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## ANALYZING SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT PRACTISE IN THE CONTEXT OF ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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**Abstract:** *Qualitative data analysis methods are becoming more and more useful in management sciences. In this paper, an attempt is made to qualitatively ascertain the extent to which effective management succession influences organizational survival. An open-ended interview schedule with 15 questions was administered on 15 randomly selected individuals belonging to top, mid and low level management cadre across 5 money deposit banks in Nigeria. Qualitative content analysis was used to carry out coding of the responses. Cohen Kappa ( $\kappa$ ) inter-coder reliability test of trustworthiness gave a coding consistency value of 0.86, showing a near-perfect agreement. The final themes generated include; succession ingredients; succession results, and succession checks. It was found that for succession to truly drive an organization towards survival, certain key inputs, otherwise known as ingredients must be in place. Furthermore, the many short-comings in the process of succession must be checked and corrected. If rightly corrected, succession checks could help gain positive results, however, if not carefully monitored, results could be negative.*

**Keywords:** *Succession management, Inter-coder reliability, Organizational survival, Succession ingredients, Succession checks, Succession results*

## 1. Introduction

Survival instinct is a universal and natural desire in all living things including man. In the same way, the desire to survive is common to all organizations, whether big or small, public or private; the aspiration is the same- *how do we survive?* Organizational survival is concerned with the ability of an enterprise to continue in business despite challenging environmental factors (Barnabas, Nwuche & Anyanwu, 2016). In many organizations, survival is a motive that has the capacity to boost satisfaction and aid the implementation of other organizational goals.

Among the many factors that contribute to the survival of an organization, succession management practices play a major role. No doubt, effective leadership replacement provides continuity in leadership which is essential for companies to carry on business as Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and other senior management positions become vacant due to retirement (Rothwell, 2001; Wellins & Byham, 2001). However, for a sustainable process which transcends different generations, succession management practices should be entrenched into the organizational system.

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Succession management is widely acknowledged in assisting organizations with internal re-sourcing, reduced attrition of workforce caused by job-hopping, high-fliers, and to prepare qualified candidates for appointment into senior management positions (Huang, 1999). It portrays a wider perspective of the succession process by embracing all of succession planning, implementation, evaluation and succession control in the organization (Seniwoliba, 2015). Hill (2005) asserted that succession management is crucial in enhancing an organization's ability to minimize potential loss of competitive advantage and ensuring business continuity. Nevertheless, as desirable as succession management is, failure to invest money, energy and time in people and the unwilling from senior management to vacate their positions may contribute to the failure of the process (Seymour, 2008; Seniwoliba, 2015).

Lack of a succession management culture generally reduces the scope for leadership development and planning. Hence, problems with business continuity, mergers and acquisition, downsizing, redundancy and layoff of staff are common in many organizations across developing countries (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). The same is true for the Nigerian banking sector that has so far undergone a number of reforms in the past. A major reform is the guideline of corporate governance principles in banking sector of which succession issue was central. Thus, there is a need to change the cultural mindset and organizational/individual attitude to power, authority and delegation, if succession management will thrive in organizations across developing countries, specifically, within the Nigerian banking sector.

### **1.1. Concept of succession management**

Succession management does not only ensure continuous existence of a business at the exit of the owner, it also guarantees the continuous competitiveness of the organization within its industry (Debapriya,

2009). Similarly, Grzegorek (2009) asserted that succession management is not all about the transfer of ownership and control of the business organization, but entails changes in the existing business model to aid competing performance. It ensures that talented individuals within the organization are identified, developed and retained for a long term (Schoonover, 2011). The management of the hand over process of business control with minimal or no disruption to the business operation and values is what succession management is all about (Ward, 2000). It is also referred to as a process that focuses on the decision on how and when the control, management and ownership of a business will be transferred to subsequent owners (Sikomwe et al., 2012). Succession management and succession planning have been used interchangeably in literature, but there seem to be specific differences between both terms. Just as planning is a function of management, succession planning is a subset of succession management. While succession planning focuses on any effort intended to ensure sustained effectiveness of the organization by making provision for the development and replacement of key personnel over time, succession management goes further than this, as it is broader in scope and more encompassing. Succession management is the strategic, systematic and intentional processes entrenched by an organization to encourage and enhance development or advancement of individual employees as well as ensuring continuity in strategic positions of the organization (Nova Scotia Public Service Commission, 2005).

