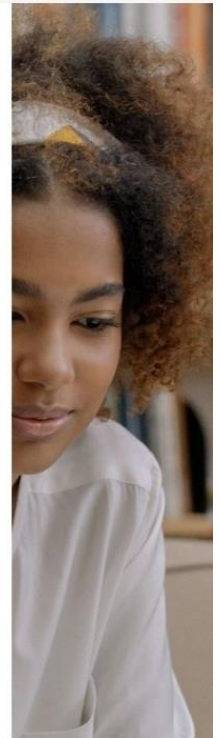




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SUCCESSION PLANING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY OF HOTELS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the relationship between succession planning and business continuity among hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, utilizing convenience and judgmental sampling techniques to select 210 managers from registered hotels in the city. Questionnaires were distributed to all participants, out of which 148 were valid for statistical analysis. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was employed to test the study's three hypotheses. The findings revealed that mentoring, talent management, and supervisory support significantly and positively influence business continuity. Consequently, the study concludes that effective mentoring, talent management, and supervisory support enhance the sustainability and operational continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt. It is therefore recommended that hotel management should focus on attracting, training, and retaining talented employees capable of occupying key positions to promote long-term business continuity.

Keywords: Succession planning, business continuity, mentoring, supervisor support, Talent management.

Introduction

The hospitality industry, particularly hotels, plays a pivotal role in national economic development by generating employment opportunities, providing quality services, promoting tourism, and contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Despite these contributions, the industry in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including inadequate electricity supply, poor road infrastructure, and low customer patronage resulting from reduced purchasing power. Furthermore, high employee turnover caused by retirement, poor managerial practices, ill health, death, aging workforce, or pursuit of better opportunities has further weakened the sector (Samuel & Amah, 2018). Many hotels are also managed by entrepreneurs with limited industry knowledge (Hospitality Institute Report, 2018), leading to frequent business failures. To mitigate such failures, scholars advocate for the adoption of structured succession planning within the hospitality sector.

Succession planning refers to the process of developing long-term strategies for the smooth replacement of key personnel within an organization (Mathis & Jackson, 2006). The essence of succession planning lies in managing and developing top talent to ensure organizational stability and continuity (Samuel & Amah, 2018). Since employee turnover whether voluntary or involuntary is inevitable, organizations lacking effective succession mechanisms are likely to face leadership gaps that may disrupt operations and performance.

Empirical evidence suggests that many Nigerian organizations lack a systematic approach to identifying, grooming, and retaining future leaders (Abdulwaheed, 2013). This shortcoming has resulted in many businesses failing to outlive their founders, especially among small, medium, and large-scale indigenous enterprises (Akinyele et al., 2015). In the hotel industry, the absence of structured succession planning is particularly evident; when key employees retire, resign, or pass away, hotels often struggle to maintain performance due to the lack of prepared successors. This issue is notably prevalent in Port Harcourt, where many hotels fail to incorporate essential succession planning practices such as career development, mentoring, coaching, talent management, supervisory support, and job rotation.

Empirical studies (Adewale et al., 2011; Chinogunum, 2015; Samuel & Amah, 2018) have demonstrated that structured succession planning enhances

organizational survival and strategic stability. By aligning current talent with future leadership needs, succession planning ensures the sustainability of organizational performance and success.

Although several studies (Adewale et al., 2011; Chinogunum, 2015; Mary et al., 2017; Samuel & Amah, 2018) have explored succession planning and organizational survival in sectors such as banking, food services, education, and transportation, limited research exists on hotels in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, few empirical studies have examined the relationship between supervisory support a key dimension of succession planning and business continuity, as most previous works have focused on its relationship with job satisfaction and affective commitment (Baloyi, Waveren & Chan, 2014; Elias & Mittal, 2011; Mohamad & Ali, 2016). This study therefore aims to fill these gaps by examining the relationship between succession planning and business continuity among selected hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Literature Review

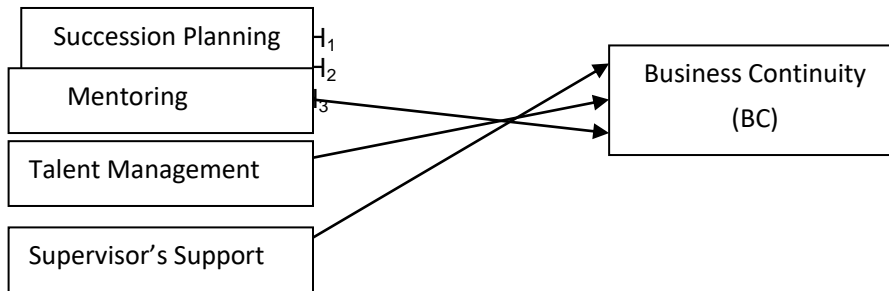
Succession Planning

The concepts of succession planning, replacement planning, and career planning are often used interchangeably, although subtle distinctions exist among them. Cannon and Carson (1982) emphasized that succession planning entails more than merely climbing the corporate hierarchy. Kathryn and Martins (1994) further differentiated these concepts by explaining that replacement planning focuses on identifying specific individuals to fill designated managerial positions, whereas succession planning involves identifying high-potential employees and equipping them with the necessary training, development opportunities, and job assignments to prepare them for future leadership roles. The key distinction lies in scope replacement planning is position-oriented, while succession planning is development-oriented.

