

## Succession Planning and Survival of Family Businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This seminar paper examines the relationship between succession planning and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: (1) investigate the relationship between leadership succession and the survival of family businesses, and (2) assess the association between mentoring and business survival. The study population comprised management and staff of selected family businesses—Dominion Gas, Blessed Plastics, Vinco Supermarket, Roban Stores, Gabs, and Anny Stores—who were on the payroll as of January 2024. Using the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 118 respondents was determined. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure representation across the various businesses. The study relied on primary data, which were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between leadership succession ( $\beta = 0.259, p < 0.00$ ) and mentoring ( $\beta = 0.136, p < 0.01$ ) with the survival of family businesses. These variables emerged as key predictors of business continuity. The study concludes that mentoring programs enhance the development of both mentors and mentees, fostering expertise and improving performance. Furthermore, effective mentoring supports succession planning by preparing future leaders. It is recommended that management create equitable opportunities to motivate employees and encourage leadership aspirations*

**Keywords:** succession planning, leadership, mentoring, family businesses

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### INTRODUCTION

Succession is a critical component of sustainability in family-owned businesses. Research shows that 88% of family businesses do not transition successfully to the third generation, primarily due to the absence of structured strategies for managing leadership succession. The survival and longevity of such businesses are closely tied to effective succession planning. In most cases, family businesses are intended to be passed on to the next generation, as people are considered the central asset of any organization. However, succession planning is often treated as a confidential matter, leading to imbalanced and poorly executed transitions (Ugwu & Enudu, 2022).

In Nigeria, a significant proportion of family-owned enterprises fail to survive beyond the first generation, with even fewer enduring into the third (Ayodeji, 2019). Family businesses are typically defined as enterprises in which

individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption play a significant role in decision-making processes, thereby influencing performance, productivity, and long-term viability (Agbim, 2019). Such businesses often exhibit certain defining characteristics: they are managed by family members, employ non-family personnel, have an independent board of directors, and involve multiple relatives in the organization. Fundamentally, family businesses aim to fulfill a shared family purpose, transcending generations.

Aladejebi (2021) offers a more comprehensive definition, stating that a family-owned business is one in which the majority of decision-making rights are held—either directly or indirectly—by the founder(s), their relatives, or their heirs. Importantly, at least one family member is formally involved in the management of the

business. This inclusive definition encompasses both large and small family-owned enterprises.

Family businesses contribute significantly to economic growth, job creation, and wealth generation on a global scale (Bettinelli et al., 2017). Despite their importance, they face unique challenges, including leadership succession, strategic planning, estate and retirement planning, and managing interpersonal family dynamics. Other internal issues such as conflicting values, divergent expectations, compensation policies, time constraints, and resistance to planning often undermine their continuity (Bettinelli et al., 2017).

One of the most critical responsibilities of a family business board is to plan for the succession of the managing director. Succession planning involves the deliberate and strategic process of transferring leadership and ownership from one generation to the next. Motwani (2015) asserts that family businesses can outperform other types of enterprises due to the inherent synergy between ownership and management. The succession process, as noted by Budhiraja and Pathak (2018) and Chirapanda (2019), comprises two essential phases: the selection of a successor and the actual transfer of ownership.

Despite its importance, succession planning is often neglected in family businesses (Decker-Lange et al., 2016). Succession should be viewed as an ongoing process rather than a single event. Helsen et al. (2017) emphasize that succession entails both the transfer of ownership and managerial responsibilities across generations.

Given this context, the present study investigates the relationship between succession planning and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.

### **The Problem**

One of the most pressing challenges facing family businesses is managing leadership succession across generations. Many family-owned enterprises struggle with the transition of leadership from one generation to the next due to the absence of structured strategies and formal succession procedures (Bozer et al., 2017). Research indicates that approximately 70% of family businesses fail to survive into the second generation, and nearly 88% do not make it to the third (Mokhber et al., 2017). Alarming, only 3% of family businesses are able to transition successfully to the fourth generation and beyond. The lack of well-defined succession planning processes has been identified as a key contributor to the high failure rate of family-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (Villegas et al., 2019). In Nigeria, this issue is particularly pronounced, with most family businesses ceasing operations after the founder's death due to the absence of a robust succession strategy. While family businesses are vital to economic and social development, their limited

ability to sustain growth and leadership continuity remains a major concern.

Leadership succession is a complex process that involves not only the transfer of management but also the transfer of ownership, both of which are often emotionally and strategically difficult, especially for founders or senior leaders reluctant to relinquish control. Furthermore, succession planning in family firms has often overlooked nuanced challenges such as gender dynamics in ownership and leadership transition, further complicating the process. Effective succession planning should involve identifying and preparing suitable candidates for critical leadership roles at various levels of the organization. This approach not only ensures business continuity but also reinforces the overall strategic direction of the enterprise. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between succession planning and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria, where many such businesses face significant challenges related to leadership continuity.

### **Objective of the Study**

The aim of the seminar is to investigate the relationship between succession planning and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Determine the relationship between leadership succession and the survival of family business in, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.
- ii. Establish the association between mentoring and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the relationship between quality service and survival of family businesses in Asaba Delta State Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the study objectives, the following research questions were raised below;

- i. What is the relationship between leadership succession and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria?
- ii. What association exist between mentoring and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria? and
- iii. To what extent does quality service affect the survival of family businesses in Asaba Delta State Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

In the bid to answer the research questions, the following hypotheses were raised;

H0<sub>1</sub>. There is no significant relationship between leadership succession planning and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.

