they do, so passing critical organizational knowledge from worker to potential successor substantially decreases the acclimation period within a given role. Succession planning is integral to the institutional knowledge transfer and talent management process (Villien, 2023). You don't have to be a demographics nerd to understand that the world's population projections indicate that the majority of the world population will be in Africa and Asia. There are growing calls to have an equilibrium on the global high dependency ratio. The increase in life expectancy and declined fecundity and fertility rates have resulted to a global population of predominantly elderly people.

“There can be no success to the mission if there are no successors to the mission.” This was shared by Clark (2015). Many young African managers have expressed their frustration about being present but not having a voice. They feel pressured to act as mere observers, under the guise of being mentored for future leadership roles. However, some young leaders and managers have successfully navigated their own paths to success,

much like a river charts its course. Effective succession planning requires strong leadership practices throughout an organization. Succession planning and employee retention are undeniably linked. When implemented correctly, effective succession planning can have a positive impact on a variety of factors including performance goal orientation, supervisor support, working environment, rewards, work-life policies, career development, and job security. In turn, these factors can contribute to higher employee retention rates. Conversely, if succession planning is not properly executed, it can lead to increased turnover, rendering the plan ineffective. Therefore, understanding the impact of succession planning on employee retention is crucial for any organization. As noted by Mokgalapa (2023), a successful succession plan can have a significant impact on overall employee retention rates.

If organizations want to be successful, particularly in realizing their vision-mission, it is important to find the right people who will be part of their journey towards greatness. As Villien, (2023) reported succession planning seems desperately lacking in higher education, even when related to planned retirement. While some corporations have established plans to address potential leadership gaps, it appears that this practice is not as prevalent in the education sector. While research on succession planning has primarily focused on for-profit organizations, it would be beneficial to explore this topic further within the context of academic institutions. With the absence of succession planning in these education institutions including unclear policies and procedures in preparing, selecting and appointing academic heads, it is important to develop a succession planning model for leadership sustainability and success of the mission.

The process of succession planning within leadership and institutions in Africa is faced with various obstacles that arise from distinct socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors. There are numerous global polarizing agents but the current record holders are Racism, Religion, Gender, Ethnicity and Politics. Majority if not all Africans are zealots of either one or the others. These challenges are not uncommon in many other regions and are compounded by the aging workforce on the continent. Leadership succession planning has become increasingly important, and new frameworks and cycles have been developed to advance approaches to this process. These constructs have been introduced to promote the proactive preparation of successors for leadership roles. In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, leadership roles are becoming more fluid, and managing organizations has become increasingly complex. This can lead to unexpected changes in management, such as termination, disability, retirement, or even death. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to prioritize succession planning in their human resource development. Successful organizations invest in continuous leadership talent development and proactive succession planning to address the challenges of transient management (K.Siambi, 2022).

Succession planning is an essential and recurring process that organizations must implement to ensure they have the right personnel, skills, and knowledge to maintain stability when leaders depart. A well-planned succession program is critical for achieving organizational goals and maintaining a competitive edge. Without it, the gaps in leadership can impede progress and jeopardize the success of the organization. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a proactive approach to succession management to ensure a smooth transfer of knowledge and continuity toward achieving organizational objectives. (Ali & Mehreen, 2019b).

As Ali (2019) reported, leadership succession planning is a vital component of human resource management, and any criticism regarding its portrayal is baseless. Although many scholars have attempted to define leadership succession planning, there are still gaps and variations in the definition, framework, and models. It is imperative to address these gaps and variations to ensure that leadership succession planning is implemented effectively and efficiently. Addison (2020) highlights the importance of developing a comprehensive and standardized approach to leadership succession planning that aligns with organizational goals and values. Research has shown a link between leadership succession planning and organizational transition, but there is limited research on how succession planning models impact talent retention and leadership development policies.

According to Moore (2020), the current literature lacks a clear agreement on standard frameworks for leadership succession planning. This can pose challenges for organizations striving for a seamless transition. While studies over the past two decades have explored the connection between leadership succession

planning and organizational transition intentions, the findings have been mixed. Some studies indicate a positive correlation, while others report a negative correlation. As a result of the foregoing, there is a wealth of literature on a variety of constructs that may be linked to a phenomenon arising from leadership succession planning. To address these discrepancies and reconcile conflicting conclusions, it is crucial to draw on diverse literature and build upon previous research.