### **1.2. Types of succession**

Gothard and Austin (2010) provide the various types of succession that exist in organizations with emphasis on their merit and demerit. Relay succession entails the ascertaining of a member of senior management in the institution as heir apparent well in advance of the actual transition, giving room for a time overlap for the outgoing

executive to “groom” the successor through transfer of knowledge and power (Vancil, 1987). This type of succession is also referred to as “*Crown Prince*” or “*Crown Heir*” succession. It is mostly used in family-owned businesses. Non-relay inside succession happens when the successor rises from the rank and file through promotion from inside the organization. It is a highly competitive process that involves several key internal candidates; hence it is referred to as “Horse Race” succession (Friedman & Olk, 1995). Outside succession occurs when the successor was hired from outside the organization (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2006). It is usually the last hope when the organization lacks the culture or process to grow its own heirs apparent, making outside alternative the last option in time of succession. A Coup d’état Succession takes place when stakeholders that has vested interest in the organization other than the outgoing executive or the board organize to make swift succession decisions (Friedman & Olk, 1995). This type of succession is common in the military but also seen in certain organization. Boomerang succession entails the return of former leaders from retirement into the organization (Dalton D. R. & Dalton C. M., 2007). It is usually a temporal arrangement that lasts a couple of years until a real succession candidate is in place. Democratic succession is a type of succession where majority vote determines who emerges as the successor. Organizations or institutions whose leadership position is determined by election make use of democratic succession for their various elective positions. Theocratic succession is mostly used by faith-based institutions where the successor is presumed to have emerged based on the direct dictate of God or guidance received from his word. The predecessor hears from God as to who should succeed him, which he later announces to others. Irrespective of the age or experience of the successor that emerges, everyone in the institution that believes in this type of succession and submits to the leadership.

### **1.3. Succession planning, implementation, evaluation and control**

Management is a process whose primary function covers planning all through to control function. In the same way, succession management in many organizations is considered along the management function perspectives which gives rise to succession planning, implementation, evaluation and control. Tropiano (2004) views succession planning as a strategic, systematic and deliberate effort to develop competencies in potential leaders through proposed learning experiences such as targeted rotations and educational training aimed at filling high-level positions without favoritism. Succession planning is also a process by which one or more successors are identified for key positions and career moves as well as development activities, planned so that successors are able to assume specified positions (Kolhatkar & Banerjee, 2015). Implementation is all about execution of plans, thus succession implementation focuses on execution of organization’s succession plan. Poor succession implementation will result in breeding of incompetent employees without skills and acumen needed to run a successful organization. Succession evaluation in its own is concerned with the assessment of the succession management programmes of an organization in relation to its importance and worth based on its characteristics (Twersky & Lindblom, 2012). Succession evaluation matches the succession plans and implementation with the overall goals of succession management within the organization and helps to alert the organization of possible threat, before the situation goes out of control. Thus succession evaluation works closely with succession control in the organization Succession monitors possible deviation from succession plans with the view of correcting same when observed. Many organizations use their structure as a major control mechanism when there is a need for succession control (Sljivic et al., 2015).

#### 1.4. Concept of organizational survival

Going by the law of synergy, the effort of two people produces better results than the sum of their individual effort combined. This brings us to the concept of an organization, that entails the coordination of people collectively for achievement of specific goals. Robbins and DeCenzo (2005) viewed organization as “a logical arrangement of persons brought together to achieve some precise goals”. Hitt (1988) cited in Osibanjo et al. (2011), posited that an organization is the structure of responsibilities, authority and obligations through which the assets are conveyed and coordinated to attain certain objectives.

In contrast, organizational survival is concerned with the ability of an enterprise to continue in business in spite of several challenging situations (Barnabas, Nwuche, & Anyanwu, 2016). It refers to efforts made to ensure sales, market share and income are not affected by conditions that are likely to interrupt business continuity (Fleming, 2012). Reitz (2012) argued that many factors determine the survival of a business. Nevertheless, system theorist have a different view to this as they believe that if a firm functions as an open entity, it has a greater survival chance compared to a business that runs a closed system. In competitive business situations, survival depends on continuity and the capacity of the entity to meet stakeholders’ expectations. Thus, Díez-Martín, Prado-Roman, and Blanco-González (2013) opined that organizational survival is a function of the support the firm receives from its diverse aspects. Nowadays, the objectives of survival are implied objectives in many enterprises. Therefore, paying attention to this helps in the achievement of all other set goals. Hence, a firm that does not prioritize survival may not stand the test of time (Osibanjo et al., 2011). Survival is often an unwritten law in many corporations. However, if it is well attended to, it ultimately leads to satisfaction and the implementation of other set goals. Different scholars have advocated various measures for

organizational survival; Denison (1990) submitted that three measures: adaptability, maintaining high performance standards, and achieving functional performance goals can be used as indicators for organizational survival. Teece (2010) and Zahra, et al., (2006) opined that adaptability and dynamic capability are most important survival instincts. Hamid & Marcantoni (2015) submitted that since firms operate in dynamic and volatile environment, business agility is important for survival. Thus, for a business to live long i.e., to survive, there is the need for consistency in the development of agile practices that will make it remain relevant. For the purpose of this study, four survival indicators are put into consideration; dynamic capability, business agility, financial viability and business continuity.