H0<sub>2</sub>. There is no significant relationship between mentoring and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.

H0<sub>3</sub>. There is no significant relationship between quality service and the survival of family businesses in Saba Delta State Nigeria

### Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the relationship between succession planning and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. This research work takes the form of a field survey as established earlier, and it is expedient to maintain that the population of this study is limited to family-owned SMEs, specifically the family-owned SMEs in Asaba, Delta State. It was conducted in Asaba Metropolis in Oshimili South Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. A sample frame with an accessible population of 1,000 family-owned small business entrepreneurs was obtained from the revenue department of the local government councils and stratified which now serves as the population of the study.

### Literature Underpinning

#### Conceptual Framework

#### Succession planning

Succession planning is a strategic process through which leadership—and in some cases, business ownership—is systematically delegated to a designated individual or group within an organization (Kenton & Perez, 2020). This process ensures continuity of operations when key leaders retire or exit the organization. An integral component of succession planning involves cross-training employees to develop essential skills, acquire organizational knowledge, and gain a comprehensive understanding of the business. This preparation equips potential successors with the capacity to take on leadership responsibilities effectively.

Beyond corporate settings, succession planning is a universally applied concept used in various systems such as monarchies, political regimes, and international organizations, where continuity of leadership is critical to stability and governance (Menaldo, 2016; Helms, 2020). In such contexts, the concept of succession often involves formal rules or hereditary rights that dictate the order in which individuals ascend to power or authority.

In the context of family-owned businesses—including farms and agribusinesses—succession planning refers to the structured process of transferring both ownership and managerial responsibilities to the next generation (Robert,

2021). This transition is not merely administrative; it often encompasses emotional, relational, and strategic dimensions that influence the long-term survival of the enterprise.

Effective succession planning, therefore, is not only about naming a successor but also about systematically preparing future leaders to uphold the organization's vision, values, and objectives. It plays a pivotal role in ensuring continuity, mitigating risks associated with leadership gaps, and fostering sustainable growth across generations.

#### Leadership succession

Leadership is the ability of an organization's management to set and achieve ambitious goals, make swift and effective decisions, outperform competitors, and inspire employees to perform at their best (Twin et al., 2020). It involves influencing and guiding the activities of an organized group toward goal setting and attainment. In family businesses, ineffective leadership roles or unclear responsibilities often contribute to failure and instability (Davis, 2014).

Succession planning, particularly for leadership positions, plays a crucial role in ensuring continuity and organizational resilience. Its primary objective is to ensure that a company has the right individuals in place to assume key positions in the event of sudden leadership transitions. Succession planning is not merely a reactive strategy, but a proactive framework for developing internal leadership pipelines and identifying external talent to fill critical roles when needed (Cristy & Nick, 2019).

In nonprofit and for-profit organizations alike, succession planning also supports strategic change management by aligning leadership development with future goals. By embedding leadership development into the organization's core processes, succession planning becomes a foundational component of long-term sustainability.

#### Mentoring

Mentoring is a structured yet flexible developmental relationship in which experienced individuals (mentors) provide guidance, knowledge, and support to less-experienced individuals (mentees) to foster personal and professional growth. It is particularly impactful in enhancing employee performance, boosting business growth, and promoting leadership readiness (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2018).

Mentorship relationships typically evolve from initial professional interactions into long-lasting partnerships that significantly influence a mentee's career trajectory. The mentor supports the mentee in learning critical skills, making informed decisions, and setting future goals (Matthew, 2021). Effective mentoring also facilitates the

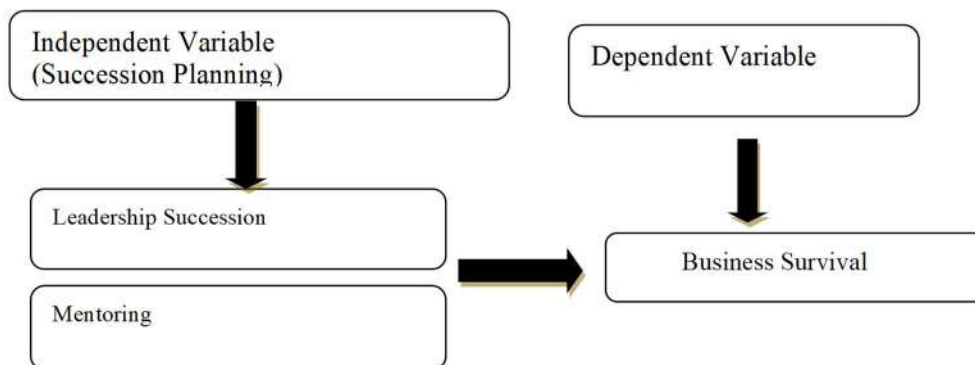


Figure 1: Source: Authors Conceptual Model, 2024.

transfer of institutional knowledge and leadership capabilities from senior to junior employees.

