

## **Factors Influencing Successor Selection During Succession Planning on Growth Of Family Businesses within Moshi Municipality Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

The study assessed factors influencing the successor selection process during succession planning on growth of family business within Moshi municipality. The objective of the study was to assess factors influencing successor selection on growth of family business within Moshi Municipality. The study was guided by the structural organization theory Gidness (1986). A convergent parallel research design was used with a mixed research approach involving quantitative and qualitative data collection. The target population was 302 family businesses and the sample size was 120 respondents. Both probability and non-probability procedures were used to select the respondents. Data was collected via self-administered questionnaires and interview guides. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from managerial level respondents and employees in respective family businesses. Probability sampling was used to select registered and active family businesses and simple random sampling techniques were used to obtain employees from selected family businesses. The research tools were validated through member checking and reliability was ensured using the Cronbach alpha coefficient test. It was found that most family businesses within Moshi Municipality still have problems in succession planning. The findings reveal the factors influencing successor selection that have a huge impact in family business if applied. Majority of selected family businesses were very aware of these factors. However not all of them took these factors into consideration during the successor selection process. This is due to lack of formal business practices. While Organization structure and contract state whether permanent or probational are minor factors. Therefore, the study recommended that for long sustainability of the family business, the indicated factors must be taken into consideration during successors selection procedure, and succession planning towards growth of family business.

**Keywords:** Succession planning, family business, growth, factors and process.

## 1. Introduction

Researchers in business management have long recognized that enterprises as the engine of most economies in the world, and has acknowledged their significant roles in economic growth, employment and wealth creation (Le Roux and Bengesi, (2014); Batsakis, (2014); Nkwe, (2012); Burton et al., (2012). In the developing economies, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) comprise the majority of businesses in the world (Le Roux and Bengesi, (2014). SMEs contribute to more than one-third of gross domestic product (GDP), and to 34 percent of formal employment in emerging economies, 41 percent in developed economies and 52 percent in developing economies (ILO, 2017). In Tanzania, SMEs are estimated to contribute 27 percent of national GDP and employ about 5.2m people (URT, 2019a, b). According to studies by Bengesi and Le Roux, (2014a) and URT (2019a, b), the contribution of the SMEs sector to Tanzania's GDP and employment is likely underestimated because of poor business record keeping and a low level of formalization.

Daspit et al. (2015) points out that most SMEs in the world are family businesses. A family business is a business in which the majority of the ownership and control lies within the family members who are directly involved in day-to-day business operations (Poza, 2014). Hnatek (2015) adds that family businesses, which are a type of entrepreneurship, account for majority of businesses in the world. Family businesses are estimated to form 80 to 98 percent of all businesses worldwide (Poza and Daugherty, 2013). They are acknowledged to have a significant contribution to the growth of the world economy (ILO, 2017), and are estimated to contribute 70–90 percent of annual GDP in the majority of countries (Family Firm Institute, employ between 50 and 70 percent of the working population (Poza and Daugherty, 2013).

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey indicated that slightly more than one third of independent business owners planned to exit their business within the next five (5) years, and within the next ten (10) years two-thirds of owners planned to exit their business (McMullen and Warnick, 2015). The survey also found that SMEs were not adequately prepared for their business succession as only 10% of owners had a formal, written succession plan; 38% had an informal, unwritten plan; and the remaining 52% did not have any succession plan at all. These findings show how succession planning was a challenge to continuity and overall business performance of SMEs.

A study by Prasanna et al, (2015) established that it was necessary for companies to leverage technology to drive an actionable succession planning program following previous findings that 62% of companies still relied on a paper-based solution.