Moreover, succession planning differs from career planning, although the two are complementary aspects of human resource management. Career planning focuses on the personal growth and development of individual employees, whereas succession planning centers on ensuring the long-term sustainability and leadership continuity of the organization as a whole.

Berke (2005) described succession planning as a comprehensive approach to identifying, nurturing, and developing a pool of talented individuals capable of assuming leadership positions within an organization. In a similar vein, Onyima (2011) asserted that succession planning involves deliberate organizational efforts to ensure that business operations continue seamlessly even when key leaders or owners exit the organization.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development



Source: Researchers' Model, 2025.

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework on the Relationship between PL and BC.

Mentoring

Mentoring refers to the structured use of selected and trained individuals to provide guidance, advice, and support that foster the professional and personal development of others (Agulanna & Awujo, 2005). According to William, James, and Susan (2002), a mentor is a senior or experienced individual who supervises, guides, and assists junior colleagues by introducing them to relevant networks within the organization and acting as a sponsor for their career progression. Pitney and Ehler (2004) view mentoring as a developmental mechanism that supports the growth and integration of potential leaders into a particular discipline or professional field.

Mentoring serves as a valuable managerial strategy that complements experiential learning and helps employees acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for professional competence. Amah and Jaja (2013, as cited in Samuel & Amah, 2018) describe mentoring as a developmental relationship that enhances an individual's capabilities and broadens their understanding of both immediate and long-term organizational goals. Through effective mentoring, employees gain a clearer understanding of their roles and expectations, thereby improving performance and alignment with organizational standards.

From these perspectives, succession planning can be understood as a proactive and systematic managerial strategy designed to identify, develop, and retain top talent to ensure smooth leadership transitions and long-term organizational success. It represents a critical component of strategic human resource management aimed at fostering stability, sustainability, and continuity in business operations.

Empirical studies (Abomeh & Peace, 2015; Chinogunum, 2015; Mary et al., 2017; Samuel & Amah, 2018) have consistently shown that mentoring positively influences organizational survival. For instance, Chinogunum (2015) and Samuel and Amah (2018) found that mentoring fosters adaptability, dynamic capability, and sustained performance. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Mentoring positively influences the business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Talent Management

The concept of talent management stems from the notion of "talent," which refers to individuals possessing exceptional abilities or innate qualities that enable them to achieve extraordinary performance (Ansar & Baloch, 2018). In the workplace, talent may refer to employees with either innate or developed competencies, often characterized as high-performing or high-potential individuals. Consequently, the definition of talent management varies across organizations and contexts. It is sometimes used interchangeably with terms such as *human capital management, employee relations management, or workforce management (Khartvi, Gupta, Gulati & Chauhan, 2010).

Despite its growing prominence, there is no universally accepted definition of talent management (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). Collings and Mellahi (2009) define it as the systematic identification of strategic positions, the development of a talent pool comprising high-potential and high-performing employees, and the creation of differentiated human resource systems that support organizational success. Similarly, Tutorial Points (2017) describes talent management as a deliberate and strategic approach to recruiting, developing, and retaining individuals with the requisite skills and aptitudes to achieve both current and future organizational goals.

Thus, talent management can be viewed as a comprehensive process that focuses on attracting, developing, and retaining talented employees to ensure a continuous supply of capable individuals who can drive organizational performance and sustainability. Empirical evidence (Arif & Uddin, 2016; Obeidat, Yassin & Masadeh, 2018) indicates that effective talent management practices enhance business performance and organizational survival. Al Aina and Atan (2020) further assert that the deliberate attraction, development, motivation, and rewarding of skilled employees lead to sustainable competitive advantage. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Talent management significantly influences the business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Supervisor's Support

Supervisor support refers to the extent to which supervisors assist employees in applying the skills, knowledge, and attitudes acquired from training and development programs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Griffin, Patterson, and West (2001) describe it as the degree of encouragement and assistance supervisors provide to employees within their work units. This support may take emotional, instrumental, or informational forms—both before and after training—and may include constructive feedback aimed at improving employee performance (Putter, 2013; Qureshi & Abhamid, 2017).