Cherono et al. (2020) highlight that mentoring involves a deliberate partnership aimed at accelerating the professional development of the mentee. While mentoring can produce highly positive outcomes such as increased confidence, skill acquisition, and better organizational performance, unrealistic expectations or poorly matched mentor-mentee pairings may hinder its success (Chand, 2019; Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2018).

Workplace mentoring, in particular, is associated with improved employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention. It fosters a culture of continuous learning and provides employees with role models who embody organizational values and leadership practices (Nicola, 2019). In family businesses, mentoring is especially valuable as it prepares future leaders—often family members or long-serving employees—for succession, ensuring smoother transitions and sustained business continuity.

### Characteristics of Mentoring

Mentoring is a structured developmental relationship that hinges on several key characteristics. These include:

1. **Mutual Trust:** A successful mentoring relationship requires a strong foundation of trust between mentor and mentee.
2. **Effective Communication:** Open, honest, and consistent communication is essential for mentoring success.
3. **Mentor’s Availability:** The mentor must be accessible and dependable, ensuring continuous support for the mentee.

4. **Structured Approach:** Mentoring should follow a methodical and goal-oriented structure to maintain focus and effectiveness.

5. **Self-Esteem and Confidence:** Both the mentor and the mentee must possess confidence to engage openly and benefit from the relationship.

6. **Mutual Respect:** Respect for each other's knowledge, roles, and contributions is critical to maintaining a healthy and productive mentoring partnership.

### Importance of Mentoring

Mentoring provides several organizational and individual benefits:

1. **Talent Recruitment:** Mentoring helps organizations identify and groom talent from both internal and external sources (Chand, 2019).
2. **Relationship Building:** It supports the development of internal networks and structural cohesion within the organization.
3. **Employee Motivation:** Mentors serve as motivational figures, helping mentees stay engaged, inspired, and aligned with organizational goals.
4. **Knowledge Capital:** Beyond physical assets, mentoring facilitates the transfer and retention of critical institutional knowledge and leadership capacity.

### Service Quality

Service quality is a critical factor in customer satisfaction and business longevity. It is typically defined by how well a company’s services meet or exceed customer expectations (Abdul & Augustinus, 2021). Key points include:

- **Customer Expectations vs. Performance:** Service quality is assessed by comparing expected services with actual service delivery (Phan & Nguyen, 2016).
- **Importance of Quality Control:** For small businesses, quality control reduces risks and costs associated with poor products or services, while enhancing customer satisfaction (Sampson, 2019).
- **Customer Loyalty:** High-quality service encourages customer loyalty, repeat business, and allows for premium pricing (Chetan, 2015).
- **Perceived Value:** According to Kant and Jaiswal (2017), service quality depends on both the perceived outcome and how well the service process aligns with customer expectations.

### Business Survival

Business survival refers to a company's ability to sustain operations over time, especially during challenging economic or competitive conditions. Key insights include:

- **Economic Role of Small Businesses:** Small business owners significantly contribute to employment and innovation (Lum, 2017).
- **Failure Rates:** More than half of small businesses fail within their first five years (SBA, 2016).
- **Profitability and Growth:** While profitability ensures short-term viability, long-term survival requires strategic growth, diversification, and adaptability (Alexis, 2020).
- **Survival Strategies:** These include access to financing, efficient operations, and agile decision-making that aligns with market changes.

### Conceptual Model of the Study

#### Theoretical Framework

#### Stewardship Theory

Stewardship Theory, originally proposed by Thompson (1960), emphasizes the alignment between principals (owners) and stewards (managers), particularly within family businesses. It suggests that family leaders act as trustworthy stewards who prioritize organizational and stakeholder welfare over personal gain. This theory portrays family business leaders as inherently motivated to act in the best interest of the firm, fostering trust, collaboration, and long-term commitment (Davis et al., 1997, as cited in Kankam-Kwarteng et al., 2021; Chrisman et al., 2007, as cited in Ugwu & Enudu, 2022).

Stewardship Theory has been applied extensively to highlight the "good side" of family firms—where managers are seen not as self-serving agents but as altruistic individuals who derive satisfaction from contributing to organizational success (Waldkirch & Nordqvist, 2016). In this context, succession planning and mentoring can be

viewed as stewardship behaviors, where current leaders invest in developing future leaders. Mentors, acting as stewards, utilize experiential learning methods to cultivate knowledge, leadership, and responsibility in mentees, thereby supporting long-term organizational sustainability.

#### Upper Echelons Theory

Developed by Hambrick and Mason (1984), Upper Echelons Theory (UET) posits that an organization's outcomes are partially predicted by the characteristics of its top executives. Factors such as age, gender, education, functional background, and tenure shape strategic decisions and influence organizational performance (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Dalton & Dalton, 2005, as cited in Ugwu & Enudu, 2022). UET argues that these demographic and experiential attributes impact how leaders perceive opportunities and threats, ultimately affecting business strategy and survival.

In the context of family businesses, UET provides a useful lens to examine how leadership succession decisions are influenced by the background and experience of top management. As such, succession planning involves not just identifying successors, but ensuring that they possess the strategic competencies and attributes required for effective leadership (Aladejebi, 2021). The theory underscores the importance of leadership diversity and preparedness, which directly contributes to organizational resilience and long-term survival.

