



Effect of Leadership Succession Management Crises on Family-Owned Businesses in Benin-City, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Despite the relevance of family-owned businesses (FOB) to economic development, leadership succession management crises could constitute bane to their multigenerational continuity globally and Nigeria inclusive. The study therefore, determined the factors that affect leadership succession management and their implications to business continuity. The study adopted the survey research design and a 35-item structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaire was validated and tested to be reliable with 0.79 as the reliability co-efficient value. The mean and standard deviation answered the research questions and determined the respondents' homogeneity respectively while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed among others that family background/cultural traits, personality traits, professionalism/educational background could affect leadership succession choice. It was recommended among others that the potential candidate's interest should be highly considered and that succession plan should be regarded as a potent tool for effective leadership succession management in other to ensure smooth transition process devoid of acrimony, upheaval and conflict to guarantee FOB multigenerational continuity.

Keywords: Business continuity, Family-owned business, Leadership succession, Management crises

1. Introduction

The high prevalence of the moribund rate of family-owned businesses (FOB) globally and Nigeria inclusive is alarming. Despite their relevance to economic development in Nigeria and Benin-City in particular, leadership succession management crises constitute bane to the continuity of most of the businesses from one successive generation to another. Onuoha (2013) and Eghaghe (2021) stated that researches showed that family business make over 70% impacts on global gross domestic products. Onuoha (2013) and Verma, Chatterjee and Sen (2017) posited that about 70% - 90% of family business face the problem of continuity and do not survive to the 2nd or 3rd generation due to

leadership succession challenges. Nwadukwe (2012) noted with dismay the disappearance of most family-owned businesses in Igbo land as a result of succession management crises which hitherto contributed to wealth and employment creation. Bozer, Levin and Santora, (2017) stated that leadership succession is one of the major challenges facing family-owned businesses globally. The consequences of leadership management crises in any sector including business could be enormous, which include conflicts, upheaval, acrimony among others. Many scholars have decried the negative effect leadership succession crises to business continuity and family harmony. Blumentritt, Matthew and Marchision



(2013) posited that the demise of a founder/leader and the process of transferring leadership from one generation to the next could constitute serious bane to family-owned business continuity. Marler, Botero and De-Massis (2017) stated that the moribund of family-owned business as a result of poor process of generational transfer is one of the challenges facing family-owned business.

Family business succession is the transfer of both managerial control and ownership of business from one generation of leader to other successive generation of leaders within the family circle. The definition of family-owned business is subjective as there is no universally acceptable definition but there exist common elements of family relationship either by blood, marriage or law. According to Carmon and Pearson (2013) family business dates back to civilization and it is regarded as the commonest form of business globally. Many scholars corroborated the idea of the multiplicity and heterogeneous nature of family-owned businesses globally, (Onuoha (2013) and Wang et al (2015). They form bulk of the businesses at the grassroots level which address the push factor-needs of employment generation, poverty alleviation and contribute immensely to Gross Domestic Products (GDP) among others. Studies showed that 87% of American businesses are family owned which contributes 54% to US GDP and 59% to employment generation and the case of Nigeria would better be imagined. Reports equally shown that about 39.65% Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises operated in Nigeria as at 2020 and 97% of them are small business which contributes significantly to employment generations.

The challenges of who becomes a successor in FOB after the demise of the business founder-manager is a herculean task globally and Nigeria inclusive. Leadership succession practice in Nigeria could be based on customary laws, traditions, lore, belief and orientations. The ethnic

proclivity and cultural tenets may have little variations but with some elements of similarity. The Igbos, Yorubas, Hausas, Edos, Efiki, Ibibios among others may differ in their leadership succession approaches which undoubtedly could be archaic and may constitute bane to business continuity. Noteworthy is that the survival, success, sustainability and continuity of any organization including business could be highly dependent on the effectiveness of leadership choice which may be a strong detractor if not properly handled. The continuity of FOB is crucial to sustain family legacy and contribute to economic development but the problem of who becomes the successor to FOBs has torn so many families apart resulting to conflict, upheaval, hatred and acrimony among family members to the extent that some could even resort to negative means such as court cases, diabolical and assassinations in extreme cases. Apparently, such negativity could possibly lead to the wrong choice of a successor who may lack the required competencies and interest to manage business which could impede business continuity. Helin and Jabri (2016) noted that lack of interest and preparedness on the part of the next generation of leaders may lead to family-owned business discontinuity.