#### 1.5. Succession management and organizational survival

Succession management if well-planned will ultimately lead to survival and even further growth of an organization. In a survey carried out by Onwuka, Ekwulugo, Dibua, & Ezeanyim, (2017), transport companies in Onitsha, Nigeria were seen to experience first, survival and later improved growth when proper succession management steps are taken. This is because individuals are trained and prepared for key positions, such that when retirement occurs as a result of incapacitation or sudden death of someone holding a key role, business continuity is guaranteed without any form of agitation. According to Rothwell (2005), succession management not only helps to ensure that there are candidates willing and able to step into the role of a departing employee, but also support strategies for knowledge transfer before a departure occurs. Hence, proper employee-pool management will help develop engaged employees who now have the needed abilities to effectively manage a vacant position. In many emerging economies, it is sad to know that organizations seldom have good succession

management plans, some small and medium scale enterprises tend to do nothing about succession, which makes the situation even worse (Obadan & Ohioyenoye, 2013). The reasons for this attitude ranges from fear of losing control to former junior staff or subordinate as well as the idea that not being in the fold. These attitude could ruin all their previous years of hard work (Onwuka, Ekwulugo, Dibua, & Ezeanyim, 2017). Additionally, Ward (2000) explained that employees generally tend to draw back and would hardly want to have discussions about topics such as; death and as well as aging amongst other factors responsible for retirement. As a result, succession management becomes a rather cumbersome process. It is note-worthy to state that although the process of talent management for smooth transition may be complicated, business continuity and ultimately organizational survival may not be realized without achieving the needed level of success in succession management. Kevin and Tarry (2002) emphasized that most firms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century business market are often carried away with continuous hiring even for key position for which it would be safer and cost effective to train existing employees. The pair explained that succession management through training and mentoring remains the most effective tool for organization survival and growth, implying that recruitment process cannot stand in lure of the training that should be given to existing employees who already understand the working principles of the organization and could help it reach its goals in a timely manner.

It is difficult to isolate succession management from organization survival. Infact, Debapriya, (2009) posited that succession management is the key to business continuity. Grzegorek, (2009) also added that successful management succession in an organization ensures competing performance. Hence, Ward (2000) gave the definition of succession management as the procedure of planning to hand over business control to someone else in a smooth way that will

enhance the growth of the business and protect organizational values. Proper succession management will help save the cost of hiring a new face to fill a vacant position. It will also assist continuous business progress as the succession occurs almost immediately after the exit of the employee whose position is to be filled.

## 2. Qualitative content analysis

According to Rosengren (1981), qualitative content analysis has been in use as early as the 18th century in the Scandinavians. Like many other qualitative research terms, qualitative content analysis has a number of definitions, some ambiguous, others conservative. One of the earliest definitions of the term was given by Berelson (1952). He defined qualitative content analysis as “a research technique for the systematic, objective, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). The concept has been explained as a research tool that concentrates on the true content and hidden features of media (Palmquist, 1980). It is a research method based on interpretation of written data content and personal influences by means of specified classification procedure of coding and style recognition (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It is an approach of systematic control and analysis of texts within their context of use during conversations. Furthermore, content analysis is carried out following laid down rules and models, without unnecessary ambiguity (Mayring, 2000). It also refers to a qualitative method that can be utilized in data analysis and interpreting of the meaning of such data (Schreier, 2012). As a research method, qualitative content analysis represents a direct means of describing and analyzing a phenomena by means of the context in which data is supplied (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). A major factor for positive content analysis is that data can be reduced to basic ideas that explain the research phenomenon (Cavanagh, 1997; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).



It is widely used in different fields (Allen & Reser, 1990), since it is a simple method for analyzing text data (Cavanagh, 1997). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explained that qualitative content analysis as a research method tries to make sense of text data by checking the frequency of words and the context with which they are used. Similarly, Mayring, (2000) defined qualitative content analysis as a method that uses specific pre-defined rules to evaluate what is contained in recorded information. Prasad (2008) explains that the goal of content analysis is to expose the real meaning of every word. The method describes the contents of a text data by grouping them into numbers to explain a phenomenon or a problem (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). The process of coding which forms part of the initial steps helps in data classification with the aim of making sense of it. Thus, it highlights the main messages, characteristics or findings. According to Hancock (1998), qualitative content analysis is a systematic grouping of spoken or behavioral data, for purposes of categorization, summarization and tabulation. For analysis of interview data for this study, qualitative content analysis has been selected due to its diverse strengths, one of which is that it helps to improve the researcher's general knowledge of the topic and to generate a theory rather than merely testing hypothesis (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). The method can also allow for research repetition in future by researchers of the same field as it is cheap and can easily be carried out in comparison to most other research methods. Hence, it is a safe method that is able to interpret the kinds of qualitative data expected to be generated from this study. In a similar fashion, the method will give room for tracing lost and unclear data before analysis. This is one huge advantage of the qualitative content over most quantitative methods (Woodrum, 1984). As a result, the use of content analysis in this study will help grasp the objective account of events and issues that cannot be understood at the initial stage of the study. In addition, the method is

unbiased in the sense that the researcher will not be able to influence the behavior of the people under investigation.