#### Empirical Review

Ugwu and Enudu (2022) assessed Enugu family-owned firm succession planning and performance. The specific goals were to assess the relationship between innovation investment and profitability, mentoring and service quality, and leadership succession planning and family-owned business survival in Enugu State. 1432 people were studied. Freund and Williams' statistical technique yielded 303 samples at 5% error. The survey was descriptive. Interviews and questionnaires collected data. Two hundred and sixty-eight (268) responders filled out two hundred and three (303) questionnaires. 88% responded. Its reliability coefficient of 0.81 was good. SPSS was used to evaluate hypotheses using a mean score (3.0 and above agreed, below 3.0 disagreed) and Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). Innovation investment increased family-owned firm profitability in Enugu State  $r(95, n = 268) = .167 < .928, p < .05$ . Mentoring and quality of service of family-owned businesses in Enugu State were positively correlated ( $r(95, n = 268) = .798 < .937, p < 0.05$ ), and leadership succession planning and business survival were positively correlated ( $r = .487 < .917, p < 0.05$ ). The study found that innovation investment, mentoring, and leadership succession planning improved family business

profitability, quality, and survival.

Onyeukwu and Jekelle (2019) studied leadership succession and small family-owned firm sustainability in Anambra, South East Nigeria. Survey research was used in Onitsha and Nnewi, Anambra State's commercial and industrial centres. 298 registered small firm owners were randomly sampled. A five-point Likert structured 6-item questionnaire collected data. This study examined the dependent-independent relationship using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The matched Sample t-test was also employed to evaluate the hypothesis's mean difference between matched data. According to research, mentoring and human capital development affect small family-owned enterprises' long-term viability. The study found that family business owners should identify a successor early and use mentorship to equip them, but the successor must show genuine interest in the business and not be coerced into it. They should also spend enough time training chosen successors to equip them with relevant skills that will help their businesses survive beyond the current generation. Andrew et al., (2017) studied mentoring in US family businesses to understand commitment outcomes. The study examined mentorship and organisational commitment in family businesses. Mentoring in family companies produces different levels of commitment based on the mentoring dyad's familial status. The study indicated that mentoring is most often connected with emotional commitment, but our arguments suggest that family business mentoring ties can generate normative and continuing commitment in many scenarios. The study proposes mentorship and organisational commitment ideas. Theoretical and HRM implications are also discussed. Vongani and Clever (2016) examined how succession planning affects firm survival in Johannesburg's Kwalita business consultants. The study examines business succession planning, its barriers, and Kwalita Business Consultants' succession planning. Ensured representativeness of a 100-person sample, the findings show that while KBC did not have succession planning rules, the founding directors did. Succession planning should be part of a company's strategy design and planning, according to the findings. To replace key employees, large and small companies must spend on employee training and development. The report proposed succession planning studies with international companies to better understand the problem. Osayande and Okolie (2016) used National Business and Technical Examination Board data from Benin City, Nigeria, to study succession planning and organisational survival. The study examined how succession planning affects organisational survival using NABTEB data from Benin City. The study's population sample of 202 was randomly selected. Semi-structured questionnaires collected sampled respondents' data. 158 of 202 samples were viable. SPSS analysed the data. The study shows that predictors positively affect response variables. According to the study, management

should create a succession plan that matches the firm's management philosophy and practice to promote adaptability and dynamic capabilities and assist the organisation in surviving.

Akani (2015) studied Banks in Port Harcourt's management succession planning and corporate survival. The purpose was to determine how management succession planning aspects like management development (MD), mentorship (ME), and retention effort (RE) affect business survival parameters like adaptability (AD) and dynamic capability (DC). The study included 21 Port Harcourt deposit money banks. Study data was primary. SPSS was used for descriptive statistics, Spearman Rank correlation, and multiple regressions. Three multiple regression equations were generated, with t-tests determining significance and F-tests showing model fitness. The dependent variable measures adaptability and the independent variable dimensions are strongly correlated. Management Development, Mentoring, and Retention Efforts measure dynamic capability and independent variable aspects. Management Development, Mentoring, and Retention Efforts measure dynamic capability and independent variable aspects. Management Development, Mentoring, and Retention Efforts measure dynamic capability and Management succession planning helps companies survive, the studies show. The report suggested that management teams and policymakers incorporate succession planning into corporate management strategies to help Nigerian banks survive.

**Summary of literature Review:** From my findings, very few works have been done in this area of research on the survival of family small businesses in Nigeria specifically in Asaba Delta State, aiming at unravelling the failure of family businesses.

It is the wish of this study, therefore, that future researchers that are interested in this area of study should delve even deeper to other developing countries and find out how small businesses have fared and how it can be salvaged.

A successful research in this dimension will help policy makers, management institutions and students to have a balance view/understanding in the area of study and hence proffer adequate solution to the survival of family small businesses towards the survival of general economy in the country, other development nations in Africa and the world as a whole.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Its purpose is to establish relationships between and among independent variables about the survival of family

business (Dependent Variable) in Asaba metropolis in Delta, State, Nigeria. This design is deemed appropriate as it described a group of people, phenomena or an event based on the influence of another variable. The descriptive survey research method was adopted because it ensures that the resultant sample sufficiently represents the population.

