The Impact of True Succession on the survival and sustainability of family businesses in Ghana:

A Case Study of Palmers Green International Limited

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By

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ABSTRACT

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Title of Thesis

The Impact of True Succession on the survival and sustainability of family businesses in Ghana: A Case Study of Palmers Green International Limited (PGIL).

Background

The increasing collapse of family businesses all over the world has been attributed to the challenges associated with succession. In line with this, theoretical and empirical literature has associated the collapse of these businesses to a lack of a true or sustainable succession process throughout the pre- and post-succession periods. With PGIL going through similar succession journey, the need to pursue a journey towards a sustainable outcome requires the company to explore and pursue the True succession course.

Aim of the investigation

The aim of the study is to explore the concept of *True Succession* and investigate how this concept could be used to influence a change towards sustainable succession within the context of the various barriers and challenges faced in PGIL.

Design/Methodology/Approach

With the exploratory nature of the problem, the study adopted the qualitative method using the case study approach within the action research (AR) methodology in a three-action research cycle utilizing Coghlan and Brannick iterative cycle of construction, planning, acting and evaluation. Data was collected from three separate groups, the action learning set, (Action Research Team), practitioners from external family businesses and workers in PGIL. The mode of collecting data was through questionnaires, interviews, and participants' dialogue within the team, focus group, and reflective journaling.

Findings

Utilizing Braun & Clarke (2006) data analysis framework, the study found that the definition of family business is a multi-dimensional construct entailing the family and business dimensions influenced by family interest, family ownership and control, family ethos and succession. However, the study found that irrespective of the nature of the structure, the family business operates in an environment characterized by emotions and conflicts, succession plan, family control and authority and external environmental forces. With the need to pursue True succession in the company, the study found that there should be an effective and capable Board to pursue the change, the founder should have the capability and willingness to pursue the change, the successor should be willing and capable to take over and the company must involve the mixed management team in this process. Whilst recognizing this, the study found that true succession can be gained if the company is able to surmount the barriers identified as lack of succession plan, conflicts and tension, un-readiness of the founder and communication challenges.

Recognizing all these, the study found that the founder was willing but not ready to hand over to the successor. The study found that factors such as the un-readiness of the successor, the successor's level of capability and the lack of trust and confidence accounted for the behaviour of the founder.

Moreover, the main barriers identified in PGIL was identified as family feud, lack of involvement of non-family members and the non-existence of succession plans were affecting the company's quest for True succession. Towards this end, the study sought to identify the enablers of True succession in PGIL and the implementation of these enablers. The study found that, the company needs to design a succession plan, involve non-family management team in the process, and provide the needed resources and the board leading the process. In line with this, the study found the need to institute a transitional leadership structure in the whole process and efforts have begun to make this process a reality in PGIL.

Implications

The study has significant implications on the succession process when the Founder/CEO is around to spearhead the entire process. The study further recognizes the Board as a major contributor to the entire succession process towards sustainability. The study further explores alternate direction to close the leadership gap when it recognizes that the potential successor is not ready to assume the leadership mantle in the company.

Limitations and Further Areas of Research

The limited time period for the submission of my action research thesis made it difficult for me to cover every aspect of my topic; thereby opening avenues for further studies. Whilst recommendation was made for the appointment of an external Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as a transitional leader, the limited time made it difficult to explore the process through which the transitional leader could sustain the company. Secondly, whilst a qualitative study was used as a method for data collection with relatively smaller sample size, it will be worthwhile to undertake a quantitative study on succession with a relatively bigger sample. The essence is to ensure that the researcher is able to utilize quantitative justification with a larger sample to seek for convergence of

the qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Lastly, although much of this study was about the Founder/CEO's willingness to let go of the company and the un-readiness of the successor, it might be good to also explore the impact of what could happen after a transition on the sustainability of the company. All these offer further areas of study.

DECLARATION

The principal researcher, Samuel Ofori-Danso, hereby declares that this thesis/project work is original research and that, except for other people's work which has been duly acknowledged, this

thesis has never been presented to this university or elsewhere for any degree. The researcher served as the sole author for the study, which was completed under the thesis supervision of Dr Nii Amoo as a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration from the University of Liverpool.

Signed: *Samuel Ofori-Danso*

DEDICATION

To my late mother, Comfort Atram Ayebeng, for her love and support throughout my childhood. This is a dream come true to honour her.

Secondly to my CEO, Prof. Henry Jones Awuku Aboagye, for his foresight, motivation and tremendous change he has nurtured in my life.

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My first appreciation and gratitude go to the Almighty God for his grace and mercy in sustaining me throughout this work.

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Besides my supervisor, I use this opportunity to thank members of my Action Research Team especially Francis, Nkrumah and Augustus for their contributions, insightful comments and hard questions.

I thank my fellow practitioners in PGIL whose questions and comments shaped this study. I also thank my study team mates for evoking critical issues and discussion, and the sleepless night we engaged in to ensure the completion of the project over the past six (6) years.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank my family: my wife, Faustina Otsiwah Danso, children Kofi, Kukua and Moses for their tremendous support, encouragement and sacrifice throughout my studies.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Embarking on a thesis journey entails planning, processes and application of theories within a set objective. Towards this end, this chapter of my dissertation focuses on the background of my study, organizational context of my study, the relevance of my study and the statement of my problem, research questions, aims and objective of the research, rationale and motivation for the study, the study implications, experience as an insider action researcher and how my study was organized.

1.1   Background of study

Family business plays a critical role not only in developing countries like Ghana, but worldwide since they contribute towards GDP growth, employment and in general poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods (Sharma et al, 2012). Available literature suggests that two thirds of the world's businesses are owned and managed by family (Oudah et al, 2018). In countries like Germany, about 90% of organizations are family businesses (Vasagar, 2014). In the USA family businesses contribute to about 89% towards taxes, with its contribution to GDP at 64% of GDP (Astrachan and Shanker, 2003; Gagne *et al.*, 2014), indicating the prominence of family businesses. The Southeast Asian region accounts for more than 60% of all the listed companies and they frequently outperform non-family-controlled companies (IBFC 2014). In Ghana, small businesses form about 92% of family businesses (Abbor and Quartey, 2010) and contribute about two-thirds of Ghana's GDP (Aacquah and Agyapong, 2015).

Towards this end, family business may be defined as a business whereby majority shares and control owned by the family, and the family members are involved in the business from one generation to the other with the intention to retain the company within the family (Chua et al, (1999). In support of this, DeTienne et al. (2015) indicated that the fundamental difference between family business and other forms of business is that there is a strong emotional attachment to the organization by the family, which defines its own uniqueness. Although family business plays a critical role in national economies, many family businesses throughout the world have not been successful in ensuring that its status as a family business remains. For instance, data released by Stalk and Foley (2012) indicated that 70% of family businesses fail to make it or are sold in the second generation, with about 10% having the ability to make it into the third generation. This high mortality rate of family businesses has been attributed to the issue of succession and has become a major concern, considering the impact of family business on national economies.

Succession in family business is a crucial and critical issue as the survival, continuity and sustainability of the business depends on what quality of succession is undertaken from one generation to the other. This becomes possible especially when the founding families' intention and motive is well established, known, processed and communicated as early as possible. Thus the founder/CEO who has the motive of demonstrating dynastic and altruistic behavior (Casson, 1999; Chua, Chrisman and Sharma, 1999) as the objective should be guided to make efforts to let this intention and desire work through a long term strategic planning with the ultimate goal of motivating and attracting potential and committed family members to practice their profession in the business (McMullen and Warnick, 2015; Parker, 2016).

Though, there are many researches on succession of family business, there is still a gap in solving this quality succession challenges especially in Ghana, where there is limited research in family business. Accordingly, when there is a capable, trusted and willing successor (Parker,2016; Blumentritt, 2016; Cabrera-Suarez, 2005; Cabrera-Suarez et al., 2018) to take over from the willing and ready founder/CEO, especially when the transition is from first generation to the second and proactively involvement of all stakeholders Cennamo et al., (2012) the quality of succession could be assured and vice-versa.

1.1.1 Explanation of True Succession and its impact on sustainability

True succession for this research as noted by Lucky, Minai and Isaiah (2011), Lorna (2011) and William (1988) is operationalized as quality succession or a sustainable succession. This is defined as *a situation where the Founder/CEO or predecessor has groomed and mentored a willing family member and passed on the leadership position (CEO) to him with the ultimate aim of sustaining a family business and preserving the family's vision, values, tradition and culture to*

ensure that the business is maintained in the family from one generation to the next and giving consideration to other concepts such as the environment and other stakeholders of the family business.

Within the organisation, the existence of competent, capable and willing family successor (Parker, 2016; Blumentritt, 2016; Kets De Vries et al., 2007; De Massis et al., 2012), along with empowerment of non-family members amongst the management team to be part of the decision-making process and willingness and readiness of the Founder/CEO to hand over power have all become significant concerns that threaten the survival and sustainability of PGIL. In line with the current succession concerns facing PGIL, I felt the need to explore critical concepts of True Succession as the framework suitable to research on how PGIL could sustain the pre- and post-succession era of the organization and this has well been articulated in the conceptual framework of the study in chapter two section 2.10 (figure 2.3).

Based on the above, DeTienneet at al. (2015) suggested it is important for us to see succession not just as a transfer of ownership and management, but as a recycling process of re-engineering the entrepreneurial capacity of the organization Pittino et al., 2018; Hillebrand, 2019). Whilst the focus of succession has always been on handing over management and control to the next generational leader, available evidences and literature equally task the Founder/CEO to consider alternative models when the leadership capability existing internally threatens the sustainability of the organization. For instance, Nike Company hired an external Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead the company through major transformational changes, but was not retained after it was achieved Karaevli and Zajic, (2012), raising the argument for a transitional leadership model.

The basic argument underlying this view is based on the idea that the external CEO could introduce and build internal capability such as human capital development Dawson, (2012) to equally help in the transition process. It must also be emphasized that the role of the non-family management members, the Board and other employees are critical and complex areas which the organization can look at during the entire succession process to ensure that the organization gains true succession.

1.1.2 Background of the Organizational Context

Palmers Green International Limited (PGIL) is a privately-owned company which was established in the year 1995 to engage in providing and supplying electrical equipment, conducting electrical engineering and civil works, as well as the installation and commissioning services to both private and government owned organizations in Ghana and West Africa.

The vision of the organization is to become a first-class electrical equipment supplier in Ghana and Africa with the optimum goal of becoming the best service provider in the electrification project market. In line with this, the organization's mission is to assist in the provision of electricity for socio-economic development in the countries it operates in, and lighting up communities through the skills, knowledge and expertise of its cherished employees.

As a family business, PGIL has a number of family members occupying key positions in the organisation. The structure of the governance of the organization is made up of the Board, the CEO, Chief Operating Officers (COOs) and the management team. There are three COOs – two family members and one non-family member on the Management team. The organization operates a top down hierarchical system. The composition of the Management team and the Board structure in the organization is highlighted in table 1.1 and 1.2 respectively below.

Table 1. 1 Management Team structure

Position	Family or non-family members	Influence on decision making (Very High-Very Low)	Potential successors Yes/No
Founder/CEO	Family member	Very High	N/A
Acting CEO/COO1	Family member	High	Yes
COO2	Non-family member	High	No
COO3	Family member	High	Yes
Head-Material	Family member	High	No
Head Finance	Family member	Low	No
Head-DOP	Non-family member	Low	No
Head-PEECL	Non-family member	Low	No
Head-Cheshire Quarry	Non-family member	Low	No
Head-GCP	Non-family member	Low	No
Head-Polymers	Non-family member	Low	No
Head-Trade and Save	Non-family member	Low	No

Source: PGIL Archive, 2018

Note: Founder/CEO represents the Founder, the Owner, the CEO and Member of the Board.

From the table it can be seen that there are more non-family management members than family members, but their influence on decision-making is very low, with the exception of COO2 who has high influence on decision-making.

Table1. 2 Composition of the Board of Directors for PGIL

	Family Executive	Non-family Executive	Total
Executive members	2	2	4
Non-Executive		5	5
Total	2	7	9

Source: PGIL Archive, 2018

The organization currently operates six registered companies, offers a diverse range of products and has formed partnership and agency agreements with a number of foreign organizations in the United Kingdom and Asia (see www.palmersgreeninternational.com, 2018).

To this end, the research is focused on PGIL as a case study and research site as well as eliciting some supporting responses from other family owned organizations in Accra and employees from PGIL. The choice of the Greater Accra region of Ghana is justified on the basis that most of the organizations in Ghana are concentrated in the capital of the country, known as the Greater Accra region. The selected organizations have similar characteristics to that of PGIL and are categorized and concentrated within the energy, commercial and manufacturing of plastic products. The choice of this dynamics is to ensure easy comparison of PGIL to these organizations.

1.2   The Problem Statement and the Relevance of the research

The challenges facing family owned businesses going through the succession process such as PGIL raise significant and disturbing challenges, considering the critical role they play in national economies. The probabilities of also losing the socio-emotional wealth, family identity as well as

the continuation of the family dynasty (Minichilli at al., 2010; Gomez-Mejia et al.,2007) are major concerns. Even though research has been done to address the succession issues (Davis *et al.*, 2000; Lorna, 2011; Kurakto et al; 2005) many family owned businesses failed and collapsed without the benefit being passed to the next generation.

The current succession dilemma facing PGIL begs a number of questions with respect to the ability to sustain the business during the post-founder era. In line with Sharma et al. (2003) research, concern is related to the sudden retirement of a Founder that is detrimental to the organization as it disrupts the mechanics of the organization, particularly when no adequate safeguard mechanism has been put in place prior to the Founder leaving. With over 600 people being employed by PGIL, the livelihood of these workers could equally be in jeopardy. Currently, the organization is faced with many complex issues such as the lack of clarity on the existence of a succession plan, no clear succession lines and lack of communication on any impending succession process. This is coupled with the challenges of availability of capable and willing successors, groomed appropriately to take over the business. Moreover, the fact that the non-family members with all these skills and expertise are not fully empowered in the decision-making processes (Verbeke and Kano, 2012), will be allowed or be involved during the succession process (Savolainen and Kansikas, 2013) is another issue. Supporting this argument, Lam (2009) posited that discontinuation of family business is very harmful and devastating as they affect jobs, assets of the family and relationships.

To avoid or manage such disruptions, PGIL needs to operate successfully in the long term and be sustainable. Recognizing these concerns, the Founder needs to evaluate the critical success factors that drive the sustainability of the family business (Collins et al., 2016). This is based on the idea that, the key players should be considered as the real actors in the true succession process and therefore must work collaboratively to manage the environment in such a way to ensure business

continuity and sustainability (Lucky et al., 2011). This therefore makes the choice of true succession a key concept in family business sustainability. In support of this, Crosbie (2000, p. 105) describes it as:

> *'I think there is an interesting analogy between running a family company and flying a plane. There's not much danger to anybody when the plane is in the third hour of a transatlantic journey, but at take-off and landing the craft is vulnerable to an accident'.* -Crosbie (2000, p.105)

To get the best of succession, concepts like successful succession (Barach and Ganitsky, 1995), True succession (Lorna 2011; Lucky et al 2011), and sustainable succession have all been recognized as important and synonymous to mean quality succession which is successful and at the same time sustainable. Therefore, the purpose of the research is to do an exploratory investigation in concepts that will address the issues of sustainable succession and sustainability of family business in Ghana, specifically in PGIL

1.3   Rationale and motivation for the research

During my seventeen years with a family business, I have witnessed many companies operate successfully under the Founder/CEO. Sadly, after the demise or retirement of the Founder/CEO, many challenges erupt (Duh, 2015; Gersick *et al.,* 1997) which prevent the family businesses from continuing their operations. In most cases, these challenges are found within the complex relationship between the Founder/CEO, successor, organisational processes and human capital challenges during the succession process. Whilst these concepts are critical in the succession process, Lucky *et al.,* (2011) conceptualisation of these concepts into True Succession concepts provide different lenses through which researchers can approach the succession process. Thus, my motivation to embark on this research is to explore the concept of True Succession as applied to

PGIL as an alternative to help solve the succession challenges that confront family businesses in Ghana. In detailed, it further seeks to explore the "limitations and enablers" of the concept of True Succession as well as the barriers of sustainable succession. In addition, the focus of this thesis invariably seeks to describe how my learning experiences as an individual, researcher, and finance practitioner will be relevant to the change process currently going on within PGIL. In engaging with the research process, two strands of research take place; my learning and engagement in the action research thesis and the resolution of the practical organisational problem which is referred to as the "core action" research (Zuber-Skerrit and Perry, 2002). Thus satisfying the two requirements of "thesis action research and core action" (Zuber-Skerrit and Perry, 2002, p.63; Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher, 2007).

Notably, limited research has been conducted on the True Succession concept, making it an exciting research focus. This research will also delve into succession transitions to explore the mechanisms needed to mitigate the problems that may disrupt the true succession process in PGIL

1.4   Research Questions

From the research topic and the research problem stated above, the main research question is stated as: How will True succession in family business impact on the sustainability of family businesses in Ghana? To answer this question appropriately, the following sub research questions were developed through the emergent issues that transpired during the action research cycles and form the basis for designing and guiding the research:

- What constitute family business and definition of family business?

- What is the nature of the succession environment of family businesses in Ghana?

- What constitute true succession in family business?

- What are the barriers towards sustainable succession?

- How does exploring of true succession conceptual framework lead to sustainable succession in PGIL?

- What factors or enablers need to be explored to ensure that PGIL attains a successful succession towards sustainability?

The research topic and questions were developed through problematizing process. More background development through the nine modules completed and the way we go about them gave the clue to initially pick a question related to my work place. Having picked an initial issue, I used the scholarly literature to refine, retune and reframe it. After that I dialogued with colleagues and knowledgeable people in family business to further help shape and fine-tune and reframe till I came to the final research topic and the main research question. To make it easier for data collection, this research question was broken into sub-questions and some emerged through the enactment of the action research cycles.

1.5   Aims and Objectives of the Research

From the research topic and the problems narrated in sections 1.1 to section 1.3, the main aim and objective of the research is broken into sub units below in order to comprehensively address them. This will be done in line with answering each of the research questions outlines in the Section 1.4 above.

- To study the constituents of family business and nature of the family business succession environment in Ghana.

- To explore the variables that defines True Succession within the family business environment in Ghana.

- To explore the barriers and possible enablers of True Succession in family businesses.

- To draw conclusions and provide actionable knowledge that can be used by PGIL in its true succession and sustainability. This includes my account of living theory and learning and the AR team's learning experience.

1.6   The Incremental Contribution to Actionable Knowledge

From the body of research, studies on family business succession have often followed the traditional research approach of engagement which this study is not exceptional with little modification in data collection and not detaching the researcher completely from the context of engagement. In line with this , I will be able to bring a stronger contribution to the body of knowledge by integrating my role as an insider-researcher into context; thereby generating quality knowledge based on experience to support the body of knowledge. Thus, by this approach, I will like to give higher utility to both practitioners and academia as it is able to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Saeed and Hossain, 2009).

Within my practice as a researcher, I believe that by engaging in this particular research on True Succession in PGIL, I will be able to break the grounds through collaborative efforts and communication by exposing certain critical ills within my organization and ensure that my organization survives together with me as the researcher.

The voices of people in the organization need to be heard for fruitful working relationships. The collaborative approach of this research gives the opportunity for other members of the organization to be empowered to bring about a change in the organization. With this succession process on-going, this research will empower participants considerably to contribute immensely to

the success of the whole process, to help them to be emancipated and enable them be active participants in business issues with no fear of intimidation.

1.7   Study Implications

My main objective of researching the impact of True Succession on the sustainability of PGIL by utilizing multiple options that could give wider and holistic ideas of varying researchers to be able to generate actionable knowledge (Chrisman et al, 2018) which can be shared between practitioners and academicians Bloch et al (2012), whilst at the same time intervening in my organization's challenges with regards to quality succession. In this case, the application of the true succession concept concepts defining succession and linking it to sustainability may be able to generate more insight into dealing with generational transferability of family business planning. It will also highlight the barriers to sustainable succession businesses which are not only dependent on profitability, but more importantly on building and sustaining the business overtime.

1.8   Experience – Insider Action Researcher (IAR)

I am currently the Chief Operating Officer (COO) in charge of Finance with a deeper involvement in major decisions in managing PGIL and sister companies. Upon this arrangement, three companies with different and distinct operational activities have been placed under me. The Civil and Construction Company undertakes over thirty different projects dotted all over Ghana. The Engineering and Electrical Company is currently undertaking six major projects in four regions in Ghana. The Transport Company provides haulage and transportation services for all of the companies within the chain. Additionally, I am in charge of finance for PGIL and all the sister companies and am one of the few non-family members occupying top most position for strategic

reasons of growth and performance (Fang et al., 2016) which sets me in a better position to contribute to change process in PGIL.

With my seventeen years employed with the family business, I have gained a considerable amount of experience, respect and trust within the family and non-family members in the organization. This has enabled me to gain rich experience in the operations of family companies in Ghana. With this background, the length of employment in the organization and the position I occupy, it is easier for me to interact with all executive and non-executive members of the organization, and voluntarily invite them to be part of the research. I have gained the acceptance of the management team to undertake this research which runs in tandem with the on-going succession process the organization is facing for the first time since its establishment. However, I needed to be politically astute and behave like a political entrepreneur (Buchanan and Badham, 2008), which involves risk-taking, innovative and creativity as change agent.

1.9   Structure and Roadmap of this thesis

This thesis consists of six (6) chapters. This current chapter consists of the background of research, problem statement, aims and objectives of the research, rationale and motivation for the research, incremental contribution of the research, scope of the research, research implications, experience-Insider researcher and the structure and roadmap of the thesis.

In chapter two, I review literature on the various concepts and theories pertaining to family businesses and succession. It also covers the development of conceptual framework and sustainability of family businesses.

In chapter three, I will look at the methodology under the various research designs which fall under the qualitative inductive approach. Justification for the choice of design in the research is also highlighted.

In chapter four, the findings of the research are presented in story-mode narrating how data was collected and analysed, emergence of issues and engagement of other practitioners to verify and conclude on various findings of the study. Here, the study goes through adopted cyclical approach.

In chapter five, I discuss the various findings that were identified throughout the study and provide enough justification for the outcomes. The chapter also focused on the reflections on the findings and interventions this resulted from the study.

Finally, in Chapter six, the conclusion and recommendations and implication for the research are presented. I draw together all the findings and evidence from the research project.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter reviews family businesses in general. The chapter is further divided into the definition of family businesses in Ghana, management structure, succession process and planning, role of transition in the process, engagement of all stakeholders among other issues.

2.1 Introduction

This literature review attempts to reflect and discuss a number of theoretical and empirical

perspectives and its implication for knowledge creation for theory and practice in my organization.

2.2 Overview of Family Business

Family businesses play significant roles in the development of every country. They are seen as

unique in terms of sizes and characteristics. In support of this, Ramadani and Hoy (2015) have

indicated that they are a major contributor to wealth creation and employment across the world. A

research conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers highlighted that 70%-80% of businesses in

Europe are family owned and that family businesses account for 40%-50% of employment in

these countries (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2013). In Africa, Price Waterhouse Coopers report

that the IMF indicate six of the ten world's fastest growing economies were in Sub-Saharan Africa

and this was largely attributed to the growth and development in the family business sector (Price

Waterhouse Coopers, 2013).

Available literatures in Ghana suggested that most Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are

family businesses which represent over 90% of private businesses (Aryeetey, 2001; Abor and

Quartey, 2010). Looking at the family business' growth pattern in Africa and the world at large, it

could be seen that there is something distinctive about family businesses that gives it leverage over

other types of business (Chrisman et al., 2005). This distinctive family business characteristic is

seen within the overlap of the family, business and ownership structure of organizations (Basco,

and Pérez Rodriguez 2009; Poza, 2007).

Recognizing all these dimensions, Michael-Tsabari et al.(2014) believe that the nature and dynamics of family involvement in family business may vary from one family to another over a period of time. In a research conducted by Pieper, *et al.* (2015) on five companies that are family owned and managed, it was realized that, whilst family businesses have a lot in common, they differ between various geographical scopes. They attributed this to the issues of family culture and traditions, the embeddedness of the family system, business and the environment.

2.2.1   Defining Family Business

Defining family business has become a major problem as a result of the heterogeneity and distinctive characteristics that family firms have within various jurisdiction and context. In view of these challenges, many authors have come out with various operational or generic definition of the term that seek to provide some distinction and character with respect to what constitutes family business (Sharma and Irving, 2005) and what critical or key variable the definition should reflect. In answering this question, attempting to define what constitutes a family business has sought to tie family business to a few variables, aspects or concepts that are reflections of multiple criteria (Sharma, 2004). In support of this, Colli et al., (2013) stated that the definition of family business must take into consideration the ownership, continuity and management structure. The continuity dimension raised by Colli et al (2013) makes it clear that the organization will continue to be in the family. The dimension of continuity goes contrary to any possibility of utilizing the exit strategy as an option during the succession process in the organization (Segaro, 2012).

In a similar vein, Acquah (2011) as well as Heinrichs (2014) defined family business narrowly to mean businesses that are owned 100% by a specific family. Supporting this argument, Astrachan and Shanker (2003) indicated the definition of family business should place the family as the

central focus of the research. Relating the above assertion to Ghana, many of the family businesses in Ghana are small in size and predominantly sole proprietorship in nature. From the above definitions and classifications made so far, it could be realized that family businesses are heterogeneous in terms of ownership, control, management and operational structure; which has made the choice of a particular definition significantly difficult for family business researchers (Arregle *et al.,* 2007). This lack of uniformity around the definition of a family business makes it difficult to compare studies and determine the boundaries of the field of family business research.

Whilst the available literatures provide varying definitions, there is no official definition, data or information on family businesses in Ghana which identifies the level of involvement of the family members in terms of the organization's ownership structure, Board system, management and the size as well as the various emotional relationships they establish with the key stakeholders involved. However, one thing that is certain is that, majority of the small and medium businesses in Ghana are owned by families and these businesses seek for sustainability to maintain the family legacy (Acquaah and Eshun, 2016). From this perspective and looking at the Ghanaian context, the definition of family business involves the extended family system, typifying the strong patriarchal traditions (Bewayo, 2009; Kiggundu, 2002). It should further be noted that in Africa and Ghana especially there is the belief in the saying that; ''*it is the whole village's responsibility to raise a child''*. This concept of family broadens the scope of succession to include near and distant familial relationships. In respect of this, the definition of family business within the African context is broadened to include the entire bloodlines of familial relationships.

The operational definition I used for this research is based on the extent to which *family systems members are deeply involved in the business management and control with the intention of retaining the business in the family from one generation to the other* (Chua et al, 1999; Chrisman et al., 2003; Astrachan and Shanker, 2003).

2.2.2 The Nature and Structure of Family Business in Ghana

Family-owned companies account for two-thirds of all businesses worldwide (EFB-KPMG, 2015). In Ghana, family businesses start mainly in the agricultural sector with agriculture family members owning about 70% of all agriculture holdings (Oppong et al., 2014). Within the framework of businesses in Ghana, available statistics demonstrate that family businesses constitute about 92% of companies in Ghana and are registered under small and medium scale enterprises (BASTIAT, 2014). In the manufacturing sector of the economy, family businesses constitute about 75% of manufacturing Gross Domestic Product (Abor and Quartey, 2010). Appendix 1.1 shows some major family companies in Ghana.

Another dimension to family businesses in the country has been the wave of immigration, which has changed the landscape of family businesses in Ghana. Accordingly, IOM (2011) has indicated that migration has the propensity of bringing many advantages to businesses in the host country. One major contributor is the role played by the Lebanese society in Ghana. According to Zgheib and Kowatly (2011), the Lebanese have a propensity to invest in businesses both large and small. Currently, the Lebanese are engaged in businesses such as automobile, hospitality, construction, real estate, commercial and media and their businesses are established as family owned (Gyasi, 2011). This is because kingship plays a key role in the Lebanese migration, where families that are related move and create businesses in specific industries and areas (IOM, 2011). Organizations such as Interplast manufacturers and Greenplastica are family business established by the Lebanese.

In contrast with the Lebanese established companies, Ghanaian family businesses have not been able to survive. Statistics have shown that, 60% to 75% of businesses in Ghana have the tendency of collapsing and these statistics have negative impact on the Ghanaian economy (Daily Guide,

2017). Organizations such as Appino Soap, which used to employ 500 people, collapsed in the 1990's, whilst other family businesses such as PAMBROS have struggled to outwit the competition. Factors such as poor management practices, lack of available finance, poor succession planning and political interference have often been cited as major cause of business failure in Ghana (Acquaah and Eshun, 2016).

My knowledge in the Ghanaian context shows that there are some small and undeveloped indigenous business practices in various families such as textile, farming and local food venture (Kenkey, Waakye, and Chop Bars etc.) which have been in existence for decades. Even they have not seen major growth and expansion. They have been retained in the family to support the families economically and socially with altruistic and dynastic motive to the founding families (Kuratko et al., 1995; Casson, 1995; Zelleweger et al., 2012). These businesses have passed on from one generation to the other, particularly from parents to children when the parents mentor those children who show interest in the business.

2.2.3   Objective of Family Business

Knowing the objective of family business is important in ensuring the longevity and sustainability of the business. Accordingly, Gedajlovic and Carney (2010) have indicated that owners always have the extra motivation to ensure the survival of the business towards the next generation. Supporting this argument, Wilson et al., (2013) argue that the survival of family business may arise based on a combination of social, financial and human capital (Dyer and Hatch, 2006; Irava and Moores, 2010) which may work together in a unique way to help the organization. This therefore shows that, various criteria have been identified which include the need to run the business in such a way as to reflect the family owners' perspectives and set of value systems, and

seeking for social and business accomplishment (Miller and Le Breton-Miller and Miller, 2006; Berrone et al., 2012) as well as preserving family cohesion and wealth as major objectives (Chrisman et al., 2003). Westhead and Howorth (2006) disclosed that when family ownership and the management structures are significantly tight, family-objectives are seen as a high priority and pursued.

Whilst family businesses may have the objective of pursuing survival, Wilson, Wright and Scholes (2013) further highlight that there may be several characteristics such as family conflicts, nepotism, unwillingness of the Founder/CEO and the family to deal with poor performance, and managerial lapses may impose an adverse impact on the family business. Supporting this, Patel and Chrisman (2014), and DeTienne and Chirico (2013.) argue that poor performance of family businesses affect the sustainability of the business, forcing them to pursue an exit strategy. This invariably may aggravate a negative effect on attracting willing successors as they might have alternative profession elsewhere Blumentritt, (2016). Nordqvist et al. (2013) equally demonstrated that the way the next generation family members think, the direction of the business and their various motivations in life, could force them to change the objective of the succession process towards an exit strategy.

Brigham and Payne (2015) have argued that many family enterprises have demonstrated a potential capability of long term survival and sustainability by strictly following a rigid strategies, structures and governance practices which should be seen as a major objective (Goldszmidt, et al., 2008). This highlights the belief that family businesses will continue to pursue goals which may be non-economic in order to increase or preserve socio-emotional wealth (Gómez-Mejía *et al.,* 2010; Cennamo et al., 2012; Zellweger and Dehlen, 2012)). Based on this assertion, family businesses must focus on drawing on the positive linkages between the pursuits of the well-being

of the family whilst at the same time ensuring the sustainability of the business (Miller et al., 2017). From the perspective of PGIL, the need to pass on the business from one generation to the other places significant emphasis on pursuing the sustainability objective of the business to ensure the preservation of the family wealth.

2.2.4   Institutional Mixed Management structure in family business

The importance of management structure in family business cannot be underestimated, considering the role it plays in impacting on the growth and sustainability of the organization. Accordingly, families can be involved in the business through ownership, Board of Directors, family CEO and family management. (Chen et al., 2011, p.3) examine the families involvement in family business assert that, 'the Heineken family controls about 22% stake in Heineken N.V, but have only one seat on the board, whilst at the same time not participating in management. Contrasting this, the Hsu family controls about 7% stake in Far Eastern Textile Ltd in Taiwan but have 14 positions on its board including the Chairmanship, the Chief Executive Officer and two more positions in its management' (Chen, 2011). Whilst many would have argued that family business should be managed by family members, Adams, Almeida and Ferreira (2009) have argued that, there is no universal model of family involvement when it comes to family business management.

In recognizing this, supporters of the growth and continuity of the family business model have argued that the organization can only be efficient and effective if they behave in the same manner as the non-family businesses. Towards this end, available literature has intimated that family business management structure can take the form of a pure family management structure Berrone et al. (2012), a pure non-family management structure or a mix of family and non-family

involvement (Stewart and Hitt., 2012). Irrespective of the form it takes, it has been argued that the character of every efficient family business depends on its ability, willingness and readiness to utilize the expertise not only from the family, but from professional non-family members (Sorenson, 2000). Coming from this perspective, the ability to join family and non-family management capabilities is critical to the success of the organization (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009; Stewart and Hit, 2012). This is because, non-family members can help in managing succession conflicts, that may arise between the incumbent leader and the potential successors (Stewart and Hit, 2010) whilst at the same time brining in professional expertise; a management approach has been termed as Institutional mixed management model.

