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INSTITUTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CONSTRAINTS ON SUSTAINABLE CULTURE OF COACHING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Coaching and succession planning are important components of human resource planning that ensure the organization maintains the right pool of talents and the available human and material resources are properly galvanized to ensure organizational success. The rapid growth of human resource development process has placed much recognition on coaching and succession planning within organizations. Changes within and outside the organization have made managers to formulate sustainable culture and strategies on how to deal with constraints accompanied by the changes. The paper made use of Secondary source of data as its methodology and explored behavioural theory as the theoretical framework. The research concluded that trying to fit an individual to a stereotype can affect the process of coaching and succession planning, and it is no longer a skill based process hence the importance of identifying required successor characteristics that will best suit the job is defeated. It is recommended that there should be clear guidelines in identification of potential successors and high potential employees. This way, identified candidates should be selected through a credible process.

Keywords: *Institution, Behavioural, Succession Planning*

Introduction

The dynamic environment in which business operates has made organizations to place much emphasis on coaching/mentoring and successive planning. As old seasoned executives are retiring, there is need to fill up those vacant posts with young, knowledgeable and vibrant employees. The young and energetic employees need to be acquainted with organizational culture, norms and a deeper understanding of interpersonal relationships among fellow colleagues as well as clients. Managers of organizations over the years have created some sort of non-financial incentives in the form of mentoring/coaching programs to provide valuable platform in which younger employees would leverage on to enhance their career path and performances. Thus, in order to cope with attrition (both voluntary and involuntary) a well thought out program of mentoring/coaching as an integral part of succession planning is key to organizational success. The going concern of organization is tied to how managers formulate and implement succession planning strategies and how they equip their employees with necessary skills (through coaching/mentoring). The world of work is rapidly changing in Nigeria with the influx of younger persons, women and other minorities into the workforce and the exit of older workers for various reasons (Ekechukwu & Horsfall 2015). It is therefore expedient that the experience and knowledge of the older workforce be passed on seamlessly to the younger generation through the act of coaching/mentoring and knowledge management.

Succession planning and mentoring programs are not only important for the organization and its current employees, but also for the leadership, the community and the employers. Organizations talk about how succession planning has proven to be beneficial, yet some of them do nothing about it when it comes to implementation. Succession planning and coaching/mentoring are initiatives that many organizations don't find the time to start until it's too late. If the organization fails to address issues concerning mentoring and succession

planning at the right time, it may end up facing the burden in the middle of a crisis which could result to poor performance. Organizations that have planned adequately stand a better chance to withstand the pressure and challenges that accompany changes. Though the whole process of training mentees could be evidently time consuming and requires a lot of additional resources, but in the long run it is a worthwhile investment that is essential for the survival of any organization. Identifying candidates goes beyond sitting down with an organization chart. It requires adequate planning which entails meetings and discussions with leaders and if possible a representative from Human Resources Department. In the light of this understanding. This paper seeks to discuss institutional and behavioural constraints on sustainable culture of coaching and succession planning in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Culture plays significant impact on the sustainability or survival of organizations. It is commonly described as a set of beliefs, morals, methods, institutions and a collection of human knowledge that is dependent on the transmission of these characteristics to younger generations. Sustainable culture has to do with sustainable cultural beliefs, cultural practices, conversation that has to be in line with heritage and which end up forming behavioural patterns of individuals and institutions. The manner in which firms respond to challenges caused by cultural differences may help explain why firms differ and why there are performance differences between firms. Nigeria as a country has been faced with myriad of challenges regarding coaching and succession planning. Great organizations in developed countries begin planning their exit strategies right at the start of their appointment unlike in Nigeria where transitions are usually marred with bottlenecks.