**Population of the Study**

**Table 1: Population Distribution of Selected Retail Firms**

S/N	Name of Firms	Staff Strength
1	Dominion Gas	23
2	Blessed Plastics	32
3	Vico Supermarket	28
4	Roban Stores	34
5	Gabs	28
6	Anny Stores	29
<b>Total</b>		<b>174</b>

Source: Staff List of Selected Family Businesses (2024)

This research work takes the form of a field survey as established earlier, and it is expedient to maintain that the population of this study is limited to family-owned SMEs, specifically the family-owned SMEs in Asaba, Delta State. It was conducted in Asaba Metropolis in Oshimili South Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. A sample frame with an accessible population of 1,000 family-owned small business entrepreneurs was obtained from the revenue department of the local government council and stratified which now serves as the population of the study. (Table 1)

**Sample Size and Procedure**

**Table 2: Proportion Apportionment of Employees Selected Retail Firms**

S/N	Name of Firms	Staff Strength	Frequency (%)
1	Dominion Gas	15	5.0
2	Blessed Plastics	29	5.0
3	Vico Supermarket	21	5.9
4	Roban Stores	20	7.6
5	Gabs	18	7.6
6	Anny Stores	15	3.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>118</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The sample size is the quantity of subjects or observations that are part of a research project. The accuracy of our calculations and the study's capacity to conclude the chosen sample size are the two statistical attributes that are impacted by sample size (Andrade, 2020). Within the chosen firms (Dominion Gas, Blessed Plastics, Vinco Supermarket, Roban Stores, Gabs and Anny Stores), the researcher categorised the population. The population's relative size led to the adoption of this strategy. The focus of this study is restricted to six (6) chosen family-owned

SMEs (Dominion Gas, Blessed Plastics, Vinco Supermarket, Roban Stores, Gabs and Anny Stores) that are of a reasonable size given the abundance of large commercial retail firms and domestic businesses. 174 respondents made up the population of this category according to the categorisation. According to a recommendation by Bartlet (2001), a sample size of 118 is optimum if the population is between 150 and 300. (Table 2)

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

From the foregoing, a sample is the proportion or subset of the population which is studied in place of the entire population. From a total population of 1000 family-owned small businesses, a sample size for this study is six family-owned small businesses were selected for the study. These were selected randomly to ensure that all sample elements had equal chances of being selected to achieve a corresponding and reliable result.

**Method Data of Collection and Research Instrument**

Data was collected through primary and secondary sources. The data type of this study consists of primary and secondary data. The data collection technique for primary data used a survey method with a questionnaire as the instrument employing 5 Likert Scale; the Likert scale of point 5 is used for the closed-ended questions. All the items were measured on a five-point Likert scale eliciting responses ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Indifferent, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Likert scale is easy to use in respondent-centred and stimulus-centred studies. Besides, secondary data was obtained by documentation, which includes journals, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, research findings report etc.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the variables under study and was followed by the correlation matrix. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions with the aid of SPSS version 23, to find the relationship between measures of succession planning (SP), namely; Leadership Succession (LS) and Mentoring (MT) and the Survival of Family Business (SFB). Multiple regression with Survival of Family Business (SFB) as the dependent variable is conducted with the two components of succession planning (SP) as explanatory variables. Thus, the multiple regression models are specified as:

$$SFB = f(LS, MT)$$

$$SFB = \beta_0 + \beta_1LS + \beta_2MT + E$$

Where:  
SFB = Survival of Family Business

**Table 7: Leadership Succession and Survival of family business**

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1
1	Impressive leadership succession predicts how the survival of a business	28 (25.9)	69 (63.9)	4 (3.7)	7 (6.5)	5 (4.6)
2	Poorly constructed leadership responsibilities set a family business up for failure	57 (41.1)	39 (36.1)	2 (1.8)	4 (3.7)	3 (13)
3	There is need to adjust to strategic changes that may results in new leadership expectation or responsibility as well as to plan for transition	19 (17.5)	82 (76)	2 (1.8)	3 (2.7)	2 (1.8)
4	It is a proactive and rigorous investment in establishing a pipeline of internal leaders and identifying great external prospects	41 (37.9)	54 (50)	6 (5.5)	7 (6.5)	-

Source: Field Survey, 2024

LS = Leadership Succession

MT = Mentoring

E = Error Term

**The Apriori expectation:  $\beta_1, \beta_2$  is less or greater**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, data and information gathered from employees of specific family-owned SMEs in Asaba, Delta State—Dominion Gas, Blessed Plastics, Vico Supermarket, Roban Stores, Gabs and Anny Stores are presented and analysed. Three sections comprised the data given and analysed in the study: a descriptive analysis of the respondents' profiles with a percentage weighting applied is the first section. The second is a corrective analysis of the variables related to each study topic. The third involves using multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses developed for the investigation. Data analysis, in the words of Nwadinigwe (2002), is the brain behind any research project because, when done well, it increases the likelihood that the researcher will draw conclusions that are reliable and may help them make wise decisions.

Of the 118 copies of questionnaire administered to the workers of the chosen retail establishment, 113 sets were returned to give a response rate of 95.6%. Five copies of the questionnaire were incorrectly completed and were rejected hence, the remaining 108 sets were valid and used for analysis.

### Analysis of Respondents' Socio-Demographic Profile

**Table 3: Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	84	77.8
Female	24	22.2
Total	108	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From table 3 above, 84(77.8%) were male respondents

and 24(22.2%) were female respondents. This indicates that male respondents were more in number than the male respondents.

**Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents**

Status	Frequency	Percentage %
Single	82	75.9
Married	26	24.1
Total	108	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4 above indicates the marital status of the respondents. It was observed that 82 (75.9%) of the respondents were single while 26 (24.1%) were married. The age distribution of the respondents, which was

**Table 5: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage %
21 – 30	56	53.7
31 – 40	47	43.5
41 – 50	8	7.4
51 and above	6	5.6
Total	108	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

dispersed throughout several age groups, is shown in table 5 above. Of the respondents, 56 (57.3%) fell into the age range of 21 to 30 years. 47 (43.5%) of the respondents fall into the 31–40 years age group. 8 responses, or 7.4%, were younger than 41 to 50 years old. Six (5.6%) of the responders were younger than 51 years old.

**Table 6: Working Experience of Respondents**

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage %
0-5 years	75	69.4
6-10 years	18	16.7
11-15 years	9	8.3
Above 16 years	6	5.5
Total	108	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

**Table 8: Mentoring and Survival of Family Business**

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1
5	Mentoring helps to improve the opportunity for job increased performance	17 (15.7)	77 (71.2)	3 (2.7)	7 (6.5)	2 (1.8)
6	Mentoring is a semi-structured system which helps organization to share in knowledge, skills and experience to assist others improve in their lives and career.	43 (39.8)	46 (42.5)	10 (9.2)	6 (5.5)	3 (2.7)
7	Mentoring helps individual to learn and development their acumen in fostering and applying same in their business	23 (21.3)	67 (62)	2 (1.8)	7 (6.5)	7 (6.5)
8	Knowledge and skills is transferred for growth	27 (25)	72 (66.7)	2 (1.8)	5 (4.6)	2 (1.8)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

**Table 9: Quality Service and Survival of Family Business**

S/N	Statement	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1
13	Good Service quality enhance repeated patronage	5 (3.7)	92 (85.1)	4 (3.7)	3 (2.7)	3 (2.7)
14	Quality products helps to keep customers happy and loyal	17 (15.7)	77 (71.2)	4 (3.7)	7 (6.4)	3 (2.7)
15	Customers are very knowledgeable about the quality of service received	16 (14.8)	83 (76.8)	4 (3.7)	2 (1.8)	3 (2.7)
8	Most customers have a good experience of your products and services	5 (4.6)	97 (89.8)	2 (1.8)	2 (1.8)	2 (1.8)

The above table 6 demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 75 (69.4%), had 0–5 years of work experience. These were followed by 18 (18.7%) with 6–10 years of work experience, 9 (8.3%) with 11–15 years of work experience, and 6 (5.5%) with 21 years or more.

### Analysis of Other Research Data

The examination of the answers to the sixteen (16) key research questions, which were divided into smaller questions using a five (5) point Likert scale, is the main topic of this part. This involved the use of multiple regression and descriptive statistics for analysis.

**Research Question One:** What relationship exist between leadership succession and survival of family business in Asaba, Delta State?

Table 7 showed the extent to which leadership succession relates with survival of family business.

Statement 1 disclosed that 97 (89.8%) of the participants concurred that impressive leadership succession predicts how the survival of a business Twelve (11.1%) disagreed, while four (3.7%) were unsure. Regarding assertion 2, ninety-three (88.5%) of the participants concurred that poorly constructed leadership responsibilities set a family business up for failure. 7 (6.5%) disagreed, while 2 (1.8%) were unsure. According to statement 3, 101 respondents, or 93.5%, agreed that there is need to adjust to strategic changes that may results in new leadership expectation or responsibility as well as to plan for transition. 5 (4.6%) disagreed, and 2 (1.8%) were unsure. 95 respondents, or

88%, agreed with statement 4 that It is a proactive and rigorous investment in establishing a pipeline of internal leaders and identifying great external prospects. Seven (6.5%) disagreed, and six (6.5%) were unsure.

**Table 10: Correlation Matrix of Studied Variables**

	1	2	3	4	5
Survival of Family Business	1				
Leadership Succession	.507	1			
Mentoring	.222	.450	1		
Quality of Service (QS)	.479	.249	.394	.146	1

N: 285,  $p < 0.05$

**Second research question:** What is the association between mentoring and survival of family business?

The impact of mentoring on survival of family business was displayed in Table 8. Statement 5 disclosed that 94 (87%) of the participants concurred that Mentoring helps to improve the opportunity for job increased performance. 9.2% (ten) were unsure, and 8.3% (nine) disagreed. 89 respondents, or 82.4%, agreed with statement 6 that mentoring is a semi-structured system which helps organization to share in knowledge, skills and experience to assist others improve in their lives and career. 9.2% (ten) were unsure, and 8.3% (nine) disagreed. 100 respondents, or 92.5%, agreed with statement 7 that mentoring helps individual to learn and development their acumen in fostering and applying same in their business. 14(12.9%) disagreed, while 2(1.8%) were unsure. Regarding statement 8, 99 (91.6%) of the participants concurred that Knowledge and skills is transferred for growth. 7(6.4%) disagreed, and 2(1.8%) were unsure. (Table 9). Positive correlation coefficients of the survival of

**Table 11: Multiple Regression Analysis of Coefficients <sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (constant)	6.678	1.875		3.562	.000
Leadership Succession	0.143	.066	.136	2.155	.001
Mentoring	0.266	.068	.259	3.892	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Survival of family business

**Table 12: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.978 <sup>a</sup>	0.956	0.914	1.8948

b. .a Predictor: (constant) Leadership Succession and Mentoring

c. b Dependent variable: Survival of family business

d. Source: Analysis of Field Survey, 2024

family business indicators were shown in table 10 above, suggesting that these metrics are reliable gauges of succession planning. According to the results, Leadership Succession and survival of family business had a positive correlation ( $r=.507, 0.01$ ).

