



Supervisor Support and Career Mentoring: A Determinant of Public Sector Succession Planning in Nigerian

FALEYE Olubunmi Christianah¹, BANKOLE Oluwole Adeniyi²

¹Department of Business Administration,

Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology

Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria

²Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences

Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract

This study explored supervisor's support and career mentoring as a determinants of public sector succession planning in Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of supervisor's support and career mentoring on succession planning in the Nigerian Public Sector. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised the public university staff in Ekiti State. The sample size was 370. Primary data used for the study were gathered through the administration of structured questionnaire. Data gathered were analyzed using multiple regression. The study found that supervisor's support has significant effect on succession planning. Furthermore, the study found that career mentoring has significant effect on succession planning. The study concluded that supervisor support and career mentoring significantly affect succession planning in the Nigerian public sector and this study recommended that organizations particularly Nigerian universities should embrace supervisor support and career mentoring for effective succession planning.

Keywords: Career Mentoring, Supervisor Support, Succession Planning

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Recently, one of the keys to keeping and attracting employees in all organizations, particularly in the service sector for performance improvement relies on the quality of human resources. One of the major sources in service organizations is the competitive advantage of the human resources providing the service. Therefore, improving the quality of human resources performance can lead to competitive advantage and organizational performance improvement. The performance improvement of human resources depends on attracting satisfaction and the increased commitment of employees. In this regard, succession planning is one of the most important programs of human capital management to attract and keep individuals and identify their potential talents. In general, succession planning is planning in which the proper individuals are selected from qualified individuals for assuming key positions in an organization. In this process, human talents who will undertake jobs and key positions in the coming years are identified and gradually prepared to assume these jobs and responsibilities through varieties of training programs (Amirkhani, Nazeryani & Faraz, 2016). The work performance of public sector workers has been a major concern in Nigerian educational sector. The prevailing situation at the work place has been one of lowest work performance and poor service delivery currently. The poor work performance has led to the decline in service delivery and poor managerial competency in the public sector.

Today's organizations are faced with different challenges particularly in the public sector settings like tertiary institutions leadership breaches, perpetuating loyalty and trust among workers, retaining and developing skills and leading within a more diversified structure (Estedadi, Shahhoseini & Hamidi, 2015). As a result, succession planning is a popular subject in organizations today. Either public or private, organization's survival is based on its ability to bring on board and sustain high quality workforce over a period of time. Many organizations are currently facing mounting pressures to ensure their sustainability, flexibility, and responsiveness to the increasing uncertainty and limitations in the economic world (Odhiambo, Njanja & Zakayo, 2014). Ultimately, increased turbulence in the

employment environment, characterized by organizational restructuring, funding uncertainties, and increasing program complexities have substantial effect on ways organizations respond to workforce replacement (Caudron in Maguta, 2016).

At a global level, succession planning in the recent past has received more attention not only as a concern for the management of human resources but also as institutional strategic management component for ensuring performance and growth. Volume of studies have been conducted differently on career mentoring and succession planning on different variables and from nations in the world such as Amirkhani, Nazeryani and Faraz (2016) conducted in South Tetran, Soltania and Moghadamb (2016) in Iran, Pila, Schultz, and Dachapalli (2016) in South Africa and Akinyele, Ogbari, Akinyele, and Dibia (2015) in Nigeria to mention but a few. However, the potential link between supervisor support, career mentoring and succession planning has not been validated, this has left a vacuum for this study to fill. Therefore, management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria would benefit from this study as it would serve as an information bank in assisting the management team in formulating policies that would lead to the successful management of their institutions.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Determine the effect of supervisor's support on succession planning in the Nigerian Public sector;
- ii. Evaluate the effect of career mentoring on succession planning in the Nigerian Public sector.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Supervisors Support

According to Kottke and Sharafinski cited in Mohamed and Ali (2016), supervisor support is the degree to which supervisors value employee's contributions and care about their well-being. Supervisors are responsible for directing and evaluating employees' job performance. Thus, employees often view their supervisor's feedback as indicative of the organization's orientation toward them (Levinson in Soulen, 2003). Moreover, because employees are aware that their supervisor's evaluations of their job performance are often communicated to executives, who are seen as the representatives of the organization, the association between affective commitment and supervisor support is further strengthened (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe & Rhoades, 2002). Supervisor support leads for employees to high commitment through job satisfaction and motivation. Supervisor consideration again refers to the degree to which supervisors are supportive, friendly and considerate, consult subordinates and recognize their contribution.