On the African front, succession planning is one of the basic and fundamental goals for organizations and firm growth or survival, and while the survival of any organization is through effective succession planning. Osinbajo, (2011) noted that it is imperative to employ some strategic human development concepts in order to achieve organizational goals, bearing in mind that human resource plays a vital role. Studies have shown that firms that fails to strategically put in place a well-articulated effective succession planning policy will definitely encounter the problem of continuous existence and survival that may likely lead to liquidation. In South Africa for example while looking at the case of succession planning, Ajay et al, (2012) noted that succession planning is a major problem within Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises in Johannesburg. Small enterprises did not have any preference on either recruiting from outside or even developing inside talent while in their process of preparation for succession planning.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Family businesses like other businesses face different obstacles which hinder business growth and some of them survive for a very short time. According to Asokoinsight newsletter (2019), it was noted that among Tanzania's largest businesses, nearly 20% of 124 firms earning more than 15 million USD a year are family owned, contribution to employment and job creation has been reported. Sustaining family business and controlling external factors is paramount to the continuity and passing over the business to the next generation. Currently, there are a few family-owned businesses in Tanzania that have survived to the second, third and fourth generation. A study by Khugshal, (2012) on succession in the family firm, indicates that when family members work together, emotions may interfere with business decisions. Conflicts may arise as relatives see the business from different perspectives. Magasi (2021) on succession planning indicates that it remains unclear how lack of management succession relates to the collapse of 87% of Tanzania family-owned manufacturing business after the first generation. The question whether from background variables namely, executive education level, business age and business nature moderate the relationship between management succession planning and survival of family-owned business remain unanswered. The studies above have not established the reasons as to why many family businesses decline or why growth is like a nightmare to family-owned businesses when the business founder die. It is in this light that this paper sought to find out factors that influence the successor selection process used during succession planning on growth of family-owned businesses within Moshi Municipality.

## **3. Objective of the Study**

To find out factors influencing successor selection process during succession planning on growth of family business within Moshi Municipality.

### **Research question**

What are the factors influencing the successor selection process during succession planning on growth of family business within Moshi Municipality?

## **4. Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by Structural organization theory concerned with vertical differentiations hierarchical levels of organizational authority and coordination, and horizontal differentiations between organizational units such as those between product or service lines, geographical areas, or skills (Giddness, 1986). Modern structural tenets are similar to Classical structural thinking: organizational efficiency is the essence of organizational rationality; The goal of rationality is to increase the production of wealth in terms of goods and services. Modern structuralisms are concerned with many of the same issues that the classical social structuralists were, but their theories have been influenced by and benefited greatly from advancements in organization theory since the Second World War. Specialization and the division of labor increase the quality and quantity of production, particularly in highly skilled workers.

### **Relevancy of the theory**

The organization structure theory is helpful in the succession process in terms of identifying leadership capability in developing programs depending on each department. Moreover, the theory helped organizations in provision of training programs so as to improve work performance for the successor. Structural theory also helped to prepare the successful leader

based on good structure organizations together with potential skills through developmental leadership activities, so as to familiarize the candidates with leadership duties.

## 5. Reviews of Empirical Studies

Succession management involves identifying and developing current employees with potential to fill key positions, as well as identifying gaps and developing strategies to address the need. Succession process can be used in the recognition of a very important position in the business and creating a talent pipeline by preparing employees to fill a vacancy in their organization as others retire or leave the company.

According to Esuh et al. (2011), business failures are a common feature amidst abundant studies on succession in family business. The authors posited that the failures arose due to the fact that the issue of succession and how it affects family business continuity was yet to be addressed. While agreeing that continuity is important in succession considerations and requires a process, the authors failed to include the process dimension in their model.