**Table 13: ANOVA <sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	76.330	4	38.423	10.702	0.000
Residual	25.733	280	3.590		
Total	102.063	284			

a. Dependent variable: Survival of family business

b. Predictors (constant), leadership succession and mentoring

Source: SPSS Version 23.0, 2024

Mentoring, the second measure, had a positive correlation ( $r=.222, 0.01$ ) with survival of family business.

The multiple regression analysis was adopted to test the relationship between Leadership Succession, mentoring and Survival of family business. The results were shown in table 11 & 12 above: From the data shown, the correlation  $R=.978$  means that the two (2) factors have high relationship with Survival of family business. In this regression, the independent variables at 91.4% (R square= 0.914), ANOVA statistics ( $F=10.702, p<.05$ ) indicated that the overall model is statistically significant and has Std. Error of the estimate at  $\pm 1.8948$ . When considering the regression data of independent variables. It is found that Leadership Succession ( $B=.143, SE_{b1}=.066, \beta=.136, t=2.155, P=.001$ ), Mentoring ( $B=.226, SE_{b1}=.068, \beta=.259, t=3.892, P=.000$ ) predicted the survival of family business with a statistically significant at 0.05. Therefore, the study accepts  $H_{01}$  and  $H_{02}$ , which means that leadership succession and mentoring are positively related to Survival of family business.

The F-ratio in the ANOVA Table 13 tested whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table showed that the independent variables (Leadership Succession and Mentoring,) significantly predict the dependent variable (Survival of family business), since  $F(4, 280) = 10.702, p<.005$ , the regression model is good

for the data.

### Hypotheses Testing

To evaluate the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was used as an analytical method. Testing hypotheses is essentially a methodical approach to evaluating assertions or theories on any particular parameter in a population by utilising data measured in a sample. The study hypotheses are tested using the p-values listed in the regression coefficient table.

### The Decision Rule

In research, the null hypothesis is the central hypothesis that is typically examined. The null hypothesis will be accepted and the alternative hypothesis will be rejected if the computed probability value is larger than the crucial threshold of significance, and vice versa. The supplied parameter is statistically significant if the probability value of .000 is less than the critical value of 5%, or if  $.000 < 0.05$ . It is acknowledged that in this case, accepting the alternative hypothesis and rejecting the null hypothesis are necessary.

According to Gujarati & Porter (2009), we declare our results to be statistically significant when we reject null hypotheses and vice versa. According to Gujarati and Porter (2009), it is best to let the researcher determine whether to reject the null hypotheses at the specified value. Keep in mind that the p-value is sometimes referred to as the precise probability of making a type 1 error or the observed or exact degree of significance. Technically speaking, according to Gandhi and Porter (2009), the p-value is the lowest significance level at which a null hypothesis may be rejected. Consequently, the p-value is 0.05 (5%)

### Hypothesis One

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between

leadership succession and the survival of family businesses in Delta State, Nigeria.

Given the Beta value ( $\beta=136$ ,  $p<.001$ ), leadership succession showed a positive correlation survival of the family business in the coefficient table 13. Table 13. regression analysis for the test of hypothesis one which indicates that leadership succession and survival of family business revealed that the chance of making a type one error (.05) is greater than the exact level of significance predicted (.001). With the results, the alternate hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that leadership succession has a major association with the survival of family business.

### Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant association between mentoring and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.

Table 4 presents the degree to which survival of the family business is positively related with mentoring. Considering the Beta value ( $\beta = 259$ ,  $p < .000$ ). Table 13 regression analysis for Mentoring and Survival of family business on the test of hypothesis one revealed that the likelihood of making a type one error (.05) is greater than the precise level of significance computed (.000). Given the results, it can be concluded that mentoring does relate with the survival of family business and thus the alternate hypothesis was accepted in place of the null hypothesis.

### Hypothesis Three

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between Quality Service and the survival of family business in Delta Sate, Nigeria.

Table 13 presents the degree to which Survival of family business is positively impacting by Quality of Service. In light of the Beta value ( $B=130$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Table 13, Regression Analysis Quality of Service and Survival of Family Business on the Test of Hypothesis One, showed that the chance of making a type one error (.05) is more than the exact level of significance estimated (.001). With the result, the alternate hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected suggesting that Quality of Service does have a major impact on the survival of family business

### Discussion of Findings

The explanation of the research study's conclusions is provided below by the data analysis completed in section four and the examination of relevant literature captured in two:

### Leadership Succession and Survival of Family Business

According to Table 13 data analysis results, the variables of leadership succession have an overall positive correlation coefficient, indicating that they are suitable indicators and dimensions of succession planning. It demonstrated how much of a change in the survival of the family business was explained by leadership succession ( $\beta=.136$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). This demonstrates the strong positive relationship between the survival of family business and leadership succession. Leadership Succession accounts for 54.5% (or Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) of the change in the survival of the family business, according to the analysis. This outcome was consistent with the research conducted by Garman and Glawe, (2004) that leadership succession 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 to support the organization's strategy. Leadership Succession also details processes for transferring institutional knowledge and preserving institutional memory, and hence organizational survival. Kellermanns and Eddleston (2006), report that succession planning in small-scale business is associated with the transfer of ownership and management to the next generation. This has been found to contribute to firm growth, survival and organizational success in general.