Theoretical Framework

Behavioral Theory of leadership is a big leap from Trait Theory, as it was developed scientifically by conducting behaviour focused studies. The theory emphasizes that leadership capability can be learned, rather than being inherent. This theory is based on the principle that a leader's behaviors can be conditioned in a manner that one can have a specific response to specific stimuli. Behavioral Theories of Leadership, also known as "The style approach to leadership" focuses on the behavior of the leader and what leaders do and how they act. In the 1940s, two parallel studies on leadership were in progress, one based on traits displayed by leaders, another on the behaviours exhibited by leaders.

Traits theory assumes that leaders are born, rather than made

Trait theory concentrates on, what the leaders are

Great Man Theory and Traits Theory are focused on intrinsic personal characteristics

Behavioural theories are based upon the belief that great leaders are made, not born

Behavioural theories concentrate on, what leaders do

Behavioral approach is based on the leader's beliefs, values, and interpersonal relations

Considers the Leader's attitude, behavior, opinion, and concern about his followers/organization

Studies leadership behavior from the point of view of motivation, supervision, and authority

Behavioural theories assume that specific behavioral patterns of leaders can be acquired

People can learn to become leaders through coaching, training, mentoring, teaching and observation.

Behavior is the range of actions and mannerisms made by organisms, systems, or artificial entities in conjunction with their environment, which includes the other systems or organisms around as well as the physical environment.

Human behavior refers to the range of behaviors exhibited by humans and which are influenced by culture, attitudes, emotions, values, ethics, authority, rapport, hypnosis, persuasion, coercion and/or genetics. In humans, behavior is believed to be controlled primarily by the endocrine system and the nervous system. Behaviors can be either innate or learned. Human behavior is experienced throughout an individual's entire lifetime. It includes the way they act based on different factors such as genetics, social norms, core faith, and attitude. Behavior is impacted by certain traits each individual has. The traits vary from person to person and can produce different actions or behavior from each person (Howe 2004).

The theory therefore, will enhance participant's understanding of the institutional and behavioural Constraints on sustainable Culture of Coaching and Succession Planning, as we brainstorm and cross-fertilize ideas.

Coaching

Coaching refers to a method of training, counselling or instructing an individual or a group how to develop skills to enhance their productivity or overcome a performance problem. The supervisor is called a coach while the learner is called the coachee. Coaching methods and models generally include close observation, accountability and feedback on progress and performance. Coaches have expressed analytical and interpersonal skills. There are two types of coaching:

- Internal coaching is done within the organization, where a manager acts as coach for the team he/she already knows.

- External coaching is done where the coach is not a part of the organization or the line management structure, but he/she is an expert in the field in which coaching is being given.

Steps of the coaching process: identifying a topic or issue, exploring ideas, removing barriers, taking action, refining and reflecting.

The benefits of coaching are; fine tuning a skill, accelerating learning, solving issues, developing peak performance, strategic planning, creating change and goal identification (Young et al, 2006).

Succession Planning

Succession planning is a process of developing talent to replace executive, leadership or other key employees when they transit to another role, leave the company, are fired, retire or die. It is relevant to all companies, from the largest to the smallest, in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. The planning process is meant to create a talent pipeline of successors that will keep the organization running with little or no interruption when inevitable staff changes   occur. Effective succession planning works by assessing staffing needs that may arise as well as creating long-term goals and strategies to manage those gaps, including through leadership development. HR departments, sometimes referred to as the *human resources management (*HRM*) department*, are typically a key driver in succession planning, although support from top leadership and other stakeholders is critical to success.

Succession planning is also sometimes referred to as *replacement planning*. Succession planning ensures that a business can continue running smoothly after an important role becomes vacant. An organization may want a succession plan to retain internal company knowledge, identify skill gap needs for training and to invest in employees. The process helps identify employees with the right skill sets and talent that can fill the vacant position (Manikutty 2011).

Sustainable Culture of Coaching and Successive Planning

Succession, in a sense, is viewed more often as an end game by many firms rather than a critical component of firm management. It is imperative to focus on the future of the firm by adopting a strategy that builds sustainability. This will add value and allow a firm to be in a position of strength to determine its own destiny be it a sale, merger (upstream/downstream), acquisition or internal succession supporting a legacy approach. There are six steps to creating a best-practice sustainability plan.

