The Effect of Succession Planning on Corporate Growth Strategy among Local Family Businesses in the Manufacturing Sector in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

Family businesses are important contributors to wealth and employment creation in any country. Indeed the economic landscape of most nations remains dominated by family firms. In Kenya, one of the Vision 2030 objectives is to create new jobs and the growth of family businesses is important to help achieve this objective. Unfortunately, many family businesses collapse within the first few years of operation and others stagnate leading to loss of jobs and greatly affecting the Kenyan economy.Succession can be defined as the process through which the leadership of the business is transferred from the outgoing generation to the successor generation, which can either be a family member or a non-family member. A number of researchers have stated that one of the most significant factors that determine continuity of the family firm from one generation to the next is whether the succession process is planned. Companies that do not have succession plans have a lot at stake. The founder of those businesses could see their lifelong hard work dismantled or even sold to non-family members. This study sought to investigate the effect of succession planning on growth strategy among the local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County.

Keywords: Familybusiness,Succession planning,Growth strategy,manufacturing.

Introduction and Background

Organizations continue to exist beyond the life of the founders and the dilemma of ownership and management succession is considered a potential source of danger and conflict. Professional and managerial requirements tend to be intertwined with family feelings and interests. The balance between an organization's professional requirement and the family dynamics influences issues to do with transfer of leadership which can quickly run into trouble. To make the succession process even more challenging, nobody wants to talk about it for various reasons (Longenecker, Moore, Petty &Palich, 2006). The first succession in leadership is crucial because it determines whether the organization will continue to exist beyond the life of its founders.

Family businesses have the potential to grow and become multinationals. A good example is Mabati Rolling Mills which started in 1961 in Nairobi's industrial area by the Chandaria family and is today a global player. This family business has propelled upwards due to proper management succession and the growth strategies they have continued to adopt.Mabati Rolling Mills has over the years adopted various growth strategies such as mergers, exporting, new product development, modernization, product differentiation and innovation and market research. These growth strategies have led to the growth and expansion of the company(Mabati Rolling Mills, 2013).

Many family companies in Kenya seem to suffer from the founders' syndrome and few have any strategies in place on how to grow the business. This founder's trap can develop into a family trap if a family member takes over on the basis of ownership and bloodline rather than competence and experience.A study by Karanja (2012) sought to establish the role of succession planning on the survival of small and medium family enterprises in Kenya. He focused on succession after retirement or death of the first generation entrepreneurs and considered the variables that he believed influenced succession planning.According to Lee (2006), Bareither and Reischl (2003) and Venter (2003), one of the main reasons for the high failure rate among first and second generation family businesses is their inability to manage the complex and highly emotive process of ownership and management succession from one generation to the next.

The generally accepted figure for succession is 3 out of 10 firms surviving to second generation and only 16% persist to the third (Kuratko, 1995). Kenya is no different for statistics show that three out of five of these businesses fail within the first three years of operation (GoK, 2007). Accordingly, Ward (2004) estimates that approximately half of all family businesses fail to make it to the next generation because of inefficient succession. Klein (2000) suggests that the failures and break-ups of family businesses occur due to power struggles and internal feuds amongst siblings and members of the extended family. He further attributes it to family members refusing to give up their central roles in the management of the businesses and to relinquish control and power in the businesses. Families that successfully survive three or four generations have a complex web of structures, agreements, councils and forms of accountability to manage their wealth (Jaffe & Lane, 2004). Although ownership and management succession are the key concerns of a large number of business families, Watts and Yucker (2004) observe that families hesitate to address the issue.

Succession is a challenge to family businesses particularly the trans-generational handover (Royer, Simons, Boyd&Rafferty, 2008) and these challenges do exist in Kenya. Aron(as cited in Maalu,McCormic, K'Obonyo&Machuki, 2013) argued that cases of failed stock brokerage firms of Francis Thuo and Partners, Nyaga Stock Brokers and Discount Securities may be attributed to failed succession.Karanja (2012) further contends that family members file court cases to bar other members of their families from running or interfering with the management of an enterprise after the exit of the first generation which is another indication of challenges family businesses face in management succession. This may lead to such enterprises stagnating, going under receivership or even closing down.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of succession planning on corporate growth strategy among local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County,Kenya

Hypothesis of the Study

The study tested the following hypothesis.