## 2.1 Qualitative data treatment

To interpret field data using qualitative content analysis, researchers often make use of a number of data treatment steps (Tesch, 1990). The aim of the current research often determines the depth or level to which the data treatment steps are used. The following are some of the steps to help treat the data according to Zhang and Wildermuth (2005).

### Data preparation

The process starts with carefully writing out recorded conversation with the interviewee. In certain scenarios, it is possible to want to interpret already written texts, in which case it is expected that the content will be in line with developed research questions, i.e. (what the researcher intends to know from the research) (Patton, 2002). Zhang and Wildermuth (2005) explained that one major reason for the usage of qualitative content analysis in library science is to understand peoples' opinions and thoughts with respect to particular models within the field of library science. The authors explained that when writing out recorded texts, some possible questions that may come up in the heart of the researcher include; should I transcribe all interview questions or the ones that are most significant to my research questions; should I carry out the writing of the transcript word-for-word as it has been recorded or just do a summary; Would it be sensible to transcribe audible behaviors such as specific sounds? (Schilling, 2006). Oftentimes, a complete transcript makes for a robust interpretation; nevertheless, the time spent does not all guarantee quality (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005).

### Deriving analytical fragments or units

This is the second step in qualitative data treatment. In content analysis, when respondents offer their responses to the

interviewer, the responses come as a recorded group of texts which are further broken down into very small units for easy interpretation, these smaller units are referred to as analytical fragment (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). There are specific differences in the meanings of text fragment and this can have an effect whether to code or not (De Wever et al., 2006). As a result of this, Weber (1990) explained that unitizing decisions are key to a quality research using content analysis. Categories of texts often serve as analytical unit in qualitative analysis as opposed to words and sentences used in linguistics. A category could be a word, phrase, sentence or paragraph (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005), giving rise to a correlation of lived experiences and idea expression (Minichiello et al., 1990). The implication of this is that a researcher can code a group of text provided it appeals to him/her bearing in mind the research questions.

#### **Developing coding style and themes**

The choice of coding style to be used is the next step. In this case, there is a need to consider the interview data, similar relevant literature as well as other established theoretical guides to coding (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). There are so many styles in literature for coding (Saldana, 2009) and researchers keep developing more. A commonly used method is inductive and deductive coding (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). The authors further explained that when there are no laid down theories with respect to the research at hand, the inductive method will do. When the inductive method is applied, it is always good to constantly compare events. This is done via the use of constant comparative technique and it helps to get deep information originating from thought and lived experiences of participants in an interview (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). When laid down theories are available, the first levels of coding can be directly related to these theories as long as they are in line with the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Zhang & Wildermuth (2005)

explained that the use of coding system from relevant literature (laid down theories) from a more general perspective. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), themes from a coded transcript in qualitative research should be similar for a coder and vary slightly from those of another coder. Hence, Weber (1990) reiterated that the reason for more than one coder and a carefully developed coding manual.

#### **Test the coding scheme**

It is often important to test your coding style. This will help to check consistency and also prove its validity and reliability (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). This can be done as early as possible during the research. Code testing is carried out by coding the initially written transcripts and checking it thoroughly via comparison with previous relevant literature or discussing and reaching an agreement with a fellow coder. As soon as it is observed that the level of coding consistency is poor, there has to be a change in the coding system or style/rules (Schilling, 2006). Coding sample text, checking coding consistency, and revising coding rules is an iterative process and should continue until sufficient coding consistency is achieved (Weber, 1990).

#### **Text coding**

As soon as a researcher believes there is a sufficient level of consistency in the coding scheme, the same style can be applied to all other parts of the text body (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). Schilling (2006) explained that it is important to be in line and in touch with the coding scheme. He stated that this helps to check “drifting into an idiosyncratic sense of what the codes mean” and will not just contain irrelevant points.

#### **Verify coding consistency**

When all transcripts have been coded, there is a need to go over the transcripts and re-check for errors and consistency (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). The authors explained further that basically assuming correctness of coded transcripts is harmful to interpretation.

Manual coding by researchers may result in stress thus resulting in errors, there is also a possibility of the researcher forgetting the coding rules as time goes by. New codes may have been added since the original consistency check may have been improved upon (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Weber, 1990).