The institutional mixed management is based on the premise that the family and nonfamily members are assessed based on their capabilities, skills and experience where each of them is accorded mutual respect, trust, equal access to the business resources in performance of their duties to develop human capital for leadership positions (Liden et al., 2014; Raelin, 2012) Unfortunately, Chrisman *et al.* (2014) have argued that bounded rationality on the part of family members constrain the non-family management team member's ability to perform, which often leads to the ''winner's curse'' (Thaler, 2012) where both family and professional goals are not achieved. Thus, ''winners curse'' attained through such limitation could affect the sustainability of the business and the family legacy.

Relating this model to Ghana and PGIL specifically, it is recognized from Table 1.1 in chapter one that even though the organization is family owned, a large portion of the management team is made of non-family management team members. However, these non-family members including those in the top management's level of acceptance, in terms of their ability to make critical decisions in the organization, has been called into question, since they are not fully engaged in the core decision-making. This sometimes make their role merely ceremonial (Sarbah and Xiao, 2015). In line with this, Yildirim-Öktem and Üsdiken's (2010) as well as Carlock and Ward

(2010)'s functionalist argument highlights that the focus on engaging non-family members in key decision-making processes of the organization provides an opportunity for the family business to be able to cope with the complexities associated with the 21st century business environment which is critical. With the objective to pursue True Succession in PGIL, the recognition of the capability of these team members is seen as a necessary resource towards the improvement in decision-making in the organization.

2.3 Succession Planning in Family Business

Over the years, the survival of family businesses has become important given the critical role that these businesses play in ensuring the development of national economies. The collapse of most family businesses in Ghana after the demise of the founder has been attributed to the absence of effective succession planning, which seems to have been framed within the context of my research problem as 'the need' to utilize the True Succession concept to avert some of these challenges affecting family businesses in Ghana. With these concerns, planning for effective succession has been recognised as a key milestone in the life of family businesses. In support of this, family business researchers have often cited succession planning as a major challenge in transiting from one generation to the other (Bastiat, 2014; Fager and Mckinney, 2007). It has been estimated at the international perspective that merely 30% of family businesses survive in the second generation, while fewer than 12% make it beyond the third generation (DeTienne et al., 2015).

 From these identifications, Nordvist et al. (2013) therefore, argued that the succession process in family businesses require a decision to be made about the position of entering and exiting the business, which therefore calls for a planned behaviour towards succession. Accordingly, succession planning may be defined as identifying and developing individual or groups with the requisite skills and talents as well as the experience to take over major specific roles in the family business (Viktorin and Downs, 2010). In support of this, Atwood (2007) defined succession

planning 'as the process of having the right individual/team at the right place and time' (p.1). This process entails an evaluation and review of the organization's strategic plans, evaluating the capability and skill of the workforce, identifying and forecasting future needs and expectations, and developing employees to take over the mantle during the retirement period of the leader'.

It must be emphasized from all these definitions that this process requires a planned behaviour geared towards deliberately engaging in behaviour capable of assisting the company to transition towards a more sustainable and effective succession process (Ajzen, 1988). The succession plan in this respect must map out which employees are ready for new leadership roles as they become available in the company (Raelin ,2008;). The argument herein requires the company to be handed over to a more trusted, committed and capable successor with the intention of sustaining the business in the family for a very long time (Sharma et. al, 2003; Lopez-Mosquera and Sanchez, 2012). This therefore places the theory of planned behaviour within a good context, arguing that the stronger the intentions to be engaged in a behaviour relating to succession, the more likely such behaviours will be displayed (Ajzen, 1991). This shows that, one person must be willing to spearhead the succession process through his behaviour and this should be communicated, planned and coordinated accordingly (Friedman et al., 2017).

2.4   True Succession as a concept of sustainable succession process

The survival and sustainability of family businesses in Ghana is critical since no organization can survive in the long term without reinventing itself which, therefore, makes succession a important concept in the sustainability of family businesses (Kotter, 1996). With this in mind, True Succession may be defined as a succession process that is successful and sustainable in scope (Oudah et al 2018). By this particular definition, any change effort in PGIL must make success

and sustainability the primary scope that should guide any succession effort. Supporting this, Lorna (2011) has indicated that the collapse of most family businesses is attributed to the absence of True Succession. Talking more about the concept of True succession, Williams (1988) has defined it as the transition of leadership from one generation to another where the successor demonstrates the qualitative characteristics of the predecessor. From his definition, Williams (1988, p.159; followed up with hypothetical illustrations of the definition of True Succession outlined below:

'An individual B is a true successor of an individual A if and only if:

1. The central ideas of B were developed after those of A

2. The central ideas of A are consistent with those of B

3. B understood the ideas of A

4. A would, ceteris paribus have developed more or less the same central ideas as those actually developed by B

5. The central ideas of A are not identical with those of B' (Williams,1988, p.159)

Underlying the core ideas of Williams (1988), the above recognizes the quality aspect of succession, continuity and culture (Williams, 2013), which are seen as key to sustaining businesses. From Williams assertion the two key players who are predecessor and the successor should demonstrate particularistic behaviour which requires the ability of the predecessor to actually desire and make an effort to hand over, whilst the successor shows behaviours that shows his willingness to take over the running of the business De Massis, et al (2014; Furst; 2017; Lam, 2009). Lorna (2011) further highlighted that these quality characteristics must be embedded within the interrelationship existing between the Founder/CEO, successor and how their relationship could be leveraged to overcome the disruptions which emanate from the succession environment to create a sustainable business. In support of this argument, the conceptual framework identified

by Lucky *et al*. (2011) as indicated in the *figure 2.1* below recognizes True Succession as a pull or push factor between the Founder/CEO and the Successor. The figure (2.1) further illustrates the Founder/CEO, the successor and the environment as joint factors that predict true succession of family business which is needed to ensure that disruptions emanating from both the internal and external environment is managed effectively to create a sustainable organization.

Figure 2.1 True Succession framework
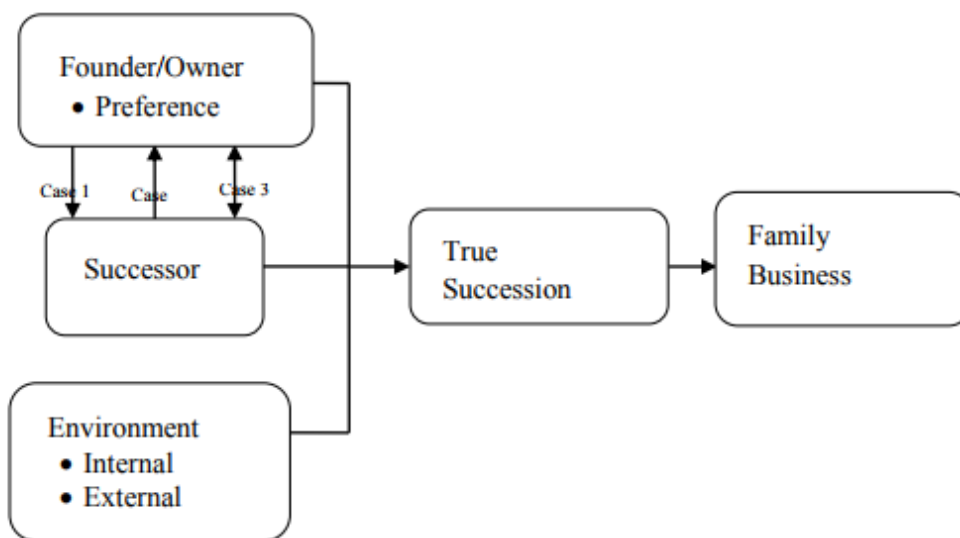
Source: Lucky et al. (2011)

True succession from the perspective of the literature identified recognizes aspect of the willingness and readiness of the Founder/CEO to hand over the reign to an identified qualified family member capable of providing leadership within the business. To ensure that the business survives and maintains its unique family business character (Barach and Ganitsky, 1995) it needs to overcome disruptions within the environment (Kellermanns and Eddlestone (2006). In support of this Ruben (2013) indicated that True Succession exists when there is a tradition of following the ideas of the Founder/CEO. Then a true successor of that Founder/CEO emerges and a new tradition evolves that follows the idea of the true successor, with the result that the new tradition

belongs to the older one, yet goes beyond them. This aspect equally identifies the Founder/CEO grooming the follower, maintaining the family tradition and re-inventing the organization.

2.4.1 Willingness and Readiness as Key Components in True Succession

The definition given in figure 2.1 restricts True Succession to leadership transition, an idea of transfer, but fails to look at other variables and factors that could impact on the entire process. On a religious front, many writers have identified Biblical characters Elisha as the true successor of Elijah based on Williams' (1988) assertion. This can have its root on Elijah (Bible: 1st and 2nd Kings) grooming and handing over to Elisha who performs more and similar miracles of Elijah (28 as compared to 14) Fretheim (1999). However, various authors have disproved the assertion of Williams (1988) and Ruben (2013) as not sufficient enough to show that, for us to get true succession more variable need to be affected. Supporting this particular view, Parker (2016) has highlighted that it is the founder's targeted actions that could have an impact on the motivation and ability of the successor to join the family business. According to Kotlar et al (2014) ability has been defined as the potential successor having the needed skills and capabilities to assume leadership role in the company as successful successor. In a study conducted by DeMasis et al (2008), three explanations were given as the condition that inhibits successful family business succession as identified:

- All potential successors decline the managerial leadership of the company

- The dominant coalition tends to reject all the family successors

- The dominant coalition rejects family succession even though family members are willing and able to take on the leadership mantle.

From the above, successful succession is based on premises that the incumbent's willingness and readiness to handover, the successor's willingness and readiness to take over with the support of family members and succession planning (Sharma et al., 2003; Nordqvist et al., 2013; De Massis et al., 2012) and the intention of both the founder and the successor to ensure that this is achieved. This further looks at the successor's capabilities to run the company in a successful manner. Also, the willingness is defined as individual disposition to engage in a particular behaviour to achieve family-oriented goals such as the establishment of harmony and business success. The variables may include the commitment of the potential successor and his attitude towards the entire succession process.

The willingness of the successor to take over the organization should be dependent on the capability level of the successor in terms of the human resource skill and requirements needed to move the organization to the next level. This requires planning on the part of the Founder/CEO to train and mentor the successor adequately to create a fit in the organization from the onset of the business. In some situations, the successor may be a high potential successor who is willing and has developed the necessary capabilities to assume the leadership role. For such individuals, the founder's perceived action need not be substantial to persuade such individuals to take on the leadership role.

Towards this end, I view True Succession within my organization as a situation where the Founder/CEO /predecessor has groomed and mentored a family member and passed on the leadership position (CEO) to him with the ultimate aim of sustaining the family business, preserving the family values, tradition and culture in order to retain the business in the family between one generation and the next.

2.5 Succession Environment and key organizational actors

The succession environment plays a critical role in influencing the outcome of every succession process, due to its interrelationship with the various components that influence succession (Lorna, 2011). According to Murphy and Habbershon (2008), the environment of the CEO succession process is highly influenced by characteristics which the organization wants to preserve (Hauck and Prugl, 2015; Murphy and Habbershon, 2008). Thus, True Succession starts from ascertaining a deeper understanding of the organizational environment. The environmental context within which succession takes place might look at forces such as the existence of organizational culture and values, corporate governance, competition, governmental regulations and globalization as key issues that must be considered if we need to sustain the business. Thus, succession environment could be influenced by a myriad of factors which includes family values, culture, conflict, kinship systems, inheritance laws and traditions as explained in figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Effect of culture determinants on family business succession
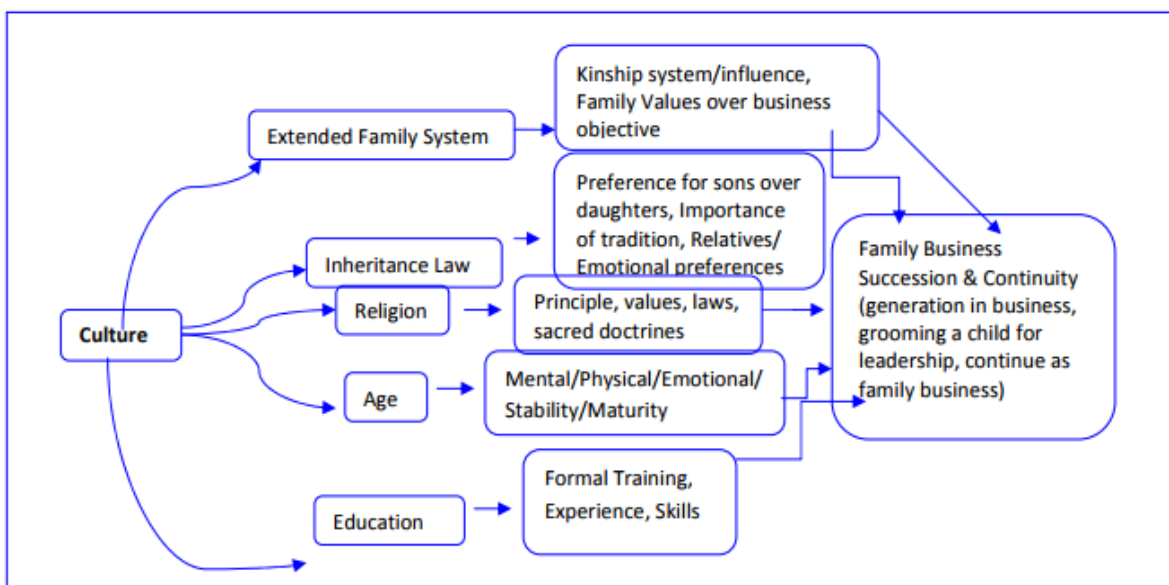
Source: (Aderonke, 2014)

2.5.1 Family Culture as a Key Environmental Influencer

Figure 2.2 above shows that embedded within the family system is a set of norms and values which are passed on from one generation to the next, irrespective of religion, education, age or marital status, and this in turn affects the success of the family business succession. The diagram therefore shows that specific cultural aspects impact on particular determinants of the entire succession process, which, therefore, needs to be looked at (Ward, 1997). For instance, from the diagram in Figure 2.2, culture impacts on the value of education, which in turn tends to have an impact on the amount of preparation of the potential successors. It is also clear that cultural attitudes affect the way in which business is conducted (Aderonke, 2014). Practitioners need to consider the way in which culture may be impacting, positively or negatively, on the family business.

Within the context of the Ghanaian economy, the family business culture determines the dynamics of succession. From most studies on family business, especially in Ghana, the culture of the country and particular ethnic groups tends to shape the Founder/CEO's cultural behaviour towards the development of his or her organization. From such a perspective, the behaviour of the Founder/CEO is typified or characterized by the cultural influence that has shaped such behaviour (Koning and Verver 2013; Drori et al., 2009). Recognizing this within the context of PGIL, the owner's behavioural pattern is influenced by a range of cultural characteristics which seems to have shaped the entire organizational context. The major question left to be seen is, to what extent such culture has permeated the very fibre of business, and how does this influence succession in general in the country. This gap raises a need for further identification and literature for further exploration.

2.5.1.1 Extended Family System

The concept of family is significantly important in African Countries and forms the building blocks upon which African societies thrive. It must be emphasized in the African setting that most people live not just with the nuclear family system, but also with members making up the extended family relation (Beweayo, 2009; Acquaah and Eshun, 2016; Zoogah et al., 2015; Vershinina et al., 2017). In such a setting, the family acts as the emotional and economic network and provides them with an identity and sense of who they are and where they are seen to belong to. From this perspective, the concept of extended family system cannot be underestimated when dealing with succession process in family business. In respect of this, Zachary (2011) has argued that, the family can be seen as the oldest and longest running institution in society, with the role of the family in business seen as an economic system to sustain and provide not just for the nuclear family, but also the extended family (Zoogah et al., 2015). In this regard, the extended family system could be a source for the company to generate relatively cheaper resources in terms of finance, human and networking rather than going with the more expensive external resources. Moreover, once the external family members are integrated wholly in the entire family business system, they tend to demonstrate more stewardship behaviour as the goal of the family are aligned towards providing for the livelihood of the family.

Therefore, the acceptance of the extended family system should be considered especially in the area of succession considering the impact they have on the organizational process. They equally can be a source of resource for succession in terms of leadership potential, grooming of potential successors to preserve the family legacy (Acquaah and Eshun, 2016). Many of the family businesses are often started by one person in support of some extended family members thereby move the business succession through nuclear lines before the arrival of the founder's offspring. In that case, relegating members of the extended family to the background during the succession

process then becomes chaotic to the sustenance of the company as a result of the level of conflicts that emanates in the process (Anderson and Reeb, 2003). This situation suggests that the role of the extended family network is critical in this study.

2.5.2 Legal and Traditional Dimension

Usually, when someone dies without making provision for successors, the continuity of any legacy becomes a major point of issue as misunderstanding and desire of families to take over assets, as well as sale of assets does not promote sustainability of the organization. Fortunately, the law and tradition sometimes provide enough of a framework in dealing with some of the challenges that may result when disputes arise during the succession process.

For instance, Figure 2.2 shows the complex web or relationships that exist during succession and, most importantly, when the Founder/CEO dies. However, in periods where the Founder/CEO dies intestate, there is the potential for the family business to begin to suffer as a result of a struggle between family members clamouring for the business properties. This period is also associated with loss in the focus of the business and management commitment. For example, when the owner of a hotel named Bobby Benson in Lagos, Nigeria, died intestate, the family members of the owner took away all the valuables in the hotel and left the hotel. This resulted in the government eventually confiscating and demolishing the property (Animashaun and Oyeneyin, 2002).

2.5.2.1 The Traditional Inheritance Law in Ghana

The inheritance laws in Ghana may be divided into the matrilineal and patrilineal traditional systems. Under the matrilineal system of inheritance, the controlling interest in the estate and

everything passes from one generation to the other only through the female lineage from which they inherit their source of existence (Bleeker, 1966; Kutsoati and Morck, (2012). In this case, family ties are only traced through ancestors who are females, which define one's matriarchal tradition. In Ghana, the Akan group, which constitutes about 48% of Ghana's population, and the Lobi, Tampolese and Baga Tribes in the Northern Ghana, tend to follow the matrilineal system of inheritance (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

On the other hand, in the patrilineal system of inheritance it includes one's children, father, siblings, and half siblings by the same father and aunts. In this system of inheritance, children would have the right to inherit the entire estate of their father and would become responsible for supporting the widow. La Ferrara and Milazzo (2012) and Aderoke (2014) highlight that most African countries tend to practice the Patrilineal system of inheritance, which is equally predominant in Ghana and Nigeria.

With the inadequacy of the local custom in ensuring equity in the succession practices in Ghana, the Provisional Defence Council (PNDC) issued major but interrelated reforms in 1985, which radically led to a reformation in the traditional system (Adedeji, 2001). The intestate succession law, recognized as a radical legislative reform, sought to balance the customary inheritance norms under the traditional inheritance system against the needs of the conjugal family (Woodman, 1985; Awusabo-Asare, 2014). Under this law, the widow of the deceased, together with the children, is the primary beneficiary of the deceased.

Whilst recognizing the importance of the intestate succession law to protect vulnerable groups, it can be recognized that there are no special rules or provisions for the succession process in family businesses in Ghana. The ability of family business to confine the family ownership in the

business is therefore seen as a major challenge for the business sustainability. However, in the absence of the succession plan, the reservation of the business in the family could still be implemented within the scope of the various inheritance laws which focuses on the devolution of the family business assets (Bracci and Vagnoni, 2011).

Whilst the inheritance law may stabilize the succession situation to an extent, it does not fully guarantee sustainability of the family business. For instance, when a performing unit of the business moves into the hands of an incompetent person who is unable to run the business well, it could lead to mismanagement of the organization, threatening the long-term survival and sustainability of the organization (Amran and Ahmad, 2010).

2.5.3   Gender as Key Force in Succession

Available research over the years has seen increasingly bias towards women in the succession process of any company (Ahrens et al., 2015; Furst, 2017). Especially in family business women are not considered for leadership or succession (Dumas, 1992) due to their religious and traditional roles they play in the family (Villares-Verala, 2018; Vijverberg, 1995; Galiano & Vinturella, 1995).

This trend has changed in the recent years as women involvement in family business has increased (Martínez, 2009). It is estimated that the percentage of family female CEO's in family businesses increase from 2% in 1995 to 9.5% in 2005 (Overbeke, 2007; Vera and Dean, 2005) This can be attribute to women taking the place of their husband based on their health condition and increase in entrepreneurship among women (Martínez, 2009).

Available evidence points to the fact that women are highly committed when given leadership position, as they tend to demonstrate high stewardship behaviour and dedication to the Company's values than men (Ryan and Haslam, 2005). The current situation is that, there has been significant increase in the number of women taking on leadership positions in businesses. In summary, Gender is seen as hindrance to intergenerational succession; daughters are ignored and not considered in succession process (Furst, 2017).

2.6 Corporate Governance Structure

With the important contribution of family business in national economies all over the world, the adoption of a good corporate governance structure would go a long way to ensure that any leadership transition process or change in general does not disrupt the organization's growth pattern (Gatamah, 2008). Thus, corporate governance seek to balance the interest of various stakeholders in the organisation by focusing on role of management and control in the family business (Witt, 2003). The incorporation of good corporate governance system in an organization would seek to introduce organization efficiency, transparency which is critical to the perpetual growth, and resilience of the company. In Ghana for instance, the corporate governance system which follows the Anglo-American model defines the country's company law, which regulates the activities of companies (Sarbah and Xiao, 2014). The regulatory framework within which the corporate governance activities are embedded includes the Company's Code of 1963, the Securities Industry Law (1993) and the Membership and Listing Regulations.

One major dimension of the corporate governance system in companies is the role of the Board and how they impact on the sustainability of the company. The institution of the Board of Directors has been recognized as a key governance system and body used within family businesses and tends to impact on the ability of the owner to manage the business (Fama and

Jensen, 1983; Nordqvist et al., 2013). Hence the effectiveness of the family business is directly linked with the effectiveness of the Board (Cadbuey, 2000). This indicates that the formation of the Board system within the family owned business provides an opportunity for establishing clear lines of authority and the assignment of responsibility within the organization.

In a country like Malaysia, the Corporate Governance Code (2001) emphasizes that a Board's composition should include one-third non-executive independent directors. Contrary to any composition specification, as in the case of Malaysia, Ghana's Company Act 1963 as well as the Ghana Stock Exchange Regulatory requirement do not prescribe any composition for Board membership (Sarbah and Xiao, 2014; Kyereboah-Coleman and Biekpe (2006).With this in mind, the Corporate governance structure will ensure that all organizational assets, resources and actions are directed at and controlled to achieve the established organization's objectives and are accounted for to all legitimate stakeholders (Sarbah and Xiao, 2014).

Whilst good corporate governance with its designed framework and formalization process plays a significant role in influencing the growth and sustainability of family businesses, family business owners tend to view it as intrusion in the family interest and disdain. Thus, an attempt to entrench their position and principles and therefore shy away from mechanisms, of corporate governance as they tend to exhibit reservation towards the term (Jaskiewicz and Klein, 2007; Pieper *et al.*, 2008).

Even though, corporate governance has been recognized as a concept that is well known within private and public sector institutions in Ghana, it has not been a characteristic of the corporate sector in general in Ghana, as evidenced by the level of corruption and mismanagement amongst these institutions (Sarbah and Xiao, 2014). As an example, the collapse and failure of most family as well as state owned businesses has been attributed to the lack of commitment to good corporate

governance structure and principle (Prempeh, 2002). Contrary to some of the negative stereotypes surrounding the board, Booth and Deli (1996) and Subrahmanyam et al. (1997), a 2010 research in Italy found the presence of independent Board members on a family business Board as having a positive effect on the performance of the organization (Giovannini, 2010). A similar research conducted in Taiwan found out that, when a family business has high ownership concentration and few family members represented on the Board, it tends to lead to higher organizational performance (Minichilli et al., 2010; Goel *et al.,* 2014; Nordqvist et al, 2013; Cotter et al., 1997).

2.7 **Barriers to Sustainable Succession**

The ability of family businesses to successfully transit across multiple generations is highly dependent on its ability to transcend the business through major hurdles and challenges presented with varying stakeholders' needs in the succession process (Allen and Harris, 2005). In a study conducted by Barry and Gabriel (2006), it was identified that forces such as family succession, legal, financial, and fiscal components place a significant strain as a barrier to successful succession.

Other studies conducted identify absence of succession plan as barriers to sustainable succession in family business. The effect of absence of succession plan may contribute incapable successor taking over and managing the business, conflict in the family and potential successor who may end up sharing the business asset or run the company in the selfish interest (Girard and Baker, 2005). Moreover, organizational complexity as a result of internal and external politics coupled with ambivalent behaviours (Lansberg, 1988) may also act as succession planning barriers (Leland et al., 2012). Thus, the impact of these barriers on ensuring sustainable succession process in the company cannot be underestimated.

These barriers create disruptions which the entire succession journey needs to deal with if the business is to have a sustainable succession process. Whilst not discounting the entire process, I

equally recognize and imagine how the family and the business could exchange resources to deal with the impact of the disruptions and the effect it might have on the sustainability family business (Olson et al 2003; Stafford et al., 1999). It is therefore necessary that founder/CEO is in the position to identify the skill set and the skill deficiency in the company and garner the needed logistical support to deal with these barriers as they occur. The major question therefore is, what type of barriers my company will be faced with in this journey, and what resources are we going to exchange and use to deal with the severity and impact on the succession process.

2.8   Sustaining Family Businesses During and After Transition

The need to embark on the succession journey is influenced by the intensity of competition amongst businesses which put pressure on family businesses to re-orient themselves towards the path of sustainability (Singhry, 2010). Given the role that family businesses play in National economies, it becomes highly important that players pay critical attention and commitment to support and sustain these businesses. Although the majority of family businesses seek to transfer the business to the next generation, very few family businesses have been able to survive into the next generation (Van de Merwe, 2009). A variety of factors have been attributed to this, but a high number of family businesses have failed because of absence of a proper succession plan or sustainability focus (Yan and Sorenson, 2006). As an example, M.K.O. Abiola's chain of companies that permeated the fibre of telecommunication, banking, media, aviation, farming and shipping have not been able to sustain after the death of the Founder/CEO (Arogundade, 2011). In a similar situation, a number of companies in Ghana, South East, North East and parts of Nigeria have all collapsed after the passing of the proprietor (Arogundade, 2011). Sustainability of these businesses has become a major concern especially in Ghana and the world over.

Whilst recognizing theses aspects, a research by Bernard (2013) on sustainability of family businesses recognized that, during transition processes, there is the need to acknowledge and support the development of the workers and incorporate star employees into the succession plan. This is because the success of any business relies on the cooperation and the knowledge of a skilled and capable team who can drive the business forward. The knowledge and skilled workforce objective are needed to ensure that the managers of the transition process have the ability to take independent and long-term objectives for the family business, including quality decision-making. Another critical area of sustainability is that family businesses must focus on wealth preservation rather than wealth creation in pursuing continuity and transfer of ownership (Ward, 1987).

Equally, the transition process needs to ensure that ownership of a business continues to remain in the family. The key to survival and sustainability of a family business is to retain the ownership of the business in the hands of committed and capable family members (Caspar, Dias and Elstrodt, 2010). Accordingly, one-third of all companies in the S&P 500 index are classified as family businesses in Germany and France, which shows that families own and control significant shares in organizations and influence key decisions (Caspar et al., 2010). Their sustainability over the years have been attributed to their relentless effort in achieving strong business performance, ensuring the commitment of the family and developing the capability of the subsequent generation to take on the business (Caspar et al. 2010). For instance, in the case of an Australian-based family business, ROI group, which has crossed four generations of family ownership and control, family members are encouraged to develop their capability outside the organization first to gain the experience, after which they are allowed to seek senior management positions in the organization. This idea equally facilitates sustainability of the organization.

Another sustainability area of focus is centred on the need to maintain family ownership and control by nurturing the family values and giving the new generation the opportunity to be proud of their legacy (Hernández-Perlines and Rung-Hoch, 2017). There is the need for a family business to institute a strong corporate governance system to support the family business.

From this perspective, the need to sustain PGIL across multiple generations requires an effective succession process. Towards this end, all key actors and enablers of sustainable succession must be garnered, combined and utilized effectively to ensure the entire journey being pursued is a success. The need to move the organization across multiple generations is a concept which must be seen as a sustainable succession process or otherwise known as True Succession (Williams, 1988; Lucky *et al*., 2011, Lorna, 2011, Lam, 2009).

2.9 Theoretical Approaches to Family Firms

In the extant literature on family business, there are many theoretical lenses that could be borrowed from general literature to understand and address issues in Small Family Business. Many theorists have noted that the foundational theoretical themes in family business are mostly taken from systems and agency theories (Gersick et al., 1997; Whitechurch and Constantine, 2004). These examples are Stewardship theories (Donaldson & Davis (1991); Resource Based View (RBV) of the firm theories (Penrose, 1959; Kraaijenbrink, et al., 2010; Barney, 1991); multi-stakeholder's theory (Freeman, 1984; Laplume et al., 2008); theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991); Socio-Emotional Wealth (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2010) and the conceptions of "willingness" as theorised through effort and ability (Parker, 2016). The review will look at these theories in order to come up with the conceptual framework for the thesis.

2.9.1   System Theory

General system theory deals with how the world as a whole and how objects in them relate to each other (Whitechurch and Constantine, 2004). Relating to family business which have the family system and the business system (made of ownership and management) Gersick et al (1997) focuses on the how the so interdependent subsystems overlap, interact to achieve the objective of the family business as a whole. It is important that the expectations and interest of the family members and the business interest is balanced with the aim of success and sustainability of the business Acquaah and Eshun, 2016; Olson et al., 2003). The balance can be achieved through effective governance structure, the Board or the family councils, the ownership or shareholders. With this understanding it must be noted that the application of the system theory demands that the governance structure, the management the Board and the ownership are not the only family members but must include nonfamily members and that each of the subsystems are equally important and must be allowed operating independently and mutually benefiting from each other interactions.

Even though the family system and the business overlap they are seen as not identical in membership (Bewayo, 2009).Connecting to my study it is found out that the ,PGIL shares is own by one family, the board of directors' membership and management even though have majority of external and nonfamily members respectively, they report to the founder/CEO who is a member of the Board and the management and has influence on them. The existence of the extended family system, the cultural aspect, like, respect for elderly and authority makes the business look at serving the symbolic interest of the founder and the family as a whole. This makes it impossible to use the system theory wholly but will be used alongside with the agency theory and the stewardship theory for this study.

2.9.2 **Agency Theory**

Agency theory establishes and develops a broader analysis the kind of relationship that exists between the principals and the agents, especially the relationship among stockholders, the capital owners, and the managers (Schulze, Lubatkin and Dino, 2003). Thus, the agent is delegated with a task with the reciprocal payment from the principal as the agency fee.

When relating the agency theory in family business concerning the family non family members it is assumed that the nonfamily member may not be committed and motivated enough to the family by engaging in self-serving behaviour. To prevent this self-serving interest, mechanism like procedures, polices and control are put in place to regulate the relationship. So as to reduce the agency cost that may arise.

However, it is noted that, agency cost is lower in family business, because the family business system normally encourages ownership and management as a shared responsibility (Chrisman et al 2004). This makes it possible that the agent and principal share common interest and commitment. Resulting in lower cost of the monitoring and additional benefits (Herrera, 2011, Anderson and Reeb 2003)

In addition to family business related issues such as conflict, family dynamic and power relations. There is also likelihood that the succession may have different interest from that of the predecessors (Schulze, et al. 2001). When consideration is given to the family executive who interest is to protect the socio-emotional wealth or noneconomic interest against the non-family executives the performance of the company is negatively affected and this created a major problem between the principle and agent (Combs et al., 2010).

These altruistic behaviour of using unqualified and incompetent family member in key position than skill, experience and qualify non family members may result in poor performance of company (Duh et al, 2010). The agency theory provides an opportunity to explain why people

behave in different ways, it has a number of shortfalls which therefore makes it applicable to the current study. Firstly, it is limited in terms of its measurability. For instance, the theory makes it difficult to measure individual preferences that are guided by relational and altruistic motives and to quantify the costs they cause. This makes it significantly difficult to apply the theory to the current work. Secondly, whilst this theory specifically argues in favour of separation between ownership, management and control, in family businesses ownership, control and management in Africa is seen as one, due to the structure of family businesses. Thus, application of the agency theory to the thesis is seen as not suitable for the current study. In the case of convergence of goals amongst family members especially when the founder is alive, there is the tendency to assume that the agency cost will be non-existent or reduced. On the other hand, when goals are disintegrated amongst the family member's efforts to align goals together especially when the founder is not available will tend to increase the agency cost to the company.