When supervisors provide consistent guidance, employees tend to feel valued and secure, which enhances their perception of organizational support (Elias & Mittal, 2011). As representatives of the organization, supervisors play a pivotal role in shaping employees' attitudes, commitment, and overall performance. Effective supervisory support can foster positive organizational citizenship behaviors (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006) and bridge communication

between upper management and frontline staff (Omisere, 2014).

However, ineffective or inconsistent supervisory support can undermine employee morale and productivity. Studies have shown that supervisor support is positively associated with job satisfaction, affective commitment, and organizational performance (Elias & Matti, 2011; Baloyi et al., 2014; Mohamed & Ali, 2016; Qureshi et al., 2018). Similarly, Sharma and Jyoti (2006) confirmed that supportive supervisors enhance employee satisfaction and performance, thereby reducing turnover rates. Based on these empirical insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Supervisor support significantly influences the business continuity of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Business Continuity

Business continuity is often regarded as a key indicator of organizational survival. It refers to an organization's ability to sustain the delivery of essential products or services at acceptable levels during and after disruptions (Mary et al., 2017). Punla (2017) defines business continuity as a continuous process designed to ensure that organizations operate efficiently under normal conditions and remain resilient during periods of adversity. Essentially, business continuity reflects an organization's capacity to persist and adapt in the face of challenges, a quality underpinned by organizational resilience—the ability to recover and emerge stronger after setbacks.

In management literature, business continuity is commonly discussed within the framework of business continuity management (BCM) or *business continuity planning (BCP)*. The Business Continuity Institute (2005) defines BCM as a holistic management process that builds organizational resilience and provides a framework for effective response to safeguard stakeholders' interests. Conversely, BCP focuses on establishing preventive and recovery systems to address potential threats (Punla, 2017).

Measures of business continuity include longevity, resilience, recovery capability, and sustainability (Eric, 2006; Abdulwaheed, 2013; Mary et al., 2017). Regardless of the specific approach adopted, the primary objective remains the same to ensure organizational survival and the consistent achievement of strategic goals despite unforeseen disruptions.

Results and Findings

The total of 210 questionnaires was distributed to the targeted respondents but only 148 were usable for statistical analysis, which represents 70.5% rate of response.

Analysis of Response Rate

Analysis of Respondents Demographics

Table 1: Respondents' Demographics

Variables	Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	93	62.8
	Female	55	37.2
Age	Below 20 years	4	2.7
	21 -30 years	33	22.3
	31-40 years	41	27.7
	41-50years	56	37.8
	51- above years	14	9.5
Educational Qualification	PhD Degree	2	1.4
	M.Sc.	27	18.2
	B.Sc.	71	48.0
	HND	31	20.9
	OND	12	8.1
	WAEC/SSCE	5	3.4
Marital Status	FSLC	-	-
	Married	83	56.1
	Single	61	41.2
Working Experience	Divorce	4	2.7
	Less than 1 year	26	17.6
	1-5 years	82	55.4
	6-10 years	33	22.3
	11-15 years	7	4.7
Total		148	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As shown in table 2, majority of the respondents are male with a percentage of 62.8% (N=93), while 37.2% are females (N=55). Thus, many of the participants fall within the age bracket of between 31-40 years old at 37.8% (N=56). In respect to educational qualification,

majority of the participants hold B.Sc. degree at 48% (N=71). Meanwhile, in the aspect of marital status, most of the participants are married at 56.1% (N=83). Finally, most of the participants at 55.4% (N=82) have between 6-10 years working experience.

The Univariate Analysis: Descriptive Statistics

The univariate analysis deals with the descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode and standard deviation. In this study we are going to analyze only the mean and standard deviation.

Table 3: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

S/N.	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
	Mentoring	3.13	1.52
	Talent Management	3.25	1.51
	Supervisor Support	3.07	1.49
	Business Continuity	2.89	1.40

Source: SPSS Result, 2025.

As shown in table 3 from the SPSS results, the mean scores of mentoring, talent management, supervisor support, business continuity are 3.13, 3.25, 3.07 and 2.89 respectively. On the other hand, the standard deviation of mentoring, talent management, supervisor's support and business continuity are 1.52, 1.51, 1.49 and 1.40 respectively. From the results, it is obvious that talent management dimension has the highest mean score among all the dimensions. It therefore means that talent management is the predominant succession planning practice being adopted in majority of the hotels in Port Harcourt, followed by mentoring. The respondents are of the opinion that the industry is doing more of firing but most talented employees in the industry are being nurtured by the organizations not to leave as a result of their skills in service delivery.