Discussion

Around the beginning of the twentieth century, Henri Fayol, a management specialist, suggested that succession planning could be a great strategy for keeping a company stable. The idea behind this technique is to create a pipeline for leadership continuity at all levels of the organization. Fayol believed that in order for a company to continue thriving and competing, its leaders should start developing the necessary leadership skills and traits for long-term success. He warned that if businesses only react to the need for leadership continuity, they risk filling senior positions with unqualified successors (K.Siambi, 2022). To drive the success of an organization, it's essential to establish a connection between the present and the future. Ergonomics indicate that, younger and middle-aged team members are seen as the future, which may lead them to focus solely on future outcomes. As a result, they may appear less assertive and avoid taking on responsibilities, assuming that senior members will take charge and they can simply follow instructions. There are differing opinions on whether the current generation is avoiding responsibilities and lacking in leadership skills. I have become aware of a situation within an institution where there seems to be a divide between the younger and older generations, along with conflicts based on tribal and gender differences. In today's workforce, up to five generations can be working together, which can affect how organizations handle values, sustainability, tenure, and employee retention. When Baby Boomers and Veterans retire or change jobs, their institutional knowledge may disappear with little or no retention by Millennials and Gen. X'ers (Villien, 2023).

According to the study conducted by Gao et al. (2023), a well-executed leadership succession plan can effectively retain talented leaders. This plan should address important factors such as psychological conditions, remuneration, job fit, and perceived alternative employment opportunities. To achieve this, organizations should consider fair salary distribution, loyalty compensation, and previous experience when determining remuneration. It's also important to provide learning and support, conduct fair and effective assessments, and offer evaluations for continuous learning. By addressing these factors, organizations can streamline their efforts to retain current and incoming leadership. Additionally, the plan should focus on the needs of potential leaders and internal talent development to ensure a perfect fit for leadership retention.

Succession planning in Japan is a model inherent across all disciplines consequently, a surge in experts. By the time a student is clearing senior high school they already know who and what they want to become. In Africa there is a sharp distinction between profession and occasion. What I experienced in Japan was that succession planning especially in institutions is enshrined in their culture. It's a practice that is accentuated. You will find Professors and leaders working with their deputies in a teamwork model. If not keen or informed you will not distinguish the "sensei" from the rest. They work with and mentor students unlike working for the students or worse still not guiding or supervising them. There are even cases of dons who gloat about themselves.

Majority if not all developed countries speak one language. In Africa, it's like the tower of Babylon. Ethnicity in Africa has had detrimental effects, especially in leadership. Thanks to urbanization, ethnicity is slowly but surely being eradicated. Despite the challenges, many African countries have demonstrated successful interethnic cooperation, fostering peace, development, and stability. It is essential to recognize that the consequences of ethnicity in Africa vary significantly from one region to another and are influenced by historical, political, and socio-economic factors. In a study done by (Walters et al., 2023) it was noted that rural-raised persons were more tribal than their urban counterparts. The urban population embraced interethnic cooperation and diversity more than the rural people. This Systemic biases within institutions may disproportionately affect departments and lead to perpetuated bias consequently limiting individuals' potentials based on generalization. In the current world of multicultural societies, it's mind-boggling to comprehend professional vacancies and opportunities being tailored to favor certain groups. Professional

prejudice and Marginalization have resulted to certain professions feeling marginalized or underrepresented in decision-making. They allege to be yellow-lined using other akin professions.

Theses & Citation, (2023) noted that there has been an ongoing and challenging issue regarding the availability of health workers across the globe that remains to be effectively addressed. Kenya's healthcare system faces challenges such as a shortage of medical personnel, difficulty retaining skilled healthcare workers, inadequate compensation and poor working conditions, unequal distribution of staff, and ineffective leadership. To address these issues, it's important to focus on retaining and motivating doctors to be as productive as possible. Experienced and well-trained doctors can offer services efficiently, enhancing treatment. To retain doctors, managers should prioritize expertise and talent, improve treatment, minimize errors, and boost employee productivity. A strategic approach involving administrative, organizational, professional practice, and professional development aspects can increase retention rates.

In modern times, job security is a crucial factor that affects employees' decision to stay in a job. Job security means having the assurance that one will not lose their job. Lack of job security can lead to uncertainty about future roles, causing stress, disappointment, mental strain, exhaustion, and harm. Job insecurity can also significantly increase employee turnover and have adverse effects on employees' health. A study on the connection between absenteeism, turnover intentions, and employee performance found that job insecurity creates more complications and stressors. According to Hassan and Siddiqui (2020), job security enhances organizational performance. They noted that if employees feel secure in their jobs, they are more likely to perform their tasks effectively. To achieve this, businesses are linking job security with workforce development opportunities, such as succession planning, to maintain skilled and competent workers within the organization. Moreover, research shows that government jobs are considered more secure than private-sector jobs, which offer less protection.