The cultural dimension in Africa and Nigeria in particular especially in a situation whereby the FOB founder died without any form of verbal or written will is a strong detractor to choosing a proficient successor. Cultural dimension to inheritance in Africa especially in Nigeria, Edo State and Benin-City in particular promotes primogeniture which emphasis the right of inheritance solely to the first son as the heir apparent. This could constitute a major source of conflict especially in polygamous families where multiple heirs abound and are qualified. Primogeniture seems to pose serious challenge to the choice of a competent successor in a situation whereby the heir apparent may be



unqualified or unwilling to assume the managerial leadership position. Several factors could play key roles in the selection and choice of a successor such as the candidates' interest, personal attributes, leadership charisma, educational background and knowledge including age and maturity. The interest of candidates and the potential managerial competency are paramount in any managerial position including business which must not be gloss-over. Although different individuals may adopt different approaches to their business succession, such factors must be put into consideration as indices for proper selection which must not be gloss-over. The personal characteristics of the candidates such as communication skills, intelligence, willingness and level of assertiveness among others are crucial in order to ensure effective communication process in the business operation. Though the personal psychological characteristics are latent and covert in candidates but they play significant role in determining the competencies in decision making whether in business, family, organization or public office which could be properly developed through grooming in order to ensure effective performance of the potential successor.

Promotion of FOBs sustainability and continuity including the business and family legacies is sacrosanct but the task of how to make the right choice of a proficient successor could be enormous which needs not to be handled with levity rather with utmost diligence, carefulness, diplomacy and wisdom without recourse to cultural bias, prejudice or sentiment. Cultural factor differs from certain theories that guide the choice of a successor such as common sense, vicious circle and scape-goating theories among others. However, Pounder (2015) noted the relevance of cultural traits to family-owned business setting which serves as a valuable impetus to successive generations to imbibe traditions and cultural ways of doing business in order to promote

both the business and family legacies. The challenge of how to identify the right personnel with the requisite competencies and personality traits especially in a polygamous family where multiple heirs abound must not be gloss-over in order to match the individual with the managerial task.

Therefore, there is no gain say that all FOB operators would passionately desire their business continuity even after their demise. They may not also be oblivious of the fact that effective leadership transition change is crucial to their business survival, sustainability and continuity but their preparedness to surmount challenges facing succession practice remains doubtful. The study therefore, is aimed at determining the challenges facing leadership succession management among FOB in Benin-City in order to suggest possible strategies that could lead to effective leadership transition devoid of acrimony and conflict to ensure business continuity.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do family background/cultural traits influence leadership succession choice in FOB?
2. To what extent do leadership traits influence succession choice?
3. To what extent does professionalism/education influence leadership succession choice?
4. What are the strategies to be adopted for effective leadership succession change?

Hypotheses

1. Business founders and inherited owners of family businesses do not differ significantly in their opinions on the challenges facing leadership succession change.
2. Male and female family-business operators do not differ significantly in their opinions on the strategies to be adopted for effective leadership succession choice.

2. Literature Review

Family-owned business (FOB) is the commonest form of small-scale businesses



worldwide and Nigeria inclusive. Onyeukwu, and Jekelle, (2019) described family business succession as the transfer of management and ownership of business through mentoring and human capital development. Musa and Semasinghe (2014) noted that the greatest problem facing small family business is succession and that many businesses die with their founders globally including Nigeria. Leadership succession in family-owned business has no defined strategies or systematic processes for implementation which most times affect business continuity beyond the first generation (Santarelli and Lotti, (2005), Fang et al., (2015). Williams and Preisser (2003) argued that lack of preparedness of founders/leaders to have intergenerational transfer affects business continuity. Tataglu, Kalu and Glaister (2008) stated that succession in family business carry a greater risk of failure since the number of potential successors is limited largely in families. Managing succession from one generation of executives to the next is one of the issues that family businesses face (Paul, Dalpiaz, and Phillips, 2014). According to (Aladejebi, 2021) 70% of family businesses are expected to survive in the second generation, and 90% will fail in the third due to succession crises. Mokhber, Rashid, Vakilbashi, Zamil, and Seng (2017) posited that seventy percent of family-owned businesses fail to survive into the second generation, and 88 percent fail to survive into the third due to succession challenges. Due to a lack of capacity to plan for succession and transition, most family businesses do not survive beyond the first generation of owners (Mokhbar et al.; 2017).