### Mentoring and Survival of Family Business

The results shown in Table 13 indicate that all of the variables measuring the survival of the family business have suitable correlation coefficient values, indicating that they are all measures of mentoring. The results demonstrated that there is a substantial positive link between mentoring and the survival of family business, with  $\beta=.259$ ,  $P<0.00$  accounting for variance in survival of the family business. Additionally, table 4.2.7 demonstrated that mentoring accounts for 545 (54.5%) of the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> reported changes in the survival of the family business. This validates the results of Askari et al., 2015; Muzaffar et al., 2016 assert that mentoring programs related to mentees in business organizations increase productivity, opportunity for career and advancement, enhancement of skill and knowledge, confidence, enhancement in job satisfaction, wellbeing, and motivation, decision-making skills, abilities of leadership, and developing leaders. Northern Ireland's Bridge mentoring program LEED Unit (2006) findings indicated that mentoring has various economic advantages for SMEs i.e. increased sales turnover, increased after-tax profits, increased employment and successful business strategies to grow ventures on their own.

## Quality of Service and Survival of Family Business

Based on the data analysis in Table 13, it was found that the variables' overall positive correlation coefficient values indicate that they are suitable indicators of Quality of Service. It demonstrates the degree to which the survival of family business changed as a result of performance feedback ( $B=.130, P< 0.01$ ). This demonstrates that there is a strong correlation between the survival of family business and Quality of Service. Similarly, table 4.2.7 demonstrated that service reliability accounts for 545 (54.5%) of the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> indicating the change in the survival of the family business. According to the test results, there is a strong positive correlation between the survival of family business and Quality of Service. This confirms the results of (Abd-Elrahman, 2012), this can encourage managers to improve SQ and accordingly survival by studying well the customer's needs, wants and expectations and working on meeting or exceeding them. Given the rapid technological changes, increasing sophisticated and indiscriminate customers coupled with fierce competition, timely information and SQ are perceived as tools for business success. To succeed in today's global and interconnected economy, management of the mobile telecommunications companies needs to enhance and improve the levels of the quality of their service, because sustainability and survival in business are rooted in satisfying customers' needs, wants and expectations.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study looked at how succession planning relates to the survival of family businesses among businesses in Asaba metropolis in Delta State. This section concentrated on summarizing the results of the data analysis in section four, concluding the results, and offering pertinent advice. It also gave an area for knowledge additions and research idea suggestions.

### Summary

The primary goal of the research was to evaluate the relationship between succession planning and the survival of family businesses in Asaba, Delta State. Leadership succession appears to be the key component that propels business survival. To address the two research questions given, two objectives were suggested. As a result, two theories were put forth and investigated by the goals the study had stated.

In this study, a descriptive survey research design was used. The reliability of the study instrument (questionnaire) was tested using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient, and the results showed that the items were valid and reliable at an overall Cronbach's alpha value.

Regression analyses of the variables showed that the

following dimensions of succession planning have positive relationship with survival of family business: Leadership succession ( $\beta =.259, P < 0.00$ ) and mentoring ( $\beta =.136, P < 0.01$ ). These are the dimensions with the strongest positive relationship with the survival of the family business.

The testing of the hypotheses' results showed that the survival of family business was explained by the general perception of succession planning indices. Therefore, the adjusted reported 545 (54.5%) of the change in survival of the family business is explained by succession.

This implied that;

- i. In Asaba, Delta State, the survival of family businesses is significantly related to leadership succession.
- ii. Also, the survival of family business is significantly associated with mentoring.
- iii. That the survival of family business is directly related to the provision of quality service

## CONCLUSION

Following the study's findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

The study concludes that the survival of the family business is significantly and positively related to leadership succession. Additionally, mentoring is an appropriate form of support, which provides mentees with the possibility to improve their management skills and learn through action with the support of business experience. A business mentoring program will help both mentors and mentees to develop their potential and upgrade their expertise. Effective mentoring can be associated with positive work behaviours, improve performance and contribute to succession planning because those who have been mentored are more likely to become mentors themselves.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions are given considering the study's analysis of its findings and conclusion:

- i. Business organizations whether small, medium or large, should take mentorship, especially career support, knowledge transfer and psychosocial support seriously because it has a positive effect on improving both employee and business performance.
- ii. The management should also provide equitable opportunities for employees to feel motivated to improve their knowledge, skills and attitude. This will allow employees, improve their personal brand which may encourage their appointment in leadership position.
- iii. Business owners should develop policies on succession planning to avoid crisis that may arise over

who takes over the management of the business when the need arises.

iv. Business owners should strive to improve the quality of their services to train their customers loyalty and ultimately their own business survival.

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