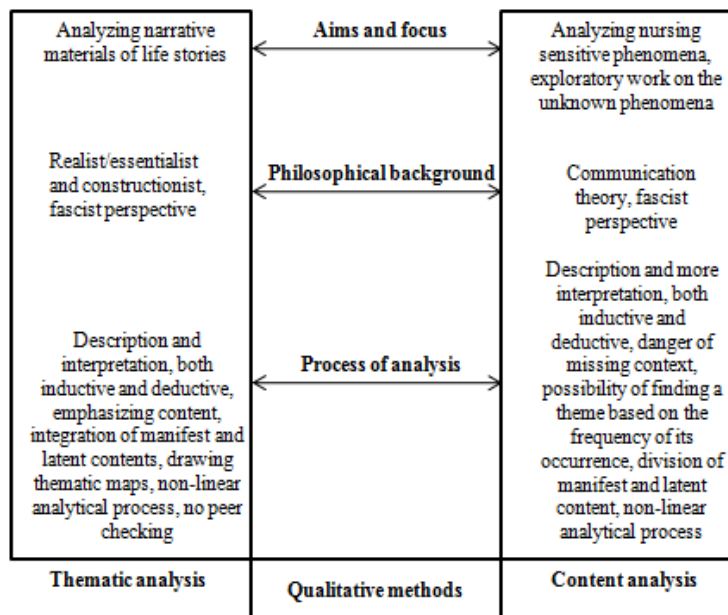
**Conceptualization**

This step involves making sense of the themes or categories identified, and their properties. At this stage, inferences are made and reconstructions of meanings derived from the data are presented. Activities may involve exploring the properties and dimensions of categories, identifying relationships between categories, uncovering patterns, and testing categories against the full range of data (Bradley, 1993). This is a critical step in the analytical process, and its success will rely almost wholly on the researcher’s reasoning abilities.

**Writing out results**

For a qualitative research to be replicable, Zhang and Wildermuth (2005) explained that the process used in data analysis must be carefully looked into. The authors went further to say that the way the results of an investigation are delivered to the readers also goes a long way in assuring the replicability and consistency of the study. Hence, it is helpful to write out results as detailed as possible, explaining the key terms and techniques in clear terms (Patton, 2002). In qualitative content analysis, the coding methods needs to be explicitly discussed (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005).

It is important to focus on the similarities and differences between thematic and content analysis are the similarities it shares with thematic analyses. In fact, some researchers use both terms interchangeably. Nevertheless, content analysis differs slightly from thematic analysis, even though both methods present final themes. Figure 1 summarizes the differences and similarities between both concepts.



**Figure 1.** Differences between thematic and content analysis (Adapted from: Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013)



Furthermore, it is note-worthy to state that there are several unique approaches in literature for carrying out qualitative content analysis.

Most common are: conventional, directed, and summative approaches (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), inductive and deductive approaches (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). According to Weber (1990), a researcher’s approach is a function of the research purpose and the phenomenon under investigation. This implies that different research purposes require different research designs and analytical techniques (Knafl & Howard, 1884). This study makes use of directed qualitative content analysis approach due to the researcher’s intention to introduce knowledge from relevant literatures during coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Hence, the study will progress to develop appropriate themes by gradually getting familiar with study data (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2005). Since the intention here is to understand how

succession management influences survival of money deposit banks in Nigeria, the problem could be best conceptualized and studied by qualitative content analysis method.

### 3. Materials and method

This study examines responses given in interviews conducted by the researchers on 15 randomly selected individuals belonging to three different management levels across five old generation banks (Union Bank, First Bank, UBA, Wema Bank and Sterling Bank) in Nigeria. Succession management construct within the interview schedule is described by succession planning, implementation, evaluation and control. In all cases, qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews (table 1), transcribed, and manually coded by two coders.

**Table 1.** Open ended interview questions

S/N	Question
1.	Can you please give an insight on succession management plans within your bank, and how succession has been implemented/practiced in the past?
2.	In what ways do you think your bank has held on to these succession plans?
3.	What ranges of developmental opportunities are available for future leaders within your bank?
4.	Does your bank possess the structure upon which succession can thrive? If no, why? And how can the existing structure within your bank be modified to aid succession?
5.	Can you comment on how well you think effective succession within your bank has so far helped in its survival
6.	Are there other factors that can aid your bank’s survival asides effective succession?
7.	To what extent would you say that succession management plans and practices are impacting your bank’s strength and resources?
8.	Mentoring and identification of competencies are key to effective succession. Have you ever been involved in mentoring within your bank? if yes, in what capacity?
9.	In your mentoring relationship, how well has the mentor/mentee been challenged?
10.	Would you say that succession management practices within your bank has affected its financial viability? If yes, how
11.	In what ways has the implementation of succession taken place in your organization?
12.	Comment on the support given to implementation of succession plans by top management
13.	How does succession control progress within your bank?
14.	What key areas need improvement in your bank’s succession management process?
15.	What outcomes can you predict if key improvements are not made in your bank’s succession management process?