In many family businesses, there are no defined strategies or systematic processes for implementing succession, which is why many family businesses do not survive beyond the first generation (Santarelli and Lotti, 2005, Fang et al., 2015). Onuoha (2013) emphasized the relevance of professionalizing FOBs to their effective

management and sustainability as well as managing conflict. Owner-managers usually avoid discussion about succession planning with hostility when it relates to their demise which affects family harmony and business continuity after their demise. OyeLadu, (2020); Sharm et al (2001) and Ogundele et al, (2012) stated that when most business owners considered the consequences of preparing a suitable successor as a way of acknowledging their mortality and planning for their demise, they therefore avoid it. Bozer, King and Santora (2015) noted that leadership related crisis could disrupt business which is capable of putting the business operation on hold. Ogundele et al (2012) posited that lack of interest by a potential successor and the choice of a wrong successor may raise upheaval among siblings and that the varying customary laws of the people also affects succession. Liu et al (2013) in Brown (2014) argued that conflict usually arise in family business as a result of nepotism which affects business. Corbetta and Salvato (2012) identified co-opting unqualified members into leadership position as one of the factors affecting family-owned businesses.

Personal characteristics play significant role in managerial position, though they seem to be in latent or covert form. They determine the competencies in decision making whether in businesses, organizations or public office. Olubiyi (2021) posited that many businesses fail not necessarily because of economic reasons or hostile business environment but because of poor management skilled which are crucial for business success and continuity. Effective management is crucial to any leadership position including business. The leadership potentials of a successor include intelligence, personality, managerial skills, situational response, ethics and values among others. Leaders are expected to know the objectives of management at their finger-tips. Some managerial skills that could be adopted include; conceptual skills,



human skills and technical skills. These skills are latent in human but could be spurred through training and retraining to make them effective. The skills would enable the successor to conceptualize, delegate, motivate, communicate, decide promptly and wisely, manage conflict, understand team dynamics, selecting and developing the right persons for the right position among others. These would enable the business to grow, be sustained and continued from one successive generation to another when the right persons with good leadership skills are selected to succeed family-owned business.

Empirical Review

Zeida and Berkes (2021) carried out a study to determine the relationship between leadership practices and its impact on family business performance for the first and second generation of leaders in Lebanon. The main aim of the study was to detect the relationship binding the individual relationship practices and to specifically ascertain the factors that boost family business continuity. They adopted the survey research design approach and administered 300 questionnaires on 300 family business owners. The findings revealed that some positive significant relationship exist between leadership practice and family business for the first and second generation in the study area. The study did not examine the implication of leadership challenge to family-owned business continuity which this study intends to examine.

Aladejebi (2021) carried out a study titled; succession planning: A key to sustainable family business in Lagos-Nigeria. The study acknowledged the high level of failure rate in FOB to the third generation and examined the strategies family business owners adopt to implement succession planning required for their business continuity. A qualitative multiple case study was adopted using a sample-size of four Nigerian family business that have operated more than a decade and interview

was also conducted. The findings revealed that some factors affecting succession planning and business owners' determination on the choice of a successor with sentiment include managerial abilities, personal attitude, gender and religious bias for the potential successor. The study is similar to the current study but was carried out in Lagos, western part of Nigeria and it overlooked probable family conflict and disharmony arising from succession which the current study intends to examine.

Ng Cho Kin (2020) carried out a study to investigate factors affecting business succession in the food hawking business in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The study determined the effect of environment, operating hours, successor willingness, relationship among family members and the preparedness of heirs on the intention to succeed hawking business. The study adopted the survey research design approach on 208 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that vending environment, successors' willingness and their level of preparedness to succeed the business have significant impact on the intention of family business succession in the food hawking businesses in the study area. The study though similar but specified a particular aspect of family business, hawking but the current study examined family businesses holistically.

Saan, Enu-Kwesi and Nyweie (2018) carried out a study on the factors influencing succession planning for continuity of family-owned businesses in Wa Municipality, Ghana. The study determined the relevance of succession planning in ensuring the continuity and prosperity of family businesses in the study area. The survey research design was adopted and 205 respondents were randomly selected from a population of 440 family business owners. The interview technique was used for data gathering and the findings revealed that the founders' educational level significantly influence



succession and the communication process. The study is similar to the current study and it filled the gap in knowledge of the relevance of succession planning to business continuity but overlooked the implications of leadership succession crises to family harmony which the present study intends to examine.