Agbim, (2019) sought to determine succession practices to successful succession and post-succession performance, and the role of these practices in the post-succession financial and non-financial performance of family-owned SMEs. The adopted quantitative methodology was interviewed. In each of the possessively selected 25 family-owned SMEs, the incumbent, a sibling of the incumbent and a top-level manager were interviewed. In all, 75 respondents were interviewed. The transcribed interviews were subjected to thematic content analysis. The succession planning practices to successful succession are the characteristics of succession planning, the incumbent, the potential successor, and the family-owned SME. The factors that contribute to the post-succession performance are the culture of making succession planning a continuous process, and the characteristics of the incumbent and the family-owned SME. These practices ensure that children of the incumbent in the SME become more active so as to be selected as potential successors. The study identified the contributory factors to successful succession and post-succession performance of the family-owned SMEs. To achieve successful succession and post-succession performance, the incumbents should inculcate the characteristics of these factors into their potential successors. Also, these characteristics should be made part of the culture of the family-owned SMEs.

Tonya (2015) conducted a study on strategic succession planning and sustainability of transport enterprises in Njombe and Iringa regions. The aim of the study was to explore whether strategic succession planning influences the sustainability of transport enterprises. The study was guided by trait and behavioral theories of leadership management. Findings revealed that the causal factors influencing the higher failure rate of transport business and its sustainability includes lack of strategic succession planning particularly in the case of the first-generation retirement from the transport business.

Rivolta (2018) conducted a study on Heir to the Throne. The aim of the study was to analysed firms' choice in replacing CEOs after unexpected successor turnovers, and the impact of the replacement decision on shareholder wealth. The findings indicated that selection and replacement of CEO from the existing board members allows the company to fill the CEO position quickly and hence reducing uncertainty and transitional costs. The researcher argued that quick selection and replacement of CEO may not be beneficial to shareholders because of the CEO being not well developed for that position. Purpose to examine succession planning and performance of family-owned and SMEs (Kiwia & Bengesi, 2019). Their findings revealed that most family-owned SMEs founders in the study area had mechanisms for succession planning for their businesses. There is a difference in business performance when successors are selected and prepared by business founders compared to when they are selected and prepared by other family members. Successors selected and prepared by business

founders performed better in business than successors who were selected and prepared by other family members.

### **6. Knowledge Gap.**

A number of studies and researches have been done on various aspects of successful succession of family business but not much research focusing on factors influencing succession planning of family business growth. Tonya (2015) conducted a study on strategic succession planning and sustainability of transport enterprises in Njombe and Iringa regions. Aim of the study was to explore whether strategic succession planning influences the sustainability of transport enterprises. The study was guided by trait and behavioural theories of leadership management. Findings revealed that the causal factors influencing the higher failure rate of transport business and its sustainability included lack of strategic succession planning particularly in the case of the first-generation retirement from the transport business. Furthermore, Dusor, (2020) investigated the importance of succession planning, factors influencing succession planning and practices in succession planning in family businesses but he did not indicate how the succession planning can help in maintaining the business continuity. According to the Bata, (2012) study, its aim was to describe problems connected with succession and generational transition in family-owned businesses. The study examined how family-owned businesses can be characterized along with the general position of family companies in the economy. The study took an insightful influence of succession planning on growth of family business.

The main focus of this study was to check out factors influencing the successor selection process used during succession planning in family business within Moshi municipality. The research was identifying gaps from the geographical location point of view, whereby other researchers conducted their research outside the Moshi municipality. The research gap was especially on the successor selection process during succession planning which was a different concept from the other researchers.

### **7. Research Methodology**

The research was conducted in Kilimanjaro Region on different family businesses found within Moshi Municipality. The area was chosen to represent other family businesses in Kilimanjaro. The research design used in this study is convergent parallel design involving collection of qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously for the purpose of understanding the research problem (Creswell, 2012). The purpose of this design is to have both forms of data whereby the weakness of one form of data is supplemented by the strength of the other form. Questionnaires were used to collect qualitative data on the factors influencing succession plan from employees and interviews of administrative level at the same time and checked if the answers agreed or disagreed to each other. The design was considered to be favorable due to limited resources in terms of financial, human and time resources. Also, it provided useful data for simple statistical description and interpretations.