1. Identify the Firm's Culture

Karl Nelson, a New York Giants Super Bowl 1986 winner, said the following when asked how the Giants won that year: "Each player on that team knew their role as well as each other's role on the team. We knew who we were as a team, and where we were going!" Every firm should know, live and breathe its culture. Ask and answer the following questions:

What is the firm's mission statement? What does the firm actually do?

What is the firm's vision? Where is the firm going?

What are the firm's core values? Who is the firm and how does it operate?

2. Build Infrastructure

Every structure or entity starts with a strong foundation. The following initiatives can help firms develop a pipeline of talented, tech-savvy young professionals to build upon, nurture and grow with the firm:

Develop an onboarding process.

Provide training and coaching.

Promote professional networking for lateral growth.

3. Identify Leadership

Identifying emerging leaders is an essential component of any successful organization. Historically, many very successful small to midsize firms were founded by partners who left larger firms in part because they were not looked upon as leaders at these firms. Focus on the firm's leaders by using the following approach:

Adopt a Firm Competency Model and communicate competencies that are needed for success.

Establish a career path.

Provide a road map for partner criteria.

Offer alternative leadership roles such as non-equity partners and developmental managers.

4. Professional Development

The best firms invest in their staff's professional development. Firm success is dependent upon having a system to monitor goals and commitments. Firms that maximize the abilities of their members have a competitive advantage. Management is a learned skill. Employ the following tactics:

Use periodic performance management to provide feedback.

Invest in entrepreneurial development (e.g., emerging leaders' conferences, seminars).

Delegate and empower others.

Implement performance-based compensation.

5. Invest in Technology

The Institutions are rapidly changing due to new technologies. David Ben-Gurion says, "It's not enough to be up to date, you have to be up to tomorrow." Consider the following actions:

Fully leverage technology.

Consistently review and update systems.

Develop IT specialization within the firm.

Facilitate technical upskilling at all levels.

6. Client Transition

A successful transition should give clients peace of mind in knowing there is continuity to meet their business and personal needs without disruption. Orderly succession is about creating a system that supports change without change; organizational changes should always come from strategy redirection, not vacancies." Sustainability is a success strategy, a most rewarding and exciting one; it allows a firm and its team members to change and grow. Components of this include the following:

Developing a team service

Building brand loyalty versus partner loyalty

Redefining roles and responsibilities (Depaul 2000).

Some other best practices to follow when enacting sustainable culture coaching and succession planning include these:

Be proactive. Prepare for unforeseen instances where a high-level executive suddenly leaves. This way, an organization can keep operating as normal.

Clarify the roles included in the succession plan. Communicate the positions and the people involved in the plan. Decide if the positions included will be the CEO or will include other C-suite positions.

Engage stakeholders in the process. HR should not be in charge of everything in the process; the role of HR should be to enable the process and provide tools as needed.

Don't exclusively choose the employee closest in rank to the role that needs to be filled. Other promising employees should be chosen if their skills have the most potential.

Start backward. Before training an employee to fill a specific role, begin by defining the core skills, abilities and competencies needed for that role.

Train successors with mentors and job rotations. Having a supervisor act as a mentor allows the mentor to transfer expertise and allows employees to gain more knowledge of certain roles and experiences.

Give regular feedback. Include evaluations of progress on understood skills and those that need to be developed further.

Create individual development plans. This way, employees receive the specific attention they need to develop any required skills. Managers should also give continual feedback.

Have trial runs. A trial run is when a potential successor assumes some of the responsibilities of the role they are inheriting. This practice will allow the successor to gain potentially valuable experience (Shilpa 2012).