Initial codes were derived by identifying themes in a set of randomly selected text and generating code definitions for these categories. Afterwards, coding followed a procedure of deciding for every text segment and for each code whether the theme developed by the code was present in the segment or not. Despite using similar interview questions across management levels, length and complexity of responses vary significantly across the different levels. Individuals selected as low management level must have spent between 1-5 years within the banking sector. Persons classified as mid management level are more experienced than those at the lower level but are grouped thus as they do not possess professional qualifications/certification as those in top management. In terms of experience, an individual grouped at mid management level must have spent 6-10 years working within the banking sector. To be classified within the top management level, an individual must have sufficient experience (11 or more years) in management.

### 3.1. Inter-coder reliability

Within the realm of qualitative research, “reliability and validity” are terms that have received stiff oppositions (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). Both terms have since been replaced with “trustworthiness”, which refers to how much qualitative research results can be relied upon (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; 1982). Trustworthiness is composed of four unique terms; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, all ensuring that the culture of “effectiveness or rigor” in qualitative research can be maintained and not replaced with the ambiguity of statistical packages merely providing p-values (Morse et al., 2002). Although the use of trustworthiness is yet to find a place in Europe, researchers in the Americas have embraced this new term (Morse et al., 2002). Be that as it may, Guba and Lincoln, (1981) stated that “research, (whether qualitative or quantitative) must

possess a “truth value”, “applicability”, “consistency” (table 2), and “neutrality”(p.18). Generally, there are set rules for understanding what qualitative researchers’ term as *effectiveness or rigor*. These rules include internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity (in quantitative research) and credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability for qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). For the test of trustworthiness of the coding scheme, inter-coder reliability test was done by comparing the results of both coders (table 3). The Kappa coefficient for the inter-coder reliability was found to be equal to 0.86, denoting a nearly perfect agreement between the results of both coders. “S” denotes that respondent has provided a sufficient answer to a question and is coded 1, while “I” implies that the response is insufficient, coded 0.

**Table 2.** Coding consistency

Question	Coder 1	Coder 2
1	S	S
2	S	S
3	I	I
4	S	S
5	I	I
6	S	I
7	I	I
8	I	I
9	S	S
10	S	S
11	I	I
12	S	S
13	I	I
14	I	I
15	S	S

**Table 3.** Inter-coder reliability calculation

		Coder 1				
		0	1			
Coder 2	0	7	1	8	53%	
	1	0	7	7	47%	
			7	8	15	
			47%	53%		

Cohen Kappa inter-coder reliability is given:

$$\kappa = \frac{Pr_a - Pr_e}{1 - Pr_e} \tag{i}$$

$\kappa$  = Kappa value

*Pr<sub>a</sub> is Probability of relative observed agreement;  
agreement on sufficient responses +  
agreement on insufficient responses  
Total number of all possible outcomes*

$$\kappa = \frac{7 + 7}{15} = 0.93$$

*Pr<sub>e</sub> is probability of agreement based on chance;*

$$\begin{aligned} & (\% \text{ insufficient responses for coder 1} \times \% \text{ insufficient responses for coder 2}) \\ & + (\% \text{ sufficient responses for coder 1} \\ & \times \% \text{ sufficient responses for coder 2}) = (0.47 \times 0.53) + (0.53 \times 0.47) \\ & = (0.2491 + 0.2491) = 0.49 \end{aligned}$$

Inserting the values into the equation (i),

$$\begin{aligned} \kappa &= \frac{0.93 - 0.49}{1 - 0.49} \\ \kappa &= 0.86 \end{aligned}$$

Kappa value of 0.86 is an excellent result for inter-coder reliability and it signifies coding agreement between the two coders. Furthermore, coding *sensitivity* and *specificity* can be computed from the table. By sensitivity, we mean percentage coding and interaction between the Coders i.e.

percentage that are sufficient and were found to be truly sufficient, while specificity is the percentage which are insufficient and were found to be insufficient. In this case, sensitivity is 87.5% while specificity is 100%. For sensitivity;

$$\frac{\text{Intersection in coding agreement for 1}}{\text{total outcome on 1}} \times 100\%$$

$$\frac{7}{8} \times 100 = 87.5$$

For specificity;

$$\frac{\text{Intersection in coding agreement for 0}}{\text{total outcome on 0}} \times 100\%$$

$$\frac{7}{7} \times 100 = 100$$

#### 4. Results

The coding process was done in two phases. Firstly, coding was done within each management level and then subsequent recoding across all three groups which yielded the final coded transcript (Table 4). From the coded transcript, the researcher developed themes (also known as categories) based on relationships that exist between the codes, bearing in mind the objectives of the study. The different categories were also grouped and labeled, for ease of identification (Table 5). Furthermore, some respondents willingly gave further insights as regards the topic under investigation which formed part of the discussion. Table 4 is the coded transcript developed from the study; it shows the final coded texts from the similarities within the individual management level already explained. A further grouping of the codes into themes is shown in table 5. These themes have been classified into three distinct groups and each theme/category summarily gives the underlying meaning of the classified codes as they relate to succession management practices and organization survival of selected money deposit banks in Nigeria. It is note-worthy to state that the true