H_1.   Succession Planning significantly affects corporate growth strategy in local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County

Importance of the study

Family businesses employ a significant number of the population in Kenya. They also contribute significantly to the Gross Domestic Product of the country. One of the Vision 2030 objectives is to create new jobs and continued existence and growth of family businesses is therefore critical to help achieve this objective. This study should contribute valuable knowledge to the field of family business in general. The study is expected to add knowledge on this subject and form a useful material for reference to other researchers and readers in general.The study should also influence the management practices of family businesses in Kenya. The use of such specific knowledge will improve the quality of the management of family businesses making succession planning successful.

Methodology
3.1. Research Design

This study was conducted through descriptive census survey. Descriptive studies attempt to obtain a complete and accurate description of a situation or event. In general a descriptive design is commonly used to describe a phenomenon or characteristic associated with a subject, estimate proportions of a population that have these characteristics and discover associations among different variables (Saunders, Lewis &Thornhill, 2007).The design was selected for this study because it would allow the researcher to do an in depth analysis of howsuccession planning affects corporate growth strategy among the local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi. The design also gave information that could be generalized. Descriptive approach has enough provision for protection of bias and maximized reliability (Kothari, 2004)

Population and Sampling
Target Population

The target population consisted of 97 local manufacturing family businesses. A preliminary survey done from a list provided by Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) in the Kenya Manufacturers and Exporters directory, 2013 helped identify the respondents for this study.

Sample

A census study was conducted since the population was relatively small. This is a survey where the entire target population was taken into account.

Data Collection
Instrumentation

A questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. The selection of this tool was guided by the nature of data to be collected and by the objective of the study. The researcher was mainly concerned with views, opinions, feelings, attitudes and perceptions and such information can be best collected through the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire was used since the study was concerned with variables that could not be directly observed and the target population was also largely literate and unlikely to have difficulties responding to the questionnaire items.

Regression Models of the Study

The following regression models were developed for the study (Table 1)

Table 1: Regression model of the study

Objective	Hypothesis	Analytical Model
Determine the effect of succession planning on corporate growth strategies in local manufacturing family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County.	H$_1$ Succession Planning significantly affects corporate growth strategies in local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County	$Y=\beta_0+\beta_1\chi_1+\varepsilon$ Where Y=Corporate growth strategy(Dependent Variable) β_0=Constant β_1=Regression Coefficient χ_1=succession Planning(Independent Variable) ε=error

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response rate

The target population was ninety seven family owned businesses in the manufacturing industry in Nairobi County. The study was a census and therefore 97 (100%) questionnaires were administered to the family owned businesses in the manufacturing industry in Nairobi. A total of 65 completed questionnaires were returned while 32 questionnaires were not received even after follow-up. Consequently, the response rate was 67.0%. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), and Saunders, Lewis &Thornhill., (2007) have argued that a response rate of 50 per cent is adequate, a response rate of 60 per cent is good, and a response rate of 70 per cent is very good. Sixty seven per cent response rate was therefore appropriate for drawing conclusion of this study.

Succession Planning

Succession planning in the family owned manufacturing businesses was assessed using a set of nineteen measures. Table 2 shows that trust among the family members had the highest mean scores of 4.36, and thus was a key aspect in the succession planning. This is in line with the conclusions by Habbershon and Williams (1999) that family firm members demonstrate high levels of trust. Other factors that had high mean scores were formal delegation of duties (4.11), good relationship among family members (4.09) and amicable communication among the family members (4.08). The sibling rivalry when appointing managers had the lowest mean score of 1.31.