In majority of academic institutions, management is rarely empowered to identify, archive, or retrieve organizational knowledge. Instead, most organizational knowledge is often lost with the resignation or retirement of employees, leading to a steep learning curve for new employees, wasted productivity, and redundant employee efforts. Most higher education institutions do not have a formal succession planning framework in place; any succession planning or knowledge retention practices are ad hoc at best. uniform format across departments. The lack of succession planning within higher education institutions is the market norm(Villien, 2023) .

Employee instability is a complex issue that can arise due to various reasons, including illness, transfers, retirement, or a search for better job opportunities. Researchers Hassan and Siddiqui (2020) have found that a lack of proper succession planning can result in the collapse of a company after the departure of key individuals. In the manufacturing sector, numerous companies are facing a shortage of skilled personnel due to retirements, deaths, and employees leaving for other opportunities. The impact of retiring staff and departing colleagues can be significant, and companies need to implement effective succession planning practices (ESPP) to ensure that key positions are retained within the organization. The concept entails the decisions and practices adopted by top management to promote and develop employees should ensure that the right people are in the right positions at the right time. It is not just about having individuals in place but also having the right leadership at all levels of the organization to ensure a smooth succession of roles and responsibilities.

In higher education, succession planning or targeted leadership development is not a common practice. However, it is more prevalent in international higher education institutions as compared to the United States (Cavanaugh, 2017). Despite this, most leaders in colleges and universities acknowledge the advantages of succession planning. Pitre-Davis (2015) attributes the hesitation towards it to the conventional nature of academia and educational institutions. Programs and initiatives are often linked with individuals instead of entire departments, making them susceptible to turnover (Fusarelli et al., 2018). Interestingly, the concept of succession planning is frequently implemented in sports, although it is not referred to by that name. If we examine the mechanics and management of any sports team, we can see that all sports involve players on the bench who must be ready to step in at a moment's notice. These players are just as capable as the first-string

players, or at least they should be. Therefore, if someone is injured or leaves the team, they are not caught off-guard and forced to hire unsuitable candidates, which can lead to a reactive crisis (Riddick, 2009).

(Ahmad et al., 2020)(Ahmad et al., 2020)(Ahmad et al., 2020)Higher education institutions ought to learn from corporate succession planning practices; nevertheless, succession planning principles must be adapted as needed to meet the unique needs of each institution. Studies of the influence of culture on succession planning in higher education institutions have not yet revealed the specific impact of national culture on succession planning. In education institutions, it seems that succession planning is not one of the major agenda of education leaders, for they think of the present and not of the future. Despite the call to create a good succession plan, there are companies or organizations that refuse or fail to make a succession plan. Studies have shown that ninety-percent percent (90%) of companies understand the importance of succession planning, yet, less than half have a formal succession plan. While the importance of succession planning is intuitive to most senior executives, he cited that some companies believe succession planning will just happen. They think a successor will come to the fore at the appropriate time, so they don't believe a systematic approach is really necessary(Ahmad et al., 2020)

It's regrettable that retiring or departing officers play favorites in passing their responsibilities to their successors. Such unethical behavior has no place in the line of duty. It is important for officers especially leaders to remain impartial when performing and passing on their responsibilities to their fellow managers or successors. Any form of favoritism is unethical and goes against the principles of duty and honor. According to Adebola (2019), implementing succession planning can decrease the time and money spent on recruiting and hiring externally. Succession planning also boosts employee dedication and motivation while minimizing the impact of layoffs. Additionally, it helps to cultivate a diverse pool of skilled and capable human resources within the company. In today's dynamic organizations, the traditional concept of succession planning has become outdated. Many organizations prioritize talent management and development processes but overlook the fact that ambitious employees may not want to stay in management positions for extended periods. As a result, effective succession planning practices are often not implemented, which can lead to difficulties in filling management positions and cause unhappiness among employees. This, in turn, may impact their performance and result in talented employees leaving the organization.

Effective succession planning is an essential ongoing process that businesses and organizations must undertake to ensure that their human capital requirements align with their objectives. The task of preparing for future vacancies in middle and senior management positions is crucial because leadership change is an inevitable challenge that every organization must face. A well-structured succession plan guarantees leadership sustainability and identifies and prepares future leaders (Gilbert S. Arrieta et al., 2022). Companies that prioritize succession planning understand that it is a continuous development process that goes beyond merely replacing individuals. They possess the necessary training and career development programs to fill critical positions with highly skilled and experienced internal candidates when required. The success of an organization's succession plan can significantly impact its ability to achieve its objectives, and it is, therefore, a critical aspect of any business or organization's growth and success.