Theoretical Framework

Certain theories guide the choice of a successor which includes common sense, vicious circle and ritual-scapegoating theories of succession. On the other hand, certain models guide FOB operations which include the three-cycle, three-dimension developmental and balance models which provide guiding principles to governance structure and business operations in family-owned businesses. For the purpose of this study the stewardship theory and the upper echelon theories will be adopted. The stewardship theory propounded by Donaldson and Davis (1989) emphasized the building, nurturing and passing on of enhanced legacies to future generations and holds the view that if managers are left on their own, they should act as responsible stewards of the assets they control. The upper echelon theory published by Donald C. Hambrick and Phyllis, A. Mason in 1984 emphasized that organisational outcome is partially predicted by the managerial background competencies of the top management team. The theory holds the view that the values and beliefs held by top managers are to be considered to be of utmost importance to organisational outcomes and strategies.

Noteworthy is that the managerial competencies of a top manager or chief executive could either positively or negatively influence the organizational performance, success and continuity including family businesses. The managerial competencies of CEO are highly sacrosanct to organisational effectiveness and efficiency in setting goals, decision making, resource control (both human and materials), actualizing the

vision to attain the set goal with high level of commitment which could be both affective and normative.

3. Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and the infinite population comprised all the multifaceted micro and Small Businesses owned and managed by family members in Benin-City and 100 were selected as samples representatives using the convenient sampling technique. Four research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated tested at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument used for data collection was a 40-item structured questionnaire which was divided into four subsections with a response set of high Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Fairly Moderate Extent (FME) and Low Extent (LE) having nominal values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively while the standard mean score is 2.5. The questionnaire was validated by three professionals from Entrepreneurship and Business Administration as well as Measurement and Evaluation. It was tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha and the co-efficient value obtained was 0.85. The research questions were answered with descriptive statistical tool of mean while the standard deviation determined the homogeneity of the respondents' responses. The hypotheses were tested using t-test inferential statistical tool via statistical product and solution service (SPSS) at 0.05 level of significance. The extent will be regarded high when the mean value is greater than the standard mean score and low extent when it is lower than the standard mean score. Any value less than the probability value is regarded to have positive implication and negative when is greater.



Estimation of Result

Table 1: Mean rating and standard deviation on the extent to which family background/cultural traits influence the choice of a business successor

Family background/cultural Traits and Choice of Business Successor				
S/N	Items	Mean	StD	Remarks
1	Family/cultural traits do not influence the choice of a business successor.	1.31	0.66	LE
2	FOB succession is the inheritance right of first son (primogeniture) to the FOB founder as prescribed by culture.	3.16	1.04	HE
3	Cultural bias affects female succession to FOB no matter their level of interest/intelligence/education.	2.57	0.88	ME
4	Cultural bias to first son's inheritance (primogeniture) affects family harmony and the choice of a business successor.	3.45	1.12	HE
5	Lack of interest of the first son affects the choice of FOB leadership successor.	2.74	0.94	ME
6	Multiple first sons in a polygamous family bring about conflict and upheaval in FOB succession management which affect the choice of the business successor.	3.57	1.28	ME
7	High expectations from family members, both immediate and extended affect leadership succession choice.	3.29	1.14	HE
8	Conflicting family and business goals affect business leadership succession	3.22	1.16	HE
Grand Mean		2.91	1.02	ME

Table 1 shows the result of how family background /cultural traits influence the choice of a successor. Total number of respondents N=100. Items Nos 2-8 met the standard mean score while item No 1 did not meet the standard mean score. The

average mean score is 2.91 while the standard deviation is 1.02 which indicates that family background /cultural traits influence the choice of business successor to a moderate extent.

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation on the extent to which leadership traits influence the choice of a business successor.