One sample t-test with a theoretical test value of zero (no significant difference expected in the mean scores) was conducted to establish whether succession planning varied from one family business in the manufacturing sector to another. Results illustrated in Table 2 indicate that succession planning mean scores of the nineteen measures differed significantly from one family business to the other, with highest difference being noted in the formal delegation of duties (t-value = 38.96, p-value < 0.05), followed by trust among family members (t-value = 38.12, p-value < 0.05). The lowest statistical difference was reported in use of external boards to make strategic decisions (t-value = 12.55, p-value < 0.05) and uses of family council to deal with succession (t-value = 13.09, p-value < 0.05). The ratings of individual measures are summarized in Table 3

Table12: Level of Succession Planning in the Family Businesses

Succession Planning Measures	N	Mean Difference	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Written and formal succession plan	65	2.523	.126	19.999	.000
Adopted growth strategies based on formal plan	65	3.585	.140	25.565	.000
Smooth transition of responsibilities	65	3.800	.136	28.040	.000
Early identification of top managers and talents	65	3.462	.142	24.338	.000
Training programme for employees	65	3.369	.156	21.608	.000
Formal delegation of duties	65	4.108	.105	38.959	.000
Good relationship among family members	64	4.094	.115	35.560	.000
Existence of family council to deal with succession	64	2.234	.171	13.090	.000
Use of external boards to make strategic decisions	65	2.231	.178	12.545	.000
Use of business consultants to make strategic decisions	64	2.453	.168	14.598	.000
Amicable communication among family members	64	4.078	.132	30.817	.000
Trust among family members	64	4.359	.114	38.119	.000
Sibling rivalry when top managers are appointed	64	1.313	.089	14.791	.000
Formal strategic family vision	64	3.156	.185	17.034	.000
Involvement of both active and inactive family members in top management	63	3.270	.186	17.627	.000
Use strategic plans to decide on the growth strategies	65	3.969	.149	26.700	.000
Appoints earmarked successors as directors	64	2.766	.200	13.819	.000
Successor education level taken into account before appointment	65	3.215	.175	18.404	.000
Formal criteria for naming a successor	64	2.609	.175	14.926	.000
Overall mean score= 3.189					
T-test for equality of means: test value=0 (Ho: there is no difference expected between the means, at α=0.05 (2-tailed); Reject Ho if p-value ≤ α, otherwise fail to reject Ho if p-value > α					

Source: Research Data (2014)

Table 3 Succession Planning Frequency Distribution

Succession Planning	Very great extent %	Great extent %	Moderate extent %	Small extent %	Not at all %	Total %
Written and formal succession plan	1.5	10.8	49.2	15.4	23.1	100
Adopted growth strategies based on formal plans	24.6	29.2	32.3	7.7	6.2	100
Smooth transition of responsibilities	26.2	46.2	15.2	6.2	6.2	100
Early identification of top managers and talents	18.5	33.8	32.3	6.2	9.2	100
Training programme for employees	26.2	15.4	36.9	12.3	9.2	100
Formal delegation of duties	36.9	41.6	16.9	4.6	0	100
Good relationship among family members	40.6	32.8	23.4	1.6	1.6	100
Existence of family council to deal with succession	7.8	12.5	21.9	10.9	46.9	100
Use of external boards to make strategic decisions	10.8	9.2	23.1	6.2	50.7	100
Use of business consultants to make strategic decisions	6.3	20.3	23.4	12.5	37.5	100
Amicable communication among family members	40.6	40.6	9.4	4.7	4.7	100
Trust among family members	54.7	34.4	6.3	1.5	3.1	100
Sibling rivalry when top managers are appointed	0	3.1	4.7	12.5	79.7	100
Formal strategic family vision	23.4	21.9	26.6	3.1	25	100
Involvement of both active and inactive family members in top management	25.4	27	17.5	9.5	20.6	100
Use strategic plans to decide on the growth strategies	44.6	24.7	21.5	1.5	7.7	100
Appoints earmarked successors as directors	23.4	9.4	25	4.7	37.5	100
Successor education level taken into account before appointment	18.5	35.4	15.4	10.7	20	100
Formal criteria for naming a successor	10.9	18.8	23.4	14.1	32.8	100
Average	**23.2**	**24.6**	**22.3**	**7.7**	**22.2**	**100**

Drivers of Succession Planning

Succession planning was measured with 19 items, which were subsequently subjected to factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.70, well above the recommended 0.5, and Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance, hence supporting the factorability of the study variable as shown in Table 4..