knowledge of the study subject from the way it is seen by the interviewees is reflected by these categories. Hence, the relationship that exist between these categories serve as the basic results of this study. The classification of codes into the themes follows the individual treatment of each of the codes and reading through the transcript thoroughly to understand that they actually reflect the responses of respondents without bias on the part of the researcher. Codes generated for the study were grouped under three distinct themes; *succession ingredients*, *succession checks* and *succession results*. Succession ingredients from the grouping of codes refer to the different processes and procedures that make up succession as well as its overall positive impacts (boosters, foundation, impacts and inputs) within the banking sector. On the other hand, succession checks refer to short-comings and problems experienced in the process of trying to initiate and implement succession, while succession results are the outcome of effective or ineffective practice of succession. One clue derived from qualitative data analysis are some weaknesses faced by the process of management succession in Nigerian banks. As a result, a conscious effort can effectively solve these problems, thereby resulting in longevity of banks.

**Table 4.** Coded transcript for succession management practice and organization survival of selected money deposit banks in Nigeria

Question	Lower level management	Mid-level management	Top level management	Code
1	Succession is sectionalized	Succession is sectionalized	Succession is all-encompassing	Problems
	Succession is biased & poorly planned	Succession is poorly planned		Short-comings
2	There is a strong will to ensure succession	There is a strong will to ensure succession	There is a strong will to ensure succession	Boosters
	Qualification & experience are vital	Succession is ineffective & biased		
3	Succession is sectionalized	Succession is sectionalized	There is provision for succession	Boosters
4	There is provision for succession	There is provision for succession	There is provision for succession	
	Succession is sectionalized	Succession is sectionalized	Succession is all-encompassing	Problems

**Table 4.** Coded transcript for succession management practice and organization survival of selected money deposit banks in Nigeria (continued)

Question	Lower level management	Mid-level management	Top level management	Code
5	Survival depends mainly on succession	Survival depends mainly on succession	Survival depends mainly on succession	Outputs
6	Partly depends on financial viability	Partly depends on image/ on staff experience	Partly depends on image/financial viability	Inputs
7	Strength and resource management depends on succession	Significant impact of succession	Significant impact of succession	Impacts
8	Succession is sectionalized	Exposure via mentoring	Exposure via mentoring	
9	Positive effect of succession	Positive effect of succession	Positive effect of succession	
10	Positive effect of succession	Positive effect of succession	Positive effect of succession	
11	Succession is sectionalized	There is provision for succession	Positive effect of succession	Boosters
12	Top management sometimes oppose succession	Succession is encouraged	Succession is encouraged	
Q13	Wage increment aids succession	There is provision for succession	There is provision for succession	Foundation
	Organizational structure controls succession	Qualification & experience are used to control succession	Qualification & experience are used to control succession	
Q14	Succession is sectionalized	Succession is sectionalized	Organization stability through succession	problems
		Succession is sectionalized	Room for improvement	Impacts
Q15	Succession is sectionalized	Succession is sectionalized	Room for improvement	Problems
	Effect of poor succession management	Effect of poor succession management	Effect of poor succession management	Ineffective planning

**Table 5.** Main themes/categories on succession management practice and organization survival of selected money deposit banks in Nigeria

Succession Ingredients	Inputs
	Foundation
	Boosters
	Impact
Succession checks	Short-coming
	Problems
Succession results	Ineffective planning
	Output





**Figure 2.** Themes for succession management and organization survival in Nigerian money deposit banks

#### 4.1. Discussion of results

The issue of succession management influencing survival of organizations in most developing countries seems to bring up arguments in various sectors of the economy of any developing nation. Generally, the impression that effective succession is key for an organization to remain in business seem to have been vastly discussed in literature. It remains therefore to be seen whether a change of leadership without following the ideals of succession management practices may bring about the death of a firm. Transcript coding was used to analyze interview questions of some bankers from the selected bank. Coding, recoding and creation of themes ensured that the study arrived at underlying impression of respondents with respect to succession management practices and organization survival in money deposit banks in Nigeria. Continuous grouping and regrouping of results helped to decipher relationships that exist within the responses given by respondents. This was carried out in a painstaking manner in order to have a uniquely created transcript copy per group (management level). By carefully reading through each submitted interview, the study used the frequency and meaning of certain words to bring together the underlying ideas

and impressions of each management level. As such, it was easy to create a unified transcript which was coded and themed.