Leadership Traits and Choice of Business Successor				
S/N	Items	Mean	StD.	Remarks
09	Understanding team dynamics and Conscientiousness	3.02	1.02	HE
10	Effective communication	3.61	1.22	HE
11	Decision making and problem-solving skills	3.38	1.15	HE
12	Emotional intelligence	3.19	1.07	HE
13	Openness and receptiveness	2.76	.93	ME
14	Initiative and creative ability	2.93	.99	ME
15	Consistency in performing task and resilience to achieve set goal	2.61	.83	ME
16	Visionary and insightful	3.17	1.06	HE
17	Honesty and reliability	3.51	1.19	HE
18	Self-control and maturity	2.88	0.98	ME



19	Self-confidence and Risk-taking propensity	2.94	0.87	ME
Grand Mean		3.09	1.03	HE

Table 2 shows the result analysis of the extent to which leadership traits influence the choice of business successor in the study area. Total number of respondents; N=100. Item Nos 9-19 met the standard mean score

and the average mean score is 3.08 while the standard deviation is 1.03. Therefore, leadership traits have high positive influence on the choice of a business successor.

Table 3: Mean rating and standard deviation on how professionalism/education knowledge influences the choice of a business successor.

Professionalism/Educational Knowledge and Choice of Business Successor				
S/N	Items	Mean	StD	Remarks
20	Professionalism/educational knowledge is not a yardstick to choose a good successor.	1.04	0.72	LE
21	Professionalism/educational knowledge and skills are necessary to determine the potential ability of a successor.	3.51	1.22	HE
22	Educational training helps to determine a potential successor's level of knowledge and skill.	3.47	1.20	HE
23	Professionalism/educational knowledge and skills would help successors to develop good business strategies	3.29	1.08	HE
24	Professionalism/educational knowledge and skills would help successor focus on customer acquisition and retention management.	2.96	0.99	ME
25	Professionalism/educational knowledge and skills would equip successor with relevant knowledge and skills on how to harmonize interest with business goals and promote family legacy including business continuity.	2.93	0.97	ME
26	Professionalism/educational knowledge and skills will promote successor's strategic thinking and problem solving as well as management techniques.	2.81	0.73	ME
Grand Mean		2.85	0.91	ME

Table 3 shows the result analysis of how professionalism/educational knowledge could influence the choice of business successor in the study area. Total number of respondents; N=100. Item Nos 20-26 met the standard mean score and the average

mean score is 2.85 while the standard deviation is 0.91. This indicates that respondent agreed that professionalism/educational knowledge have positive influence on the choice of a business successor.



Table 4: Mean rating and standard deviation on the strategies to be adopted for effective leadership succession change

Strategies for Effective Leadership Transition Process

Table with 5 columns: S/N, Items, Mean, StD, Remark. Rows include items 27-35 and a Grand Mean row.

Table 4 shows the result analysis of the strategies to be adopted in the choice of a successor. Total number of respondents N=100. Items Nos 27, 29, 30, 32-35 met the standard mean score while item No 28 and 31 did not meet the standard mean score.

business successor will facilitate the effective leadership transition process to moderate extent.

Hypotheses Testing

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of inherited business owners and founders of Family businesses on the challenges facing the choice of business successors.

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test of Mean Difference in responses between inherited business owners and founders of family business on the challenges facing their choice of business successors

Table with 7 columns: N, Mean, Std. Dev., df, t-value, p-value (Sig. 2-tailed). Rows for Founder and Inherited.

alpha = .05, p < .05= Significant

Table 4 showed Difference in Responses of founders and inherited owners of family businesses with respect to challenges facing

the choice of business successors. Numbers of business founder respondents- N=68; Mean (Standard Deviation) are 28.53 (3.17) while number of inherited business owner



respondents are N= 32; Mean (Standard Deviation) are 24.64 (3.02). The t-value = .104 while the P-value is greater than alpha (.05) that is (.821 < .05), therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. It shows that business founders and inherited owners of

family businesses face the same challenges in leadership succession change.

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female family business owners on the strategies to be adopted to ensure effective leadership succession choice in the study area.

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test of Mean Difference in responses between male and female family business owners with respect to the strategies to be adopted in the choice of business successors.