Table24. A KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.700
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	507.232
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

Source: Research Data (2014)

The factor analysis results in Table 5 revealed presence of five components with Eigen values exceeding 1, explaining 25.7%, 16.7%, 9.7%, 8.5% and 5.9% of the variance respectively. The five critical factors driving succession planning in the family businesses cumulatively accounted for 66.48 per cent of the total variance in this construct.

Table35Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.878	25.673	25.673	4.878	25.673	25.673	4.191	22.056	22.056
2	3.178	16.726	42.400	3.178	16.726	42.400	2.951	15.530	37.585
3	1.837	9.668	52.068	1.837	9.668	52.068	2.124	11.178	48.763
4	1.609	8.468	60.536	1.609	8.468	60.536	1.903	10.018	58.782
5	1.130	5.946	66.482	1.130	5.946	66.482	1.463	7.700	66.482
6	.866	4.559	71.041						
7	.838	4.410	75.451						
8	.711	3.743	79.194						
9	.630	3.318	82.511						
10	.590	3.106	85.618						
11	.483	2.541	88.159						
12	.419	2.207	90.365						
13	.406	2.135	92.501						
14	.392	2.061	94.561						
15	.303	1.592	96.154						
16	.229	1.203	97.357						
17	.208	1.097	98.453						
18	.174	.916	99.369						
19	.120	.631	100.000						

Source: Research Data (2014)

Factor 1 had five dominant loadings (Formal delegation of duties; Adopted growth strategies based on succession plan; Early identification of top managers and talents; Use of strategic plans to decide on the growth strategies; Smooth transition of responsibilities; Training programme for employees), which together accounted for 22.06 per cent of variance of rotated sums of squared loadings. This factor was labelled capacity building for management succession. Factor 2 had four dominant loadings (Formal criteria for naming a successor; Successor education level taken into account before appointment; Appoints earmarked successors as directors; Involvement of both active and inactive family members in top management) and together account for 15.53 per cent of variance of rotated sums of squared loadings. Consequently the factor was labelled Successor appointment process. Factor 3 had dominant loadings (Use of external boards to make strategic decisions; Existence of family council to deal with succession; Use of business consultants to make strategic decisions) which contributed 11.18 per cent of variance of rotated sums of squared loadings and so was labelled Decision making authority.

Table46 Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Formal delegation of duties	.802				
Adopted growth strategies based on succession plan	.787				
Early identification of top managers and talents	.778				
Use strategic plans to decide on the growth strategies	.725	.303			
Smooth transition of responsibilities	.707				.351
Training programme for employees	.668				.338
Written and formal succession plan	.548			-.304	
Good relationship among family members	.536			.413	.385
Formal criteria for naming a successor		.853			
Successor education level taken into account before appointment		.777			
Appoints earmarked successors as directors		.701	.332		
Involvement of both active and inactive family members in top management		.649	.340	.317	
Formal strategic family vision		.579		.447	
Use of external boards to make strategic decisions			.845		
Existence of family council to deal with succession			.762		
Use of business consultants to make strategic decisions			.624		-.414
Amicable communication among family members				.849	
Trust among family members				.670	.316
Sibling rivalry when top managers are appointed					-.735

Source: Research Data (2014)

Factor 4 had two most dominant loadings (Amicable communication among family members; Trust among family members) which together accounted for 10.02 percent of variance of the rotated sums of squared loadings and so was labelled family relationship. Finally factor 5 had one dominant loading (Sibling rivalry when top managers are appointed) which contributed 7.7 percent of the variance and was labeled sibling relationship.