2.9.3   Stewardship Theory

Donaldson & Davis (1991) introduced the Stewardship Theory, where the beneficial consequences for the company are displayed when the principal and the agent share the same interests and roles, rather than putting emphasis on control and incentives to avoid possible opportunistic behaviour.

Since there is an alignment of goals and direction, managers are disinterested in pursuing their own self-interest at the disadvantage of the stakeholder group in general, even where they have the incentive to do so (De Massis et al, 2014). They exhibit collectivist behaviour by favouring the interests of the organization and the people who are part of it (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007). A steward will identify with the organization they work for by acting on its behalf, and accepting its vision, mission and objectives. They will have an organizational commitment and work to meet the goals by completing the required tasks and assignments, taking credit for the firm's success

and feeling frustrated when the objectives are not achieved (Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson 1997).

The stewardship theory provides an opportunity to understand the components relating to motivation, power, wide perspectives from various family and non-family members and culture dynamics that affects the stewards in the process of engagement. By utilizing the stewardship theory, management is able to assign performance targets between the success of the organization and the satisfaction of the principal (Davies et al., 1997).

This theoretical model can explain why executives of family businesses who assume Steward's role have strong incentives to act in the best interest of the business, the family owner and all stakeholders involved (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2009).

In family business, growth and sustainability is built around family harmony and family cohesion (Zellweger and Nason, 2008). In accordance with this, the stakeholder theory explains that succession in family business entails the leader, the successor and mechanism for succession, and therefore stakeholders' satisfaction must be highly regarded in succession process (Barry and Gabriel, 2006). This require wide stakeholders consultation and involvement by management during succession planning in family business than just focusing on the sole needs of shareholders (Moura-Leite, Padgett & Galan 2012; Cennamo et al., 2012). The stakeholder perspective may also be used to explain the concept of willingness in the succession process in every company. From this argument, Venter (2003) found that successor's willingness to be involved in the business is influence by the business performance and structure of the succession process.

The theory can equally explain the crucial role that non-family members play in the company. These roles include balance in decision making, maintenance of positive relation and sometime also account for conflicts among family members (Farrington, 2009). The stakeholder theory has a

significant impact on gender involvement the entire succession process of a company. Accordingly, studies and contribution on the presence of women in family business have often underscored the non-preference nature of family business owners to take over the business (Wang, 2010). This theory is seen as more appropriate to the study of succession in family business and the people involved in the entire succession process. Therefore, the choice of this theory is seen as appropriate for my study.

2.9.4 Resource-Based View Theory

The ability of an organization to create value depends on how they are able to mobilize and leverage the different organizational resources to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). The Resource Based View (RBV) stipulates that an organisation formulate strategic decision by considering its internal resource and capabilities. The resource identified by the theory are strategic resources which are considered as valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and not substitutable. The theory further highlights that, strategic resource must be difficult to be copied by business competitors and also provide competitive advantage for the business (Lee, 2013).

Most studies on resources have focused on intangible resources like human capital, but Hitt et al (2001) argue that there are a number of dimensions to organizational intangible resources with culture equally recognized as key. Within family owned businesses, the tacit knowledge is embedded within the collaborative working relationship which is likely to be transferred from one generation to the other (Nelson and Winter, 1982). Other resources that have been identified as having the capacity to generate sustainable competitive advantage to the company are family culture. Goldwasser (1986) suggests that family as source of a sustainable competitive advantage. It can be argued that, it is this culture that binds organizational members together which may work to increase motivation and commitment of the organizational members to the company's vision

and long-term objectives (Zellweger and Astrachan 2008) Also, Coyne (1986) argues that the sources of a company's sustainable competitive advantage may be derived from the company's functional, cultural, regulatory and positional differentials.

Linking this to some organizational constructs in family business, the extended family system provides a sense of networking and the ability to generate the needed resources from the pool of the extended family system. With the difficulty experienced in raising capital and hiring external leaders and resources, the presence of the resources within the extended family system provides enough competitive strength in driving the growth of family businesses (Stafford et al 1999; Olson et al., 2003). In solving the issue of having a successor after the retirement of the predecessor, which Parker (2016), termed as 'Willing successors problems' Founder/CEOs make the necessary efforts and ability in running their businesses by building a bundle of tangible and intangible resources to boost the performance of their business and also with the objective of using it to entice their willing successor to take over from them. These efforts and actions taken by the Founder/CEO are captioned as 'Founders' targeted action' (Blumentritt, 2016, p. 1261)

Whilst the resource-based view provides several explanations to the internal resources of family owned businesses, it has some disadvantages. Firstly, the resource-based view only focuses on the internal resources of the firm but does not consider external factors that consume the outcome of these resources like the customer or external pool of talents or professionals. Secondly, the theory is based on the assumption that sustained competitive advantage could be achieved if resources meet the set of criteria. Another downside of the whole resource-based view within the company is that, in cases where the company fails to garner the range of resources from within, the company will now need to look outside for the sake of sustaining the company. This situation therefore shows that this theory cannot be wholly applicable to the current study.

2.9.5   The Socio-emotional Wealth theory

The socio emotional wealth theory underlying family business argues that non-financial goals in family business provides a source of competitive edge upon which family businesses could become sustainable (Berrone, Cruz & GomezMejia, 2012). In line with this, preserving the socio-emotional wealth of family businesses provides a source of strategic value that could propel the company towards a sustainable outcome. From this perspective, socio-emotional wealthy theory entails a number of components as explained below and these components have a direct impact on the sustainability of the family business (Berrone, Cruz & Gomez-Mejia, 2012)

The first component of social emotional wealth identified as family control and influence is based on the ideology that family members tend to maintain significant amount of control over the strategic direction of the company (Chua et al., 1999; Schulze, Lubatkin & Dino, 2003). This situation only happens when these family members are dominant part of the management team and the board of directors of the company (Mustakallio, Autio & Zahra, 2002). From this, family members always try ensure high level of control over the business with an ideal of maintaining socio-emotional wealth (Schulze, Lubatkin & Dino, 2003).

The second component implies that under the socio-emotional wealth theory, the family members tend to build a binding social tie through social relationships and derive the benefit that accrue to closed network or collective social capital as well as relational trust (Justo and De Castro, 2012). These ties have both internal and external connotation, which translates significantly to cement the relationship that family, business and community have (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2005). Thus, these things are done for altruistic reasons as well as the communities' improvement (Schulze et al., 2003).

Thirdly, emotional attachment of the family member's to the business constitutes a major component in maintaining the family's socio-emotional wealth. Accordingly, Flechter (2000) indicates that this emotional attachment might be significantly complex, and therefore its mixture between the family and the business defines the differentiating variable between the family business and non-family business (Eddleston & Kellermanns, 2007; Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). These changes might be positive or negative and often comes out during key moments like succession, changes, divorce or economic downturns (Baron, 2008) and could influence the structure and direction of change.

Lastly, trans-generational control is a key component of social emotional wealth theory, as the family's key goal is to maintain the business in the family for future generations (Zellweger, Kellermanns et al., 2011). In view of this, the family recognises its business as an entity not for sale but to be maintained across generations.

2.9.6 Multi-Sstakeholder Theory

Extending this theory to the multiple stakeholders, the multi-stakeholder's theory attempts to address multiple individuals who are affected and in turn affect the organization (Freeman, 1984; Laplume et al., 2008). This view is equally supported by Sorenson (2000), who argued that the character of every efficient family business depends on its ability, willingness and readiness to utilize the expertise not only from the family, but from professional non-family members. The model recognizes that, multiple stakeholders are involved in the entire succession process and therefore must be involved at any stage of succession (Cennamo et al., 2012). Placing this within the context of my research problem, the presence and development of leadership, pursuit of family interest, creation of shared vision, and presence of a Board to influence the direction of the organization are critical stakeholder issues.

2.9.7   Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour utilizes key attributes from the research's definition of family business. This includes the intention of the Founder/CEO-owner to effect a change in the business during the succession planning process (Chrisman, Chua and Zahra, 2003). Putting the research problem within this context, the theory of planned behaviour recognizes succession not just as an event but as a continuous process and therefore planning for it in PGIL is important. In support of this, the theory of planned behaviour in the framework (Ajzen, 1991) selected seeks to identify the role the incumbent in the organization brings to identify and determine the type succession and the process of engagement (De Massis et al., 2008; López-Mosquera and Sánchez, 2012; Parker, 2016). This is crucial as the incumbent is seen as the major force needed to drive sustainable succession in the organization by planning for effective succession. This shows that with the Founder/CEO being the key architect of the succession process needs to plan the network of relationships existing within the organization effectively to make an impact.   From the aforementioned, it could be argued that consistent interaction among the stakeholders of the family business leads to the creation of common belief systems and intentions (Kuiken, 2015).

2.9.8   Sustainability Family Business Theory

The Sustainability Family Business Theory (SFBT) is a comprehensive and flexible theory developed to enhance understanding of the dynamic role of the family in family business entrepreneurship as well as demonstrates integration of the family, business, and community (Stafford *et al.*, 1999; Zachary, 2011). The theory recognises and responds to the disruption by each of the subsystems through exchange of resources (Stafford et al., 1999). It has the tendency to deal with survival of the business in bad times of the business through sacrificing resources

from the subsystems to deal with the crises. The theory is applicable to dealing with succession problems where all stakeholders in both systems would be able to sacrifice and exchange resources to deal with any disruptions that may occur. With this in mind, the sustainability of PGIL is dependent on the ability of the Founder/CEO and other related parties putting appropriate plans in place that entails the consent and contribution of multiple stakeholders in the change process. Thus, exploring my work-based problem within the context of this framework this theory is seen as appropriate for the sustainability of PGIL.

2.10   Development of the framework for the research

A number of theoretical frames have been reviewed and discussed on how they can influence the study. The main theories that influence the conceptual framework for this research are identified as the sustainability family Business Theory (Stafford, *et al.,* 1999; Olson et al., 2003), The Multi-Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1987; 1991) and the Stewradship Theory (Donaldson & Davis, 1991). The application of the four theories provides a blue-print towards True Succession that will lead to a sustaianble outcome for the PGIL. The theories have, therefore, been combined into the conceptual framework below in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Conceptual Model for the study
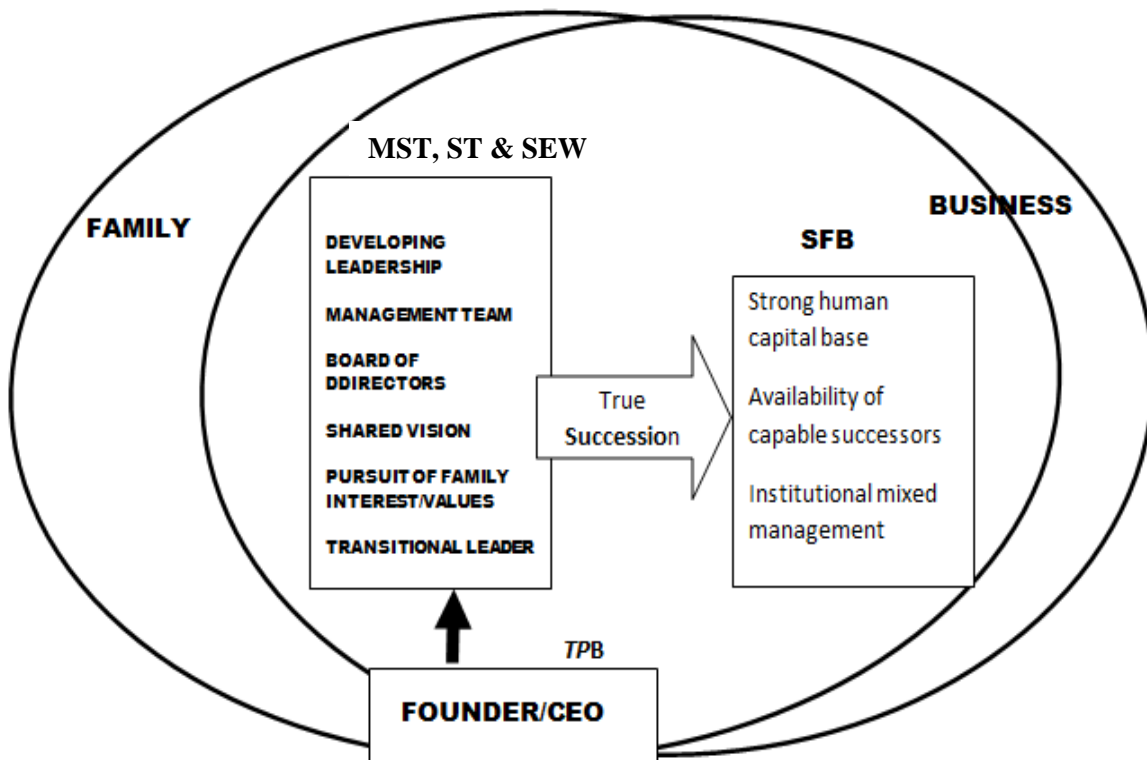
Source: field study, 2018

TPB = Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

MST = Multi-Stakeholders Theory (Freeman, 1984; Laplume et al., 2008)

SFBT= Sustainability Family Business Theory (Stafford et al., 1999)

ST   = Stewardship Theory (Donaldson & Davis, 1991)

SEW = Socio-emotional Wealth Theory (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2010)

The conceptual model (Fig 3.3) above is premised on the notion that the family and the business could be functional subsystems that are embedded within the family business system. According to the model, the Founder/CEO having intention to effect change in succession in the family business, puts the problem in the context of Theory of Planned Behaviour and utilizing the Multi Stakeholders theory to understand and take necessary action on the effect on varying stakeholders involved. In addition, the application of Stewardship Theory will be used to assess alignment of stakeholders' interest, commitment and loyalty to that of the family business and utilising the socio-emotional wealth theory (SEW) will help determine the protection of the socio-emotional wealth (SEW) of the family. The Sustainability Family Business Theory helps to handle disruptions that may arise in the process by the subsystems exchanging resources. Thus, by utilizing these selected theories, the founder/CEO will be able to influence the development of leadership capabilities, build a strong team from which the Board together with the founder /CEO selects potential successors in the succession process to achieve true succession. At the end of this planned process, sustainability would be achieved. There would be strong human capital base from institutional mixed management where capable successors will be chosen from. The model also explains that, in the event where there is no available capable successor the continuity and sustainability of the business would be affected. Therefore transitional leadership should be considered until such time that a capable family successor arises. Details of this model are explained in line with the study.

 According to the model, the sustainability of the family business is influenced by the success of the business and the family function (Stafford *et al.,* 1999). Thus, the sustainability of the business reflects the outcome whereby the organization has been able to develop strong human resource capability, making available capable successors and institutionalizing an effective mix management team.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In engaging with the research, the choice of an appropriate methodology for the research is seen as necessary to ensure the reliability, credibility and acceptability of the research. In line with this, this chapter deals with the methodology which was adopted in this research.

3.1 Introduction

The design of this chapter operationalizes the research methodology and the design of the research to ensure that I achieve the objectives that were set in the research. In this chapter, I reviewed and contrasted the philosophical assumptions and choose one or a combination suitable for my research. This includes the empirical or positivist design, the interpretive design, my ontological position, my epistemological position, my research design, formation of the research team, introduction to my research cycles, and development of my research questions, data collection, data analysis, ethical issues, summary and conclusion.

3.2 The Philosophical Assumption of my Research

Since my introduction to the DBA program, I have realized the need to understand the various paradigms of research (Creswell et al., 2007) and the context in which to situate my research. Accordingly, understanding the paradigm Lincoln et al, (2011) from which I work was necessary to help me to understand and determine the problem that I seek to study and develop the capability to deal with emerging patterns and problems in the world that we live.

3.3   My Ontological Position

Ontology basically seeks to answer the question in relation to what constitutes reality and how best to understand the existence of this reality (Creswell, 2012). The ontology of my research is based on the critical theory which argues that, researchers cannot separate themselves from what they already know in the process of making enquiry. Accordingly, what the researcher seeks to know is inseparably tied to the various interactions which exist between the researcher and the context of the study (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In contextualizing this position to the current study, exploring the True Succession conceptual framework, reality is assumed to have been shaped over time by the social, cultural, gender, ethnic, political and economic factors, and

changed into a reality that 'has set' over time (Guba and Lincoln,1994; Lincoln *et al.*, 2011). In this case, I facilitated change in the research team by providing greater insight into their situation and providing a stimulus for members of the community who are identified as my action research team to take control of their future and initiate action and change.

3.4   My Epistemological Position

Epistemology studies the nature of knowledge and the process through which the researcher is able to acquire and validate this knowledge (Gall, et al.1996). It tries to answer the question in relation to what constitutes knowledge. Throughout the research, I have been highly enthused about finding the right approach in engaging in the research. In line with the above, I saw PGIL as an organization that requires a change in CEO and empowerment of non-family management members. Coming from the social constructionist background, I saw the need to utilise an qualitative research approach with less restriction on the involvement of participants to engage in the research in order to achieve my objective set in chapter one.

My methodological search approach and criteria ties into Schon's (1983, p. 49) quote which highlighted that:

'Let us search, instead, for an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive process which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict...Often we cannot say what it is that we know… our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action.'

3.5   The Empirical / Positivist Research Paradigm

The positivist researcher believes in the rationality of the world around us. In this case, the researcher is not seen as part of the object of investigation in a study but as an objective observer (Babbie, 2011). This paradigm favours the quantitative research approach which establishes a cause-effect relationship between variables. Connecting this to the problem under research, the researcher seeks to explore the concept of True Succession in relation to the sustainability of the organization. Since the positivist approach seeks to examine only relationships amongst variables (Aliyu et al., 2014), and not for exploration, this approach is seen as not appropriate for my research.

3.6   The Interpretive Research Paradigm

In the interpretivist paradigm argues that values and facts observed cannot be separated and that understanding of real-world phenomena is situated within the context of the individual and events that comes with it from multiple perspectives (Elliott and Lukes, 2008). According to the interpretivist perspective, what constitutes reality in the field of study is something that is socially constructed (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). This process suggests that, in the process of collecting data, the researcher will not be able to divorce the various actors in the study's context , which signifies the continuous generation, construction and reconstruction of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)

Whilst the interpretive paradigm gives room for bias and excessive promotion of self (Yanow, 2006) as disadvantages to the work, it equally seeks to appreciate the differences that exist amongst multiple actors in the research. Since the research problem seeks to explore the concept of True Succession, I would partially site my research within this approach to create a socially constructed knowledge that is seen as appropriate for my research.

3.7   The Pragmatism Paradigm

The pragmatism approach is considered by authors as the third paradigm in research methodologies and it comes with mixing of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Doyle et al, 2009; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Thus this approach is called Mixed Method Research (MMR) and as noted by Doyle et al (2009, p175), MMR came about mostly as a …"response to the limitations of the sole use of quantitative or qualitative methods.."

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007, p.4) defined MMR as 'research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study'.   Pragmatism comes with philosophical assumptions that go with the idea that "the end justifies the means' and also the practicalities of research such methodological approach (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17). There are however much criticism of MMR, notably its incompatibility and therefore argued that quantitative and qualitative approaches should not be combined (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Much criticism is also noted that practically the researcher requires more time and skills to undertake this dual methodological approach.

3.7.1   Action Research Paradigm - The Action Research Approach

Action research is an inquiry process that allows practitioners and researchers to examine their own beliefs about their practice, learn from these practices, and utilize the knowledge generated to embark on actions to bring about positive change within their context (Glassman et al., 2013). Thus, 'action research objective is about improving learning for improving practice' (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010, p. 7).

Putting my research problem into frame, the action research approach provided an opportunity to deal with my problem from varying angles. Accordingly, Dick (2002) indicates that as the process of research study is gone through, the researcher begins to develop greater understanding through the process of refining, retuning the research methods, an action which he termed as alternating between action and critical reflection. This is necessary in ensuring that the researcher is able to deal with the organizational problem adequately in a cyclical, for as identified in Coghlan and Brannick (2010), process of construction, planning action, taking action and evaluating the action in figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 Action research cycle
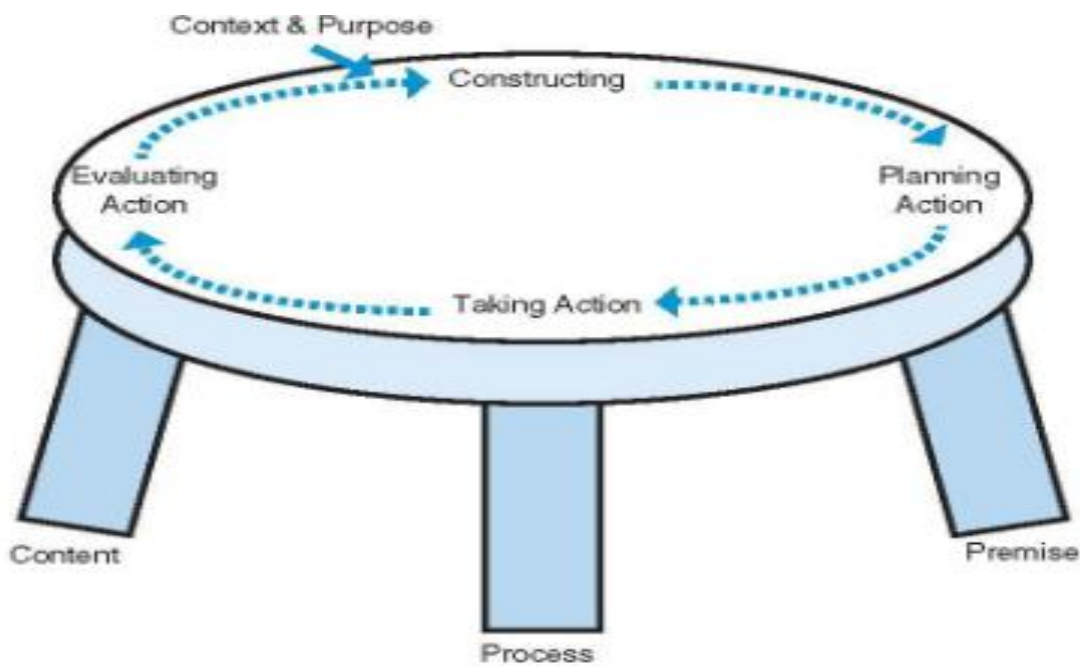
Source:

Coghlan and Brannick, 2010

3.8   My Research Designs.

The research design adopted for the research is based on the Qualitative Research approach which is regarded as a systematic approach to engagement with varying designs that could be

adopted. This method is important and its use is necessary when the research problem cannot be divorced from its context, and when it focuses on contemporary events and the experiences of the actors involved Yin (2014) such as what I am currently doing in PGIL. This assertion demonstrates that the case study strategy is more useful for practice-based problems where the actors' experience is important and the context of action is critical (Totterdill and Exton, 2014). Although, case study research has been criticized due to its limitation of generalizing the outcome (Gummesson, 2008; Noor, 2008), Yin (2014) has argued that the findings can be generalized if careful and purposeful selection of quality and qualified participants are made.

3.9   Introducing my Research Cycles

Based on the research, my research design went through three cycles of engagement based on Coghlan and Brannick (2010) cyclical process of constructing the research initiative, planning the action, taking the action and evaluating the action which is represented in figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2 Interrelationships of action research cycles
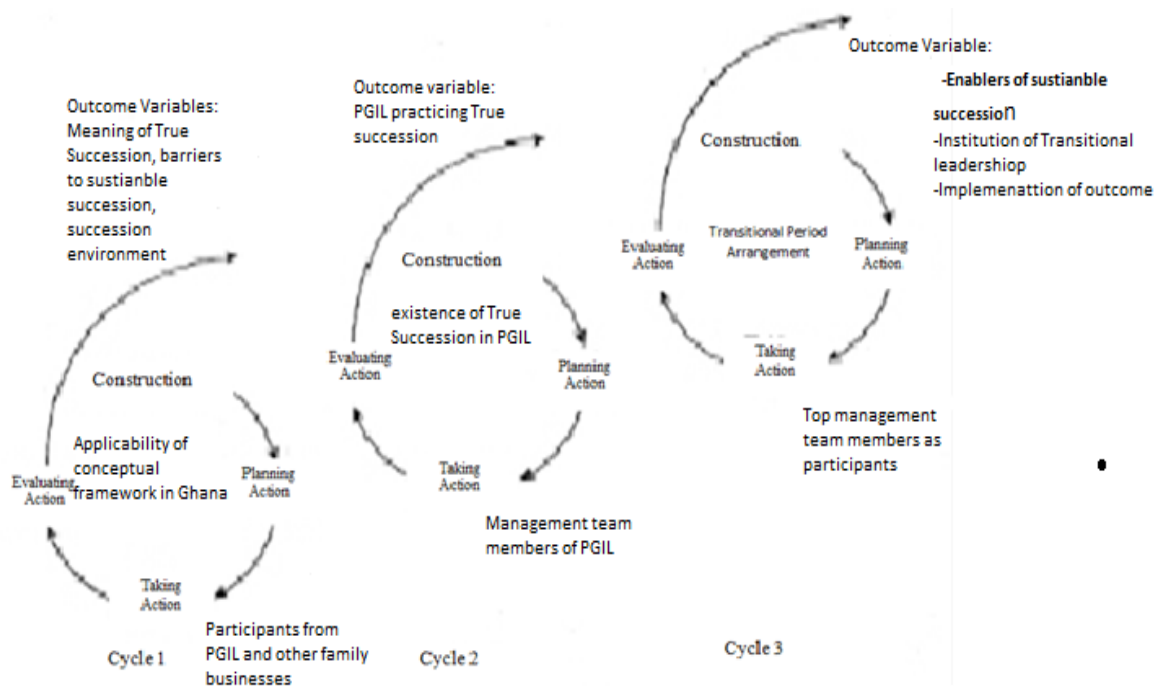
Adapted from Coghlan and Brannick (2010, p.10)

The above figure depicts the three research cycles adopted in data collection and identification of findings going through the cyclical approach with different participants and different outcomes. Cycle 1 used participants from PGIL and other family businesses to indicate the applicability of true succession conceptual framework in Ghana and generated outcomes of true succession, definition of family business, true succession, succession environment in Ghana and barriers to succession. Cycle two used management team from PGIL to explore the existence of true succession concept in PGIL and generated outcomes such as PGIL not fully practicing True succession due to absence of key concepts of true succession and identified barriers which make the succession unplanned. Identification of succession barriers and how some were implanted were also done. Cycle three used top management in PGIL in a focus group to address transitional period arrangements and the outcomes includes the identification of enablers of sustainable succession and how they were implemented.

3.10   Constructing the Action

During the process of constructing the initiative for the first, second and third research cycles, I felt the need for collaboration with organizational actors. I therefore needed to put my research team members together; an effort which was successfully done. This process of putting the team together was time consuming and demanding, considering the level of pressure and commitment of the management team to their roles in the company. In the process of putting together the research team, I decided to focus on the top, middle and low management within the organization. From this approach, I decided to select the team based on three criteria: a) the level of knowledge and understanding about the organizational culture, b) the level of passion and readiness of the participants, and c) their position in the organization. This was after the approval was received from the Board and the Founder/CEO for such a project to be conducted in the organization (appendix 1.3). After the approval was received from the Board, a voluntary invitation was made

through personal contacts, emails and telephone calls to selected persons. I followed up by sending a summary of the proposal for the study, indicating the topic and reasons for the research, the benefit participants will gain and the suggested contribution to the succession and organizational change the organization was embarking on (ref. appendices 1.4;1.5;1.6). Out of the sixteen-management staff invited, nine responded which became the team. The demographic characteristics of the selected action research team members are represented in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Action research team members

ART=Action research team member

Code	Length of experience	Age	Position	Qualification
ART01	10 years	40	Manager	Masters
ART02	15 years	45	General Manager	Professional
ART03	8 years	41	General Manager	Professional
ART04	10 years	43	Head	Masters
ART05	20 years	46	Head	First Degree
ART06	16 years	48	General Manager	First Degree
ART07	5 years	38	Assistant Manager	Masters
ART08	9 years	50	Head	Masters
ART09	15 years	47	General	Masters

Source: field study, 2018

The action research team members were however selected from the management team of the company, with three of these members serving as Board members. The ages of the team ranges from forty to forty-eight years, with minimum qualification of First degree and length of working experience within the company from eight to twenty years. The choice of the management team

was justified on the basis of the level of influence they wield within the organizational process, and how this influence could help to achieve the goal of my study (Yin, 2014). In line with this, nine action research team members were formed for which I was a part.

After the selection of the team, we spent time discussing the context of the study, the various research concerns, and co-constructed critical meaning of certain terms and concepts which were to be used in the study. The orientation process helped to bring out concrete images of the various expectations from the team and the various benefits that they could have. Various roles and responsibilities were assigned for the three action research cycles which the study underwent. Duration of the meetings and other aspects of the entire project were discussed by the team and assigned accordingly. We equally felt that; retention of any team member was critically necessary in maintaining the level of consistency in the project. To maintain this retention level, we agreed that the project should be participatory in nature in all aspects of the project. In order to avoid burnout, the team members were constantly rotated, with readily available information provided on each stage of the project. Thirdly, utilizing the conference rooms for the team meeting made it readily accessible to the team to avoid participants abandoning the team (Creswell, 2014).

The action research team was duly utilized throughout the study, with only changes occurring within the second action research process where three members opted out. However, additional three management members were selected to replace the exited members.

3.10.1 Identification of the Nature of the Sample and Sampling method

In terms of the sample size, I decided to utilise the non-probability sampling approach to select the participants, where participants were purposively selected to participate in the research (Creswell, 2012). I equally engaged only participants who have worked in family owned businesses. I

decided to engage external and internal participants to explore the problem defined in the construction stage of the initiative. To be able to effectively identify my sample, I utilized the stakeholder analysis map in selecting the participants as captured in the *Table 3.2* below:

Table 3. 2 Stakeholder Analysis Map

Step	Methodology
Develop Stakeholder map	Include any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the research objective.
Prepare chart of specific stakeholders	Identify specific stakeholders from within each of the above groups
Identify the stake of each group	Chart identifies how they impact or are impacted by the research outcome
Determine key stakeholder issues	In depth interviews to determine key perceptions and issues identified by stakeholders.
Analyse stakeholder issues	Relate stakeholder issues to major research themes

Source: Elias et al. (2002)

In utilizing the stakeholder analysis map in table 3.2 above, practitioners and employees of PGIL were identified as stakeholders who understand the dynamics of family owned businesses and how it operates from the internal and external environment. From these, target participants were identified for the research. Employees from PGIL comprise management staff only. The second category were made up of family business industry CEO's who have had some experience with succession and a relationship with PGIL.

3.10.2 Data Collection

The process of data collection is seen as a critical part in any research study. Accordingly, data is collected to show clearly the evidence on the ground, integrating the data to bring about assumed explanation of the situation and evaluation of the data to bring about the importance of the action that has been taken to support any re-planning efforts towards a further action in the company (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010).

3.10.2.1 Research Cycle 1

In the first research cycle, I utilized a non-probability sampling method. Data was collected from external family owned businesses and workers from PGIL. The sample selection and sizes were taken from both the external and internal participants. With respect to the external participants, family business practitioners were identified to participate in the research. The process of identifying who is a family business practitioner was a bit cumbersome, as data on family businesses in Ghana was not readily available. After failing to get family business data base from the Registrar Generals Department (Company House), I fell on the bodies that deal with SMEs in Ghana such as Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ghana, Association of Ghana Industries and National Board for Small Scale Industries. This was to obtain their data base of members. I was not able to source this information from them but with my membership at the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I was able to source some information from the meeting attendance. I also sent pre-test questionnaires through my face book and in that questionnaire requested respondents to indicate if they are a family business. After gaining traction on this, twenty (20) practitioners from external family businesses made up of CEOs and twelve (12) participants from PGIL were given the questionnaire (appendices 1.7; 1.8).These participants were selected using the non-probability sampling approach where participants were

deliberately selected to be a part of the research. The rational for this approach was that they have thorough knowledge on family business related issues. Out of the twenty external participants, twelve members participated.

With regards to the internal participants from PGIL, I focused on the management team members of the organization. In all, twelve participants were selected to participate in the research, out of which nine members responded to the invitation. The sample was selected based on a non-probability sampling approach that afforded me the opportunity to engage the right participants for the research as captured in table 3.3 below.