However, fundamentals of sustainable culture of coaching and succession planning include the following:

gaining the support of key stakeholders, including the CEO or executive director;

assessing key positions (and individuals) and deciding which ones to focus on;

identifying high-potential employees for key leadership positions and creating learning and development plans tailored to a wider range of employees for more expansive succession plans;

assessing the extent to which internal candidates can fill roles (likely with development), who will be more familiar with company culture and processes, and which roles HR should look externally for the right talent pool;

creating effective learning and professional development processes that support the succession strategy, especially experiential development, such as job shadowing (on-the-job training and cross-functional moves; and

determining which HR software will be used in support of the succession planning strategy and process. (Depaul 2000).

Succession is a process that can take years, and it is never too early to start planning.

Sustainable Culture of Coaching and Successive Planning Programme in Nigeria

Organizations in Nigeria are creating sustainable culture of coaching and succession planning programs for numerous reasons. Some of the reasons could be to increase morale, to increase organisational productivity and career development, the benefits of an organisation that actively supports coaching/mentoring are numerous. In Nigeria, successful coaching and succession planning do not just happen, it requires conscious efforts with sound reasons.

Organizations in Nigeria implement coaching and succession planning programs as a way to enhance on-boarding process. New recruits and employees settle in the organisation through coaching programs.

Coaching through adequate succession planning enables experienced and highly competent staff to pass their expertise on to others who need to acquire specified skills. Thus, it facilitates the development of skills to get work done within the organisation.

Professional Identity: when younger employees are early in their careers, they need help in understanding what it means to be a professional in their work environment.

Professionals embody the values of the profession and are self-initiating and self-regulating. Mentors play a key role in defining professional behaviour for new employees. This is most important when employees first enter the workforce;

Career Development: Coaching helps employees plan, develop, and manage their careers. It also helps them become more resilient in times of change, more self-reliant in their careers and more responsible as self-directed learners;

Leadership and Management Development: mentoring encourages the development of leadership competencies. These competencies are often more easily gained through example, guided practice or experience than by education and training;

Education Support: mentoring helps bridge the gap between theory and practice. Formal education and training is complemented by the knowledge and experience of a competent practitioner;

Organisational Development and Culture Change: mentoring can help communicate the values, vision and mission of the organisation; a one-to-one relationship can help employees understand the organisational culture and make any necessary changes;

Customer Service: Coaching/mentoring assists in modifying desired behaviours, encouraging the development of competencies in support of customer service, and above all, cultivating the right attitudes;

Staff retention: Coaching provides an encouraging environment through ongoing interactions. Mentoring has been found to influence employee retention because it helps establish an organisational culture that is attractive to the top talent clamouring for growth opportunities. It is a tangible way to show employees that they are valued and that the company's future includes them;

Recruitment: Coaching/mentoring can enhance recruitment goals by offering additional incentives to prospective employees; and Knowledge Management/Knowledge Transfer. It provides for the interchange/exchange of information/knowledge between members of different organisations.

Ease of Succession Planning: Coaching prepares employees for career growth so as to take up senior or managerial position in the future.

Higher Productivity: Coaching programme encourages employees to increase their contributions in terms of output, job satisfaction, and reduce rate of labour turnover.

Synergy: Coaching/mentoring embraces synergy as it provides mentor and mentee to become better and more productive than either could be individually. (Ohuabunwa 2015).

Factors influencing Mentoring and Succession Planning Culture

Succession planning is an important process every organization should not dare to ignore. Public institutions in Nigeria lose workforce all the time. Although, replacements are carried

out periodically, but what they are actually losing is a large quantity of institutional memory and essential skills. Meharabani and Mohamed (2011) observed the following factors as part of their research findings:

Training: The impartation or transfer of knowledge and new skills is achieved through training. The mentor usually has the expertise and experience to impart knowledge on his mentee. Trained people within the organization are more empowered; therefore, training programmes should be made available for any effective mentoring and succession planning.