In the current cutthroat environment, organizations face a formidable challenge in retaining their staff. Employees are indispensable to a company's triumph and are a crucial means of gaining a competitive edge. They are regarded as primary assets, and their performance holds a central position in the success of the organization. Prior to 1994, the South African economy faced the challenges of apartheid, which resulted in a disproportionately low ownership of firms by the black majority. The effective implementation of a firm's management succession plan is greatly influenced by the level of commitment and interest shown by its successor, which ultimately impacts decision-making and criteria formation (Gomba and Kele, 2016).

In the business world, succession planning is a crucial process that ensures the seamless transition of leadership roles in a company. It involves careful preparation and consideration of various scenarios to ensure that there are no leadership gaps left unfilled after the departure of key business heads. This is an important aspect of establishing a lasting legacy for future leaders, which includes not only tangible actions

but also intangible factors such as succession stories and contingency plans. By being well-prepared for future leadership transitions, companies can ensure their longevity and continued success (Larino & De Los Santos, 2023). It's understandable that in today's world, leaders place a high value on resourcefulness. Being able to adapt quickly, think creatively, and make the most of what's available are all important aspects of this skill. However, it's also important to remember the importance of consistency. Approaching each day with a determined mindset is crucial for achieving success. Staying focused on your goals can help you accomplish amazing things. When faced with a challenge, it can be tempting to spend time analyzing it and worrying about its impact. Instead, try to focus on developing a strategy for overcoming it. Together, these traits can help you navigate any situation with confidence and resilience.

Conclusion

The development of a national culture is influenced by multiple factors, including politics, history, ideology, sociology, economics, and psychology. This culture plays a crucial role in shaping the behavior and performance of organizations. Unlike organizational culture, the national culture is more dominant and enduring, making it challenging to alter. However, it is essential to recognize that the national culture is not immutable and may evolve over time. As critical positions become vacant due to various reasons like resignation, retirement, promotions, death, growth, expansion, and creation of new positions, there is a need for competent leaders to take over. To achieve this, organizations can develop a reliable succession planning process. This process helps to assess the current situation and identify the employees who are best suited to take on leadership and senior management positions in the future. As part of this economy, organizations and their HR units must continuously reevaluate leadership structures and practices that exploit core competencies while allowing for innovation (i.e., leadership ambidexterity) and incorporate big data with predictive analytics. In this vein, understanding how HR executives can create better solutions around this problem remains sparse.

While the aforementioned challenges are not unique to Africa, succession planning as a strategy requires transparency to be effective. This involves not only being honest but also keeping employees informed about the necessary steps to advance their careers or develop their skills. Traditionally, succession plans were often kept private, assuming that employees would work harder to climb the career ladder if they didn't know where they stood. However, modern organizations need to strike a balance between being too transparent and giving employees the chance to take control of their development. It's important to involve employees in their own succession planning. In their findings Villien, (2023) pointed out that many institutions can often exclude their employees, emphasizing organizational needs without considering the needs and interests of individual employees, at times even with disregard for the employee's willingness or desire to transfer, assume a new position or engage in developmental activities. Succession planning must have the full cooperation of all involved parties to succeed. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach and sustainable strategies, including improving access to education and training, enhancing retention strategies, establishing formal succession plans, fostering a culture of leadership development, and addressing systemic issues affecting institutions or organizations. Collaborative efforts between governments, organizations, and relevant stakeholders are crucial to overcoming these challenges and building a strong and sustainable leadership foundation in organizations across Africa.

People and time have taught me more than books. It is like unscrupulous leadership metamorphoses and reproduces itself if and when it is not progressively eliminated. As a lecturer, I always made sure I reminded my students that they held the key to the future of our profession. It is amazing to see how many of them have become my colleagues over time. As for my junior staff, I firmly believe that they are the future leaders and managers of this Institution. With unwavering determination and dedication, they can achieve any goals they set for themselves.

Acknowledgments: I wish to acknowledge the Kenya Medical Training College for their moral support in writing this manuscript.

Contributors: Salim Omambia Matagi is the sole author and is responsible for ideation, writing, images and submission.

Funding: The author has not declared a specific grant for this research from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing interests None declared.

Patient consent for publication Not applicable.

Ethics approval This study does not involve human participants.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

Data availability statement: Data sharing not applicable as no datasets generated and/or analyzed for this study.

ORCID Salim Omambia Matagi-<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8795-4987>

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