Table 3. 3 Demographic presentation of respondents in action research cycle one

Code	Age	Organization	Length of Service (years)	Position	Qualification
FBP1	48	PGIL	18	MLM	Masters
FBP2	55	PGIL	15	TLM	Professional
FBP3	50	PGIL	16	MLM	Professional
FBP4	48	PGIL	8	TLM	Masters
FBP5	49	PGIL	7	MLM	Masters
FBP6	52	PGIL	11	TLM	Professional
FBP7	51	PGIL	10	TLM	Professional
FBP8	46	PGIL	13	MLM	Masters

Code	Age	Organization	Length of Service (years)	Position	Qualification
FBP9	38	PGIL	12	MLM	Masters
FBP10	58	EFBC	34	CEO	Masters
FBP11	50	EFBC	31	CEO	First Degree
FBP12	49	EFBC	12	CEO	Masters
FBP13	53	EFBC	18	Acting CEO	Professional
FBP14	51	EFBC	14	Deputy CEO	First Degree
FBP15	47	EFBC	6	CEO	First Degree
FBP16	42	EFBC	7	Deputy CEO	Masters
FBP17	43	EFBC	11	CEO	Masters
FBP18	38	EFBC	10	CEO	Masters
FBP19	35	EFBC	10	CEO	Masters
FBP20	47	EFBC	18	Acting CEO	Masters
FBP21	56	EFBC	10	Deputy CEO	First Degree

Source: field study, 2018

Note: FBP = family business participant, EFBC = external family business, PGIL = Palmers Green International Limited, TLM = Top Level Manager, MLM = Middle Level Manager

The participants who are CEOs of Family businesses and Management personnel of PGIl have their ages ranging from thirty-five (35) to fifty-eighty years. Length of Service indication working experience in family business rages from seven (7) to 34 years. The minimum qualification is

First Degree, four (4), five (5) professionals and twelve (12) masters' holders. These indicates the quality of participants selected for cycle one.

Two approaches were adopted for the data collection exercise. These were identified as the initial questionnaire and subsequent face to face interview. I sought to draft unstructured, open-ended questions for the interview. As stated earlier, my focus was to gain responses regarding True Succession, the succession environment of family businesses in Ghana and the barriers to sustainable succession and the definition of family business in Ghana. The interview was focused on the questions raised in the construction stage of the cycle. With respect to the questionnaire, samples of the questions were initially given to three top management team members of PGIL as a pre-test process. During this process of pre-testing the questions, modifications were made to some of the questions for clarity in terms of language and content where team members recommended changes. Apart from the top management team that supported the pre-testing process of the questionnaires designed, I equally distributed the questionnaire items to a team of academicians within the area of family business and sociology to determine the applicability of the items. This stage equally supported the initial pre-testing process by the three top management team members of PGIL.

After pre-testing the questions, the modified version (appendix 1.7) was then distributed to the research participants who were made up of Management Team members of PGIL and CEO's of other family owned businesses in Accra. During this process, copies of the interview questions together with letters for invitation of participation, consent forms and participant information sheet, (appendixes1.4; 1.5; 1.6) respectively were sent in advance to targeted respondents – family business practitioners and the selected employees of PGIL

I led the respondents through the questions chronologically. Post-succession working environment of some companies were also observed as evidence to the insight given by the CEOs. This was seen as a source of data for the research. With respect to the face to face interviews, I sent an invitation to the same participants who were engaged with the questionnaires. Whilst this process was cumbersome due to the busy nature of the participants, booking an appointment at latter days with the participants seemed significantly effective. As a practitioner-researcher, I led the interview process and the action research team played the coordinator role by confirming all appointments through phone calls and sending email reminders a day before the appointment. Respondents were informed about the recording of the interview and their consent was received through a consent form they filled and signed.

After going through the data analysis process, the qualitative data collected was subjected to rigorous analysis to identify patterns and trends that emerged (Braun and Wilkinson, 2003). In line with this, I opted for the use of thematic analysis as the basis for analysing the transcripts (Appendix 1.9) generated from the respondents. Through this process, I utilized the line-by-line coding approach where specific categories accompanied with emerging themes were identified. The process undertaken is highlighted in figure 3.3 under the thematic coding approach selected.

3.10.2.2 Research Cycle 2

After conducting the first research cycle, we needed to explore the emerging concepts within PGIL. To get started with the study, I used purposive sampling method to select internal participants from of PGIL. I concentrated on the Management team members made up of the top, middle and low-level management. This was because I needed to engage with particular categories of people who have deeper knowledge of PGIL and could provide credible data for the study (Yin, 2014). In line with this, forty-one (41) participants made up of management level members

participated in the study for the second action research cycle.

This was because I needed to engage with particular categories of people. In line with this, from a possible 55 participants selected, 41 responded to the questionnaire. *Table 3.4* below captures the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 3. 4 Demographics of the respondents in action research cycle two

Code	Age	Organization	Length of Service	Position	Qualification
PGL 1	40	PGIL	10 years	LLM	Masters
PGL 2	45	PGIL	15 years	LLM	Professional
PGL 3	51	PGIL	20 years	TLM	Professional
PGL 4	43	PGIL	9 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 5	46	PGIL	10 years	TLM	First Degree
PGL 6	56	PGIL	20 years	TLM	First Degree
PGL 7	51	PGIL	12 years	TLM	Professional
PGL 8	56	PGIL	14 years	TLM	Professional
PGL 9	46	PGIL	9 years	MLM	First Degree
PGL 10	41	PGIL	11 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 11	54	PGIL	18 years	MLM	First Degree
PGL 12	39	PGIL	9 years	LLM	Masters

Code	Age	Organization	Length of Service	Position	Qualification
PGL 13	35	PGIL	5 years	LLM	Professional
PGL 14	43	PGIL	12 years	MLM	First Degree
PGL 15	52	PGIL	17 years	TLM	First Degree
PGL 16	39	SC	9 years	LLM	Masters
PGL 17	48	SC	12 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 18	52	SC	16 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 19	56	SC	10 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 20	46	SC	13 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 21	38	SC	7 years	LLM	First Degree
PGL 22	46	SC	6 years	LLM	Professional
PGL 23	43	SC	10 years	LLM	Masters
PGL 24	36	SC	8 years	MLM	First Degree
PGL 25	52	SC	20 years	TLM	Masters
PGL 26	46	SC	13 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 27	50	SC	12 years	MLM	Professional
PGL 28	42	SC	10 years	LLM	First Degree
PGL 29	55	SC	15 years	TLM	Professional
PGL 30	35	SC	5 years	LLM	Masters

Code	Age	Organization	Length of Service	Position	Qualification
PGL 31	42	SC	9 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 32	48	SC	12 years	MLM	First Degree
PGL 33	55	SC	14 y ears	TLM	Professional
PGL 34	37	SC	9 years	LLM	Masters
PGL 35	52	SC	15 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 36	40	SC	10 years	MLM	Professional
PGL 37	41	SC	12 years	TLM	Professional
PGL 38	45	SC	15 years	MLM	Masters
PGL 39	36	SC	5 years	LLM	Masters
PGL 40	42	SC	8 years	LLM	First Degree
PGL 41	43	SC	10 years	MLM	Professional

Source: field study, 2018

Note: SC = Sister Company, TLM = Top Level Manager, MLM = Middle Level Manager, LLM = Low Level Manager, PGIL = Palmers Green International Limited.

Data collection in the second action research cycle was based on questionnaires and face to face interviews with selected participants. The process was sequential in nature with the questionnaires first and subsequent interviews from selected participants based on the items in the questionnaire. Data collection was through open ended questions to explore the research questions outlined in in the constructing stage. The choice of questionnaire provided an opportunity to engage family and non-family members in the data collection process (Creswell, 2014). The questionnaire was put

through a pre-test process where questions were subjected to intense scrutiny with a number of top management team members in the organization. This was to test the appropriateness of the questions to answer the research problem constructed in the second research cycle. Through the process of pre-testing, the questionnaire was modified (refer appendix 1.8) to suit the context.

The participants invited and accepted (refer appendix 1.4; 1.5; 1.6) were given three weeks to respond. Out of the 55 participants sent a questionnaire, 41 responded, representing a 75-percentage response rate. Investigating into the fourteen rejected, four were rejected due to incomplete answers, which we attributed to lack of knowledge in family business issues and non-commitment in the exercise. Five decided not to take part in the research after going through the questionnaire. We realized from their decision to not participate, that they were afraid to disclose information with the belief they would be punished if found out. With all assurance given by the team of adhering to strict confidentiality, they chose not to participate. No reasons were assigned to the remaining five.

3.10.2.3 Research Cycle 3

After the completion and evaluation of the second action research cycle, we saw that we could not resolve all the issues emanating from the second action research cycle. We therefore saw that a third cycle development could help resolve some of the emerging issues which came through the process of engagement. From this, a focus group method of data collection Onwuegbuzie et al., (2009) was chosen due to the sensitive nature of the information needed to advance the research. The method was selected because of its strength of generating data from expertise with real life experiences.

Thirteen top management members were initially invited through personal contacts, telephone calls, emails and face to face interaction. Out of this number, seven (7) members were able to

attend the first meeting. Four of those who did not participate had travelled outside the country for official business. Two members could not participate due to heavy business schedules. Two meetings were scheduled to be organized within a month period. *Table 3.5* below captures the demographic characteristics of the focus group members.

Table 3. 5 Demographic presentations of focus group members

Code	Age	Organization	Length of Service	Position	Qualification
FGP 01	51	PGIL	20 years	TLM	Professional
FGP 02	52	SC	20 years	TLM	Masters
FGP 03	54	PGIL	18 years	TLM	First Degree
FGP 04	60	PGIL	20 years	TLM	First Degree
FGP 05	56	PGIL	14 years	TLM	Professional
FGP 06	43	SC	10 years	TLM	Professional
FGP 07	52	SC	16 years	TLM	Masters

Source: field Study, 2018

Note: FGP = Focus Group Member, SC = Sister Company, TLM = Top Level Manager, PGIL = Palmers Green International Limited

The emphasis for choosing the top management is due to their long wing experience working with the business and the Age. This is because of the sensitive nature of dealing with the founder/CEO family and succession or selection of a successor. The working experience ranges from fourteen (14) to twenty (20) years and the ages range from forty-three (43) to sixty (60) years.

As an insider action researcher (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010; Coghlan and Coughlan, 2010), I played the role as facilitator running the action research process and, at the same time, a researcher responsible for the production of scientific text. I took it upon myself to brief the focus group members on the group discussion process and what was expected of them. This included how to focus on the subject matter, avoidance of personal attack and personalizing other's suggestion.

In view of the focus group method, two meetings were scheduled due to the busy schedules of the group members. The nominated dates for the meetings were rejected by most of the members and later proposed dates were considered. The first meeting held at the Management Meeting Room at the Head office lasted for three hours. Each participant was given an average of fifteen minutes to contribute to the discussion, make counter contributions to the topic and any general input for the topic. The data collected at the first meeting was coded and grouped for further discussion at the second meeting.

The second meeting was held with seven members in attendance and the meeting lasted for two hours. The main aim was to confirm and disconfirm earlier submissions, clarification and identify fresh ideas for the discussion during the meeting.

In all the meetings, taking of notes and voice recording were used. Participants were assured of utmost confidentiality and that contributions at the meeting will be transcribed to eliminate personal identification. The notes and recording of focus group proceeding and interviews with other management and senior members of the organization became the major means of gathering the information. Raw data collected on tapes and in note books were transcribed and used for coding and analysis

3.10.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis stage of my work took three cyclical stages, with each cycle of the work answering different but interrelated set of questions respectively.   The study utilized the thematic analysis process which is identified as a method for the identification, analysis and reporting of patterns revealed in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The advantage in the choice of this thematic analysis is premised on its simplicity and ability to allow for flexibility in the data pattern. In conducting the thematic analysis of my work, I focused on the model developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) as indicated in the figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3. 3 Phases of Thematic Analysis
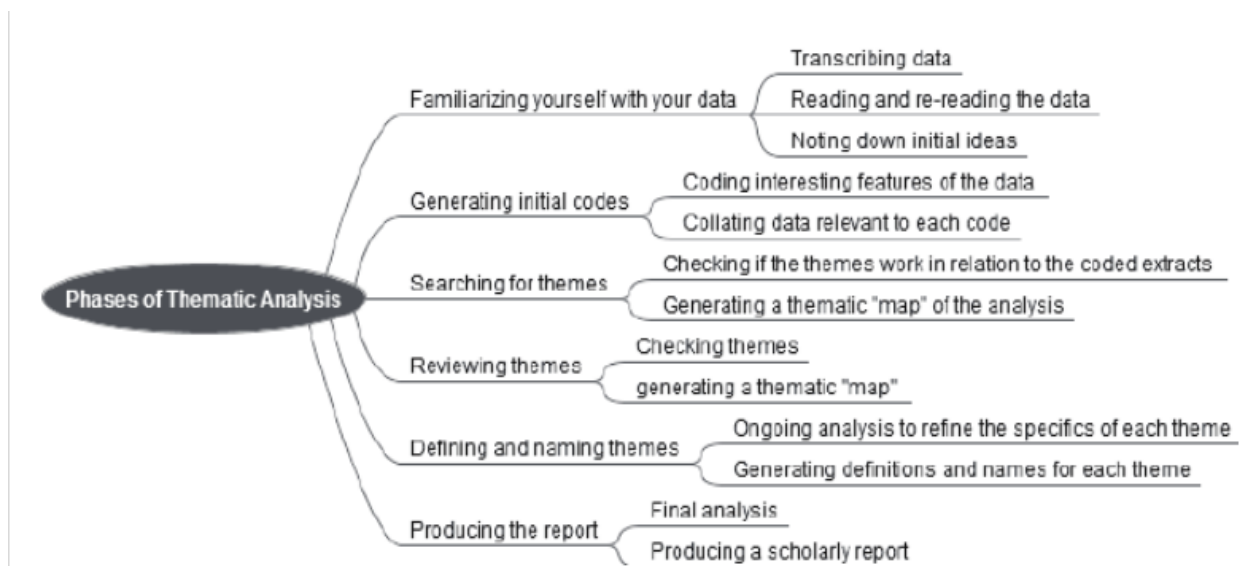
Source: Adapted from Braun & Clarke, (2006, p.87)

3.10.3.1   My Approach to the Thematic Analysis

I started the data analysis stage of my work by following five stage process of familiarizing myself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report for all the three cycles sequentially (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87). I analyzed the first action research cycle first followed by the data generated from the second action research cycle and lastly the third cycle.

➢ **Familiarizing myself with the data**

In the data collection process from the field, the data came in various forms which included recorded observations, data from focus group discussion in the third action research cycle, texts and documents. As a researcher I ensured that all the data collected were archived properly and organized adequately to ensure that I was able to benchmark my findings and interpretation to provide a proper audit trail to the work. I used excel spread sheet to record all the raw data from the field as a well as some reflections and made by the participants. From this organized data, I familiarized myself with the data and ensured that the transcribed data reflected the responses the participants gave.

➢ **Generating Initial Codes**

This stage of the work allowed me to produce my initial codes in all the cycles. I kept revisiting the data in response to the questions posed to ensure that the codes reflected the response provided. After the generation of the initial codes, a week's meeting was held with the action research team to allow for peer debriefing testing the strength of the codes. The responses generated from the action research team on the initial codes were recorded to establish an adequate audit trail to track the emerging patterns and changes to the work. The notes created were subsequently documented as evidence about the trustworthiness of my study.

➢ **Searching for Themes**

The third stage of the work was for me to search for the various themes from the initial codes of my work. Potentially, relevant coded data extracts were sorted and collated into themes. The initial codes began to form major themes, whilst some of these codes formed sub-themes for the work (Braun and Wilkinson, 2003). The deduced codes from the data which matched the interview

questions posed became the major theme, with detailed notes of the development these themes found in (appendix 1.9)

> **Reviewing Themes**

In this phase of the analysis, the coded data extracts for each of the themes were considered to determine whether a certain coherent pattern has developed. During this phase of our analysis, inadequacies in my initial coding and themes were revealed after a thorough vetting by the action research team. Through the process of engagement, it became clear that some of the themes and sub-themes generated for the study did not have enough data to support its findings and therefore were dropped, whilst some other themes were collapsed into each other. The selected and final themes for my study became specific enough to capture a set of ideas which the study sought to find (Patton, 1990). In line with this, I had a good idea about the story which the data reveals and how they fit together enough to give an idea of the research question.

> **Defining and Naming Themes**

In this particular stage of my analysis, I identified each individual theme, and sought to find out the kind of story it tells and how each of these themes and sub-themes answers the overall story about the data set collected. Engaging with the action research team in a peer debriefing exercise, personal insights into the findings from the research ensured that I was able to analyze the findings thoroughly. As part of the whole process of engaging the action research team in the analysis, themes were further ordered to reflect adequately the data, and all members of the team were satisfied that all the data represented has been well organized and displayed in a meaningful manner to reflect the story.

3.11   Planning the Action

The planning process of my research took three research cyclical processes; identified to include cycle one, cycle two and cycle three. In the planning process, the action research team played a critical role in aligning the plans that have been developed to the intervention which the team intended achieving.

The planning stages of the action research cycles focus on how the action research team intends to implement the intervention in the business. In the first action research cycle, the team agreed on collecting data to modify the initial conceptual framework. This was due to the scanty nature of literature on true succession. Questionnaires with follow up interviews were seen appropriate as explained in the data collection section 3.10.2. This situation made the action research team to collaboratively formulate the various research questions along the lines of the major areas already established. Since the team needed broader understanding of the various concepts, we felt that the engagement of other family business owners together with some top management participants of PGIL could help explore broadly the various concepts that formed the basis of the first cycle.

After this particular process, the team decided that the evaluation of the outcomes of the study should therefore produce data that could corroborate the findings. The option which was planned by the team was for the team to take the analyzed data which helped in the construction of the initiative evaluate and reflect on it thoroughly to identify its fitness with the data. This process was seen as an attempt by the team to redefine the various concepts within the Ghanaian environment in the first action research cycle.

In the second action research cycle, the plan was to act on the conclusion derived from the analyzed data to embark on intervention that would solve the identified issues in PGIL. We the action research team members generally agreed to implement the findings derived from the study

in PGIL as reflected in Chapter four. In the process of planning in the second cycle, three action research team members exited the group as a result of their busy schedules and three new members were recruited to be part of the team. With this new dimension, the team went on to implement the intervention, evaluate the outcome and reflected on the study.

The third action research cycle focus on the medium-term issues which mainly deal with the transitional arrangements in PGIL as identified in cycle 2. Focus group discussion with top management was designed to help in generating data on enablers. The action research team agreed on the use of consultation, discussion, seeking of approvals, visiting the CEO and recommendation in a form of proposals as a means of implementing interventions to achieve the desire outcome for PGIL. Further action was to join force with the board, CEO and management to implement any approved proposal for sustainability of PGIL.

3.12   Acting the Initiative

In the process of acting the initiative for the first research cycle, I embarked on discussion with the research team members to understand the various outcomes generated by the analysed data. During this interaction, the options and objectives for the analysis was to understand the various concepts which the team could explore to engage in PGIL. The team addressed various aspects of true succession, succession environment, definition of family business and the barriers to sustainable succession in the company. This stage of the work in the first action research cycle provided an opportunity for the research team to gain the needed knowledge and modify the initial conceptual framework to guide the subsequent cycles.

In the second action research cycle, I maintained my role in the research team as a facilitator of the entire research process and also maintained the action research team numbers by recruiting

additional team members to replace the exited members. The research team was to undertake intervention to solve succession challenges identified through the analysis of the data collected.

Lastly, in the third research cycle, through consultation, visiting of the CEO and discussion with the Board, approval was sought from the Board and CEO where the action research team made some recommendation in the form of proposal to manage the transitional period of PGIL. The study saw implementation of some of its proposal which was done jointly with the Board, Management and the action research team.

3.13   Evaluation of the action

During the evaluation process, I engaged the action research team extensively. I entreated the team members to be polite and show high level of intelligence during the process. In addition to their conduct, I asked the members to review available literature on the subject and seek to achieve peaceful group discussion due to my fear of the heightened tension relating to succession discussion in the organization. As a facilitator within the action research team, I directed and facilitated the entire process by placing the findings of the research within the context of available literature and emerging themes in the organization. In evaluating the action, the action research team came out with certain key focal areas which helped in the process of reflection and sense-making as outlined below.

- Evaluation of the outcome/findings from the research – this captures the outcomes from the three action research cycles.
- Evaluation of the outcome for Palmers Green International Limited (PGIL).
- Evaluation of the outcome for the action research team.
- Evaluation of the outcome for the researcher-practitioner.

In the evaluation process on the key areas identified above, we intended using collaborative approach amongst the action research team to engage in. We felt that involving people in the process of evaluation will help in the design of the intervention process. We again felt that, this collaborative evaluation process would help in community buy-in and support for any plan of intervention. Under the critical areas identified for the study, the objective was to understand the data in relation to the research context, accuracy, relevance and credibility of the findings and to assess the level of consistency in the data that have been collected and the learning and reflective outcomes.

3.14 Ethical issues

Walker & Haslette (2002) stated that, ethical issues are grounded in the research cycles. Thus, ethical issues are mostly located and addressed in the Action research cycles-planning, taking action and reflection. One important advantage the Insider action researchers have is pre-understanding. Thus, they have valuable knowledge both explicit and tacit about the structures, cultures and background of the organization (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010; Gummesson, 2000). This gives an added advantage and reduces the work of knowing and understanding the research site and the participants. The major challenge associated with this research is the undue influence that emanates from human interactions. These interactions come in the form of personal position advantage, the intentions and values one holds as against others McNiff and Whitehead (2010), the use of organizational assets and information. All these present themselves as ethical issues which action researchers face and needed to be captured, monitored and addressed properly.

This is demonstrated and dealt with by obtaining consent, ensuring anonymity confidentiality, balancing conflicts and differences and many others when they happen. The above assertion by

Walker and Haslette as cited by Coghlan and Brannick, (2010, p. 134) was to address the questions posed by Stringer (2007) as "Who will be affected? How will they be affected?

My first ethical issue was to obtain approval from the DBA research ethics committee before I began the field work. This is a part requirement of DBA study in Liverpool University and approval was duly granted. Action research which involves providing practical solution to organisation makes it impossible to secretly conduct the action research in an organisation. I therefore sought and had approval from my company (Appendix, 1.3) by convincing the Board on the real-time importance the study would have over the company's operations. As collaborative as action research is, invitation to participate (appendix 1.4), participant consent form (appendix 1.5) and participant information sheet (appendix 1.6) were used to invite, sought their concerns and assured them of how confidential information contributed to the research would be kept and the right they have to be part or not.

Three most significant ethical issues confronted are reported below. The first ethical issue which arose bordered on the sentiment raised by the CEO and other family members concerning the confidentiality and exposure of the company to the outside world when the research is published. It became a major issue as I have to give the full assurance to both the CEO and the Board that before the final completion of the work, it will be presented to them, including the company's consultant to study and indicate areas of concern. In addition, the benefits of the study will that help solve certain organisational problems when completed were revealed to them. Thereafter, I made sure that any ethical issues raised during the study were followed up and quickly resolved.

Another serious ethical issue I confronted was when a family member remarked that, "it was unfair and unrewarding to by-pass them and go for an outsider to become the next CEO". This became an issue which raised a big challenge to the study, as many of the family members started to read politics in the whole work and demanded that they will not allow the study to go ahead. I

approached the member after the meeting to discuss and explain that the recommendation was fact finding from the study which suggests the need to go in for outsider. After that meeting the issue was raised at the top management meeting where justification for such recommendation was given. He finally accepted and assured us of his support for the study. I made extra efforts to discuss it with the CEO and he assured me that he would explain it to the family members

The third issue was when three members of the action research team decided to quit (section 4.1.4), in addition to some participants refusing to be part of the research. They voluntarily declined interest and I had to accept and thanked them for expressing their unwillingness to be part of the study. These have been reported in the work accordingly.

I have to play my dual role by making sure that ethical issues rose that will put the company into public criticism and dispute is safeguarded. Meanwhile, the research should be regarded as a means to generate actionable knowledge that will be needed to help the organisation to solve its challenges, and at the same time, provide change through learning that has been acquired (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010).

As a researcher, my interaction with the organisational members should not be seen as an undue influence on organisational members or behaved as expert and outsider, but rather to uphold my value through the demonstration of my faithfulness, integrity and commitment to my values, the protection of the company and the knowledge generated.

In this regard, there is the need for reciprocity of commitment, respect and truthfulness from me as a researcher and the participants in the research which will prove beneficial to all of us.

3.15   Summary and Conclusion

The above details have outlined how rigor was attempted in the research by detailing the theoretical basis, epistemological consideration, methodology adopted and how it informs the design, data collection and interpretation to inform the research questions. It also provides information on the inquiry approach and strategy in using existing literature. From this perspective, I utilized the social constructionist approach to my research study. Further, the methodology for three research cycles was developed and I identified my role in the entire research project as a facilitator. I also designed a methodology for stakeholder analysis, coding chart and identified the process through which data was collected and analysed. The study further highlighted the various interventions and evaluations of the outcomes which were conducted collaboratively.

CHAPTER FOUR – DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter unfolds how the journey of the research was taken. Enacting cycles of constructing, planning, taking action and evaluating of action form the central stage of `the chapter. The story, in summary, creates a mental picture and clarifies the step by step approach adopted in implementing the desired change that comes with the research in PGIL.

4.1   Introduction

To sustain a business across multiple generations, CEO succession is one of the crossroads every business has to deal with. Performance effect of CEO succession has been the obstacle triggering the collapse of many family businesses world-wide (Herbane, 2010). This research was built on the concepts of the True Succession and extends further on how these concepts help in sustaining family businesses. As a practitioner-researcher, I also embarked on this research with an aim of improving the succession process in PGIL to avoid the challenges faced by family businesses during the transition process.

 I relied on my story telling ability to narrate action-base steps of how, where and who contributed to the research, emphasizing on how the cycles of the research were enacted throughout my journey as practitioner-researcher in PGIL. Koch, (1998, p. 1182) 'views story as interpreted work communicated through writing as the research product'. Coghlan and Brannick, 2010, p.146) also posit that 'the heart of the dissertation is the story or course of events'. Accordingly, this story telling provides an opportunity to explain my own living concepts and theory about the existence of reality (McNiff, 2007). Chapter one to three of the research laid the foundation for this chapter to collect data, analyse data and conclude on the findings of the study and further discuss the findings in chapters five and concluded in chapter six. Approval of the research by the organization (appendix 1.3), the formation of a research team (Section 3.10) and design to collect data has been carried out in chapter three. This chapter comprises three action research cycles, with each of them generating data and credible evidence to support the overall objective of the research. The cycles' objectives, challenges, findings, emerging themes, quotes and reflections from participants are highlighted throughout the chapter to paint a mental picture for stakeholders of what happened, what it was like, how obstacles were overcome and implication on the research.

This eventually aimed at sustainability of family businesses in Ghana, and specifically PGIL. To support this, table 4.1 depicts an overview of the main objectives and goals of each cycle.

Table 4.1 The main objectives and goal of each cycle

Cycle	Main focus or Theme
Research cycle one	To explore the views of practitioners from family businesses to assess the definition and objective of family businesses, succession environment, to explore the concept of True Succession concept within the Ghanaian environment and explore the barriers to sustainable succession in Ghana.
Research cycle two	To explore how the conceptual framework of True Succession could lead to sustainable succession in PGIL and barriers that impact on succession in the organization.
Research cycle three	To explore how enablers of succession in family businesses can be implemented to sustain PGIL.

Source: field study 2018

From the onset of the research, I utilized Coghlan and Brannick's (2010) model, which focused on the process of constructing, planning action, taking action and evaluating the action that has been taken as illustrated in figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Action research cycle diagram
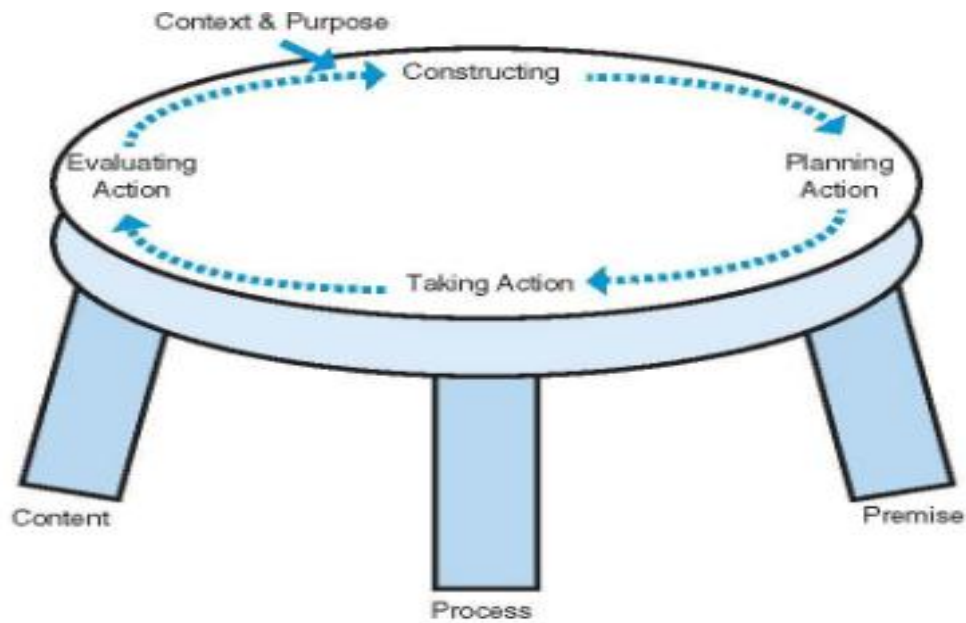
Source: Coghlan and Brannick, (2010, p. 12)

4.1   Action Research Cycle One

In advancing the cause stated above, the action research cycle one was aimed at exploring the meaning of family business, what constitutes a succession environment in Ghana, emphasizing the family business definition, understanding of True Succession with its limitation and enablers, narrowing it down to first generation family businesses. In line with this, views of family business practitioners, together with insight from employees of PGIL, were explored.

4.1.1   Constructing Stage – Action Research Cycle 1

The construction stage of the first action research cycle was basically informed by my quest to diagnose the critical issues falling within the domain of existing literature but falling short of the Ghanaian family business context. From the varying literature collected in the third chapter, I recognized that studies on True Succession in the family business environment and family business dynamics was scanty and inadequate to guide and making the right decisions on the part

of family businesses in Ghana. However, I recognized that True Succession, the succession environment, family business definition within the context of Ghanaian family business, and the barriers towards sustainable succession are critical concepts that need attention (Perricone *et al.*, 2001) before placing subsequent cycles within context. These concerns led to the development of the following questions to serve as a guide in enacting the first cycle:

- What constitute a family business and the definition of family business?
- What constitute the concept of True Succession in family business?
- What is the nature of the succession environment of family businesses in Ghana?
- What are the barriers towards sustainable succession?

4.1.2 Planning the Action - Action Research Cycle 1

According to Coghlan and Brannick (2010, p.9), planning an action, enacts the action research cycle and 'focuses on how the first step or series of first steps would be taken'. The process of engaging in the planning stage of the thesis has previously been outlined in chapter three, section 3.11 of this thesis. The process of determining the population, sample, data collection approach is all highlighted and explained in detail in Chapter three, Section 3.10

Throughout the process of engagement, we saw the need to provide a clearer understanding of family business, the concept of True succession, the succession environment and the barriers to sustainable succession. In the planning of the action, I defined my role in the entire study as a participant-facilitator; acting and providing direction in the entire process. Prior to the design of the action plan for this study, I embarked on a reflective process about the importance and the role of the entire action research members in thinking through the initial construction which revealed the various themes.

From this perspective, the action research team, together with the selected participants, were motivated to engage in the research. Some informal comments and chats made were captured in my journal. These chats and comments were not part of the questions asked but were seen as relevant to the research as it motivated and encouraged the team to ensure that quality work was undertaken on a timely basis for the completion of the first cycle

We adopted the discussion approach where the outcomes, decisions and feedbacks were recorded. Two high quoted comments made by action research members were captured below:

Text box 4 1 Comment by action research members

> *I believe if we should explore, we can help our company to solve most of the challenges we face, instead of always outsourcing to consultants. Why don't we pursue our own change and take full responsibility to generate knowledge to deal with challenges?* – **ART 05**
>
> *I am ever ready to help in solving succession challenges of the company. I know how succession conflict has ended many family businesses in this country and I wish it to be different for this company. -* **ART 01**

Source: field study 2018

The comments in text box 4.1 created a sense of loyalty and commitment to the research by the action research team members. The question of how to create good rapport among the action research team members, and to what extent the action research members are to be involved in the research covered the other phase of the planning, which is detailed in the taking action section of the cycle.

4.1.3 Taking Action – Action Research Cycle 1

The process of taking action in the research has been explained in detail in chapter three of this thesis. In this chapter, a summary of the process has been outlined below:

- The first stage was to put together the action research team. The team was made up of management members (top, middle and low level). Text box 4.1 captured some comments of the action research team members during the process of engagement.

- The second phase was to design and clarify the specific interview questions that were needed to gain the necessary feedback from participants. This stage was exclusively set by me, and based on the explorative nature of the research the questions were opened for in-depth response from the respondents

- The third stage identified the target sample.

- In the fourth stage, questionnaires were developed and distributed to the selected sample.

- In the fifth stage, face to face interviews were conducted.