Management Support: In order to implement a successful succession planning system in Nigeria, there is a need for a lot of support from the managers. Management support could be in form of financial and non-financial. Financial could be sponsoring training programs, investing in the education of the mentees monetarily. Non-financial support could be in terms of words of praise, recognition and employee participation in decision making of the organization.

Giving a clear understanding of the mentee career path is another major factor influencing mentoring/coaching and succession planning within the organization. Clarifying the career path would help employees to better understand the career objectives for better implementation of succession planning.

Creating a clear vision and mission statement for mentees within the organization. A positive vision will facilitate a positive insight towards succession planning and mentoring programmes, therefore removing fear in employees who have negative perception about mentoring programs and succession planning. Having a strong

organizational culture which provides values, beliefs, standards and paradigms for all employees for effective succession planning.

Technological advancements also impacts the way of preparing workforce for new jobs. In addition, technology advancement makes it easier for employees to find opportunities elsewhere.

Flat structure influences succession planning since it allows better communication and easier knowledge sharing in the organizations, which are parameters that would greatly help in implementation of succession planning.

Financial conditions of the organization also affect implementation of effective succession plans. For example, having enough budgets for human resources is one of the most important conditions for training people.

Importance of sustainable culture of coaching and Succession Planning

There is need to incorporate mentoring/coaching programs into succession planning. Some of the benefits may include the following:

Mentoring and succession planning facilitates more exposure and visibility to employees who are highly talented. If their mentor sees them as a high performer, this will be communicated to other coworkers and senior executives.

Leaders are usually products of good mentoring. Take a cursory look of all the leaders today; they had a mentor who played significant role in their development. There are specific leadership competencies that can be learnt and gained from a mentor.

Mentoring program of organizations will engage the employees to be more committed to the organization. This means that there is a high tendency for them to stick to the organization and to a large extent be part of the succession pipeline (Rothwell, 2010).

Institutional and Behavioural Constraints on Sustainable Culture of Coaching and Succession Planning in Nigeria

In the course of implementing succession plans to ensure seamless operations within the organizations, myriad of challenges are evident in Nigeria. Some of the key institutional and behavioural challenges include the following:

Identifying talented candidates for leadership succession

Developing candidates to become suitable leadership successors.

Retaining leaders and succession candidates long enough to ensure that key positions will be filled according to plan (Ohuabunwa 2015).

Some other institutional and behavioral constraints include the following:

Mismatch between mentor and mentee

Inadequate time

Mentee requests for personal favour or expect involvement and credits with the mentors work.

Breach of confidentiality – Mentee's reputation may be tarnished if his/her mentor commits a serious breach of ethics.

Expectations that are not realistic

Inadequate support from top management

The mentee may be neglected by the mentor

Poor communication between the mentor and mentee

Mentees who are submissive can be manipulated by their mentors for their personal gains.

Meentees who are slow learners may have problem with their mentors who desire high performance at a faster pace.

Conflict – Mentors may be jealous when their mentees outshine them.

Incompatible learning skills may cause conflict between the mentor and the mentee.

Interpersonal problems in mentoring occurs when the relationships moves from a professional one to a personal one of sexual relationships (Young et al, 2006).

Others are;

Poor Transition of Leadership: As succinctly observed by Ohuabunwa (2015), more than half of the companies operating today would find it difficult to name a successor to the Chief Executive Officer should there be any need. This quagmire poses a problem for the intended successor and the predecessor. This has been the case in Nigeria as many organizations do not have the required skills to facilitate seamless leadership transmission.

The type of Family and Cultural beliefs: The type of family setting in Africa and Nigeria in particular could serve as a major challenge to succession planning. For instance, polygamy is widely practiced in Nigeria and this has affected family

businesses. A successful entrepreneur could end up marrying more wives and unfortunately if he dies, his company which is one of his inheritances may be given to his son or daughter who may not be fit to carry on its operations. Sometimes, the fracas between the children and wives may have a negative effect on the survival of the organisation. The cultural inheritance in Nigeria creates succession crisis.