As a general impression amongst mid and low-level management personnel, succession is generally tagged as biased due to one-sidedness exhibited in its implementation within the banks surveyed in this study. On several occasions, participant complained that the word succession applies more to those at the top; making the process unfair to those at low level management. This may be one of the problems associated with succession planning within the banking sector as there is a possibility of “*process-sabotage*” by those at the lower management level. Although the issue is seen differently at the top where most respondents feel that succession management covers all management levels. Many of the interviewees who belong to low level management claimed that bulk of the day to day running of the banks rest on their shoulders but that they are often isolated from the decision-making processes. In turn, when such decisions are made, they often feel opposed to the decisions as they are rarely consulted before decisions are taken. In some cases, individuals from the low-level management with wealth of experience on the job and who are due to

move-up are denied such opportunities as certain top management individuals refuse to give recommendations to that effect. Hence, there is a general feeling amongst lower management participants that top management oppose succession due to fear of possible stiff competitions that may be brought about by promoted individuals. Across all fronts, there is a provision for succession among banks in terms of mentoring and its effects. Additionally, top management individuals claim they are often penciled/scheduled for a couple of high level training monthly. These trainings are often aimed at preparing them for higher tasks and are based on the will of most Nigerian banks to see that succession thrives.

Without ruling out the effect of the “*man-know-man*” syndrome (which is a situation in which certain individuals favored by some cabals to attain specific positions) within Nigerian banking sector, qualification and experience are key factors considered for succession in most banks. The structure created by the bank may as well have an impact in the sense that banks sometimes want to reward individuals who have passed through their system. For instance, two individuals A and B may be equal in experience as well as qualification and in turn short-listed for a particular executive position. However, candidate A may have passed through the bank’s training school while candidate B came into the system as a result of good on-the-job performance exhibited elsewhere (say another bank). When such a situation arises, the bank is more likely to select candidate A, who has passed through its ranks. As suggested by many of the participants surveyed in this study, succession management is key, if banks will remain in business, this answers the question put forward as the overall objective of this study. Another frequently mentioned factor for survival of the banks is their financial base. Some participants believe that their employers have stayed this long on the business as a result of strong financial viability. This implies that financial viability

is very important for an organization to survive turbulence. Although financial viability is not seen as important as succession, we can infer from the judgment of respondents that it may be classified as a factor that should be in place if succession will truly bring about survival within the Nigerian banking system. Additionally, the image of the bank might be another important factor for its survival. The way a bank is perceived is more or less a pointer as to whether customers want to stay, and whether investors want to do business with the bank. This means that a negative image will scare-off investors and customers alike, thereby leading to the eventual collapse of the bank. In the same vein, a positive image brings about customer and/or investor confidence, which in turn helps in growth of its financial strength. When asked the extent to which succession management plans and practices are impacting the strength and resources of individual banks, many respondents were quick to state that succession is very important for effective management of both human and financial resources of the banks, thereby positively impacting the strength of the banks. Furthermore, effective mentoring as introduced by selected banks has also had a positive effect on the output of most mid and low management level personnel. The result of this is that in the process of trying to create a platform for effective succession management, employees are challenged, resulting in job improvement. When output of workers improves, more profit is accrued on the long run, further boosting survival. On the issue of support given to the process of succession for which most personnel at low management level accuse those at the top of outright negligence, mid and top level personnel differ in opinion saying that the support given is high and often yielded the desired results. Generally speaking, this study has been able to reveal that succession management process within money deposit banks needs to improve, owing to issues such as one-sidedness of the process, the biased nature as well as certain individuals opposing

the process within banks due to their own selfish interests.

## 5. Conclusion

The central objective of this study was to appraise succession management practice in the context of organizational survival among selected money deposit banks in Nigeria. The relationships between the measures of succession management practices and organizational survival correspond to what is reported in literature. Since qualitative data analysis methods are becoming more and more useful in management sciences, this current research reveals that succession management practice affect organizational survival of money deposit banks in Nigeria. The study showed that though organization operates in a volatile business environment, well planned succession will boost the firm's agility in the way that it will positively responds to business operational issues. This however will not be without the incorporation of succession implementation that helps to focus on the capacity development of the employees which in turn create dynamic capability within the organization. Well implemented succession management practices drive a sustained process that could create pools of talented individuals that are skilled, competent and able to assume any leadership position in the organization. Though succession management practice needs to improve in the selected banks, for succession to truly drive an organization towards survival, certain key inputs, otherwise known as ingredients must be in

place. The many short-comings in the process of succession must be checked and corrected. If rightly corrected, succession checks could help gain positive results for the organization, thereby guaranteeing the long term survival of the organization.

### 5.1. Limitations and suggestions for further studies

- The scope of this study is limited to only five old generation banks in Nigeria, it is suggested that future research can expand this scope to enable generalization of findings.
- This study did not take cognizance of the voting power of shareholders in succession. Future research may consider the role of shareholders in succession management practice and organizational survival to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of the same in organizations in Nigeria.
- This study was conducted in the banking industry in Nigeria. Future research can consider other sectors of the economy to see how succession management practice fair there.
- As oppose to the qualitative approach to this study that some quantitative researchers believes that it is subjective, future research can explore succession management practice in the context of organizational survival from the quantitative perspective

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