The target population of the study was 302 registered and active family businesses within Moshi municipality. The representative target population of 32 registered and active family businesses which is approximately 10% the businesses. In each selected family business, the researcher selected four representatives that brought the sample size to 120 as determined by Kerlinger (2004). Accordingly, a good representative sample should range from 10% to 30% of the target population.



The quantitative and qualitative data were collected from managerial level respondents and employees in the respective family business. Probability sampling was used to select registered and active family businesses and simple random sampling techniques to obtain employees from selected family businesses. Questionnaires were used to collect data from family business employees while interview guides gathered additional information from managerial level. The research tools were validated through member checking and reliability was ensured using the Cronbach alpha coefficient test.

Moreover, Informant Interviews were done to collect qualitative data from the owner or chief executive officers from different family businesses. Interviews were conducted with 4 key informants selected based on their knowledge on factors of succession planning in successor selection. The key informants included purposely selected top management of the family business.

Quantitative data was coded, cleaned and analyzed based on descriptive data and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The information from the database was made into frequency tables of chosen variables.

## 8. Research Findings

### Factors influencing the successor selection used during succession planning on growth of family business.

This study aimed to assess the factors influencing successor selection process during succession planning towards growth of family business within Moshi Municipality. Family business employees and management team were asked to indicate the level of agreement to which different factors influence the successor selection process during succession planning. Responses to this question are summarized in Tables 1.1 respectively

**Table 1.1 Factors that influence successor selection during succession planning.**

<b>Factors influencing</b>	<b>LE n(%)</b>	<b>ME n(%)</b>	<b>HE n(%)</b>	<b>M(mean)</b>
<b>Organizational structure</b>	8 (8.1)	50 (50.5)	41 (41.4)	2.33
<b>Qualification of the candidates</b>	1 (1.0)	19 (19.2)	79 (79.8)	2.79
<b>Experience of the candidates</b>	0(0)	3(3.0)	96(97)	2.97
<b>Training and development</b>	0(0)	11 (11.1)	99 (97.0)	2.89
<b>Recruitment and selection process</b>	1 (1.0)	7 (7.1)	88 (88.9)	2.91
<b>Organization policy</b>	3 (3.0)	29 (29.3)	66 (66.7)	2.95
<b>Competence of the successor</b>	2(2.0)	34 (34.3)	63 (63.7)	2.62
<b>Willingness to takeover position</b>				
	1 (21.0)	10 (10.1)	88 (88.9)	2.88
<b>Commitment to the position</b>	1(1.1)	7 (7.1)	91(91.8)	2.90
<b>Contract state weather permanent or probation</b>				
	5 (5.1)	10 (10.1)	84 (84.8)	2.80

**Source: field data (2022)**

Data in table 1.1 show that a mean score of 50 (2.33) as a moderate level of extent indicate that organizational structure is a factor that influences succession planning in the family business. On the other hand, a high extent with 41 (41.4%) respondents indicate that presence of organization structure has helped organizations to clarify duties and responsibility so as to look at which candidate is qualified to be a successor. Moreover 8(8.1%) with the level of low extent suggests that few employees are not aware if the organization structure was influencing

selection of a successor. This situation might lead to the loss of accountability and awareness within an organization. According to Ngailo (2016) most family enterprises do not have proper organization structures that show who is responsible for doing what in the enterprises. In short, he means that there is no clear division of roles and responsibilities which may result in everybody literally doing things anyhow. Although this offers flexibility and keeps away possibilities of creating gaps in services provision, the same can bring serious confusion especially in managing finance. For instance, when a problem occurs, each member in the family business may end up denying accountability and blame someone else for the fault. When one of the family business members was interviewed on the issue of the succession planning system used in the organization the following response was given,

*“I think organization structure is important but it depends on how the business operates in terms of how big. In my view the selection process is practiced based on the looking of organization structure or formal way and it is applied by few businesses. Most family businesses contain a big number of family members as employees. one can be proposed and selected by the family to take over the position or sometimes the business owner of the family business may decide who will be the successor”* (Interview. June 2022).