Tests of Hypotheses

The study sought to establish the relationship between succession planning and growth strategies adopted by the family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County. To assess the stated relationship the following null hypothesis was tested;

H_{01}: *Succession Planning does not significantly affect corporate growth strategy in local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County*

The aggregate mean score of the growth strategies measures was regressed on the aggregate mean score of the succession planning. The regression model capturing the hypothesized relationship between succession planning and corporate growth strategies was presented in the following equation;

Growth Strategy = β_0 + β_1 (Succession Planning) + e

Where;

β_0 = Model equation intercept

β_1 = Correlation coefficient for succession planning

e = Error term

The adjusted R-square statistic in Table 6 indicates that 16.7% of the variance in the growth strategies adopted by family businesses in the manufacturing sector was explained by the succession planning. The relevant regression results presented in Table 7 reveals that the overall model was statistically significant (F $_{(1,58)}$ = 12.791, p-value = 0.001). Examination of the individual coefficient in Table 8 reveals a significant positive linear relationship between the succession planning and corporate growth strategies (β = 0.423, p-value = 0.001). These findings supported rejection of the null hypothesis that succession Planning does not significantly affect corporate growth strategies in local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis that succession planning significantly affects corporate growth strategies in local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County was adopted.

Table57: Goodness-of-fit of Regression of Growth Strategies on Succession Planning

Sample size	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.425	.181	.167	.51120

Predictors: (Constant), Aggregate Mean of Succession Planning

Dependent Variable: Aggregate Mean of Growth Strategies

Source: Research Data (2014).

Table68: Overall Significance of Regression of Growth Strategies on Succession Planning

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean square	F	Significance (p-value)
Regression	3.343	1	3.343	12.791	.001
Residual	15.157	58	.261		
Total	18.500	59			

Predictors: (Constant), Aggregate Mean of Succession Planning

Dependent Variable: Aggregate Mean of Growth Strategies

Source: Research Data (2014)

Table79 Individual Significance of Regression of Growth Strategies on Succession Planning

	Unstandardized Coefficients		t-value	Significance (p-value)	Collinearity Statistics	
	Beta	Standard Error			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.266	.382	3.309	.002		
Aggregate mean of Succession planning	.423	.118	3.577	.001	1.000	1.000

Predictors: (Constant), Aggregate Mean of Succession Planning

Dependent Variable: Aggregate Mean of Growth Strategies

Source: Research Data (2014)

On the basis of the results in tables 7,8 and 9 the following simple regression equation can be used to estimate the growth strategies of the family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Kenya given a certain level of succession planning;

Growth strategies = 1.266 + 0.423 (succession planning)

Where;

1.266 = Model equation intercept

0.423 = estimate of the expected increase in the growth strategies corresponding to an increase in the succession planning.

Researchers have stated that one of the most significant factors that determine continuity of the family firm from one generation to the next is whether the succession process is planned (Handler, 1994; Lansberg, 1988 as quoted by Merwe et al.. 2009). Developing a comprehensive long term succession plan is a critical element for continuity and success of small, medium family enterprises (Ibrahim et al, 2001a). Yet, Rosenblatt et al. (1985) found that many families do not participate in formal succession planning or discuss succession planning or retirement planning with their children. In many cases, families believe that succession will "fall into place" when the time comes (Keating & Little 1997).

Conclusion

The study revealed a positive linear relationship between succession planning and corporate growth strategy and these findings supported the rejection of the null hypothesis that succession planning does not significantly affect corporate growth strategies in local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County. Consequently the alternative hypothesis that Succession planning significantly affects corporate growth strategies in local family businesses in the manufacturing sector in Nairobi County was accepted. The expected increase in the growth strategies corresponding to the increase in the succession planning was 42.3%.

Recommendations

Family businesses should engage in formal strategic planning and use outside boards and consultants to make strategic decisions. They should also develop formal written succession plans for smooth business succession. Family businesses should also consider making use of family councils to deal with succession issues.

Direction for further research.

The researcher offers the following direction to future researchers. Since the study was conducted in Nairobi County and considered the manufacturing firms only, other studies involving family firms in other counties and sectors could be done.

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