- In the sixth stage, the data collected was analysed. The method of data analysis has been outlined in chapter three, section 3.10.3 with transcript in appendix 1.9.

All together four (4) weeks were used to engage in the interview process. From this, the transcripts from respondents are highlighted; data collected, and challenges encountered in the subsequent meetings held in every other week were presented. Some high-level quotes were captured in text 4.2 below

Text

box 4 2 Quotes on family business succession

> *When stakeholders are ready for change, change is admirable, reduce resistance to change and increase productivity –* **FBP 21**
>
> *True succession is the true way to sustainability of family business –* **FBP05**
>
> *Succession challenges are major forces behind many fold-ups in the family business -* **FBP 10**
>
> *Family business is like a hotel, people check in and out but when a family member checks out, he still stays in the premises of the hotel –* **FBP 13**
>
> *Change is inevitable and no king can rule forever – this is a fundamental assumption for succession –* **FBP 15**

Source: field study, 2018

The above text box 4.2 presents some high-level direct quotes noted in my journal from participants which are relevant to the research that will be used in the analysis.

Data Analysis from Themes and Categories

Following the active involvement of the action research team, enough data was obtained from the participants with good response rate as detail account has been recorded in chapter three., section

3.10.2. The figures below form the themes and categories that emerged in the first action cycle from the transcript in appendix 1.9 using the thematic data analysis approach in chapter three, (section 3.10.3.1), in line with the objectives set in the construction section.

Objective 1: Definition of Family business

Family business throughout the world has had several definitions; this has made it difficult to assume that a single construct has the tendency of defining the concept. However, the definition of family business should place the family and continuity as the central focus of the research Heinrichs (2014). Regarding definition of family owned businesses in Ghana, the following findings were derived as represented in the figures 4.2 below.

Figure 4. 2 Development of the themes and categories on family business definition

- Provision for family livelihood
- Network of family relationships
- Continuity and sustainability of family interest

- Reservation of key positions for family members
- Family cohesion in business
- Family first in recruitment

Family interest

Family Ownership and Control

Family Succession

Family ethos

- Intention to hand over the business to a family member
- Grooming of potential successors

- Family Honour
- Family beliefs, Values and Culture
- Extended family system

Source: field study, 2018

From the themes generated for the research, participants identified concepts of family ownership and control, family ethos, family succession and family interest as the core elements in the definition of family business.

From the concepts of family ownership and control, the major characteristics identified by the study were family cohesion in the business, key positions reserved for family members, Family first attitude in recruitment process. This identification has been consistent with Acquaah (2011), Heinrichs (2014) and Colli et al., (2013), who identified family ownership and control as one of the key elements in the definition of family business.

Secondly, from the concepts of family succession, the study recognized grooming of the potential successor and intention to hand over the business to a family member. This has been recognized as critically important to the survival of the business (Nordvist et al. 2013). In line with this, the definition of family business must consider the aspect of succession which is critical (Sharma et al. 2003).

Thirdly, the study recognized family interest as one of the concepts that must be considered in the definition of family business in Ghana. Under the concept of family interest, the analysed data identified provision for family livelihood, family relationships and continuity and sustainability of family interest in the business. In support of this, Blumnetritt (2016), Parker (2016), Gedajlovic and Carney (2010) have highlighted that, as a result of the need for continuity and sustainability, the owners have extra intention and extra motivation to ensure survival and to keep the business in the family for the benefit of future generations.

Another concept that emerged from the definition of family business is the family system. Family system has different meaning and composition in different jurisdictions and by defining family

business the concept of family system could be incorporated into the definition. Normally when we talk of family, we refer to nuclear (father, mother, and children). However, in the study, concepts such as nuclear family, extended family, inheritance and succession, kinship, tradition, pursuit of extended family interest, involvement of extended family members were revealed as defining family system in Ghana. Aderonke, (2014) indicated that extended family system which forms part of culture has effect on the determinants and implication on family business succession

The last concept identified from the data analysed was the family ethos that was characterized by family beliefs, core values and culture as well as family honour. In support of these findings, majority of the small and medium businesses in Ghana are owned by families and these businesses seek to pursue sustainability goals which may be non-economic in order to increase or preserve socio-emotional wealth of the family legacy (Acquaah and Eshun, 2016; Gómez-Mejía et al., 2010).

Objective 2: Exploration of the concept of True Succession

Theoretically, the need to move the organization across multiple generations is a concept which is seen as a sustainable succession process, which is needed to curb the eventual demise of family businesses (Williams, 1988; Cabrera-Suarez, 2005; Sharma, et al 2003)). Lorna (2011) has indicated that the collapse of most family businesses is attributed to the absence of True Succession. In line with this, there was the need to explore the concept of True Succession in the Ghanaian family business context as transcribed in the responses captured. Figure 4.3 presents the themes generated and categories.

Figure 4. 3 Development of the themes and categories on concept of True Succession

- Supporting the succession process
- Demonstrate Independence in Decision making
- The resource of family member on the board
- Establishment of governance framework

- Founders role in thinking long term
- Founders role in succession planning
- Founders role in structuring management team

Effectivenessnd Capability of the Board

Willingness and Capability of founder

Utilization of Mixed Management team

Willingness and ability of the successor

- Independence and quality Decision making
- Ability to help Mentor Potential Successors
- Are able to demonstrate stewardship in the company

- To drive the business to improve performance
- High morale person
- Taking over as Successor

Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes in Cycle; Categories in projection

The second aspect of the analysis data discovered the willingness and ability of the founder to hand over the company. Willingness and capability of the successor, utilization of the mixed management team and willingness and capability of the board were identified as the major themes that defined the concept of True succession. On the aspect of the willingness and ability of the founder, the study found out that the founder should play a key role in the succession planning process (Parker, 2016), restructure the management team to suit the needed change and think long term planning for the company. From the available literature reviewed, predictors of a successful succession process are found to be dependent on the incumbent's willingness and capability to step aside (Nordqvist et al., 2013) without undue interference.

The second aspect of the analysis discovered the willingness and capability of the successor to take over the company. Coming from this background, the various concepts identified were the ability to take over as successor, to drive the business to improve performance and have a high moral personality to take on the company. In support of this, (Parker, 2016; Friedman et al., (2017) suggested a process of considering the capability and willingness of the family members in the succession process to be the determining factor for the success of the succession process.

Thirdly, the engagement of the non-family members in the succession process has been identified by the analysed data as critical to the effectiveness of the succession process. Captured as the institutional mixed management (section 2.2.4.), the findings from the study identified that, the non-family management members have the ability to assist in the succession process, help mentor potential successors, demonstrate stewardship behaviour (Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2007) and provide independent and quality decision making towards the company. Accordingly, the character of every efficient family business depends on its ability, willingness and readiness to utilize the expertise not only from the family, but from professional non-family members (Sorenson, 2000). This is because non-family members can help in addressing the interpersonal conflicts surrounding the succession, which can arise among the potential successors or between the outgoing and the incoming leader (Stewart and Hitt, 2010).

Lastly, the study found out that, the effectiveness and capability of the Board to support the succession is critical to the success of the entire succession process. The defining concepts identified by the study were recognized as the Board establishing a good corporate governance structure for the company, supporting the succession process, demonstrating independence in their decision-making process and utilizing the resource of family members on the board. To support the effectiveness and capability of the board to execute on all these four concepts, Gatamah (2008) have indicated that, the adoption of a good corporate governance structure would go a long way to ensuring that any leadership transition process or change in general does not disrupt the

organization's growth pattern. On the aspect of the independence and quality decision making, with a strong corporate governance system set in place, outsiders may be able to complement the family's knowledge with fresh perspectives from qualified external personnel which serves as a great asset towards sustaining the organization in the long term (Lozano et al., 2015).

Objective 3: Nature of the succession environment of family businesses in Ghana

The nature of the succession environment has a significant impact on the success of the succession process. Accordingly, the continual changes that emanate from the internal and external environment have been recognized as key variables that must be considered if succession in family business will go on (Atwood, 2007). From this perspective, I sought to find out the nature of the family business environment within the context of Ghana. The analysis of the data collected from the research in that respect is represented in fig 4.4 below.

Figure 4. 4 Development of the themes and categories on barriers towards sustainable succession
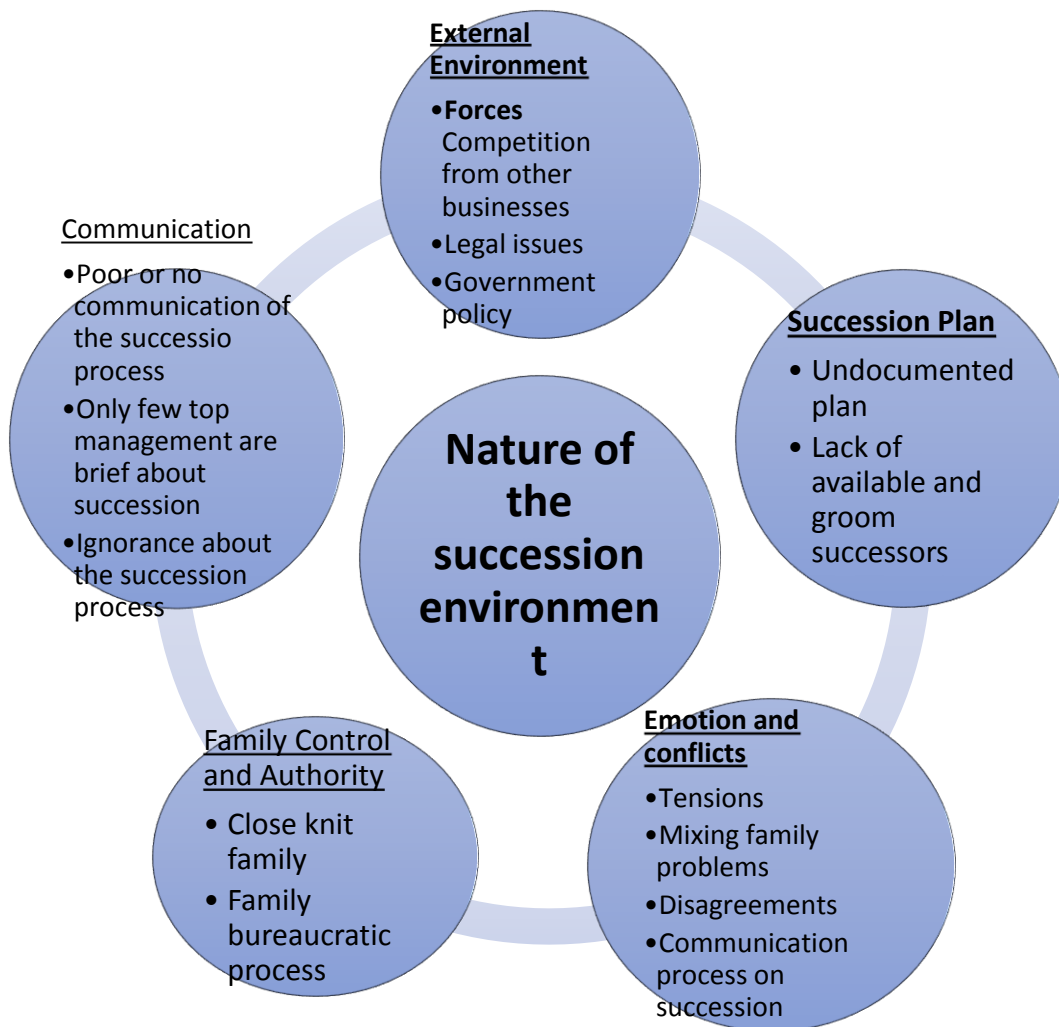
Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes are underlined; Categories proceeded by bullets

Theoretically, the succession environment has been recognized as having an interrelationship with varying components of a family business (Lorna, 2011). The findings from the research bring out the various components and interrelationships that exist within the succession environment. From the analysed data in the figure 4.4 above, the succession environment was identified as the internal and external environmental forces. On the issue of the external forces, competition from other businesses, government's policy and legal related issues as having significant influence on the succession environment. In the case of the internal environment, family identity characterized by family honour, ethos, legacy, culture, customs, family secrets and values were identified. The

study further recognized family challenges such as emotions and conflicts, tensions, mixing family problems with business and communication as some of the characteristics of the environment. Thirdly, the study found that family control and authority characterized by close knit family behaviour and family bureaucratic processes as influencing the environment. Lastly the study found that the family environment is characterised by the presence of nonfamily executives.

Supporting aspects of the findings, Sharma (2004) highlighted issues of relationships as being felt throughout the company. Also, Aderonke (2014) identifies cultural components as having impact on the succession environment. The knowledge generated recognizes the need for the succession process to consider both internal and external forces when defining the nature of the succession environment and should provide the basis for contextualizing the succession process.

Objective 4: Barriers to Sustainable succession

The complex nature and interrelationships between a family and business presents significant challenges and barriers that affect the success of any succession process (Leland *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, exploring the barriers to sustainable succession is necessary to avoid the same pitfalls most succession has gone through. This section presents the analysis of the responses generated from the respondents and the themes generated pertaining to the barriers to sustainable succession in Ghana are shown in the figure 4.5 below

Figure 4. 5 Development of the themes and categories on Nature of family business Succession Environment
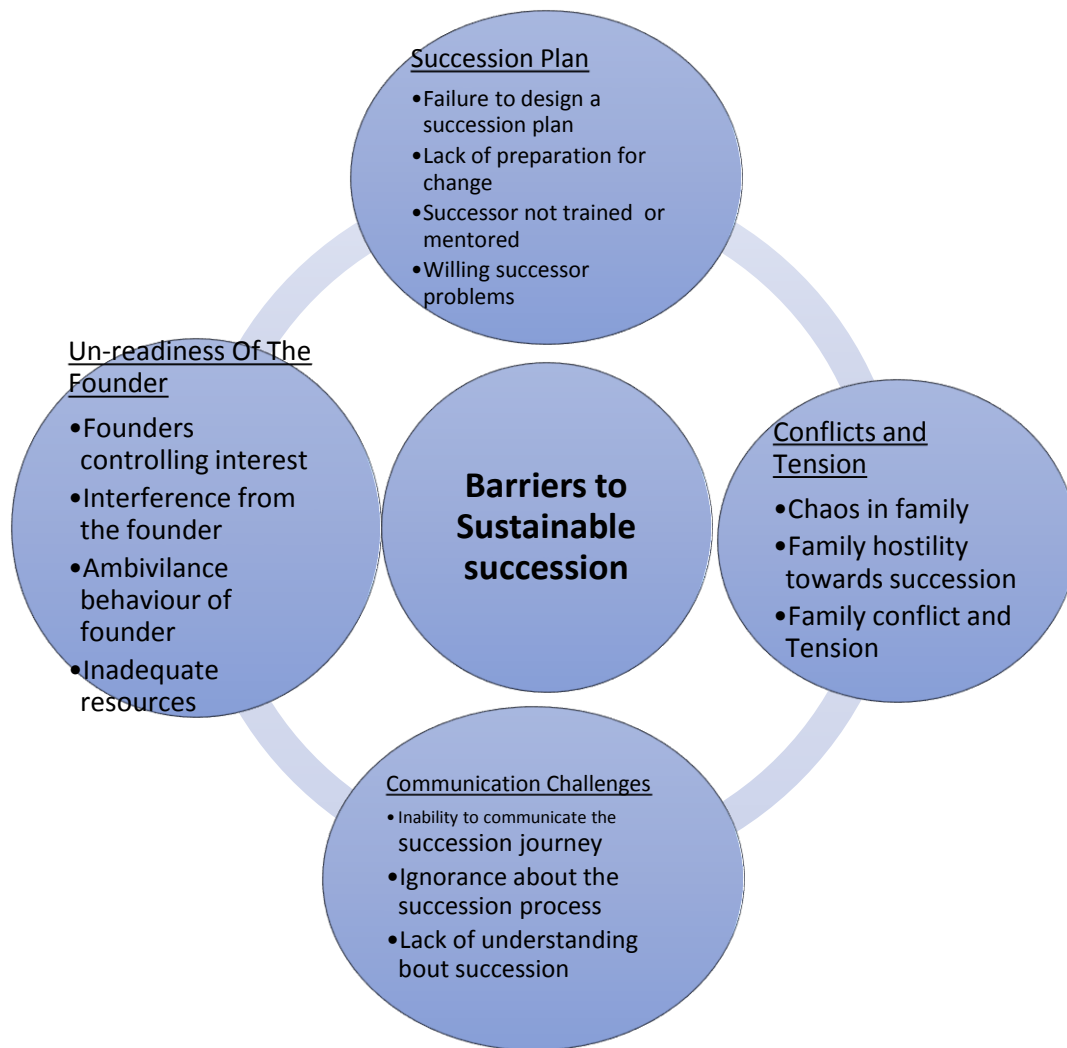
Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes are underlined; Categories proceeded by bullets

From the themes generated from the analysed data, lack of succession plan, communication, un-readiness of the founder, conflicts and tensions were recognized as significant barriers to sustainable succession in Ghana. Failure to design a succession plan, lack of preparation for change and lack of training, mentorship programmes and willing successors problems show that lack of succession plan could pose a major barrier to the company. It may also indicate that there is the intention to discontinue the business. Thus, a family member's failure to pursue the business

continuity and the tendency of sharing the assets of the business posed as a barrier to sustainable succession.

Secondly, the study found that chaos, hostility and family conflict during the succession process could equally undermine the entire succession journey. Thirdly, the founder's controlling interest and interference in the business could sometimes undermine the succession process. Fourthly, the study found that inability to communicate the succession journey, ignorance of the succession process and the least understanding of the succession journey are key forces that could serve as a barrier. Lastly, the lack of readiness of the founder to hand over explained by the founder's controlling interest and the level of interference within the whole succession process, ambivalent attitude towards the succession and failure to provide adequate resources could undermine the company's quest for sustainable succession.

Supporting the findings from the study, Wang (2010) indicated that some of the key barriers to sustainable succession process are identified as lack of communication, lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, reluctance to talk about succession plan. In another assertion Glod and Glod, (2017) argued that since succession is a multi-staged process, it requires significant amount of resources which often becomes a major barrier to sustainable succession process. From the analysed data, the identified barriers are impediments to the succession process of most family businesses, and these can be attributed to absence of a succession plan which forms the major basis of these barriers in most family businesses. Most family businesses however, lack succession plans, which render succession as an event rather than a process creating such barriers that derail succession process.

In sum, the extent of emotional, organizational and interpersonal issues that may exist within the company prior to the succession journey can easily be magnified in the succession process (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2011).

4.1.4   Evaluating the Action - Action Research Cycle 1

In terms of the evaluation process, a collaborative effort between me and the action research team members was used. The standard of evaluation on the other hand was based on whether the objective is being realized or not. The standards will question whether people are participating in the study or not, and whether collaborative participatory learning has emerged in the process and how my personal value has been captured in this whole process. This section of the cycle therefore seeks to evaluate the outcome of the action research cycle one and at the subsequent meeting of the action research team, I created a platform where we discussed and evaluated the outcome of the action research. My reflection on the action research team effort towards the evaluation process is captured in the reflective Pause 1 below.

Reflective Pause 1:

I was happy as my conscience was guided by the words of Harry Ford. "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is Progress. Working together is success."

Deppeler (2012, pg. 125-138).

The evaluation of the action of the first action research cycle was centred on the core questions that formed the basis of the research in the first action research cycle, which are enumerated in the construction stage of the cycle. From this, the action research team made comments, amongst which included the following representations in text box 4.3, showing how important succession is.

Text box 4 3 Action research team members' comments

I realized that everyone in family businesses thinks about the succession of their company and worried about its impact on the survival and sustainability of the company. - **ART 02**

I realized how important we can affect change and do away with negativity of succession in family business. - **ART 06**

"I learnt that almost all the action research team members and participants were anxious to understand the concept of true succession and the more it is explained the more I get real understanding of it **-ART 09**

Source: field study, 2018

Aside the importance of succession, barriers and other environmental context, the platform also helped the action research team to reflect on what they have learnt throughout the project, how they overcame the challenges of the action and how the project had influenced their previous thoughts.

The first reflection of the team was what they had learnt individually and as a group regarding family business. The team felt that the research has exposed them to many issues regarding succession and family businesses in general which they had no idea about. They had learnt a lot during the research. The research had also given them the chance to review a lot of administrative strategies regarding succession, barriers and other environmental factors and boost their confidence to spearhead change in succession process in PGIL.

As a practitioner action researcher, I used this opportunity to reflect on the outcome of the research in my life – as a practitioner and academician. I noticed that my ability to spearhead change in family businesses, develop leadership capacity and competencies in the organization's employees has improved considerably. In addition, the drafting of a road map on the implementation of change to improve the succession process whilst adding to the literature of True Succession and creation of new knowledge has improved my initiative and implementation qualities in this section.

The other reflections were on how I, together with action research team, overcame the challenges of the action. I opened the floor with the difficulties I encountered myself in arranging and conducting interviews and coordinating the activities of the team. Understanding of True Succession became a big challenge as every participant I faced wanted to know the definition or meaning of the two words 'true succession' before the interview proceeded. Comments made by the respondents are captured in Text Box 4.4 and reflects some important information gathered before the interview.

Text box 4 4 Family CEOs participants comment

<div style="border:1px solid">

*It has not been easy for me to make it to your appointment, but I know you have suffered more than me. Succession is inevitable as well as its challenges. But succession in family business demands that everybody affected should sacrifice to make it successful. -**FBP 18***

I have similar succession problem and I only responded to be part of the study because I believe our appointment would generate possible solution to family business succession and the various challenges that it faces - FBP *12*

*The true succession picture of PGIL is far from my reach and I have less time to consider their succession. - -**FBP 17***

*Are you sure you can attain true succession especially in family business where they have more challenges and conflicts in the country? - -**FBP 20***

</div>

Source: field study, 2018

The above comments showed effort and readiness of the practitioners to contribute to generating solutions to succession challenges. This is because succession is the major challenge for all practitioners, since its impediment affect all operations and continuity of the business. In addition, some of the comments also presented doubts whether True Succession is attainable in family

businesses in view of many family conflicts experienced during the succession process. These varied opinions shared about the research prompted me to think deep and outside the box to make sure that I did not miss the negative comments.

The action research team also discussed the performance of the various action research team members in conducting the research. Notably three (3) members did not undertake the task that had been agreed on the previous week. The other action research team members demanded as to why they did not undertake the task as agreed which was necessary to add to the teamwork. This engagement appeared to make them uncomfortable. They did not contribute actively during the action review meeting. Despite my intervention to keep them in the team, they eventually dropped out. It became very disappointing news since their contribution at meetings, participating in action and implementation stages, and their understanding of the principles of action research shown in the previous engagement were outstanding. To get quality replacement for them was an issue I was confronted with. My reflection on their departure is captured in the Reflective Pause 2 below:

Reflective Pause 2:

With this in mind, the attention was to ensure the remaining team members worked out their differences and were committed to the research. All team members collectively agreed to participate and focus until the end of the research. - Action researcher, (2018)

Almost every participant had identified something that needed attention. Some identified realities that would have negative impact on succession or transition process, others were questions and contributions from reviewed literatures that needed to be considered and addressed. With the general understanding of the various concepts, the action research team agreed that there was

enough grounds to adopt the True Succession concept to undertake another cycle of the research and address emerging issues in PGIL to make the succession process possible under the theme 'How *could the exploration of the concept of True Succession lead to sustainable succession in PGIL?* This therefore became a major pre-occupation for the team towards the next engagement in PGIL.

4.1.4.1 Implementation of the outcome

Coming from the background of the original True succession conceptual framework developed by Lucky et al, (2011), the findings from the research provided an opportunity for me to modify the original conceptual framework. I recognized from the findings that, the ability of a family owned business to gain sustainable succession is influenced by the nature of the succession environment and the various barriers that affect the succession journey. This informed my thinking for the need to be able to generate a model or frame that captures the essence of the findings within my mental frame (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). In line with this, the modified conceptual frame within which my thinking as a researcher and practitioner is embedded is represented in the Figure 4.6 below.

Figure 4. 6 Revised True Succession Framework 1

Concepts of True Succession
- Willingness and ability of the successor
- Effectiveness and capability of the board
- utilization of mixed management team
- Willingness and readiness of the founder
- succession environment

Management of Succession Barriers
- lack of succession plan
- Resource Constraint
- Conflicts and tension
- un-readiness of the founder
- willing successors problem
- communication challenges

Sustainable Succession

Source: field study, 2018

The Figure 4.6 above shows the interrelationship existing between the successor, the Board, the mixed management team and the Founder/CEO. The idea surrounding True Succession from figure 4.6 highlights that, the willingness of the Founder/CEO to hand over power, the readiness of the successor, the involvement of the board and the mixed management team is needed in managing the disruptions identified as the barriers to True succession towards a sustainable succession process. Underlying the concept drawn above is the availability of human resource capability which serves as an essential component of true succession without it no succession can take place (Parker, 2016; Dawson 2012; Lam, 2009). Accordingly, these units must interrelate successfully by building capabilities towards the management of the disruptions emanating from the succession environment which could potentially put a strain on the success of the succession process (Olson et al 2003). Thus, the efficient management of any succession barriers is needed to

have a smooth change from one generation to another. The success of this interplay should lead the family business towards True Succession.

4.1.5 Critical Rreflection and Cconclusion - Action Research Cycle 1

Shedding light through critical reflection on the first cycle around constructing the context of the cycle's aim, planning the interventions and implementation of the action, and how action was taken; the outcome revealed that all worked according to the strategies planned to achieve the objectives set for the research.

The objective of the cycle was to seek the support of CEO practitioners from the family businesses and employees of PGIL to access the succession environment, to understand the True Succession conceptual framework and its variables, and to explore the barriers to sustainable succession in Ghana.

From the evidence generated, it was found that the True Succession conceptual framework can be used to explore and assess the on-going succession in PGIL. It was also confirmed that the True Succession variables namely, the predecessor (Founder/CEO), the successor, and the environment that constitute True Succession play (Lucky, 2011; Lorna, 2011) major building blocks. However, two emerging variables from the first cycle, being institutional mix management and the Board of Directors, were identified as two major variables that could be developed due to the crucial role they play in family business succession. Based on these findings a modified conceptual framework (fig 4.6; section 4.1.4.1) was drawn up to guide the next cycle of the study. The definition of family business was also explored, and family system was incorporated

4.2   The Action research cycle two

At the conclusion of cycle one, evidence generated supported what constitutes family business, the family business succession environment in Ghana and the understanding of the True Succession concept. This paved the way to explore those variables and any other potential variables that may emerge in PGIL to answer the main question for the cycle two, being:

- How does exploring of true succession conceptual framework lead to sustainable succession in PGIL?

Drawing from the general objective set in the introduction of this chapter, the aim of this cycle is to explore True Succession in the context of PGIL; the business status, succession realities and barriers of True Succession to generate credible data and evidence to support the research. Whilst I was highly dominant in the entire action research cycle, the action research team was highly supportive in the cyclical process of engagement in discussion, evaluation and implementation, as represented in the various phases of the cycle.

4.2.1   Construction -Action Research Cycle 2

The construction stage was done under two phases. The first phase was the Data collection, coding and generating categories and themes as explained in chapter three and the appendix 1.9 as an input for the second phase. In the second phase we analysed the categories and the themes for reflection and sense making.

After the evaluation process in the first action research cycle, the team was highly curious about the need to adopt the various concepts derived in the first cycle in PGIL, knowing the efforts the company was making in transiting from the first generational leader to the second-generation leader. Coming out with the various concepts from the first action research cycle, the theory

developed helped in providing a frame from which the engagement process in this second action research cycle emerged.

Prior to the construction of the second action research cycle, a number of submissions were made by key personnel in the organization. These are captured below in text box 4.5. The text box provides informal comments and chats made by participants, which I saw as relevant to the research, but not part of the questions asked.

Text box 4 5 Comments from management team members of PGIL

> *I don't believe the Founder/CEO will hand over to the brothers or any family member now. I see the implementation of the Board as a way to move the power from the family to external CEO. What I think is that, the FOUNDER/CEO wants a temporary replacement of a leader in the company.* – **PGL 35**
>
> *Since the Founder/CEO is not here, the best way is for the acting CEO to use the Board to create the change that we require. I still think the Board needs the involvement of top management members to ensure stability in the company.* – **PGL 26**
>
> *It is very surprising and unrewarding to the family members for all the sacrifices made to bring the company to this stage. We cannot sit down and allow an outsider to take over our hard-fought legacy'.* – **PGL 06**

Source: field Study, 2018

The comments explicitly show the mix feeling, tension and emotions from both the family and non-family members towards succession in the business. This informed my decision to investigate into forces behind succession in PGIL and what True Succession would mean to the organization. I reflected on the mental pictures created by the above comment as captured in the Reflective Pause 3 below.

Reflective Pause 3:

Anticipating it to be rough and a level of danger ahead, I need to prepare carefully to trek along this rough road - Action researcher (2018)

As noticed in cycle one, the Founder/CEO plays a central role in the succession process and acts as a commander of succession in the family business. For the sustainable succession process in PGIL, the role of the Founder/CEO and potential successors, being top management family members, were identified as a critical factor which can make or break the succession process. With this regard, answers to the following questions were sought from employees of PGIL in undertaking the second cycle:

- How will you describe the willingness of the Founder/CEO to hand over the organization?
- How would you describe the readiness of the potential family successor to take over the business?
- What are the barriers and limitations serving as a challenge involved in working towards sustainable succession in PGIL?

In general, I wanted to know the richer picture as to how true succession variables are being impacted on PGIL within the context of its environmental forces. The adoption of Coghlan and

Brannick (2010) iterative cycle of action research was deemed as appropriate to answer the research question posed in the second cycle.

In line with this, the qualitative analysis of the data collected was based on the following question,

Question 1: How will you describe the willingness of the Founder/CEO to hand over the organization?

This question sought to find out from the research participants the activities that would demonstrate the willingness of the founder to hand over power to any of the potential successors in PGIL. In exploring this question, the role and willingness of the Founder/CEO was explored to determine whether the succession process of PGIL is as a result of the Founder/CEO's initiative or the force factors from the successor as explained in chapter three in the literature review. From data collected as captured in appendix 1.9, the following themes were derived.

Figure 4. 7 Development of the themes and categories on willingness of founder to handover

- Health Conditions of the founder
- High emotional attachment to the business
- Not won the trust of potential successors
- High involvement of founder in business operation

- Delegation of dutie and authority
- Board to facilitate transition process
- Restructuing and revaluation of assets of the business towards succession

Willing but not ready

Making effort to handover

Succession as Event

Williness of the founder

- Health condition as determinant factor for change
- Unplanned succession

- Management and Board tasked to manage operations
- Family members in key position
- Request for retirenent benefits & social security
- Regular meeting held for succession discussion

Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes in Cycle; Categories in Trial Angles

From the analysis of the study to determine the readiness of the Founder/CEO to hand over, various themes and patterns emerged which led us to recognize that the Founder/CEO was willing to hand over the organization. The dominant responses that came out of the varying narratives identified include restructuring to empower the management team by involving family and non-family management members in succession decision, initiating changes for handing over power by holding regular meetings with the Board on succession. Involvement of the Board and

management to manage the business affairs all point to the efforts he is making and willingness to hand over.

Secondly, there has been an effort on the part of the founder to give some control to family members by placing them in key leadership positions and initiating training and capacity development efforts towards the development of potential successors. Accordingly, initiating mentorship programs through training and other modes of knowledge transfer provides an opportunity to impart the knowledge about the business that have been acquired overtime to ensure that the legacy of the family lives on (Kumar & Blake-Beard, 2012). This seems to be the objective in PGIL. Thirdly, establishing a board geared towards handling the transition process and getting some family members on the board demonstrates the willingness of the founder to hand over the company to the successor. Also, the study identified health status as factor for the founder's willingness and readiness to handover.

However, the study revealed the willingness to hand over but not readily reluctance. His 'un-readiness was supported by the fact that despite his health challenges, he has a high emotional attachment to the business which has resulted in his failure to groom and trusted potential successors, thereby being deeply involved in the operations of the business under his health challenges.

From the above data analysis, it indicates that the Founder/CEO of PGIL is willing to handover the business. It can be deduced that PGIL succession process is as a result of the Founder/CEO's initiation due to his declining health condition and desire to preserve the socio-emotional wealth (Gedajlovic et al., 2012; Minichilli et al., 2010) of the business across the generation. In view of this, the succession process depends on his willingness to handover the business to the next generation, but not as a result of a 'pulling act' of the successor or mutual understanding which is an alternate means to the succession process (Lucky *et al.,* 2011; Parker, 2016). Considering the

above conditions, questions such as: Is there an identified and groomed successor to take over? Is he or she capable, ready and willing to take over the organization? These and other related issues form the basis for our engagement in subsequent sections.

Question 2: How would you describe the readiness of the potential family successor to take over the business?