This means family businesses recognize the importance of organization structure but they don't implement it due to the size and nature of the businesses. Family business should not be practiced differently as other businesses if growth is the target. By following and implementing a kind of policies and structure that can be used as guideline business practice eventually will make the business successful.

Moreover, Table 1.1 reveals that 79 (79.8%) of respondents indicated high extent level to the qualification of the candidate as another factor influencing successor selection in the family business, while moderate extent with 19(19.2%) respondents and low extent only rated by 1(1%) of succession were based on qualifications. This shows that most family business owners support their heir's career nowadays in order to have qualified candidates during the succession process. According to these findings, qualification of candidates is most important in selection of employees or successors in the family business. Ngailo (2016) commented on career opportunity by saying that family enterprises owners pride themselves in being able to provide family members with career opportunities in the enterprise through training so as to take over a key position. When one of the family business owners was interviewed on the issue of the qualification of the candidate if it was necessary during succession, he explain that,

*“Currently business practice is quite different from previously, nowadays business competition is very high compared to the old days. The level of technology is growing rapidly day by day. Entering in the market and staying in the market for a long time need a qualified team member who knows the new business world. Without skilled and well-trained personnel, it is possible for the decline of family businesses. Therefore, the qualification of a candidate is important in selection of a successor. But unfortunately, it is very expensive to acquire a qualified one. That is why most of us owners know how important it is, but the issue is to afford and retain them.”* (Interview. June 2022).

Business success depends on well trained team-work. It is the human resource that brings business dreams into prosperity. Therefore, it is very important for the family business to consider hiring talented and qualified employees for the growth of the business in spite of the size or nature of the business. Having qualified and well-trained employees for a particular job will assure the business success because the successor is at the right place and the right job. The successor's individual factors such as personal goals, qualifications, age, education level, business knowledge and lifestyle have to align well with the business under succession planning (Devins (2015); Bozer et al, (2017)).

Also, data from Table 1.1 revealed that 96 (97.0%) respondents in study, response on the level of high extent. This means that one among of the factor influencing successor selection process is via looking his or her experience of working in the business. These data depict that the candidate experience is neither designed nor equipped with the ability to perform duties and responsibilities in the organization. Few of the family business tend to engage their children in the business at an early stage which cultivate the skills in running family business. By doing so the future heir is prepared for a long time for a position which makes him or her experienced enough to be a successor. This further implies that the family business selection system is structured in a way that it can cause good selection of candidates. Working experiences give greater self-awareness, maturity, independence and self-assurance according to Gronmo (2020).

Competence of successor, the findings in Table 1.1 revealed that 63 (63.6%) of respondents in family business with high extent on the competence of successor to be on among the factors influencing successor selection. This articulates that the competence of the successor influences the selection process. Organization growth needs a competence team that will pass the knowledge concerning family business practices from one person to another.

When one participant from a family business was interviewed on the issue of the competence of successor the following response was given,

*“It's true that the succession process needs a talented successor in the organization, hence it makes it difficult to get competent successors. This is because of the nature as well as the size of the business.”* (Interview, June 2022).

Majority of the family business involved almost 80% of family members as employees and because their business depends on family decision making it difficult to get a qualified member from family members to cover certain positions in the business. So they just appoint someone without considering his/her qualification and competence.

Concerning Training and development, 88 respondents with mean score of (2.89) rates to a high extent. It shows that training and development was one among the factors which influence the successor selection process, which means that skills and knowledge in performing organizations duties is very crucial. Having a well-trained and developed personnel definitely enhances growth of any business. And this factor influences the succession plan process because no one is born knowing everything so training is needed in different aspects in the business concerns. It is obviously a family business based on family lineage, so the knowledge of operating the business is built within a family lineage. As Ngailo(2016) supports that there is transferring of knowledge from one person to another, from one generation to another.