Table 4: Correlations

Variables		Mentoring	TM	SS	BC	
Spearman's rho	Mentoring	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.065	.499**	.499**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.441	.000	.000
		N	148	148	148	148
	Talent mgt	Correlation Coefficient	.065	1.000	.382**	.617**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.441	.	.000	.000
		N	148	148	148	148
	SS	Correlation Coefficient	.499**	.382**	1.000	.414**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	148	148	148	148
	BC	Correlation Coefficient	.499**	.617**	.414**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	148	148	148	148

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One:

The results presented in Table 4 indicate a moderate and statistically significant association between mentoring and business continuity ($\rho = 0.499$, $n = 148$, $p < 0.01$). Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H_{a1}) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (H_{o1}) is rejected based on the significance level. This implies that mentoring accounts for 49.9% of the variation in business continuity. This finding supports the theoretical assumption of Hypothesis H1 as discussed in the literature review.

Hypothesis Two:

The results in Table 4 show a strong and statistically significant relationship between talent management and business continuity ($\rho = 0.617$, $n = 148$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_{a2}) is

The Bivariate Analysis: Test of Hypotheses

In this section, the various hypotheses proposed for this study were subjected to statistical tests using the Spearmen Rank Order Correlation statistical tool.

Test of Hypotheses 1, 2 & 3

H₁: Mentoring significantly influences business continuity of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

H₂: Talent management significantly influences business continuity of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

H₃: Supervisor's support significantly influences business continuity of Hotels in Port Harcourt.

accepted and the null hypothesis (H_{o2}) rejected. The results further reveal that 61.7% of business continuity can be influenced by effective talent management practices. This supports the theoretical foundation of Hypothesis H2 presented in the literature review.

Hypothesis Three:

The results in Table 4 reveal a moderate and statistically significant association between supervisor support and business continuity ($\rho = 0.414$, $n = 148$, $p < 0.01$). Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis (H_{a3}) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (H_{o3}) is rejected. The results indicate that 41.4% of business continuity can be influenced by supervisor support. This finding aligns with the theoretical proposition of Hypothesis H3 in the literature review.

Discussion of Findings

In relation to the hypotheses tested, the findings are discussed within the framework of existing literature on succession planning and business continuity among selected hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

The first hypothesis showed that mentoring has a significant and positive influence on business continuity. This finding aligns with that of Mary, Onyinye, Emmanuel, and Ekene (2017), who found that mentoring enhances business continuity. Similarly, Ogunyomi (2013) emphasized that effective employee mentoring reduces challenges associated with succession in key positions and promotes organizational growth and sustainability. Thus, mentoring serves as a vital mechanism for nurturing future leaders and ensuring smooth organizational transitions.

For the second hypothesis, the results revealed a strong positive relationship between talent management and business continuity. This suggests that effective talent management practices such as recruitment, nurturing, grooming, and retention foster leadership continuity and organizational survival. This supports Abdulwaheed's (2013) assertion that structured succession planning enhances continuity. The finding confirms empirically that talent management is a key driver of sustained business operations and leadership stability in hotels.

The third hypothesis established that supervisor support significantly contributes to business continuity. This finding corroborates the study of Mohamed and Ali (2016), who found that supervisor support enhances employee commitment and job satisfaction. Employees who receive strong supervisory support tend to demonstrate higher motivation and performance, which in turn promotes continuity and service quality in hotel operations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that succession planning positively influences business continuity among hotels in Port Harcourt. The three examined dimensions—mentoring, talent management, and supervisor support each showed significant positive effects on business continuity, with talent management exhibiting the strongest impact.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made

1. Talent Management: Hotel management should prioritize attracting, developing, and retaining talented employees to occupy key leadership positions, thereby ensuring organizational stability and continuity.
2. Mentoring: Management should identify employees' strengths and weaknesses and implement structured mentoring programs to enhance skill development and succession readiness.
3. Supervisor Support: Supervisors should provide guidance, motivation, and necessary assistance to staff, promoting a supportive rather than autocratic work environment to encourage optimal performance.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations.

1. The dimensions of succession planning examined—mentoring, talent management, and supervisor support—are not exhaustive.
2. Business continuity was the sole dependent variable considered, which limits broader generalization.
3. The study focused exclusively on hotels in Port Harcourt, restricting applicability to other sectors or regions.
4. Data were collected only from managers, excluding other categories of employees whose perspectives might have provided a more comprehensive understanding.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should consider including other dimensions such as **career development, training, and coaching** to explore their effects on business continuity across different sectors like fast-food chains, supermarkets, and private institutions. Moreover, additional empirical research is needed to further investigate the link between supervisor support and business continuity, as existing literature in this area remains limited.

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