The successor's readiness and willingness to take over the business are essential factors to be considered in the succession process (Parker, 2016; Blumnetritt, 2016; Pittino et al., 2018), particularly where the process is initiated by the Founder/CEO and not the successor (Lucky *et al.,* 2011). From the analysed data concerning the readiness of the potential successor to take over the organization in the absence of the Founder/CEO, figure 4.7 below captures the themes generated for interpretation and sense making.

Figure 4. 8 Development of the themes and categories on willingness of the successor to takeover

- No clear time line for handing over
- Interference and conflicting decisions
- Succession process not transparent

Ambivelence attitude of Founder-CEO

- Failure in demonstrating leadership qualities by successors
- Lack of expertise and capabilities by potential successors

Successor capability

- Lack of motivation from potential successors
- Family members not willing to take-over the company
- Children resigning from the business

Unwilling successors

Trust and Confidence

- Founder maintain total control of the business operation
- Interference from the Successor
- Lack of capabilities among family members

Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes in Cycle; Categories in projection

From the analysis as shown in the figure 4.8, successor's capability, trust and confidence, unwilling successors and ambivalent attitude of the founder-CEO became the major themes derived from responses of participants to the willingness and readiness of the successor to take over the business.

Regarding successor's capability, data generated show that the available family members have failed to demonstrate leadership qualities and capabilities expected to manage and sustain the business over generation. The supporters of this assertion argue that the successors have not been enticed, groomed, mentored or trained by the founder to gain the expected skills, interest, capabilities have the confidence to control and manage (Parker, 2016; Blumentritt, 2016; File and Prince, 1996). This is seen from the activities and operations of the business still in the control of the founder. Competency and expertise of most successors are also in doubt by the respondents. In sustaining the business, successor must be competent and skilful and possess technical know-how and abreast with all the operations of the company. This is because the qualities and capabilities and the quality of the succession process has a greater impact on the continuity and sustainability of the business (Nordqvist et al., 2013; Wiklund et al 2013) Also, they should be seen to exercising of control over the company resources effectively and efficiently with good management and interpersonal relationship. These qualities according to the evidence were not seen in the potential successors and these point to the fact that the Founder's trust in them in their qualities and capabilities are in doubt to take over from him.

The other part of the successor's readiness dealt with their willingness to take over. The evidence points to the fact that, the competent offspring of the founder have not shown much interest in the

business. This can be attested to the fact that some have even resigned from the position they previously held in the company. Trust and confidence was another theme that emerged. This theme was built on the basis that the founder continues to maintain total control over the business operation despite his health challenges. The employees of top position including the potential successors are not allowed to work with free hands as the company operates on the sole direction of the CEO. This action was interpreted by respondents as lack of trust and confidence in the employees of the company including the family members.

The theme of ambivalent attitude of Founder-CEO was on the basis that the founder has not shown clearly when he would be leaving office, who would be taking over and the support he would give the potential successors to take over. According to the participants, at one time it seems he has given consent to the potential successor to take over, but at other times he was not giving the necessary support or freedom to operate fully to enable the potential successors to make mistakes and learn from them. It was concluded that where there is no successor there cannot be true succession. The inability to identify a ready successor amongst the potential successors in the family to take over the business led us to research the barriers to True Succession in the organization.

Question 3: What are the barriers and limitations serving as challenges involved in working towards sustainable succession in PGIL?

The other part of the 2nd cycle was to study the barriers that hinder true or sustainable succession in PGIL. The analysed data and themes generated are represented in figure 4.9 below.

Figure 4. 9 Development of the themes and categories on Barriers to True Succession PGIL

- Family conflict
- Tension
- Divisions among family members
- In fighting amongst family members
- Lack of unity between family members

- Founders interference in succession process
- The successor not allowed to operate with free hand
- Unprepared founder to handover
- Lack of trust from the founder to the successor

Family feud

Un-readiness to hand over

Succession Plan

Non-family members

- Succession process follows undocumented plan
- Late start of the succession process.
- Ineffective Communication of the succession process
- Lack of identified successor

- Non-family members not involve in succession process
- The role of non-family members have been limited
- Lack of motivation for succession process

Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes in Cycle; Categories in projection

PGIL, like other family businesses, is characterized by family priority and lack of communication of the succession process and, above all, lack of a succession plan (Friedman et al., 2017). Due to the absence of a succession plan, most variables of succession such as the Board, the successor and the management team have no or little idea of the role expected of them in the succession process. Majority of non-family members in the management team who bring on board expertise Fang et al., (2016) are excluded from the succession process in the organization. This affects the balance of decision-making regarding succession and leads to lording of family interest over the

business, which has eventually affected the sustainability of the business. The Founder/CEO is deeply involved in the operations of the business due to the fact that potential successors are deemed to be incapable and not trusted to take charge of the business. However, this interruption is questionable as the Founder/CEO, despite his health condition, is still the CEO of the organization and therefore involved in the day-to-day operation of the organization and should not be regarded as interference.

The evidence also revealed that the barriers identified in PGIL also account for the difference between the founder and successor's readiness and willingness. This can be traced to the fact that the company has no documented plan which would have spelt out the expected role of both the founder and successor. The undocumented plan and poor communication of the founder on the succession process also account for the tension and conflict associated with the succession process in PGIL. The un-readiness of the founder to handover the company plays a central role in the succession process, because the initiation of the succession process in family business highly depends on the founder's effort and role in the succession process.

The research revealed that there are a lot of barriers in PGIL which affect the possibility of True Succession in the organization. These barriers were labelled as 'succession realities' in PGIL which need attention. Some comments of respondents were captured in my journal during the process of retrieving the questionnaires which suggested an alternative means to succession planning. These are outlined in text box 4.6 below:

Text box 4 6 Respondents' comments

I don't think there is any written or documented succession plan in place, and there is no system of grooming and preparation of potential successors in place. The current practice with change is often done without adequately communicating or involving other non-family members in the whole process.

There is so much uncertainty regarding the direction of the company in terms of succession, and we can really see a huge vacuum that have been created. I believe that if proper succession plan has been put in place and communicated, the heath challenges of the founder would not have disrupted the operational flow of the company.

The board must be empowered to structure the communication process of the company and committees must be set purposely for succession process. -PGL 3

Barriers to succession are many in PGIL and they cannot be solved by the same people who created it. External person as interim leader would be preferred. – **PGL 05**

Source: Field Study, 2018

Succession in family business especially, transition period is a critical issue since the survival and sustainability of the business depend on the quality of succession that takes place from one generation to the other. Any disruption that was not well resolved during the transition periods

would have a devastating effect on the business or founders' dynastic objectives and preserving their socio-emotional wealth (Minichilli et al., 2014; Parker, 2016). The danger is that the business may be transferred to an incapable and untrusted leader when the founder/CEO has an altruistic objective (Gomez-Mejia et al., (2011) and wants to reduce agency cost (Ilias, 2006).Contrary, this objective defeats the concept of true succession concept.

Summary

From the analysis data, it was realized that the succession has come about as a result of the sudden health challenges of the founder/CEO. It is also noted that any succession, and most critical to the exploration of the true succession concept, demands that at least the two key players of the succession process, namely, the predecessor and the successor should be available and supported equally with the mixed management and the Board. As the successor is not available in PGIL, the exploration of the true succession concept was put on hold and rather explored deeper into the factors that have led to the disruption in the process for change.

In line with this, the action research team identified a need for intervention in the whole process. This process of intervention was broken into two (1) those that need immediate intervention which solution could not be postponed (2) those which need a careful diagnosis and recommendation for future exploration so as to bring back on track the utilisation of true succession concept for sustainable succession in the business.

4.2.2   Planning the Action - Action Research Cycle 2

After going through the construction stage of the project, the action research team met on 13th January 2017 to draft a plan of intervention which formed the basis for the action. I anticipated active involvement of the members in this phase than before. The team deliberated about how the

project was to be implemented and the reflective pause below shows the level of willingness and readiness of the team to engage in this process.

Reflective Pause 3:

Ah! I was surprised when the study revealed that there is no immediate capable and trusted successor. All along every eye is on one of the siblings of the founder. It therefore resonates in me that myself and the team should be extra careful and diligent as we have entered the most sensitive part of the study. Though this caution persists, we need to intervene as our future livelihood is important - Action researcher (2018)

From the identification provided above, I reflected on what I said in chapter one (section 1.9) 'I needed to be politically astute and behave like a political entrepreneur (Buchanan and Badham, 2008), which involves risk-taking, innovative and creativity as change agent.

Deliberating on how to implement the intervention, the action research team realized that most of the issues identified from the findings of the study are human capital related, which required Human Resource Policies, thus altering and drafting of policies considering the issues identified. The team agreed on broad stakeholders' consultation and engagement of top management, the Board and founder-CEO to pave way for drafting and implementing specific recommended policies. The action research team members were abreast with the existing policies of the company and would be in position to draft recommendations for improvement.

4.2.3   Taking Action -Action Research Cycle 2

After going through the construction and planning stages of the work, the team recognized that it was now time to take action on the initiative that were planned. The first task of the AR team was to book appointment with people in key positions in the company. The schedule for meeting with the board, followed by the founder-CEO and finally some management members such as the Head -HR & Administration and Head Finance was agreed and fixed with dates. The immediate on the list of challenges was to introduce institutional mixed management. This aims at fostering teamwork, leadership skills, respect, unity and equality among the management team of the company (Liden et al, 2014; Raelin, 2012). Two other members of the top management team and I met the Board at their meeting and introduced the issues identified for approval. We also met the HR and the Finance department after the Board and CEO had approved our proposal. At this stage the business was ready and willing to accept our proposed intervention which has been informed by the long deliberation and hard work of all participants.

Knowing most of the challenges of PGIL succession to be human capital as agreed in the construction stage, HR policies and procedures became our first focus to build respect, unity and equality among management team in order to institute what we called institutional mixed management. Promotion as planned was used to enhance the membership of the management team. This brought on board expert and capable employees who had been with the company for long time and knew the operation of the company. Working in concert with the HR department, some outstanding management members were also promoted to top management position as Chief Operating Officers. The restructuring of the management team went further by elevating two Chief Operating Officers, (COO) to Deputy CEO Position. This was strategically done to enhance decision making process in the company.

At the side of available resources to entice successors and enhance performance of the company, assets of the company were to be valued as proposed by the AR team. Considering the view of

Blumentritt (2016) that a successor would consider his career paths and weighs against company's social economic wealth in deciding to join the company or not, the team working together with Finance and Accounting Department, a professional was appointed to help in knowing the total value of the company assets. The report of the professional summarized the company's bundle of resources - economic and social wealth (Barney, 1991; Gadajlovic and Carney, 2010). This was intended to aid future decision and also entices potential successors of the company. Asset register was then built in support of the report.

Working on capability building, initiation was taken to establish a training center based on the effort of the AR team. One of the company's buildings was completed and commissioned by the Board Chairman as a training centre and was placed under the care of the HR and Administration Department where periodic training has been held to develop human capital capabilities to take up leadership positions.

Finally, the AR team tackled the communication challenges of the company. The Board's decisions on the succession have been discussed at the Management level who then disseminate the succession news down to all the subordinates. A new organogram has therefore been designed and now being enforced to ensure effective communication throughout the company.

4.2.4   Evaluation of the Action - Action Research Cycle 2

The team agreed that they have also been empowered by the project that they can cause changes at their various offices which together would enhance productivity and sustain the company. They also believe the objective of the project was met as institutional mixed management has been implemented for commitment, respect and loyalty for the company. The commissioning and the use of the Training centre were deemed as great achievement, in addition to solving some

communication challenges. All the participants were actively involved in executing the project either by spearheading change or creating avenues for education and learning amongst the workforce.

In assessing the way forward, I drew the attention of the action research team to the unresolved issues identified and labelled as short to medium term in the planning stage which need careful diagnosis and recommendation for future exploration so as to bring the company back on track to the utilisation of true succession concept for sustainable succession in PGIL. The major issues were:

a) A CEO succession model to be adopted by PGIL and criteria to select the next CEO

b) Drafting of succession plan

c) Board composition, independence and effectiveness

d) Grooming of potential successor

The team members were mindful that the study now focused on the transition period arrangements for PGIL and agreed that another cycle should be organised to handle them.

4.3 Action Research Cycle Three

The aim of the third cycle became the exploration and development of actions to address the succession issues identified in the second action research cycle.

4.3.1 Constructing - Action Research Cycle 3

As indicated in the second cycle some immediate and short-term challenges identified in the study was resolved to help the succession process on-going. In line with this, the third action research cycle's objective is to answer the unattended and emerging issues and shape the business succession process toward true succession. The questions that guided the third action research cycle are as follows:

- What are the enablers of True succession that can be identified in PGIL?

- How can the identified enablers be implemented in solving succession challenges of PGIL?

These questions guided the data collection through focus group discussion for the cycle. In the process of collecting the data, two meetings were scheduled with the focus group and data was analysed as explained in chapter three, (section 3.10.2). I also used unofficial interviews and individual dialogues at social and coffee breaks interchangeably. I jotted down notes in both official and unofficial engagements with members of the group and other senior members of the organization as stated in the planning stage. Jotting down notes and recording the focus group's proceedings and interviews with other management and senior members of the organization became the major means of gathering the information as detailed in chapter three (section 3.10.2). After collecting the data, the action research team analysed the data and the findings from the study revealed the following concepts and themes as detailing the enablers of True succession in Ghana; illustrated in figure 4.10 below.

Enablers of True Succession:

Figure 4. 10 Development of the themes and categories on Enabler of True Succession

- Getting the non-family members involved in the
- Giving the non-family management team members key role in assisting the grooming process
- Mixed management teams must be high involved in the pro

- Prepare succession environment
- Training and grooming of successor
- Founder willingness and Readiness
- Communicating the Succession process
- Willingness and readiness of the successor

Key Role of non-family members

Development of a Succession Plan

Board leading the process

Existence of Resources

- Models of CEO succession considered by the Board
- Board must show independence from the founder

- Strong asset base by founder

Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes in Cycle; Categories in projection

In identifying the enablers of succession in the organization, the analysis of the responses identified the founder's development of succession plan, existence of resources, board's role in leading the succession process and the key role in involving non-family members in the entire succession process. The existence of the Board can now manage the succession process by ensuring a smooth transition of power from the Founder/CEO to successor without distortion of business operations. Non-family members on the other hand bring on expertise and competence that are absent in the family and their inclusion in the succession process would help balance decision taking and smooth transition as effort was done in cycle 2 to bring respect, unity and

equality among the management to ensure all inclusion management team. Lastly, resources of the company are regarded as a key component in the succession process and determinant to entice potential successors and qualify external non-family members in the succession process.

How to implement the identified enablers in solving succession challenges in PGIL?

In an effort to ensure that the company is able to implement some of these enablers, the study sought to identify how the key enablers in driving the succession challenge could be implemented in the company. The figure 4.9 captures the major themes below:

Figure 4. 11 Development of the themes and categories on implementation of the enablers in PGIL

- Provision of honest feedback
- Publicly affirming the potential successors

- Entice good talent to remain
- Identify skill gap amongst subordinates
- Identify key position gaps

Intensifying the communication process

Mitigate risk of losing efficient workforce

Succession Activity Planning.

Development of family business vision

- Plan the next activity for founder
- Company focusing on building an office for founder

- Development of vision for the process
- Clarification of the family role in the business

Source: field study, 2018

Note: Themes in Cycle; Categories in projection

From the data analysed, the findings from the study recognized forces such as development of family business vision, mitigating risk of losing efficient workforce, communication and succession activity planning as some of the main implementing variables that could assist in the succession process of the company. On the issue of development of family business vision, the study recognized that implementing the succession process requires clarification of the family role in the business and establishing a vision for the succession process. For succession activity planning, the study recognized that, there is the need for all activities of the process to be planned, and establishment of an office space for the founder. For mitigating risk of losing efficient workforce, the study recognized that the succession process should identify the skill gaps amongst subordinates, identify position gaps and seek efforts to entice good talent to remain in the company. Lastly, communication of the succession process is important in the process of implementing the enablers through the activity of providing honest feedback and publicly affirming the potential successors.

4.3.2   Planning the Action - Action Research Cycle 3

Prior to the start of the research, the organizational change efforts and processes that took place in PGIL made my research work very relevant to my organization. In addition to this, the action research team saw that with the presence of the Founder/CEO and the level of authority he wields in the organization and his emotional attachment, any effort to implement the findings from the study should be based on his approval and recommendation. We really needed the engagement of the founder if we were to succeed with the implementation efforts within the company. Therefore,

after identifying the enablers in PGIL, I informed the Founder/CEO about the project, its findings and recommendations. I named this document to be submitted as "The future step of PGIL".

On 28th July 2017 three of the action research team members, who originally are part of the Board took advantage of the Board Meeting with Founder/CEO in London and presented the concerns within the identified areas. During the discussion at the meeting I made a critical contribution on the project which enlightened the entire Board and the Founder/CEO. After the meeting, the action research team members had a separate meeting with the Founder/CEO and he was delighted to know that the sustainability of his Company was a major concern to us, especially being non-family management members, and thus congratulated us on our contribution and depth of knowledge gained about the organization. We took the opportunity to submit and discuss the recommendations from the research which needed to be discussed for approval and implementation especially from the founder.

In order to validate the evidence generated about the willingness of the founder/CEO to hand over, but there are no trusted and capable successors which is a sensitive emergent issue, I needed to be bold, intelligent and diligent in my task to explore into the 'darker side' of this issue. This endeavour was for me and the team to understand and interpret the assertion made by the founder's willingness and readiness. A discussion was made between myself and the Founder/CEO which was concluded that as much as he is willing to handover, he is not ready to hand over immediately to anyone whom he has no trust that he/she could manage both the family and the business.

He elaborated that he had worked hard by building up a corporate image with distinctive family values and will be highly delighted if he gets a capable and trusted successor. As much as he loves and likes his siblings who have been with him for long period, they have not gained the trust and capability he needed from them. He expressed his pain that, this hard decision has come at a time

when he is battling with health challenges which has marred his intention to entice enough potential family members to select one of them for the CEO position.

He also demonstrated his willingness through his managing the succession and the company before his indisposition. These include the establishment of the Board, the introduction of Chief Operating Officers (COO) at the management level, internal audit department to strengthen interval controls, expansion and establishment of additional companies and the restructuring of the sister companies into autonomous companies. Many of them were in agreement and support of recommendations and suggestion the study presented for implementation.

I also inquired that, as we have not got a potential willing successor from him, how was he going to build that trust and capabilities in the potential successors. He replied that the board, management including him should be able to continue grooming and mentoring successors till a capable and trusted successor could be selected.

The team accepted and isolated this assertion by the Founder/ CEO as very fundamental and the most emergent evidence that runs through all the nerves of the research. These authentic evidences confirm and disconfirm some of the comments and information provided by the participants. With these in mind the team discussed and agreed to research into the areas of employing expatriate CEO and its effect on the Board's composition, the family interest and control

However, in the interim he agreed to the suggestions made by the research team that an interim leader position should be created to deal with succession disruptions and transitional arrangements.

Surprising Reflective Pause 4

Ah! Ah! It was surprising and shocking to me and all the entire action research team, hearing from the Founder/CEO of not having a capable and trusted successor. All eyes were on one of his siblings to take over as he has been with him for a long time   - Action researcher, 2018

Source: field study, 2018.

4.3.3   Taking Action- Action Research Cycle 3

After the process of gaining the approval of the CEO on the core focal areas which the team sought to deal with, the action research team handed the major areas of concern to the Top Management team members of the company to study.

➢   **Recommendations for Action**

After two months of studying our document, the Top Management and the action research team integrated some key areas of our document into the organizational development training manual which was now being designed for the company. The core areas for study were stated below:

- **The Appointment of an interim leader as a transitional leader for PGIL**

  The interim leader should be an expatriate to serve as a bridge towards the preparation of a permanent family CEO. The choice of an expatriate CEO was the directive of the CEO and it could be deduced from his direction that emotions, tensions and conflicts will be reduced. In addition, the appointment of the expatriate CEO is strategically for both economic performance and effective measures to protect the socioeconomic wealth of the business for a short period of time. The process of engaging external CEO should be communicated and explained effectively to members of the company that it is a temporary position to aid in the preparation of the successor. The employment of the expatriate CEO

should be based on criteria of knowledge of PGIL, international business, transformation of the business and any other dynamics of family business.

- On the employment of an expatriate CEO as an interim leader, another aspect of the business that has to be considered is the composition of the Board. The team recommended that family members must be empowered on the Board in order to promote the family interest. This recommendation was based on the assertion made by (Gomez-Mejia et al.; 2011 and Berrone et al., 2012) that family empowerment on the board is essential when the management is not in the hands of the owning family. This is to bring balance in decision to promote family interest, effective governance, protecting socio-emotional wealth, financial performance and for transitional strategy for business continuity (Minichilli et al., 2012)

- **Utilization of expatriate CEO model in successors capability development**

  There should be a conscious skill and capability development of the potential successors. Deliberate mentorship programme should be designed for all the potential successors. This should be incorporated into the staff development plans of the company with constant follow ups on the progress of the staff. Establish a well-equipped training centre as a means of developing human capital for the organization (Dawson, 2012).

- **Development and building of Effective Succession plan for PGIL**

  The Board together with the founder must lead preparation of formal succession plan. This process should start immediately by developing a cohesive list of the various objectives and the timelines that have been set. The process must also embark on a documentary review of the vision, mission and goals of the company. The operating standards and procedures must also be reviewed to reflect and align with the succession process. The

leadership fit structure must be identified within the plan to ensure that the right successor is appointed (Blumentritt, 2016). One other aspect to be included is how the extended family system would be dealt with. This had been revealed through the study and secondary data of the make-up of the family members and must clearly state those entitled to occupy the CEO position.

- **Empowerment of Mixed Management on the succession process.**

As mixed management proposal has been accepted and implementation started, we recommend that the Board, management and CEO should promote, evaluate and review it to help develop capabilities, enhance productivity and performance of the business.

Applications to Professional Practice

In order to help manage the business during the succession period the first stage was the appointment of the two Deputy CEOs supported by two COOs as a measure to hold the fort in the absence of potential successor. They will be working close with the external CEO when appointed. The recruiting exercise for the external CEO has commenced where the Board and the CEO had regular meetings on how it could be done. However, some few criteria have been submitted by the team to the HR and the Board for study. Key among them was transformational leadership skills, family business background, competency and qualification.

4.7 Excitement of Action Research Team.

Every purposeful beginning has a desirable end. The research journey needed to come to an end due to the time frame of the research. Taking account of how far we have come with the work with surprises, shocks and perceptions and excitement the team could not hide their joy and some of them have been captured in the text box below:

It is good to have real-time exercise like this leading to solve strategic issues for the current and future of the company. To have wider views, the succession and changes in the company is good for decision-making and help to generate credible data for the study – ART 1

If our ideas have been accepted and drafted into the whole training manual of PGIL, then we can confess that we have made an impact, even within this stress level. ART 2

I count myself blessed for this impact, maybe we should begin to press for more intervention and own the whole process. AR3

Ah...The surprises were many and at times shocking. I have now understood research findings and will from now respect researchers and their contribution to knowledge.

Source: field study, 2018

After this last cycle, I congratulated every action research team member and focus group member on how they had contributed to the success of the research and, more importantly, been part of the change and the improvement in the succession process undertaken by the organization. Some closing remarks and chats which served as critical reflection to sum up the learning of the team members and journalized were seen as relevant to the research and which I developed into the text box 4.8 below.

Text box 4 8 Learning of Action Research Team members

> *When the success of the company and its history is read after the succession process, I can count myself blessed and glad to be a part of the whole process…. I believe I have contributed through the knowledge creation process to bring the company to where its is'' – **ART 06***
>
> *I breathe sense of joy and do not regret to be part of the history to be written about PGIL succession. We are bidding farewell to the study but the succession in PGIL has just started – ART **01***
>
> *We have also added to literature on succession in family business which was one of main objectives of the study. I see PGIL well prepared to handle every challenge of true succession. – **ART 09***
>
> *I have seen the importance and effective link that exist between theory and practice. Thus, theory guides practice and it is important that research in any field should have its theoretical base. Without the true succession conceptual frame work we would not have understood the reasons why true succession could not have been attained at the study's time frame. –* **ART 07**

Source: field study, 2018.

4.3   **Summary and Conclusion of the Story**

This chapter collected and analysed the data around specific questions that formed the bedrock of the research and has been guided by theory and practice based on the development and application of the conceptual framework. Utilizing Coghlan and Brannick's (2010) cyclical process of construction, planning, taking action, and evaluation of action, the action research went through a three-stage cyclical process.

 In the first cycle of the work, the objective was based on seeking to explore the understanding of family business, the nature of the family business succession environment and the concept of True Succession. In line with this, we engaged the services of family business CEOs and participants from PGIL in seeking to answer the questions. Towards this end, the research identified concepts such as family interest, family ownership and control, family ethos and family succession as critical concepts that define family business. The research also identified concepts such lack of succession plan, family priority, tensions and emotions, competition, and external forces as characteristics of family business succession environment. In determining the meaning of True Succession, concepts such as willingness and capability of the founder, willingness and ability of the successor, utilization of mixed management, effectiveness and capability of the board as defining concepts. These outcomes confirm the initial conceptual framework adopted for the research in the literature review chapter (Section 2.4, section 2.9 and section 2.10). The action research team also used the feedbacks and lessons learned as a reflection to plan for the subsequent cycles.

The second action research cycle sought to find how the exploring of a True Succession Conceptual Framework would lead to sustainable succession in PGIL. The findings from the

research suggested that the Founder/CEO was willing to hand over, but there was no successor ready due to identified barriers in the succession process in PGIL. The barriers were considered as derailing factors of the succession process in business. The barriers were identified as lack of succession plan, tension and emotions, family priority and external forces and competition.

In view of these barriers, the third cycle was to explore the available enablers of succession in PGIL and how it could be implemented to achieve sustainable succession. The enablers were identified as the Founder/CEO, the Board and the involvement of non-family members in the succession process. Some of the outcomes of the research were then implemented in PGIL and others are yet to be considered. From evidence generated from the cycles, the research proceeds to chapter five to conduct the evaluation of the outcomes and the reflections.

4.4 Development of my theory for True succession Transition - cycle three

Within the focus of the research, I sought to determine how True Succession could impact on the survival and sustainability of PGIL. Coming from this background, identifying the meaning of True Succession was seen as an important key. The third cycle focused on determining the enablers of True Succession in PGIL. With the True Succession concept linked to sustainability, the third cycle found how the enablers of True Succession could be explored to ensure that PGIL develops a sustainable succession process. From the evaluated data, the findings of the research identified that a transitional leadership type or model was immediately necessary for the organization. Secondly, the research found that there was a need for the Board and management to ensure the communication of the process and the selection of the next leader based on expertise. However, for these to happen, the Founder/CEO and the substantive CEO together with the Board must ensure that the Founder/CEO is committed and sincerely willing to hand over. Since the research recognizes the influence of multiple stakeholders such as family members, external

parties and non-family employees, the sustainability of the business would also be dependent on how these stakeholders affect and are affected by the transition process in the organization.

In line with this, the research's conceptual framework recognizes the Founder/CEO as a leader within the context of the planned behaviour theory to influence key capability concepts such as leadership, management, processes to create a sustainable family business. From these, I managed to develop my concept which formed the theory developed for final action research cycle as illustrated in the Figure 4.12 below.

Figure 4. 12 Transitional true succession conceptual frameworks for PGIL
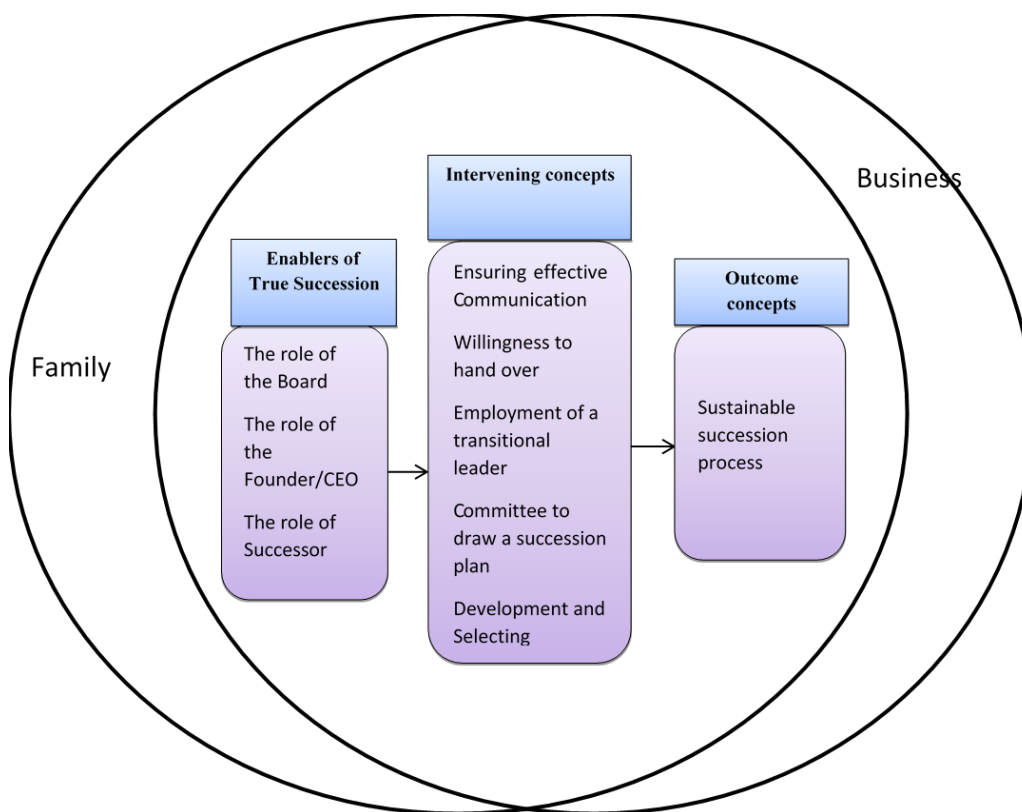
Source: Field Study, 2018

From the conclusion drawn from Figure 4.12 above, it could be seen that the enablers of True Succession identified as the Board and the Founder/CEO must *push* the intervening concepts to arrive at a sustainable succession process which would eventually lead to true (quality) succession,

that is, successful and sustainable. This conclusion is based on the findings from the action research cycles.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND REFLECTION

'Validity, reliability, comparability and fairness are not just measurement issues, but social values that have meaning and force outside of measurement wherever evaluative judgments and decisions are made'. (Messick, 1994:2)

5.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of the study; the key research findings from the first cycle through to the third cycle, the accomplishments and the impact the research had on various stakeholders who were engaged in the project under the headings:

- Evaluation of the outcome/findings from the research – this captures the outcomes from the three action research cycles.

The chapter also reflect on the outcomes of the entire research exploratory journey, highlighting on PGIL, the research team, myself as the researcher, the methodological journey and the learning that has come out throughout this whole process of engagement. This was done in line Ramsey (2014). As scholar/practitioner researcher making impact on the development of myself and my organisation, throughout the whole thesis, I have attempted to achieve greater detail in the development of a narrative based around my whole research journey and using illustrative quotes where possible from my research diary. The reflection in the thesis is organised as per Coghlan Brannick (2010) three voices/practices in Action Research as an Integrative Framework – first person; second person; and third person inquiries/practices (see also Coghlan, 2011, pg. 69 – 71)

5.2   Evaluation of the outcome or findings from the research

The action research cycle developed for the research emerged in three interdependent cyclical processes. The findings of each cycle together with some emerging issues within PGIL were used as the basis for generating the research problem in subsequent cycles. This process looked at evaluation of the information and data landscape, the issues of quality, accuracy, relevance and credibility for the data and the consistency in the data collection process.

5.2.1   Evaluation of the outcome of cycle one

The development of the problem for the action research cycle was based on the original conceptual framework developed by Lucky et al. (2011). The major problem which influenced the motive for the first action research cycle was based on seeking to explore the meaning of family

business in Ghana, the succession environment and the concept of True Succession and barriers to true succession. Cycle one also sought to have a diagnostic overview and understanding of PGIL alongside Ghanaian perspectives. To ensure the quality of the research problem I consulted a number of literatures that fitted into the emerging issues in Ghana. The development of my research problem was a result of the emerging issues confronting succession in general in Ghana and the literature on the subject. In the process of collecting the data, the research methodology chosen was seen as appropriate as the companies selected were identified as family businesses that have similar operational dynamics to PGIL. The participants selected were identified as those with in-depth knowledge in their respective fields and were important in generating quality data in the field which I was researching.

Table 5.1 below highlights the outcomes generated from the first action research cycle.

Table 5.1 Outcomes from the action research cycle one

	Objectives	**Findings**
Cycle 1	Explore the definition of family business within Ghanaian context	The following were identified as concepts that define family business: family interest, family ownership and control, family ethos and family succession and extended family system
	Explore the succession environment in Ghana	In identifying the succession environment in Ghana, the study recognized that this environment is characterized by: external environment made up of competitive forces, legal forces and government policies. The internal environment is also made up of

	Objectives	Findings
		communication processes, succession plans, emotions and conflicts and family control and authority.
	Exploring the concept of True Succession	The concept of True succession was identified as effectiveness and capability of the board, willingness and capability of the founder, utilization of the mixed management team and capability and willingness of the successor.
	Exploring the barriers to sustainable succession	In exploring the barriers to true succession, the study recognized lack of succession plan, conflicts and tensions, communication challenges and un-readiness of the founder and un-availability of successors as the main barriers.