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)
Male	72	32.74	4.07	98	3.424	.003
Female	28	16.23	3.21			

$\alpha = .05, p < .05 = \text{Significant}$

Table 6 showed a difference in the responses of male and female family business owners on the strategies to be adopted in the choice of business successors. Numbers of male respondents-N= 72; Mean (Standard Deviation) are 32.74 (4.07) while the Female, N= 28; Mean (Standard Deviation) are 16.23 (3.21). The t-value = 3.424 while the P-value is less than alpha (.05) which is (.001 > .05), therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected which indicates a significant difference.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that family background/cultural traits affect the choice of successors which constituted conflict, upheaval and bane to effective transition process. Noteworthy is that cultural traits and family lore are rooted in traditions and custom of a people which may dictate the turn of primogeniture in accordance with African traditions which undoubted would raise conflict among family members. This corroborates with Ogudele, Idris and Ahmed-Ogundikpe (2021) assertion which stated that native law and customs as well as multi-cultural nature of Nigeria, constitute myriads of problems to family-

owned business succession. However, Pounder (2015) supports the idea to imbibe cultural trait into business and noted the relevance of cultural traits to family-owned business setting as valuable impetus to successive generations in order to imbibe traditions and cultural ways of doing business to promote both the business and family legacies. Nevertheless, family ties/culture could obviously play great role in the behaviour and attitude of persons

which could reflect in the way they do business. These attitudes are characteristics of the individuals which forms their personalities dispositions in terms of temperament, self-control, risk taking propensity, tolerance for ambiguity and the business success or failure dependent on them. This is in agreement with Ehigiamusoe (2023) who affirms that, who the business owner is, in terms of training, experience, interest and temperament is crucial to business success or failure.

The findings also revealed the relevance of professionalism and educational knowledge as good attributes to the choice of a successor. Education is key to knowledge which would broaden their horizon and skills in decision making, insightfulness,



proactiveness, strategic planning, problem-solving, negotiations and management of both human and material resources in the business organisations. The finding is in consonance with Awosanya (2019) who stated the need for education to support the knowledge need for effective transition of family business to successive generation including the business continuity and family harmony. Professionalism and education would give the assurance of the candidates' managerial skill which would facilitate the smooth running of the business operation and ensure the survival and continuity. This conforms with Olubiyi (2021) who posited that many businesses fail not necessarily because of economic reasons or hostile business environment but because of poor management skill which are crucial for business success and continuity. Therefore, effective management is key to any leadership position including family-owned business.

The indispensable role of leadership traits cum choice of a successor was also revealed which must form the focal point of succession change to ensure the wise choice of a successor. Such leadership traits include emotional intelligence, effective communication skill, tolerance for ambiguity, receptiveness, good interpersonal relationship, visionary, goal and people oriented as well as have values for ethical considerations and passion for business success and continuity. When the right person with leadership skill is chosen as a successor it would promote the business growth, sustained and continued from one successive generation to another. Effective communication, resource management and passion about the business success through quality products and services delivery would be guaranteed that could promote the business continuity and sustained family legacy. The finding is in consonance with Johnson (2020) who identified valuable human capital as key construct for talent management in leadership succession in family-owned

business. The crucial role of succession planning to effective leadership change and the interest of the potential successor was found to be inherent.

Inherited business owners and founders of Family businesses did not differ in their opinions on the challenges facing the choice of business successors neither did male and female business owners differ in their opinions on the strategies to be adopted for the choice of a competent successor in the study area.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Considering the relevance of FOB to economic development in Nigeria and Benin-City in particular, the choice of a competent successor in order to ensure business continuity is worthwhile. Therefore, possible intervention strategy to surmount the challenges in order to ensure effective, smooth and peaceful transition devoid of upheaval and acrimony is imperative. The findings determined that cultural traits have continuously played a pivotal role in succession process but could impede the choice of a competent successor where acrimony and conflict exist in a family setting. Many factors could be inherent in the selection and choice of a credible successor apart from cultural factor which may include personality traits, leadership skills and professional skills but the interest of the candidate was found to be crucial which must not be glossed over. Therefore, succession plan is sacrosanct to effective succession process which would facilitate peace transition process devoid of acrimony, upheaval and conflicts in order to promote family business multigenerational continuity in Benin-City.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion the following recommendations were made

1. Family business operators should adopt succession plan in order to ensure effective succession process devoid of acrimony, upheaval and conflicts.



2. The potential successor's interest should be highly considered.
3. The chosen candidates should be properly groom to enable him/her perform maximally through apprenticeship, seminar, or formal education.
4. How the past business leaders should be carried along and cared for should be well spelt out.
5. The business should be institutionalized as an entity to have board members.

6. Contribution to Knowledge

The enormous task of who succeeds a business has torn so many families apart and ruined business continuity which hitherto contributes to economic development in Nigeria. Therefore, the study provides an impetus to effective leadership succession practice devoid of acrimony, upheaval and conflict that would promote family harmony, business legacy and multigenerational continuity.

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