Supervisor support refers to supervisors' behaviour toward helping their employees demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes collected from the training program (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). According to Bhatti, Battour, Sundram and Othman (2013), the supervisor plays an important role in training effectiveness. Without getting support from the supervisor, the transfer of training process cannot be successful. This is because the employee will lose focus when they are not monitored or supervised. It is said to be one of the most powerful tools in enhancing the transfer of training and is supported by numerous studies (Ismail, Hassan & Sulaiman, 2010). According to Putter (2013), the support can be emotional, instrumental, or support which is provided before and after the training program. Providing feedback also would be a form of supervisor support (van der Klink, Blonk, Shene & Van-Dijk, 2001), this is because feedback is relatively seen as part of supervisor support whereby the supervisor identifies which area of their employees needs to be improved, encouraging them to join the training program, and help them to apply the learned skills upon completing their job.

Apart from that, Ismail, Hassan and Sulaiman (2010) stated that the supervisor is also responsible for allocating the budget for their employee's developmental purposes. This is because, each individual has the rights to increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and hence, this can only be achieved when they undergo the training program provided by the organization. Besides, Baldwin and Ford in Queshi and Hamid (2017) identified that discussion between the supervisors with their employees can also certainly stimulate the transfer of training. This is because; the employees feel that they are valued in the organization. Supervisor must have a basic understanding of development concepts before they can facilitate their employees (Karatepe, 2013). This is because when supervisors understand employee developmental concepts, it increases employee's confidence and perception that their supervisor is qualified and capable of leading them.

2.2 Career Mentoring

Mentoring is a planned early intervention designed to provide timely instruction to mentees throughout their apprenticeship, shorten the learning curve, reinforce positive work ethics and attitudes, and give the mentees role models (Hipes & Marinoni, 2005). A mentor helps another person through an important transition such as coping with a new situation like a new job or a major change in personal circumstances or career development or personal growth (Judy, Carol & Mark, 2003). Career Mentoring usually takes the form of a senior or experienced employee taking a supporting role in the development of a new or inexperienced employee. It can be formal or informal and relies on development of positive advisory relationships. As such it includes the skills of coaching, facilitating, counseling and networking. Mentoring is a part of the career development activities range that organizations engage in to identify, develop, engage, retain and deploy the more talented individuals. The career mentoring relationship is often oriented toward exchange of wisdom, support, learning or guidance for career growth and increased employee performance (Parsloe & Wry, 2000).

Career mentoring is based on counseling and supports learners and helps them to develop their own approach and solutions to problems. Formal career mentoring programs with a structured approach to the mentoring process as opposed to informal career mentoring, those relationships that develop on their own, are shown to be positive and beneficial to companies. Formal career mentoring programs include training for mentors, tie the mentoring program to business goals with measurable results, and contact periodic evaluations and coordination offering on-going support for mentoring pairs (Murray, 2006). In those situations, the mentors and mentees both benefit in different ways. For mentors, studies have shown increased personal and job satisfaction. The increase in satisfaction is a result of several factors. One is that mentors gain more influence in the organization, through the added respect gained in the development of future leaders (Kakui & Gachunga, 2016). Mentors also gain professional assistance from the mentee on work projects and may also enhance their own skills by learning new skills from the mentee. In addition, the relationship can help to motivate a seasoned mentor by offering fresh viewpoints and new perspectives about the organization (Murray, 2006).

2.3 Succession Planning

The development of the concept of succession planning by Nink and Fogg cited in Odhiambo, Njanja and Zakayo (2014), describes it as a dynamic and ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing leadership talent within the organization's career development pipeline. This depicts assessing, developing and recognizing key contributors to meet future organisational strategic and operational needs as a fundamental organizational function. However, Schmalzried and Fallon (2007) described succession planning as a proactive attempt by organizational leaders to ensure that leadership is continuous, and different positions are filled from within for any vacancy that may occur. To achieve outstanding results using succession planning, an organization such as a private firm particularly in the education sector ought to develop an effective and highly focused strategy centered on organisational future superiority. This process is designed to ensure continuous and effective organizational performance, through using and improving employees and managers in key roles. Succession planning is a subfield of workforce planning in which organizational key positions are determined and employees become prepared to fill them. This involves identifying the gap between the current workforce and the one necessary for the future. Succession planning refers to the process in which potential talent for filling key positions, in the future, is identified and prepared through planned training and education (Abolalai & Ghafari, 2008). The succession plan can be considered as a plan retain or identify quality managers and employees to cover events such as death, retirement, disease, promotion, or any other circumstances that may impact the organization's long-term plans.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