Recruitment and selection of successor gain rated as high extent with mean score of 91 (2.91), this shows respondents support recruitment and selection for a successor selection is powerfully and important in the process of selecting successor. Based on the rules and



regulations of the organization though few respondents rate the factor with a very low mean score which is only 1(1.0) this means that a small percentage of employees don't know if recruitment and selection could be the factor that influence the succession planning process during successor selection. This articulates that the recruitment process can be internal or external, but for the case of family business it depends on the nature and the size of the business. Most of the family businesses tend to recruit from inside, especially when it involves family members to cover in the sensitive areas or department such as management, finance, production, sales and stores. Meanwhile other family businesses prefer both internal and external recruitment especially have branches outside of the municipality, and sometimes tend to recruit people from the area where the family business branch is located. Moreover, Table 1.1 reveals that 66 (2.95) of respondents are to a high extent that organizational policy was a factor influencing the successor selection process. This means that every organization could have their procedures on running and operation hence the policy could be formal or informal. According to these findings, organizational policy is applied in family businesses during the succession process and selection. Although most family members were not aware of the implication of organizational policy. One of the chief executive officers during interview said that

*“Speaking on behalf of my fellow business people, especially family businesses, we lacked policy and regulation for operating a business, we operate it informally. Sometimes I think it depends on how big the organization is. For the case of our company, before expansion we didn't have organization policy so the succession process was conducted very informally. We just selected one member from the family that we wish to hand over the responsibilities but now the business is growing and we have different branches in other regions. Therefore, nowadays we have a professional manager who puts these rules or policies in place. Us, we have different policies nowadays. For example, we have OSHA policy, we have set disciplinary action guidelines and others which I don't remember but I agree with them”* (Interview. June 2022).

Therefore, family business owners understand the contribution of organizational policy in selection of a successor in the organization. Hence, family business should look forward by copying or going with changes in the business world without forgetting compliance. Willingness to take over a position as a factor that influences the succession selection process with mean of 88 (2.91) indicate that most employees in family business were aware and willing for taking positions. Royer et al (2008), asserts that the selection of the family-owned successor should consider his or her suitability in leading and managing the business. It's a voluntary act depending on how the person is related to the family business owner. Selection of a successor should consider willingness of the successor himself or herself, taking into consideration his/her interest, and the commitment to the position. Findings show that (2.90) equal to the 91% of respondents agreed at a higher level of extent to be clear on commitment to the position. While in the contract state whether permanent or probation as a factor also most of the respondents agreed in high extent on the 84 (2.80). This indicates that in order to conduct succession planning, family businesses should look at employees' contracts, other family businesses based on 5 up to 10 years while other family businesses focus on permanent contracts. Experience matters a lot when it comes to successor selection for the sake of family business growth.

## 9. Conclusion and Recommendation

### Conclusion

The study focused on assessing the influence of succession planning on growth of family businesses. Based on the study findings, the following conclusions are made; on the factors influencing successor selection process during succession planning on growth of family business are rated and agreed by majority of family business but sadly only few take those factors into consideration during successor's selection due to the size and nature of the business.

### Recommendation

Basing on research conclusions, the study recommends the following

Family businesses should commit to formulate strategies for improving and applying succession planning at an early stage as well as to create more opportunities for non-family member employees to be part and parcel of family business.

It is also recommended that family businesses should invest in factors that influence the successor selection process for the growth of the business. Recruiting and selection of qualified and willingness of the candidate should be promoted during the successor selection process.

Moreover, family business owners should have a business policy that will guide in the successor selection process to enable succession planning to be successful and in a right time. There is also a need to prepare a will as guidance who will take the position after the retirement or serious illness as well sudden death for peace of the family member who are working with family businesses. The proposed successor should be prepared with appropriate training according to position or job title. Furthermore, the family members within family business should be open about the individual interests, especially what position they are capable of.

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