Source: Field Study, 2018

The outcome of the first objective, which entailed exploring the concept of family business, provided a number of variables as illustrated in Table 5.1 above. These findings from the research recognized that a number of concepts could be used to define family business. Supporting this particular finding, Chua *et al.* (1999, p. 25) defined family business as:

"...a business governed and/or managed with the intention to shape and pursue the

vision of the business held by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the

same family or a small number of families in a manner that is potentially sustainable

across generations of the family or families." - Chua et al. (1999:25)

The quotation provided above highlights multiple criteria for defining the concept of family business as illustrated in the table above. From these findings, it must be recognized that, the definition of family business should be based on multiple dimensions, as identification of a particular dimension will be insufficient simplification Fiegener (2010), which would not be used to explain the concept.

The findings are also in line with the operational definition of the research (Section 2.2.1) which was coined from Sharma (2003) and Astrakhan and Shanker (2003). Part of the definition states that: 'the extent to which family members are deeply involved in the business management and the control with the intention of retaining the business in the family'. The 'intention' to keep the business in the family has been the indicative and desired factor of the Founder/CEO as his willingness to hand over the business as shown in the finding of (chapter four, cycle two). This finding conforms to Ajzen's (1991; 1988) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which requires the Founder/CEO desirability to undertake the succession, to plan, initiate and moderate the behaviour of the successor and other stakeholders (Cennamo et al., 2012; Laplume et al., 2008; Freeman, 1984). By applying the TPB, I seek to identify the Founder/CEO's role in the succession process and to determine the type of succession and process involved (DeMassis et al., 2008). Thus, having the intention to hand over the business should be supported by putting a succession plan in place which is indicative of a willingness and effort to perform the behaviour (López-Mosquera and Sánchez 2012). The fact that the Founder/CEO is willing to hand over the business without putting in place a succession plan, to the extent that there is no available successor, nullifies or does not support the willingness to hand over. (Parker 2016; Blumentritt, 2016; De Massis et al.,

2012), support the idea that efforts, ability and willingness to continue a dynastic objective of family business succession, should be demonstrated by the founder/CEO to entice the willing successors.

Another major opportunity within the succession process is the aspect of gender which has not been captured in the findings of the work. Available evidence points to the fact that women are highly committed when given leadership positions, as they tend to demonstrate high stewardship behaviour and dedication to the Company's values than men (Ryan and Haslam, 2005). Unfortunately, this finding has not been explored in the current study, as part of the whole process of change in PGIL.

One emerging concept revealed by the study on the definition of family business is the incorporation of family system (extended family system) this was supported by the concentric model of family business by Bawayo, (2009) adapted by (Acquaah and Eshun, 2016:27) which describes family business as founder, nuclear family member, extended family and social network and community. Aderonke (2014) laid much emphasis on the extended family system in his model captioned effect of culture determinants on family business succession (refer to page 31 of the study). This family system especially the extended family system has its root in succession on family business in Ghana and Africa as a whole of which attention has to be given when researching into family business in this jurisdiction. As much as it has its advantages in areas such as collectivism, reciprocity, economic benefits in the form of family member employment 'first', commitment to the family values, positive stewardship Acquaah and Eshun, (2016) to reduce agency cost Herrero, (2011), and human capital availability to the business, it has its peculiar implication to the business succession from one generation to the other. Who succeeds who under varying conditions becomes much expanded challenge for continuation and sustainability of the

family business? This extended family system implication need further research when using family business theories and concepts.

Secondly, the environmental context within which succession occurs in Ghana was explored and the findings are captured in Table 5.1. Critical variables like family control and authority, emotions and conflicts, lack of succession plan, poor communication of succession process, have the tendency of having negative impact on the succession if they are not well managed within the context of the organisation. Confirming this, Gedjlovic *et al*. (2012) have indicated that the succession process is often confronted with so many emotions and tensions for which the family relationships must seek to manage to avoid the destruction of the business and the family legacy.

Moreover, the presence of non-family members in the organization may equally have an impact on the entire succession process as stated in the Table 5.1. In support of this, Dyer (1986) recognized that family businesses that establish a closer relationship with non-family members in the organization will have a sustainable succession that could lead to the long-term survival of the organization. Reasons could be that the independent assumptions, decisions and contributions by non-family members in the family business could provide a significant source of knowledge to influence the entire succession process Chrisman et al., (2014). In addition, external factors as identified by the research can equally have an effect on the family business succession process. It is therefore important for such an external environmental scan to be considered within the framework of any succession process (Wheelen and Hunger, 2017).

Reflecting on the works, exploring the succession environment in Ghana was to help in determining the environment in which succession is taking place and to determine the successor selection requirement in order to match the qualities of the successor with the operational needs of

the organization (Goldberg and Wooldridge, 1993). Furthermore, succession is implemented with peculiar aim of achieving sustainability and knowing the succession environment becomes essential to avoid pitfalls of succession and capitalize on enablers available to sustain the business

Thirdly, cycle one also sought to explore the concept of True Succession within the Ghanaian family business environment. Whilst the concept was initially defined by Lorna (2011) and Lucky *et al.* (2011), seeking to place the meaning of the concept within the Ghanaian family business context was seen as necessary. Whilst Lucky *et al*. (2011) identified True Succession to entail the Founder/CEO, the successor and the environment, our exploration of the concept within the Ghanaian business environment identified the concept as effectiveness and capability of the board, willingness and readiness of the founder, utilization of the mixed management team and willingness and capability of the successor. In support of the findings from the above, Castillo (2010) identified that preparing for a successor (Parker, 2016; Furst, 2017 Pittino et al.,2018), creating a team to look for a successor (Friedman, et al., 2017), building the capacity and capability of relationships within the business are outlined factors that do not inhibit quality and sustainable succession among family businesses. This identification, therefore, supports the view that such interrelationship between the Founder/CEO, the Board, the successor and the mixed-management team should have a significant impact on the attainment of True Succession.

Lastly, the cycle sought to identify the barriers to sustainable succession in Ghana. The emerging themes identified factors such as lack of succession plan, lack of clear communication process, emotions and conflicts and family control and authority.

In general, the findings from the first action research cycle suggest that the predecessor, the successor, the Board and the mixed management team must work collaboratively and have

knowledge of the internal and external environment so they can work towards having sustainable succession in the organization. According to Zahra (2005), conflicts arise when incumbents use their authority to constrain management activity if they are in dissonance with the growth expectations of the business. According to Venter et al. (2005), succession planning cannot be effective without the support of the other members of the family. Moreover, succession planning might become a problem if there is a sense of distrust from other family members in the ability of the successor to lead (Lorna, 2011). It is therefore important for family businesses to look at these barriers and devise appropriate responses towards them. The barriers to succession should be viewed in line with the survival of the business. Thus, many family businesses collapse in the transitional periods where there is an unpredicted event such as death or incapacitation which threatens the survival and continuity of the business.

5.2.2   Evaluation of the outcome of cycle two

The second action research cycle focused on the outcome of the first action research cycle and emerging issues in PGIL to construct the problem. Based on this, the cycle sought to explore how the True Succession conceptual framework might lead to sustainable succession in PGIL and the various barriers that seem to hamper the process. The context of research was seen as appropriate as I needed to conduct research in my own organization and generate actionable knowledge and to improve my development through learning and to solve the succession challenges that have bedevilled my organization (Coghlan and Shani, 2014). By undertaking such task will help improve my development through learning (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). My approach toward collecting data from management team members (low, middle and top management) was seen as significantly appropriate, considering their level of expertise and knowledge about the organization (Creswell, 2012). This could equally introduce a significant amount of bias in their

response set. Therefore, setting the questions to fit within the context of the on-going change process, and encouraging them to develop the future of the organization, was deemed important in ensuring they participated effectively in the research. The outcome presented in Table 5.2 below highlights a thorough analysis and findings of the responses provided by the participants.

The focus of the second action research cycle sought to identify: How the exploration of true succession conceptual framework leads to sustainable succession in PGIL? From the general research question, the outcome of the study reveals the following:

Table 5. 2 Outcomes from the action research cycle two

	Objectives	**Findings**
Cycle 2	Willingness of the Founder/CEO to hand over the organization	This is evidenced by the deteriorating health of the founder, assignment of board roles, giving control to some family members and restructuring to empower non-family management members.
	Readiness of the potential family successor to take over the business	This is evidenced by successor incapability, lack of trust and confidence, unwillingness of the successor and ambivalent attitude of the founder/CEO.
	Barriers working towards sustainable succession in PGIL	In identifying the barriers to true succession, the study identified family feud, un-readiness of the founder to hand over, lack of succession plan and non-readiness to engage the services of non-family members.

Source: field study, 2018

In exploring the True Succession conceptual framework in PGIL, the findings from the research suggested that the Founder/CEO was willing to hand over the organization as evidenced by the various actions and initiatives identified from the research. Accordingly, the succession process starts when the Founder/CEO at the top is willing to hand over the organization (Breton-Miller et al., 2004). Research suggests that the Founder/CEO is the person most responsible for the continuity of the family business (Barnes and Hershon, 1989; Kets De Vries et al., 2007). Whilst readiness and willingness to hand over the organization is recognized as a key component in sustainable succession, (Mitchell *et al.* 2009; Parker, 2019; Blumentritt, 2016; DeMassis et al., 2012) have indicated that the Founder/CEO must structure the business and make efforts to solve the willing successor problem in such a way that the successor can easily take over control of the organization. Accordingly, the readiness of the Founder/CEO stepping down of the organization has a significant implication for creating value in the family business and should be a motivating factor towards quality succession and ensuring the sustainability of the organization.

With the explanation of succession, the Founder/CEO stepping down largely depends on the trust he/she has for the successor with the assurance that the succession is successful and sustainable. Thus, as posited by (Aronoff and Ward, 2011; Parker 2016; Kets De Vries et al., 2007) many family Founder/CEOs wish that their offspring succeed and continue the business after they have retired. This was found not to be the situation in PGIL because neither the offspring nor a family member has been groomed to take over business and therefore the True Succession concept could not be fully attained at this time.

The second aspect of the work sought to find out the readiness level of the potential successors of the organization. Successor readiness is characterized as the successor's mix of intelligence, experience, interest in the organization, relevant skills, interpersonal skills and trust from the

Founder/CEO that allows the individual to profitably continue operation of the family business (Chua et al., 1999; Friedman et al., 2017; File and Prince, 1996). If a family business is defined by its intent to continue family leadership and ownership, the burden of the succession process falls equally on the successor (Dyck *et al.,* 2002). Crucial and effective succession in a family business is where the family successor has shown commitment and willing to take over the business Cabrera-Suarez, 2005; Sharma and Irving, 2005; Sharma et al., 2003). The emerging themes from the research highlighted that, the family successors were not ready to take on the mantle from the incumbent Founder/CEO.

According to Sharma (2004) understanding the successor's perceived readiness to take on the leadership mantle of the organization is critically important for ensuring a sustainable succession. Accordingly, by the nature of family businesses, they restrict the selection pool of successors to members of the family (Coetzee and Van der Merwe, 2009) to preserve their socio-emotional wealth and pursue altruistic activities. Many of these business owners do not carefully consider all the issues when deciding whether succession to a family member is a viable alternative (Gilding et al., 2015). However, Bjuggren and Sund (2001) attributed the low survival rate amongst family businesses as the practice by families in handing over their businesses to incompetent family members, instead of more competent professional managers.

Contrary to handing over to incapable and trusted family member, it was realized that the Founder/CEO is not concerned with only succession but sustainability of the business. This indicates that the Founder/CEO was not in a rush to select a successor but considers sustainability of the business over all matters of succession. continuity (Parker, 2016; Zellweger et al., 2012) and be expecting to pursue altruistic activities (Lubatkin et al., 2007; Sshulze et al., 2001) by engaging any of the family members to take over from him as the highest utility for the family at that

material time. However, this approach or preference becomes a liability at the expense of sustainability and economic performance (Lubatkin et al, 2007). I therefore agree with (Hauck and Progl, 2015) and Hillebrand 2019) that, a transitional period gives the players in the succession process an opportunity to renew and innovate better options for the benefit of the future generations

With the potential successors not ready to take on the business, it is important for the Founder/CEO to look at an alternative model of selection to avoid the tendency of collapsing the business. The lack of readiness of the successor is being criticized by some participants that the Founder/CEO is showing an ambivalence character (Lansberg, 1988). At one time it seems he has given consent to the potential successor to take over, but at other times he is not given the necessary support or freedom to operate fully to enable the potential successors to make mistakes and learn from them. All these sentiments are unresolved issues which are being assessed through the research to find solutions.

5.2.3 Evaluation of the outcome of cycle three

After the evaluation of the second action research cycle, I recognized that even though the Founder/CEO was willing to hand over the organization, the family successors were not ready, thus, the founder was equally not ready to hand over. With the various barriers to sustainable succession identified, there was the need to move on to another cycle to find out what PGIL can do to ensure the sustainability of the organization. We were mindful that full exploration of true succession conceptual framework could not be sustained; therefore we needed to resort to transitional arrangement. This was done by solving those barriers, now labelled as enablers. The aim of these arrangements is to bring back the true succession process which has been stalled due to absences of a successor. Through the collaborative efforts of the action research team, we were

able to construct the initiative for the study. From this, the exploration of the enablers of True succession in PGIL led to outcomes as presented in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5. 3 Outcomes from the action research cycle three

	Objectives	Findings	
CYCLE 3	What are the enablers of True succession that can be identified in PGIL?	In terms of the enablers of True succession in PGIL, the study identified key role of non-family members, the Board of directors leading the whole process, development of succession plan and the existence of resources as the critical concepts.	*Sou rce: fiel d stud*

y, 2018

With the challenges faced by PGIL in its succession efforts, the third action research cycle explored the enablers of sustainable succession in the organization. Providing the justification for exploring the enablers, Kosie (2017) indicated that the threats to family business sustainability and continuity are rooted not just in the succession process, but in the players or enablers of succession. In line with this, the findings identified the leading role of the Board, key roles of the mixed-management team, development of the succession plan and the existence of resources as key forces that were classified as the enablers. Towards this end, Kosie (2017) indicated that there is the need to identify that these enablers have a key responsibility in sustaining the company. Whilst this has been recognized, De Masis et al (2014) highlight that there should be an alignment of goals and direction or create a stewardship behaviour amongst the key enablers in pursuit of the organizational interest.

To ensure that the company is able to implement some of these enablers, the study sought to identify how the key enablers in driving the succession challenge could be implemented in the company. The research further recognized that, since the potential successors are currently not ready, the enablers must come together (Brigham and Payne, 2015) to bring in a transitional leader who will fill in as a 'stop-gap' to move the organization towards a desirable outcome until such time when any of the potential successors are seen as capable to take over the leadership of the company. Supporting this view, whilst the focus of succession has always been on handing over management and control to the next generational leader, available evidences and literature equally task the Founder/CEO to consider alternative models when the leadership capability existing internally threatens the sustainability of the organization (Cabrera-Suarez et al., 2018). From this particular perspective, we felt the need to engage the action research team and the top management of the company in dealing with the situation.

The process that sought to bring the whole enablers together was seen as appropriate for the entire study. We needed to create a change, to bring about a sustainable outcome of succession in spite of the many barriers that the team identified in PGIL. Supporting this view, DeTienneet at al. (2015) suggested it is important for us to see succession not just as a transfer of ownership and management, but as a recycling process of re-engineering the entrepreneurial capacity of the organization. Thus, the initial approval required from the CEO was seen as appropriate for the company, as the CEO who doubles as the founder was seen as the major gatekeeper who could either make or mar the entire implementation process. Providing a support for these findings, Coghlan and Brannick (2010; 2014) suggested a need to gain the acceptability of the gatekeeper in engaging with the organizational system. The further engagement of the top management team of the company was equally seen as a major change in bringing about a transformational change process in PGIL.

5.3   Implementation of Action

After going through the whole process of the third cycle, it was time for the team to implement some of the findings from the study. Considering this, the cycles ended by the implementation of the action based on the evidence gathered for succession realities within PGIL to pursue sustainable succession which followed a long-term planned process (LeCouvie and Pendergast, 2014). With this effort in order, I felt the action research team has been significantly effective in bringing about a change effort, which previously was non-existent in PGIL. Approval has been given by the founder to negotiate, together with the management team, on the organizational development plan of the company. This strategy has been a key milestone in the efforts of the study. The second part of this great information is the acceptance of key propositions such as the acceptance of a transitional leadership model, motivation of the mixed management team, elevating and promoting two key personnel as Deputy CEOs for strategic decision making, the commissioning of a training centre for human capital development and improvement in information dissemination on the succession. The acceptance of the transitional leader model is justified on the fact that external CEO could introduce and build internal capability to equally help in the transition process (Cabrera-Suarez, 2004).

5.4   Development of True succession transitional conceptual framework

Apart from demonstrating the change efforts which the team made in implementing some of the findings, the team agreed that a transitional arrangement has to be made to address the unresolved issues which could have had a devastating effect if not handled well. A transitional true

succession conceptual framework was developed after a thorough reflection by the team which highlighted that, the enablers of True succession identified as the Board and the founder should pursue effective communication, set a transitional leader in place, establish a succession plan and develop the successor to arrive at sustainable succession process in the company. The argument here is that, in events where no capable successor has been put in place, the selection of a transitional leader (Zhang et al., 2014; Cruz et al., 2010; Gedajlovic et al., 2012; Kellermanns et al., 2012) should harness the process towards True succession leading to sustainability in the company and possibly solve transition periods conflicts. Full details of how the concepts and theories have been developed and used has been discussed in next chapter.

5.5 **The First-Person Voices - My learning as Researcher-practitioner**

Going through my journey with the action research team have made me to realize how critical and important I am in the emancipation process in my organization. Recognizing this statement, I captured the comments made by two of the action research team members in the Text Box 5.1 below.

Text Box 5. 1 Success comments by AR team members

> *''...when the success of the company and its history is read after the succession process, I can count myself blessed and glad to be a part of the whole process…. I believe I have contributed through the knowledge creation process to bring the company to where it is'' – ART 06*
>
> *I breathe sense of joy and do not regret to be part of the history to be written about PGIL succession. We are bidding farewell to the study but the succession in PGIL has just started – ART 01*

As practitioner action researcher, I used this opportunity to reflect on the outcome of the research in my life. I noticed my ability with the help of the research team to bring about change in PGIL, developed leadership capacity and competencies in organization's employees, improve succession process whilst adding to the literature of True Succession and creation of new knowledge. The comments above made by the team are morale boosting, bring development and self-improvement through learning from the research which I am proud of.

From all these understanding, ability to combine the various theories and concepts explored from the study to support the True succession framework that was utilized in the study provided an opportunity for me to gain new actionable knowledge on sustainable succession literature (McNifff and Whitehead, 2010). From my own perspective as an insider seeking to explore the concept of True Succession, its barriers and enablers in PGIL, my working experience with family businesses have afforded me the opportunity to better understand and appreciate some of the succession related problems (Heinrichs, 2014) that businesses go through. Prior to the start of my thesis, my knowledge was purely based on my beliefs, experience about my organization and related family businesses. However, my engagement with the whole problem has changed my perspective.

I can now adequately argue that the research work I carried out brought in me a new wave of professional and theoretical revelation and certainty. The investigative process has afforded me the opportunity of gaining new knowledge based on the findings of my research. Consequently, I have gained a new perspective and position whereby I can comfortably claim to have new knowledge based on my research experience. Because of this, as a Board and Management

member, I have been able to improve on my professional situation with new conviction and intellectual authority towards the improvement of my practice.

Throughout the research process, several learning took place which I saw as necessary for capacity building towards leading the change effort in PGIL. Highlighted below are some of those learning that took place in the process of engagement

5.5.1 Learning about family business

Prior to the start of the project, I was oblivious to the fact that family businesses operate on two major systems; family and business systems, which brings together a host of complexities in the way they interact with each other. As I got deeper and deeper into the engagement process of the research, I saw that the complexities associated with family businesses need to be harnessed and worked on if succession in the family business could lead to sustainability of the whole process.

5.5.2 What I have learnt about action research

My conception of action approach was initially blurred by my lack of understanding about the dynamics and complexities associated with the system. Whilst focusing deeper and deeper into its process and application, I realized that the method focuses on finding a pragmatic solution by causing researchers to create a change (Morgan, 2014). Moreover, coming from the background of objectivity, I felt initially that the approach would create a high level of bias in the findings due to my positional advantage and my role in bringing a broad insider perspective into the research. As I engaged more and more in my reflective practice (Schön, 1983), I realized that being the researcher has two major roles to play; my role as a researcher for the project and my role as a change agent in the organization. I realized that performing these roles within the context of the

action research, I am able to identify and bring the stories and narratives from varying angles to enrich my action research process (Saeed and Hossain, 2009). However, in reflecting deeper into the project, I realized that there were times that I had to pay a price by behaving like a detached observer to introduce objectivity into the process of engagement (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). From this perspective, I utilized the journaling process a lot to capture the various issues in a more ethical manner whilst navigating the political dimensions (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, p.137) citing Humphrey (2007) who indicated that journaling came to function as a 'friend' in the sense of 'confidante' (p.18-19). The importance of journaling is reflected in the ideology that it provides an opportunity to capture the various thought patterns and feelings in an unbiased, unemotional and un-judgemental manner.

Further, I recognized within the context of Fryberg and Townsend (2008), the purpose of the chosen methodology is to provoke 'critical change'. From my engagement with the change process, I focused on my ontology and worked within my epistemology to understanding the various collaborative activities that led to the reframing of my living theory within the context of existing frameworks (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010, p.50). I concluded that the action research methodology has provided practical, iterative and democratized the entire approach to creating a change in PGIL.

5.5.3 What I learnt about myself

As an action researcher, I have felt that my role has been working in the organization as a facilitator which requires me to inject a major level of responsibility and a high level of commitment towards the project. In the process of engagement, I realized that there has been a high level of tension between what I pursue in a theoretical and pragmatic way (Schön, 1983). I felt that I needed to navigate the tension to pursue the best fit between theory and practice. This

process took on the responsibility in questioning and challenging my own perspective and paradigm about what the DBA project is about and how the outcome could be used to solve problems in the organization (Saeed and Hossain, 2009). I learnt throughout the action research process that I am responsible as a researcher in the entire research process and as a participant. I have a responsibility towards creating change throughout the complex web of relationship that exists between the family and the business.

5.5.4   What I have learnt about my action research team

Since action research is a collaborative process of engagement, the engagement with the action research team has provided strong evidence and insights into the power, role and benefit of utilizing the team as a basis of engagement in the action research approach. By participating in this research, the aim has been to encourage participation and self-reflection amongst the action research team. I realized that to achieve the objective of my research depends not only on my role as a researcher, but the engagement of other practitioners. With the action research approach studied in detail, I realized that the process of engagement in knowledge creation does not imply assessing knowledge resources from papers, books or media alone, but gaining insight from networking, exchange and collaboration with individual, groups and teams. Their contribution as co-researchers has helped me to uncover deeper insights and redefined my objectives and problem throughout the action research cycles

5.6   The Second-Person Voices - Evaluation and Reflection on the outcome of PGIL

For PGIL, the action research team sought to identify the key outcomes of the research from the implementation process of the concept of True Succession that could lead to sustainability of the organization. I particularly considered how I have been able to answer and address my research questions within the framework of the three action research cycles. My major concern was not just

about learning the context within which I operate, but to find out how changes have taken place within this context (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). Moreover, within the findings from the data analysed, I discussed in chapter five, the various changes that need to take place to improve the organizational dynamics in PGIL, and their implementation in section 5.3.

From this perspective, there was an attempt on the part of the team members to implement some of the outcomes from the third action research cycle in PGIL. The focus was to involve the mixed-management team and the founder. Drafting a submission to the Board and the Founder/CEO for the selection of an external CEO as a transitional leader was crucial and major breakthrough from my action research. Whilst the selection of the external CEO has not been made, major reforms are on-going in the organization, which makes such a dream a reality. Moreover, the need to develop the capability of the workforce necessitated the action research team in advocating for the establishment of a training centre for the company.

From the various submissions by the team, there has been an attempt by the founder to change his perspective about the structural dynamics of PGIL, which hitherto he was unwilling to confront. Now he seems more than ready to confront the status-quo with the level of knowledge the current study has unravelled and presented to him. Critical issues such as the need for transitional leader, establishment of the board, empowerment of mixed management team through redefinition of the various roles are important key milestones in the effort of the founder to change the status-quo of the company. In addition, the building and commissioning of the training centre has become a major milestone in the life of the Company.

Prior to this project, no succession process had been communicated within the company, and organizational actors were not aware of any succession process, even though emerging issues in

the company pointed to the fact that changes were on-going (Friedman et al 2017; Cennamo et al., 2012). This was in the light of barriers of succession identified in PGIL. The research had helped in adopting and generating conceptual framework to guide in identifying enablers which can be implemented to solve the succession problem. In this case, the organization finds it necessary to reinvent itself through transitional arrangements by the appointment of the expatriate CEO (Kotter, 1996; Minichilli et al., 2014). The interim leader, together with the Board and the Founder/CEO, are working to develop a succession plan which would eventually bring on course the True Succession process to attain sustainable succession in PGIL. This assertion was addressed in the final action research cycle which is considered as a breakthrough for my study. I also saw it necessary to evaluate the outcome for the action research team as employees of PGIL. This was done by examining improvement in operation and working condition of PGIL upon completion of the research. The team unanimously agreed on the following for PGIL as the outcome of the research:

5.6.1 Unity among family and non-family members through the engagement process

Unity was needed to ensure that all members of the team were ready to work collaboratively to achieve the purpose of the research (Rowan, 2002). The research ended up promoting unity among the family and non-family members. The unplanned succession of PGIL initially considered only family members as successors and this in turn affected the commitment of hard-working non-family members. The introduction of the research and acceptance of institutional mixed-management by the Founder/CEO, Board and management, gave assurance to both family and non-family members, the opportunity to be recognized and respected in their leadership roles in the organization (Raelin, 2012; Sherperd and Haynie, 2009; Stewart and Hit, 2012). The succession debate from the start of the project became open to competency and capability. The perception of non-family members regarding succession as of no concern for them playing no role

in succession has been changed. In addition, unity in roles towards achievement of the business' long-standing objective is now clear and will help sustain the business performance for present and future generations.

5.6.2 Sense of belonging

From this, we wanted to know how the team has embraced personally the research project and owned the entire process. This sense of belonging has an impact on the commitment level of the team. The engagement process led the team to feel as though they are a major part of PGIL and its brand. Friendliness and oneness demonstrated at the junior staff level, has been promoted to the senior management level, where everyone, being a family member or not, enjoys the authority of their office when it comes to decision-making which was the invisible hindrance to management freedom – operating in the shadows of family members. This is seen in the selection of personnel for training and courses, both local and foreign to ensure organizational effectiveness and promote better performance. Liden et al (2014)

5.6.3 Enhancement of leadership capacity and creativity skills

The team members agreed that the research has improved their ability to lead and enhance change in a society or community using PGIL as an example. The action research process, which allowed all action research team members to be leaders Raelin, (2008), enhanced and addressed their respective concerns. They believed their leadership capacity has been enhanced (Yildirim-Oktem and Usdikens, 2010; Raelin, 2012; Liden et al., 2014; Dawson 2012) throughout the research and have been given the platform to showcase their initiative and creativity skills that has resulted in PGIL appreciating competency over familiarity. All these helped in achieving the organizational

vision and mission as compared to the old practice of familiarity, which bred discrimination and uncommitted employees.

5.6.4 **Change agent**

Change is inevitable (Choctaw, 2016), but it is not easy to spearhead change in transition period in a family business which is full of tensions and emotions (Cao et al., 2006). The action research team was proud to be part of the research due to the change the research has brought to PGIL. Fortunately, this confidence has been gained through the process of engagement. Spearheading the change process on a voluntary basis, in addition to their normal duties, was not an easy task. Moreover, with part of our research findings in the third action research cycle implemented in the organization, I, together with the action research team, have made a major contribution to the research.

5.6.5 Learning and new knowledge

McNiff and Whitehead, 2010, p.15-16) posit that, 'the process of showing how and why a knowledge claim may be believed is by offering an explanation. 'I can explain what I know and how I have come to know it through explanation which is my living theory' The team felt that the research has exposed them to a range of issues regarding succession in general and specifically understanding issues in PGIL for which they had no idea of. The research team has given them the chance to contribute to the creation of new knowledge and literature in the field of succession. For instance, the concept of True Succession has not been spoken of in our context, but the in-depth research of the concept has helped them to define the varying dimensions of it.

5.7 The Third-Person Voices: The implications to practice in Family Business

The first important implication of this research is derived from the findings on the willingness of the Founder/CEO to hand over power to the successor, but there is no readily available capable and trusted one to take over. The research recognized that, the circumstance faced by the Founder/CEO has made him willing to hand over leadership power to an interim leader, until such a time that the capability level of the potential successors is built.

A concluding statement by Parker (2016, p.1255) suggested that Founder/CEOs who have dynastic motive of the family business, should strategically mould their offspring into willing successors who have the interest and committed to control and continue the business. In support of this suggestion Blumentritt (2016, p.266) also cautions Founder/CEOs that 'they do not need to sit back and just hope that their offspring join the family business. They have to be proactive and demonstrate in a meaningful way'. He referred to the magnitude of the founder's efforts and investment in the motivating and attracting them into the business.

Even though the founder in this case has made frantic effort by building more investment both tangible and intangible assets to motivate and entice willing successors but that do not seem the solution. The problem here as stated in chapter 4 section 4.2.3 was that the founder's motive and intention to maintain the business in the family was not clearly communicated. This is because not much effort was made to mould the offspring and the siblings to be capable and trusted take over from him. This aspect of grooming and moulding should start early but this has not been done.

The Founder/CEO's presence and his involvement have served as an excellent mechanism and springboard that is driving the whole succession process. This is one of the major components of the large transformational change in the organization. The implication is that in the event that the Founder/CEO is not alive and unable to be part of the on-going exercise, the

focus and the outcome would have been different. In this case what needs to be researched further is: What would the position be if the Founder/CEO was not available and the Board and the family have to undertake this succession and transformational change with the emotion, tension and conflict within the family? Additionally, it was found that many of the family businesses in Ghana do not have Boards or strong governance in place. In such a situation how will True Succession be attained?

The findings demonstrate that the competencies and knowledge of the Board has significant implication in bringing in additional resources to ensure the success of the transition process in PGIL. The research was not able to fully cover True Succession as it is on-going due to the fact that one major concept a 'successor' is not immediately available. The result of this has led to a suggestion for the employment of a transitional CEO until such time that true successor is found. *The unanswered questions are that: Since the CEO position is reserved for the extended family, will the founder willing to hand over to the siblings when he still has the children available? Will he allow the extended family members to share power with the offspring? (* Kets De Vries et al., 2007).

One major finding from my research was that, PGIL was going to utilize the services of an Interim CEO, since the potential successors were currently not ready to take on the mantle. The implication of the finding is that, we may not be in the position to utilize the services of the external CEO to transform the organization by leading the action to achieve True Succession, which would have an impact on attaining sustainability in the family business. Some objections raised that need to be addressed were that the expatriate CEO may not possess the intrinsic value, idiosyncratic knowledge (Van der Merwe et. al, 2012) to manage

the family cohesion and its related dynamics and may affect the organization's social networking which is PGIL's competitive advantage.

However, from the research, the action research cycles call for further theory development in the field of family business studies in Ghana. By incorporating the external CEO as a transitional leader and the Board as a major catalyst in the entire succession process, it is one area open to further research to help curb the collapse of family businesses in Ghana during the exit of the Founder/CEO, either through death or incapacitation.

Most models on family businesses, especially in Ghana and other parts of Africa, have often focused on succession based on family hierarchy (Sarbah and Xiao, 2015), which more often than not have had significant impact on the business after the demise of the Founder/CEO. The findings from this research, however, recognized that True Succession advocates for broadening the succession scope to include a pre-succession process where interim leaders take on the realm of power until the 'True Successor' is ready to take the reins of power. This interim leader helps in sustaining the business to calm pressure while the business continues operation until the succession issues are resolved.

These findings have significant implications on the concepts needed to ensure True Succession in the short, middle and long term of family businesses; helping to advance theory development. The challenge here is not to have just succession, but True Succession that will guarantee sustainability, which is not only measured by economic performance and value creation, but on people planning leading to human capital development as a competitive advantage for the business (Friedman et al., 2017).