For this study, goal setting theory underpinned this study. This is due to its stand on linking succession planning with career mentoring to exert better performance. Goal setting theory assumes that there is a direct relation between the definition of specific and measurable goals and performance, if managers know what they are aiming for, they are motivated to exert more effort, which increases performance. Similarly, the hope of every staff is fulfilling their potential on the field they are thus implied that when their career is prioritized, this encourages and inspires them to be more committed psychologically to work. Therefore, organisational goals are achieved through training and developing employees towards areas needed to develop talents and the best brain to pilot the affairs of the organization in future and to be more competitive among rivalries.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out on public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The design adopted for this study is a descriptive survey which involves obtaining information directly from a group of individuals by administering a structured questionnaire. The study population comprised public universities staff including both academic and non-academic staff in Ekiti State. These public universities were selected through convenience sampling method. The selected institutions are: Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Federal University Oye Ekiti and Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti. The table below shows the population of the public universities staff comprising the academic and non-academic staff both male and female of different age range. However, the population for this study is 4,888.

Table 3.1: Population of Staff in the Public Universities Staff

Tertiary Institutions	No. of Staff
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti	2,586
Federal University Oye Ekiti	1,601
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti	701
Total	4,888

Source: Nigeria University System Statistical Digest (2019)

The statistical formula to be applied in determining the sample size from the population of the study was formulated by Yamane (1967) cited in Ahmed and Nawaz (2015) stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size to be tested

N = Total population size

e = acceptable error term (0.05)

Therefore, the total sample size is calculated thus:

$$n = \frac{4,888}{1 + 4,888(0.05)^2} = 370$$

Three models were developed to capture supervisor’s support, career mentoring and succession planning. Supervisor’s support and career mentoring depicts the independent variable while the dependent variable is succession planning. For this study, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Deprive statistics was used to analyze the data generated from the socio-demographic variables of the respondents through frequency tables. To achieve the specific objective of this study, inferential statistics through the use of multiple regression analysis was employed. Durbin Watson statistic was used to test the study hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The regression model was specified as:

$$Scp = f'(Ssp, Cmt) \dots\dots\dots 1$$

$$Scp = \beta_0 + \beta_1Ssp + \beta_2Cmt + \mu \dots\dots\dots 2$$

Where:

Scp = Succession Planning

Ssp = Supervisor’s Support

Cmt = Career Mentoring

β_0 = Intercept

μ = Stochastic or Error Term

f = Functional Notation

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Presentation of Respondents' Demographic Data

Three hundred and seventy (370) respondents were sampled, two hundred and ninety four (294) questionnaires were filled and returned which represented 80% response rate which thus implies that public university staff response rate to the information needed for this study is very high and adequate for data analysis. The response of the respondents is analysed in Table 1. It was also shown in table 1 that 31 (10.5%) of the respondents were within the range of 21-30 years of age, 101 (34.4%) were within the range of 31-40 years of age, 124 (42.2%) respondents were between 41-50 years of age while 38 (12.9%) were 50 years of age and above. This indicated that majority of the respondents were within the range of 41-50 years of age which implied that staff within this range must have been well exposed to different activities and operation of the institution for succession process. Table 1 indicated that the male distribution was 158 (53.7%), while the female were 136 (46.3%). Therefore, male staff are more than the female staff. From the researcher's observation, most units or department in the public universities are being coordinated by male staff which implies that male staff are considered to be more effective in succession planning than female staff among Ekiti State public universities. Considering the staff's marital status, 96 (32.7%) of the total respondents were single, 191 (64.9%) were married while only 7 (2.4%) of the total respondents were divorced. The summary of the response gathered here shows that the larger populations of respondents are married putting years of experience distribution into consideration, it implied that married staff are relatively matured, confident and courageous enough in succession planning process. From the Table 4.1, it was also revealed that 47 (16.0%) of the total respondents are NCE/OND holders, 103 (35.0%) of the total respondents are HND/B.Sc degree holder, 71 (24.1%) of the total respondents were MBA/M.Sc. degree holders, 22 (7.5%) of the survey respondents hold Ph.D. degree, while 51 (17.4%) of the total respondents hold other qualifications which implied that staff with HND/B.Sc degree tend to have the required minimum qualifications needed for succession planning because they must have been well equipped academically.