Size of the Organization and Inadequate Material/Human Resources: The size of the organization can be a hindrance to succession planning, especially in small firms since they have few positions and may lack the ability to offer advancement opportunities. These employees that have potential lack the opportunity for career growth with the same companies and at times forced to move to larger organizations. The talent pool from the organization to fill these positions may be too limited to have a successful succession plan. Employees especially, those with high potential tend to leave for better paying organizations due to lack of enough financial resources in their current employment (Axelrod, 2010).

Inadequate Coaching/Mentoring and Training : Inadequate training and development leads to an employee that is unprepared for a promotion, and this leads to succession planning gaps. Organization where promotions are not done in a timely and orderly manner, leaves employees in distraught with no understanding of what succession planning is about (Robinson, 2004). If talents are not developed, this inhibits a company from growing future leaders. Companies need to identify high potential candidates and groom them for continuity of the business and easy succession.

Hesitance on grooming successors: Ankita (2012) states that emotional involvement from members of the family make it difficult for succession planning in family businesses. They never want to discuss succession planning even though they know

that owner of the business will one day die. Thus, the issue of succession planning is often avoided. Most family businesses have a very unprofessional way of handling succession planning. Most family firms end up not doing succession planning or whenever done, it is done in confidentiality and most times leads to wrong decisions. The thought of replacing managers who have been in a position for long is usually difficult. There are also managers who never want to leave their positions and want to remain at their jobs. Other leaders concentrate so much on retaining their jobs and forget to focus on what matters (Conger and Nadler, 2004).

Unprofessionalism: Most family businesses have an unprofessional approach in conducting succession planning. Deep down, everyone worries about retirement, or redundancy. The importance of succession planning is at times undermined by the fear of discussing about moving on slowing down the strategic process. Some of the people in senior positions view the process of succession planning as a reminder of their possible exit, this is due to lack of adequate training on the importance of succession planning (Jackson, 2004).

Deciding who to promote: Being very good at one thing is not an automatic assurance that someone has the required skills and talents to take up a more senior position in an organization. There are employees who tend to be comfortable in their positions and would not want a promotion. Including them in the succession plan would be a mistake since they lack the drive, ambition or motivation for a more senior role. The fear of being unable to handle the pressure of more responsibility also makes them shy away from moving up the ladder (Richardson, 2006). The decision on who to select should be based on which candidate is likely to perform best if given that opportunity. Different levels in an organization have different challenges and whenever an individual succeeds

in one level, it is no guarantee that they will pass in the next position, as lower levels have less challenges, selection should be done on the qualitative differences.

Biased selection: Familiarity makes people comfortable and managers are no exception to this. It is very easy for males to have a bias for males and the reverse is true. In a group where all managers are male, they will tend to have a bias in the selection of a male, making it difficult for a woman to get selected. This is not a bias out of intentional discrimination but because of the comfort of familiarity (Glen, 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Coaching and succession planning are important keys to organizational success. This paper explores and identifies several constraints affecting coaching and succession planning, especially in Nigeria. The issues of cultural beliefs, family type, mismatch between mentor and mentee, inadequate time, poor communication, biased selection among others, have been identified as constraints to coaching and succession planning. For instance, when selecting people required for different levels in an organization, the person specifications of the positions should be very clear and an objective comparison done against individuals to ensure a best fit. Trying to fit an individual to a stereotype can affect the process of coaching and succession planning, and it is no longer a skill based process hence the importance of identifying required successor characteristics that will best suit the job is defeated. There should be clear guidelines in identification of potential successors and high potential employees. This way, identified candidates are selected through a credible process. In addition to identification, the employees need to continuously get trained and adequately mentored with ample time and attention, this way there are no skill gaps especially when there is sudden loss of a person holding a key position. There is also need to ensure high potential employees are looked after in terms of better pay as well as how they are engaged. Organizations need to look into what extra responsibilities the successors can be given to avoid boredom and stagnation which easily gives them a reason to exit.

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