Further, this research has a significant contribution to the literature on family business governance to include the Board. Unfortunately, reviews on family business succession in Ghana have failed to recognize the Board as a critical component of family business Governance (Amran and Ahmad, 2009). Most of the literature has focused on the Board structure, the task and roles of the Board. In support of this Gersick and Feliu (2014) recognize that not much has been written on family business Board and its relationship with succession. There is, therefore, the need for additional knowledge on the role of the Board in family business succession. This research contributes both to succession in family business and literature on family business Boards by recognizing that ownership may affect the way the Board works and its relationship with key stakeholders in the organization, and that the Board may affect or be affected by the succession process in family businesses Nordqvist et al, 2013 Giovannini, 2010) This finding is therefore important in filling the gaps in these existing theories on family business governance in Ghana

5.7.1 Navigating the academic and practical divide during the research

Over the years, the debate between the academic and practical divide has been subjected to varying scrutiny in the field of knowledge creation. Whilst the difference between PhDs and DBAs provide a perfect opportunity to explaining the context of this divide, (Greenwood and Levin, 2006; Banerjee and Morley, 2013), I can argue that PhDs focus on theory, but DBAs focus on creating theoretical and practical knowledge (University of Liverpool, 2018). Towards this end, using the action research approach in investigating the impact of True Succession on the sustainability of PGIL contributes towards the process of knowledge creation for theory and practice. Taking from the argument of Coghlan and Brannick (2010) on the practitioner-academician divide, I believe that, actionable knowledge can be defined as knowledge that is created to satisfy the community of academicians and practitioners. Throughout the research

journey, I have been guided to demonstrate my learning and understanding through my living theories McNiff and Whitehead, 2010), by the development of theory at the end of each of the action research cycle, which was tested and applied in the process of engagement in creating change in the organization.

5.7.2 Integration of the Various Frameworks

Apart from demonstrating the change efforts which the team made in implementing some of the findings, I further made the necessary efforts to integrate all the concepts and theories developed to support the conceptual framework Lucky et al., (2011) initially selected for the study. From my first conceptual model at the end of the literature review, section 2.10, fig. 2.3, I identified the business and family sub-systems, and recognized that family business operates within the intersection Gersick et al., (1997), thereby making it difficult to delineate the family from the business Churchill and Hatten, 1987; Olson et al 2003; Stafford et al., 1999); results which have been confirmed by the final theory I developed at Section 4.4; (fig. 4.11). The argument for true succession conceptual framework highlighted in the original model (Fig 2.1), as modified in (fig 4.6), indicated that, the development of leadership predesuccessor and successor, management team, Board role, strong vision and pursuit of family interest would lead to true succession. This will be translated into sustainable outcomes in terms of strong human capital base, availability of capable successor and institutional mix management fig 4.6).

The final conceptual model developed from the study is in Section 4.4 fig 4.11. A thorough reflection by the team highlighted that, the enablers of True succession identified as the Board and the founder should pursue effective communication, set a transitional leader in place, establish a succession plan and develop the successor to arrive at sustainable succession process in the company. The essence of this particular theory is that, in events where no capable successor has

been put in place and the founder willing and ready to hand over, the selection of a transitional leader (Shen and Cannella, 2007; Zhang, 2008; Cruz et al., 2010; Gedajlovic et al., 2012; Kellermanns et al., 2012; Minichilli, et al., 2014) should harness the process towards True succession leading to sustainability in the company and possibly solve transition periods conflicts (Kets De Vries et al., 2007).

5.7.3 **The methodological journey**

In evaluating the methodology chosen for the study, the choice of any method could make or mar the entire study. In line with the various objectives set for the cycles, the adoption of the action research approach helped to answer the questions posed in each of them. The findings from the literature on the methodology recognized that the action research-based enquiry developed within three cycles for my thesis journey involved the key stakeholders of PGIL and other family owned businesses to solve the problem and effect change. The choice of the action research approach is based on the view that, action research involves the process towards improvement in practice through theory generation. This process entails rigorous data collection methods with results highly acceptable within the field of practice and theory (Lomax, 1999; McNiff, 2013).

My methodological approach which was based on a collaborative enquiry process (Creswell, 2012) highlighted the need for organizational participants to explore organizational issues from the perspective of teamwork. The major learning from this approach refers to the readiness of the action research team to engage the problem and the kind of space this affords the team to be able to deal with the complexity of the problem. My learning from the action research approach selected for this research ''opened my eyes'' to the reality of the numerous challenges facing family owned businesses and the multiple approaches to which such could be explored. I further

gained a higher insight into PGIL as the issues unfolded as we became deeply involved. Moreover, I felt individual organizational members had so many issues to air, but needed someone one to take the lead; an assumption which was confirmed by the degree of readiness they were in the engagement process.

CHAPTER SIX –CONCULSION AND IMPLICATION / CONTRIBUTIONS

Following from the evidences generated from my study, I believe that I will be measured not only by how much effort I put into the study, but what I finally accomplished within my organization and the rigour and relevance embedded throughout my study and the gap that I have been able to close between theory and practice.

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Researcher (2018)

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6.1 Introduction

The research was undertaken in the context of my organization, PGIL, with the focus on seeking to find out how true succession could lead to sustainability of family businesses in Ghana. In line with this, the study went through three cyclical processes Coghlan and Brannick (2010), with each cycle helping to define the context of the subsequent cycle as shown in figure 3.2 at Section 3.9. Going through the various stages and chapters of my study, I have realized that this is the time for me to bring the 'curtains down' on the project, because every purposeful beginning has a desirable end. This chapter therefore provides a summary of answers generated for the research questions, implication of the research, limitations and recommendation from the findings of the research.

6.2 The answers generated for the research questions

The research project which I undertook went through a three-cyclical process, with the outcome of each stage of the cycle defining the context of engagement for the next cycle. The outcomes of each of the stages are explained below.

6.2.1 Summary of the findings from first action research cycle

In this initial cycle, the research sought to find out the following:

- The meaning of family businesses in Ghana.

- The barriers towards sustainable succession.

- Factors that determine the succession environment in family businesses.

- Exploration of the concept of True Succession.

I recognized from the findings from the first action research cycle that, True Succession in family business is critical to the survival of the organization and requires the effectiveness and capability of the board, willingness and readiness of the founder, willingness and ability of the successor and

the utilization of the mixed management team. The research further found that, underlying the definition of family businesses are the existence of family interest, family succession, family ownership and control. The findings from the first action research cycle also identified the succession environment to be influenced by the existence of succession plan, emotions and conflicts, family control and authority, communication (Friedman et al, 2017; Lucky et al., 2011). Within this environment, the findings of the research recognized key barriers to True Succession which are identified as lack of succession plan, communication challenges, tension and conflict Kets De Vries et al., (2007). These forces are keys in influencing the succession process. In line with this, the study was able to develop a model (Fig 4.6) expressing a relationship between concepts of True succession and sustainability with management of succession barriers as intermediate concepts.

6.2.2   Summary of findings from second action research cycle

In the second action research cycle, I sought to find out how the exploration of true succession leads to sustainable succession in PGIL. Narrowing down on the topic, the action research team came to an agreement that the following questions drawn on the parameters of True succession were relevant.

 How will you describe the willingness of the Founder/CEO to hand over the organization?

- How would you describe the readiness of the potential family successor to take over the business?

- What are the barriers and limitations serving as challenge involved in working towards sustainable succession in PGIL?

The findings from the research in the second action research cycle recognized that the willingness of the founder to handover the company is influenced by his health condition, current restructuring

process seeking to empower the mixed management team (De Massis et al., 2013; Miller et al., 2013), giving control to some family members to take on leadership positions and assignment of Board roles in the company. On the issue of readiness of the successors, it was found that the successors were not ready; the founder did not have trust and confidence in their capability, unwillingness of the successors and ambivalent attitude of the founder (Lansberg, 1988; Parker, 2016). On the barriers, the study found that the founder is not ready to hand over power, lack of engagement of non-family members, lack of succession plan and existence of family feud. Lastly, the cycle equally explored the enablers of True succession and the findings highlighted key role of mixed management team, Board's role in leading the process, existence of resources and development of succession plan. As a result of the non-available successor to take over and the founder not ready to hand over, the exploration of true succession process in PGIL could not continue, thus the transitional arrangement was proposed for the third cycle so as manage the transitional period disruptions Stafford *et al.*, 1999; Zachary, 2011; Blumentritt, 2016; Minichilli et al., 2014; Williams 1988).

6.2.3   Summary of findings from third action research cycle

After the completion of the second cycle, the outcome from that cycle helped in defining the context of the third action research cycle. The team immediately decided to explore two major questions as identified below:

- What are the enablers of True succession that can be identified in PGIL?

- How can the identified enablers be implemented in solving succession challenges of PGIL?

In exploring the enablers of sustainable succession in PGIL, the study identified development of a succession plan, the key role of non-family members, the Board's leadership in the process and the existence of resources as key drivers. In seeking to implement the enablers, the study recognized

that the above-mentioned enablers have a key role in the development of family business vision, mitigating risk of losing efficient workforce, communication and succession activity planning as some of the main implementing activities that could assist in the succession process of the company Lam, 2009; Bastiat, 2014; Fager and Mckinney, 2007).

After such identification, the implementation of the action saw that the company currently has no ready successor and therefore the enablers must come together to bring in a transitional leader who will fill in as a 'stop-gap' to move the organization towards a desirable outcome. The proposition further recognized that the process should begin in building a succession plan and the transitional leader should focus on developing the next generational leader. A transitional model was developed (fig 4.11) to guide the transition period arrangements that will bring back the true succession conceptual framework to attain sustainable succession. By that time a successor has been groomed, trusted and committed to take over the running of the business with all the stakeholders involved in the process. Cennamo et al., (2012; Parker, 2016; Moura-Leite et al., 2011)

6.3 Summary Implications for the body of knowledge

On a much broader and general scale, this research can contribute immensely to the body of knowledge since literature on True Succession has been scant. With the outcomes of the research, we have been able to close certain gaps in the literature which are key to ensuring a successful succession and to reduce the collapse of many family businesses. Specifically, whilst the definition of family business is a multi-dimensional concepts as identified in the findings generated from the first action research cycle in chapter four, the research has been able to establish that, underneath this concepts, is the essence of familiness, extended family system,

ownership and control and continuity (Brigham and Payne, 2015) which should be central to the business. This definition should therefore help to fill the literature gap and provide a thorough frame within which to approach organizational challenges.

6.4 Limitations and Further Areas of Research

The limited time period for the submission of my action research thesis made it difficult for me to cover every aspect of my topic; thereby opening avenues for further studies. Whilst recommendation was made for the appointment of an external Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as a transitional leader, the limited time made it difficult to explore the process through which the transitional leader could sustain the company. Secondly, whilst a qualitative study was used as a method for data collection with relatively smaller sample size, it will be worthwhile to undertake a quantitative study on succession with a relatively bigger sample. The essence is to ensure that the researcher is able to utilize quantitative justification with a larger sample to seek for convergence between the qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Lastly, although much of this study was about the Founder/CEO's willingness to let go of the company and the un-readiness of the successor, the study could not explore the impact of what could happen after a transition on the sustainability of the company.

6.5   Recommendations for future research

The Board membership needs to be addressed to strengthen their independence, control and authority in their strategic decision-making in the organization (Minichilli et al., 2010). For now, it seems that their independence is compromised for the reason that the Founder/CEO, as the head of the management team, is the sole shareholder and also a member of the Board. This is seen to many stakeholders of the organization as the Board working in the interest of the shareholder to the detriment of the organization. The independence of the Board would give the assurance and

respect for the proposed external CEO. The Board's independence is an asset to the organization as they would be able to manage the family emotions, the business and governance challenges when the transitional leader takes over the business.

The position of the external chairman of the Board should also to be reviewed alongside the recruitment of the external CEO (Sarbah and Xiao, 2014). This is to make sure that the interest of the family is assured and to build a dynamic and strong management team for the business.

The role of the current Founder/CEO should also be reviewed after the appointment of the external CEO. What role is he going to play alongside the external CEO? This should be discussed so that roles and lines of communication are made clear for a smooth working relationship.

The challenges PGIL and sister companies face should be assessed – both for external market forces and internal dynamics. Scanning the environment will help the Board to know the type of the leader to be selected. For example, the organization is embarking on structural changes to be competitive in their area of operations. Are we looking for a transformation leader who will be able to control family emotions and dynamics, and prepare the organization to face the reality of the market and to build a prosperous future?

As it is now known that the next CEO will be a family member, even though it has its positive and negative aspects, the Board and the Founder/CEO should be able to identified potential family successors so that their grooming and mentoring can start from both in the organization and outside to prepare them for a future appointment in the CEO position.

Lastly, since the research introduced institutions mixed management as a concept, it should help the organization in the development of human capital by grooming for the CEO/leadership positions. This should include non-family members who have shown long term commitment, loyalty and trust to be part of this, so that in the absence of a family member they would be appointed. However, this has agency and stewardship implications for either merits or demerits. In the long run the effect should be positive if it is well handled and managed.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1.1 – Major Family Businesses in Ghana

Company	Website
Pambros Salt Limited	*www.pambrossaltponds.com*
Melcom Group of Companies	www.melcomgroup.com
Kantanka Group of Companies	www.kantanka.com
PH Motors	www.phcmotors.com
Despite Group of Companies	www.despitegroup.com
Groupe Ndoum	www.groupenduom.com
Mechanical Lloyd-Ghana	www.mechlloyd.com
Unibank Ltd	www.unibankghana.com
Global Access Bank	www.globalaccessbank.com

- **Family business:** A commercial organization in which decision-making is influenced by multiple generations of a family; related by blood or marriage; who is closely identified with the organization through leadership or ownership.

- **Family member: I**mmediate family (spouses, parents. brothers, sisters, sons and/or daughters) and extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces and/or siblings-in-law).

- **Founder/CEO:**A person who started and owns the family business and the CEO.

- **Mixed-management team:** A management team which comprises of both family members and non-family members.

- **Predecessor:** A person who held a job or office before the current holder.

- **Social Capital:** Network of social relations which adds value to the network actors by accessing the resources embedded in the networks.

- **Succession:** A process by which leadership and responsibilities are transferred from one person to another in family business, normally the CEO position.

- **Successor:** A family member who is to take over the business in the absence of the Founder/CEO or the current leader of the organization.

Appendix 1.3 – Approval Letter from PGIL

SAMUEL OFORI-DANSO

C/O PALMERS GREEN INT. LTD

BOX 3689

ACCRA- GHANA

20TH MARCH, 2014

THE CHAIRMAN

BOARD
OF DIRECTORS

PALMERS GREEN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

ACCRA- GHANA

Dear Sir

CONSENT TO UNDERTAKE ACTION RESEARCH WITHIN PALMERS GREEN INTERNATIONAL LIMITED (PGIL)

I have enrolled in the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) programme at the University of Liverpool for the past two years.

This programme has been carefully designed for senior professionals looking to advance their career by enhancing their leadership capabilities and to improving their knowledge and skills through research. The programme utilizes critical action learning research approach by combining work-based problems with academic work.

As part of the final stage of the programme, a doctoral thesis is produced based on a critical analysis of the organization to generate actionable knowledge to solve the challenges.

I would like to seek your consent and approval for the use of the Company as my research site. This is to enable the Ethics Committee of the programme give me clearance to undertake the study. The clearance involves Palmers Green International Limited (PGIL) granting me access to all relevant data, access to the research participants, use of facilities for meeting and staff time for the purposes of the research.

This research is an extension of the Company's organizational challenges and programme, especially in the area of succession. This is an area which will help the development of the organization in theory and practice.

Action research methods involve iterative and cyclical diagnosis, constructing, planning, action and implementing the outcomes. It will also serve as a means of transferring and sharing knowledge in general.

I want to render my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, Management and the entire staff for their support and encouragement to undertake this important study.

I would kindly seek your approval to undertake the study.

I thank you in advance for your support and cooperation

Yours Sincerely

Samuel Ofori-Danso

(Deputy CEO - Finance)

CC: Chief Executive Officer

This request is approved. The Company wish you well in this important study and will facilitate your access to data and records accordingly. All the bes...

Sincer...
Alw...
CHAIRMAN
DR KWAKU OSAFO

Appendix 1.4 – Invitation of Participants

The chief operating officers
Palmers Green International ltd
Accra-Ghana

15th August, 2016

The Humana Resource Manager
(Company Name)
Accra-Ghana

Invitation to participate in research

Dear Sir,

I am a student of University of Liverpool (UK), pursuing a Doctorate of Business Administration and carrying out a research on **the Impact of True Succession on the Survival and Sustainability of Family Businesses in Ghana.** It is a requirement for the award of a Doctorate in Business Administration Degree from the University of Liverpool.

I am writing to ask for your permission and help in contacting your employees, especially managers and above to assist in answering the questionnaire of the research. The questionnaire is to help me for academic purposes only. All information shall be treated in strict confidence.

Your help is highly needed and appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

SAMUEL OFORI-DANSO

DBA Program
University of Liverpool
Email: samuel.ofori-danso@online.liverpool.ac.uk

Appendix 1.5 – Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: The Impact of True Succession on the Survival and Sustainability of Family Businesses in Ghana: A Case Study of Palmers Green International Limited

Researcher Samuel Ofori-Danso

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 14th August, 2014 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.

4. I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded and I am aware of and consent to your use of these recordings for transcribing the research material and data validation.

5. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications that result from the research.

6. I give permission for the research team, to have access to my anonymized responses.

7. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research and understand that any such use of identifiable data would be reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee.

8. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____

Participant Name   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of Person taking consent   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Date   Signature

Principal Investigator: **Researcher:**

Name   Samuel Ofori-Danso

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1. <u>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET</u>

Title of study:

The Impact of True Succession on the Survival and Sustainability of Family Businesses in Ghana:

A Case Study of Palmers Green International Company Limited.

2. <u>VERSION NUMBER AND DATE</u>

Version number 1.0 dated 21st April, 2014

3. <u>INITIATION PARAGRAPH</u>

I hereby invite you to kindly and voluntarily contribute to my research study about survival and
sustainability of family Business in Ghana. Before your approval to participate it will be
appropriate to comprehend and fully understand the purpose and objective of the study. You are
kindly requested to read carefully the following information and do not hesitate to enquire further
information and details.

I wish to restate that; participation is absolutely voluntarily and you have to contribute only should
you want to take part in such project.

4. <u>WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?</u>

The purpose of the study is to seek how a change in the critical success factors of leadership;
process and culture constituting true succession variables can impact and influence the survival
and sustainability of family businesses in Ghana. The intension is to intervene and resolve the
problem within Palmers Green International Limited and also to contribute to the study on family
business succession and sustainability.

5. <u>WHY HAVE I BEEN CHOSEN TO TAKE PART?</u>

I have chosen you because of your direct and indirect exposure /experience to family business notably, with the small and medium businesses in Ghana, being current or former Founder/CEO owner, manager and family member, consultant and Board member of a family owned organization.

6. <u>DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?</u>

The contribution to this research is totally voluntary. You have the full right to decline to fulfil the research at any point in time during the investigation. Also, you may decline to respond to any question with which you are uncomfortable.

You can raise any query or ask any question to the researcher at any point in time. Your responses and contact details including: Name, work place, email and phone numbers will not be conveyed to any part at any point in time and will never be shown in any report. Instead, a simple coding mechanism will be used for identification purposes. That data will be strictly available to the involved academic staff only.

7. <u>WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU AGREE TO TAKE PART?</u>

If you kindly approve to participate, you will be asked to:

 a. Attend an interview with the researcher.

 b. Answer a set of questions that are relevant to the study.

 c. Convey your thoughts of any related items that may help the study.

The requested time of the interview will be about 45 minutes.

8. <u>EXPENSES AND / OR PAYMENTS</u>

This is a voluntary research and you are not required to pay anything and also not eligible to be paid for participating in the study.

9. ARE THERE ANY RISKS IN TAKING PART?

Considering the absolute anonymity and confidentiality, we expect the risk to be minimum and reasonable, which is significantly less than the benefit to be gained. The risk would not be greater than what is experienced in normal day-to-day activities.

10. ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS IN TAKING PART?

You will acquire more knowledge about this comparative empirical investigation. You will contribute to knowledge by reflecting your views and applying your experiences to a practical situation that requires more understanding and solutions. You will contribute greatly to the information and theories related to family businesses, their succession and sustainability. In future it may be used in general to solve problems facing family businesses.

11. WHAT IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY OR IF THERE IS A PROBLEM?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know contacting Samuel Ofori-Danso on 00233 244328338 or Samuel.ofori-danso@online.liverpool.ac.uk and we will help you. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Governance Officer at ethics@liv.ac.uk.

When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study, (So that it can be identified), the researcher (s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

12. WILL YOUR PARTICIPATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your responses will be reserved in a strictly confidential manner. Your name will not be connected with the research materials, and you will not be acknowledged or detectable in any publication that fall outside from the study.

13. <u>WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?</u>

All the collected (an analysed) data delivered by you will be warehoused on a PC/second electronic storage maintained by the researcher and the academic team at University of Liverpool. The result to be generated from the study will be accessible through the library of the university and might be presented in seminars, conferences and / or peer reviewed academic journals if required.

14. <u>WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU WANT TO STOP TAKING PART?</u>

You are free to withdraw at any point in time without giving any reason and without your rights being affected. Furthermore, if you wish not to respond to any questions, you are also free to decline. Under the Data Protection Act, you can at any time ask for access to the information you provided and you can also request the demolition of that information if you wish.

15. <u>WHO CAN YOU CONTACT IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS?</u>

Please feel free to contact:

Samuel Ofori–Danso

Samuel.ofori-danso@online.liverpool.ac.uk

00233 244328338

Appendix 1.7 – Questionnaire for Practitioners (Action Research Cycle 1)

Part A: Personal Details

How old are you?

Which organization do you work for?

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How long have you been working in the company?

What is the position you currently occupy?

What is your highest level of education?

Part B: Family Business

How will you define family business within the context of Ghanaian businesses?

What are the core elements of the character of family business from the definition?

How do these core elements influence the behaviour of family business?

Part C: Concept of True Succession

How would you define True Succession within the context of family business in Ghana?

-

What would you consider is the core elements of true succession from the definition of family

business?

How would these core elements of True succession influence the succession process in family business?

Part D: Succession environment of family businesses in Ghana

How will you describe the nature of the succession environment in Ghana?

How do the core succession environmental elements interplay in family business in Ghana?

Part E: Barriers to Sustainable succession

What are the key barriers to sustainable succession in Ghana?

How do these barriers influence the succession process in family businesses?

Appendix 1.8 – Questionnaire for PGIL Employees (Action Research Cycle 2)

Part A: Personal Details

How old are you?

Which organization do you work for?

…How long have you been working in the company?

What is the position you currently occupy?

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……………………………………………………………………………………………………

What is your highest level of education?

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Part B: Succession process in PGIL

How would you describe succession to be an on-going process in PGIL?

How will you describe the willingness of the Founder/CEO to hand over the organization?

How would you describe the readiness of the potential family successor to take over the business?

What are the barriers and limitations serving as a challenge involved in working towards sustainable succession in PGIL?

What strategies have been put in place to resolve some of the barriers affecting the succession process in PGIL?

How could the non-family management team influence the entire succession process of the company?

Questionnaire for PGIL Employees (Action Research Cycle 3)

Part A: Personal Details

How old are you?

Which organization do you work for?

………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

How long have you been working in the company?

What is the position you currently occupy?

What is your highest level of education?

Part B: Enablers of True Succession

What are the enablers of True succession that can be identified in PGIL?

Which enablers do you foresee the company pursuing to create the change?

Part C: Implementing the Enablers

How can the identified enablers be implemented in solving succession challenges of PGIL?

How would you describe the influence of the enablers implemented on the sustainability of PGIL?

Appendix 1.9 – Transcripts

Note: the table below capture sample from the detail transcript of the data collected study. The detail transcripts were not included because of the word count limitation

Transcripts from questionnaire	Pattern	Theme
What is the perspective of you concerning family business?		
Transcripts from questionnaire	**Pattern/Categories**	**Theme**
Reserved positions for the family members	Reserved position for family	**Position Reserved for family members**
…family business recruitment process considers the family first especially when recruiting for key positions. …the business is owned and controlled by the family which therefore gives it the opportunity to pursue the family interest...	Family members in key positions	
	Family recruitment favouring family members	
	owned and controlled by family	
The family values of these group or individuals influence the operational value of the business.	Controlled and influenced by family	**OWNERSHIP & CONTROL**
	Family Values influencing operations	
	Family cohesion	
…the critical elements of family business, identifies aspect of ownership and control to be the rock. They are modelled after the founder's values and culture thereby creating an identity	Ownership and control	
	Modelled after founders' culture and value	
Ok…in my company, no one dares to change uniting pattern influenced by the culture and family values which defines it.	Culture and family values	**FAMILY VALUES**
I see the essence of family business is to provide for the livelihood of the current and future generation.	Provision of livelihood	FAMILY INTEREST
Family business is defined as a business where there is the intention to hand over the company to the next generation family member	Intention to hand over to family member	
… I can take time off my work and take care of the younger children in the home; a privy which other business cannot afford to give.	Family livelihood	
	Family welfare	

I take care of everything in the family and control everything in the business.	Family welfare	
	Continuity of the business	
A family business article I read had this slogan "We very consciously develop family talent with two to six interns every year'.	Maintain the business in family	
How would you describe barriers to successful succession in Ghana?		
… situations where the family members instead of pursuing the continuity of the business rather pursue asset sharing.	Asset sharing over business continuity - family members	Conflict & Tension
Some of us don't plan to get hit by the bus…or some of us don't plan to leave, but the way the family is fighting and creating chaos leaves much to be desired…I will leave.	family fighting and creating of chaos affect turnover during transition	
…failure to draw up the road map for succession or design the succession plans…	Lack of succession plan	Lack of Succession Plan
Working from within a family business, succession plan is absent	Lack of succession plan	
Lack of communication of the entire succession process to the whole organization serves as a major barrier to the succession process	Lack of communication	Communication
In every organization, the left hand needs to know what the right hand seems to be doing. Unfortunately, there has been significant misunderstanding as to what requirements is expected by the founder, the potential successors and other stakeholders in the company.	Lack of communication	
Tendency of the founder to maintain control over the new leader	founder interference in operation process	Un-readiness of founder
When potential successors have not been adequately trained finding the next successor tends to affect the success of the entire succession process.	untrained successor	

I see a two-way environment where non-family members stick to the management room, and the family members stick to the family room. The family however has all the powers; and this will not be a fair fight…….	Family members have all the powers and authority	FAMILY CONTROL
Working in most family owned businesses can be highly frustrating as a result of tensions, conflicts and misunderstanding in such business environment.	conflict and tension in family business	CONFLICT AND TENSION
I remember year's back when we had a succession process in the company, the lack of succession plan created so many tensions and emotions which made it difficult for the company to survive and continue.	lack of succession plan creates tension and emotion	SUCCESSION PLAN
Communication could be seen as a key player in preventing many conflicts in succession and as effective communication addresses many problems.	effective communication addresses succession problem	COMMUNICATION
The changes are diverse and pervasive, public policies and regulations, growth and aging of people, and economic opportunities.	succession environment affected by external policies	EXTERNAL FACTORS
How would you define the concept of True Succession regarding family business in the world and Africa?		
I believe that, for us to get true succession, the founder of the company has a huge role in managing leadership processes, capable in selecting the next generation leaders who must demonstrate willingness, desire and capability to hold the fort.	founder managing leadership by selecting next CEO	founder's capability & willingness
	Founder willing to handover to selected successor	
	environmental study by the founder to selected competent successor	

Transcripts	PATTERN	Theme
…for sustainable succession to take place, the need to integrate the non-family executives as key members of the whole process is important.	non-family members involvement	mixed management team
To have a true succession competence, trust and capability should be used for the selection of the successor.	capable non-family members must be considered for succession	
The true succession process requires effective governance structure, managed and executed by capable Board to handle the succession process to support the founder to select capable and trusted potential successors.	Effective governance structure	Board Capability and Involvement
The founder of the company must be aware of the capability level of the potential successors,	capability of the successor must be examining	Successor capability and willingness
After placing the brother in an interim position as CEO, sales/contracts started dwindling significantly, and employee morale had gone down. I felt something new needed to be done.	successor must be capable and trusted to handle the operation of the business	

Transcripts from questionnaire	PATTERN	Theme
The founder has now appointed four chief operating officers to oversee the running of the company made up of two family members and two non-family members.	Top Management mixed management	Willingness
Restructuring in the company, establishing of the board and mix management team are indication of handing over in future.	*On-going restructuring of the company Board, *founder effort - restructuring of the company *establishing of board and mix management team	Making Effort

Transcripts from questionnaire	PATTERN	Theme
A number of changes have been made at the top level of the company signifying some readiness to hand over the company.	*founder effort-preparing the company to accept change	
Task has now been assigned to family and non-family members to oversee the transition process of the company.	*delegation of duties *involvement of non-family members	Willing but not ready
The health condition of the founder is forcing him to handover the company even though prior measures such as grooming of successor and preparing the business for new leader have not been taken.	Health condition as a factor but no successor yet	
Our business operation still depends on the founder and his links. The company has not been taken off his shoulder, therefore I don't see his willingness to let go the company.	* survival after Founders retirement questionable	Unwilling
His health condition has been the fundamental for succession process in this company.	health condition as determinant factor for change	Willingness
The health of the founder has caused him to make a number of changes.	Health condition determining willingness	
Hmm… the shift in top management position of the company shows how willing the founder is to hand over the company but as to what time is not known	*restructuring of management in order to handover	Willing but not ready
Transcript	Pattern	Themes
How would you describe the readiness of the potential family successor to take over the business?		
The acting CEO has not been given a free hand to work and I think it has to deal with lack of trust on the part of the founder	*not given free hand to work	Trust and Confidence
The company has enough competent family and non-family members but the question has to be of trust from the founder.	*lack of trust and confidence in the successors from founder	

Transcripts from questionnaire	PATTERN	Theme
I think though the founder I s willing to hand over, capability of the potential successors have been called into question.	* lack of capabilities by potential successors	Successor capability
I see a lack of expertise on the part of the preferred successors in the company as a major obstacle to the success and sustainability of the company.	*the preferred successor lack of expertise	
The prefer successors have their interest in other areas of life and care little about the business.	Different interest by the potential successors	Unwilling Successor
The son of the CEO- the preferred successor- needs time to grow and learn a lot about the company.	Grooming of the son	
• What are the barriers and limitations serving as a challenge involved in working towards sustainable succession in PGIL?	Pattern	
The founder's directives and interference hamper the succession process	Founders control	Founders interference
The founder's tendency of interfering in the whole organisational change process could create a major challenge for the brothers to perform.	Founders control	
Lack of communication in the entire succession process in PGIL has left doubts in peoples mind.	Communication challenges	Communication
There is no explicit communication on the succession.	Communication challenges	
Since there is no succession plan in place, it is difficult to know who succeeds the founder	lack of succession plan	Succession Plan
Absence of succession plan has raised much tension and unnecessary competition among family members	*lack of succession plan	
No successor has been identified at the moment and it is creating significant challenges.	lack of identified successor	Successor

Transcripts from questionnaire	PATTERN	Theme
Siblings as against the young and inexperienced children?	Selection issues and tensions	Family Feud
When a member of the family feels unappreciated, they may wage war against the success of the succession journey.	family feud or conflict	
Non-family members don't seem to feel appreciated, as their role in the succession process has been marginalised	Nonfamily members rare not recognised	Non-family Members

Transcripts from questionnaire	PARTHERN	Theme
What are the enablers of succession that can be identified in PGIL?		
The CEO as a founder must spearhead the drafting of succession plan for smooth transition in the company	drafting of succession plan	Succession Plan
A willing founder must build strong asset base - tangible and intangible to entice potential successor to join the business.	building of assets -founder	Existence of Resource
The business environment must be preparing to accept change by the Board and founder through allocation of resources to finance succession issues.	Allocation of resources for succession process	
It is difficult seen who is ready and available to take over the business. I think non-family members must be involve in the succession process	Involvement of non-family members.	Key Role by Non-family members
The board needs to employ a transformational leader.	Transformational leader	Board leading the succession process
The succession process must be champion by the board.	Role of the board	

Transcripts from questionnaire	PARTHERN	Theme
Questionnaire: Transcripts from questionnaire		
How can the identified enablers be implemented in solving succession challenges in pail?		
The vision of the business must be documented to assist the planning of the succession process.	the vision of the business must be documented	Develop family Business vision for succession
There must be vision for the succession process.	Existence of succession vision	
There must be a frequent communication of the succession process among key stakeholders.	*frequent communication succession process is needed	Intensifying the communication process
The succession process must be opened and to welcome all opinions. Also the involvement of non-family members and others stakeholders of the company.	involve all stakeholders to keep them	Mitigate risk of losing efficient workforce
The board must influence the founder to embark on early succession plan and manage the family to accept change for transitional progress	The board must influence the founder to plan the succession process	Succession activity planning