Table 4.1: Respondents Demographic Distribution

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21-30	31	10.5
31-40	101	34.4
41-50	124	42.2
Above 50	38	12.9
Total	294	100.0
Gender		
Male	158	53.7
Female	136	46.3
Total	294	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	96	32.7
Married	191	64.9
Divorced	7	2.4
Total	294	100.0
Educational Qualification		
OND/NCE	47	16.0
HND/B.Sc	103	35.0
MBA/M.Sc	71	24.1
Ph.D	22	7.5
Others	51	17.4
Total	294	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

4. 2 Interpretation of Results

Supervisor’s Support, Career Mentoring and Succession Planning

Table 2 explains the effect of supervisor’s support and career mentoring on succession planning. From the table, R (Regression Coefficient) gave a positive value of 0.828. This indicated that supervisor’s support and career mentoring have a very strong effect on succession planning. R² is a portion of the total variation in the dependent variable that was explained by the variation in the independent variables. From the results obtained, R² is equal to 0.686. This implied linear relationship between supervisor’s support, career mentoring and succession planning, that is, it can only account for approximately 69% of succession planning, this was further proven by the adjusted R² that showed the goodness of fit of the model which gave a value of 0.682, implying that when all errors were corrected and adjustments were made, the model could only account for 68.2% of succession planning in the surveyed institutions. The value of Durbin Watson statistics was 2.012 showing the absence of autocorrelation in the model due to a considerably large sample, the result showed that the null hypothesis was rejected and accepted otherwise i.e. supervisor’s support and career mentoring have significant effect on succession planning in Nigerian Public Sector.

The unstandardized and standardized β co-efficient of the supervisor’s support gave a positive value of 0.524 with T-test value of 10.789 and a significance value (0.000 < 0.05). These results showed that the supervisor’s support had a significant effect on succession planning and meant that succession planning is positively influenced by supervisor’s support. This is in line with the findings of Pila, Schultz, and Dachapalli (2016) which found that there was a significant difference between groups in the organizational support program in terms of years of service and supervisor support among employees. The most important implications for managers resulting from this study are that management development by way of succession planning contributes to employee satisfaction and improves the overall outcomes of the organization. The unstandardized and standardized β co-efficient of career mentoring gave a positive value of 0.575 with T-test value of 13.553 and a significance value (0.000 < 0.05). These results showed that mentoring had a significant effect on succession planning. This meant that succession planning is positively influenced by career mentoring. The finding correlates with that of Dialoke and Wabara (2017) who examined career development and employee commitment at selected institutions in Abia State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that mentoring enhances employee commitment in higher institutions.

The regression equation of the model could be stated as:

$$\text{Succession Planning} = 1.265 + 0.524S_{sp} + 0.575C_{mt}$$

Table 2: Regression Results of Supervisor’s Support, Career Mentoring and Succession Planning

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	DW	B	Std Error	T value	P Value
	0.828	0.686	0.682	2.012				
Supervisor Support					.524	.021	10.789	.000
Career Mentoring					.575	.042	13.553	.000
Constant					1.265	.264	4.784	.000

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2024)

4.3 Discussion of Results

The result of the above analysis revealed that supervisor’s support and career mentoring significantly affect the succession planning of public universities in Ekiti State. This is shown and further proven by the regression coefficient (R, R², and Adj. R²) at 5% level of significance coupled with T-test and Durbin Watson Statistics. It was deduced from the tested hypothesis that supervisor’s support has significant effect on succession planning of public universities in Ekiti State and career mentoring has significant effect on succession planning of public universities in Ekiti State. Alternate hypothesis was accepted and the study rejected otherwise.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was clearly shown that the role of mentorship and supervisor support cannot be underestimated in training and developing employees for higher responsibilities and preparing them for strategic decision making. Public universities is one of the organizations in Nigeria with a high level of staff population and diversity which requires competent expertise to manage the multitude of assets, talents and skills. It was found that supervisor's support has a strong significant effect on succession planning and career mentoring has a strong significant effect on succession planning all at 0.05 level of significance. From the findings, alternate hypothesis was accepted while null hypothesis was rejected thus concluding that succession planning is positively affected by supervisor's support and career mentoring particularly among public universities in Ekiti State.

5.1 Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings, the following recommendations are considered:

- i. Providing responsive supervisor support could effectively enhance employee effectiveness toward achieving better organizational performance. Management should ensure that responsibilities are delegated to develop staff confidence and should embrace career mentoring and coaching to prepare them for better and higher positions. So, management should see employees as an important asset that cannot be undermined. Given the above fact, there will be effective and genuine succession planning.
- ii. Moreso, career mentoring is statistically significant. Therefore, the study recommends that public university policymakers should prioritize career mentoring as a germane technique to improve employee development. This is because mentoring will easily identify talented or skillful employees and guide them towards helping them to realize their potential and set their foot on the right path which will also contribute to organizational goals.

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