

ROLE OF FAMILY-SUCCESSION CRISIS, ITS RESOLUTION, AND FAMILY THERAPY ON FAMILY BUSINESS PERFORMANCE IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Many businesses are trapped on issue of who will be the successor after the founder/leader is no longer controlling the helm of affairs. The study adopted cross-sectional design in which the population comprised family businesses in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study sampled 145 respondents who were purposively drawn from the entire population where data was analyzed using the regression method with the aid of the SPSS package. It was revealed that succession crisis resolution and family therapy have a significant and positive effect on family business performance. The study recommends among other issues that family business owners should imbibe the culture of leadership succession crisis resolution as it proves to ensure a smooth transition of leadership succession in the organization. furthermore, owners and managers of family businesses should engage their workers in psychological therapy, so as to enable them to be more productive within and outside the business environment.*

KEYWORDS: **Business Performance, Contribution, Crisis Resolution, Family Business, Family Therapy, Leadership Succession**

INTRODUCTION

The history of man has been characterized by different levels of crises that range from individual, family, group, organizational and national to international levels. Crisis originates from differences of opinions, interests and desires among members of the same family, group and; many others in standing human society. Therefore, the crisis is normal, ubiquitous and unavoidable in the life of a man as it is an inherent feature of human existence, especially when it comes to taking over the mantle of leadership irrespective of the nature including family business organizations. It is even; useful on many occasions to bring

about understanding within an existing circle of man in our dear global society. It is difficult to conceive of a situation or environment full of crisis-free as far as human life is concerned. Indeed, the very presence of crisis is at the heart of all human societies as staying, living and working together cannot be easily separated from one another. This being the case, it is hardly surprising to note that crisis is a theme that has occupied the thinking of men more than any other, except for God and love (Rappoport & Lowenstein, 2007).

Crisis can be treated broadly as a philosophical category denoting the clash of interest against interest and power against power in the striving for all things to become

manifested. It can also be seen simply as a distinct category of social behaviour with two or more parties trying to get what they both cannot have easily. Sapriel (2003) alluded that crises transpire mainly as a result of managerial errors arising from leadership and decision-making approaches of decision-makers while handling critical matters. Such situations occur in the family circle especially the one with property or business enterprise. They often affect family relationships, family goals, values and standards which also escalate to the general environment.

According to Karam (2018) crisis is referred to as a low probability-high impact phenomenon that threatens the viability of people and the organization. It is seen as an inescapable disruption every organization and its employees are bound to encounter at any point in their life and it mostly occurs with or without sufficient warning signals to parties involved. A crisis can be viewed as a potentiality or a situation, as a structure or a manifestation, as an event or a process of disagreement between two or many parties in a struggle to achieve a specific target of interest. In simple terms, a crisis may be understood as a fight, war, collision or disagreement between people that come in contact for specific reasons; it could happen to a family with a business, a community living together, members of an organization or even people as a nation.

Wobodo, et. al (2020) averred that what is classified as a crisis can be triggered through human actions and inactions such as wrong managerial decisions and practices against matters of interest as well as natural causes such as earthquakes, storms, ocean surges and host of others; which organization must quickly address for better survival. A leadership succession crisis is a predicament that arises when an order of succession fails to meet the specification of one becoming a successor, this normally happens when a leader dies, became incapacitated or steps down due to tiredness or retirement without an indisputable heir. It may result in a war of succession which virtually cannot go down smoothly with members of families that owned and runs businesses. Fidelis (2021) classified periods of leadership succession crisis as stages that are often tense times for all categories of regimes in the society, even where there exists established procedures and easy legitimization

for smooth transition due to the personal interest of the people concerned.

The family crisis occurs when a family status change in most cases to new hands or practice of strange behaviour. It is a turning point that either gets better or worse. Sometimes, day-to-day disagreements can pile up and cause stress over the head in a family, particularly those with businesses. In the same vein, other events can also lead to a family crisis which affects the family relationship and its enterprise. It is a known reality that everyone in a family has a sense of entitlement to the properties of their family and so will feel cheated if he/she does not have a share of the family belongings. In the case of a family business, all members of the family are part owners of the business irrespective of their roles because they belong to the family. Also, every member of the family can be chosen as the successor in most cases than not; the family members have their eyes on the leadership position.

Leadership planning is sacrosanct in discerning who will be the successor hence many family members may have an interest in assuming or taking over the leadership position. Leadership planning entails preparing and training an individual(s) to take over the management and or ownership of a family enterprise to guarantee continuity and smooth growth/development of the business. In terms of crisis resolution or management, Oparanma and Wechie (2014) investigated the process of managing to ensure effective and continuous performance in business-minded organizations such as family-owned businesses.

Family therapy is a category of psychological counselling (psychotherapy) rendering to and among people that helps family members improve communication and resolve any existing conflicts capable of tiering apart a family and her progressive activities. Family therapy services are delivered by a professional(s) known as a psychologist, clinical social worker or licensed therapist in the society to resolve critical psychological issues within a family, group of persons or an organization. Paul et al. (2020) affirmed that family business joins family members together everyone is willing to work for the success of the business to ensure a crisis-free operation. It becomes part of the family's history being the source of appreciation and pride for themselves and humanity as a whole. This also allows the

children to learn to act according to the family's values, which are usually also values of the business enterprise.

Varghese et. al (2020) vowed that family therapy is a foundational structured form of psychotherapy that seeks to reduce distress and conflict by improving the systems of cordial interactions between family members especially, those with businesses. It is an ideal and deliberate counselling technique for helping family members adjust to immediate occurrence that is bedeviling a family member struggling with an addiction, medical issue, mental health diagnosis and many others within the family circle in a given society. Kendra (2021) classified Family therapy as a kind of psychological treatment designed to help with issues that specifically affect families' mental health and the functionality of their activities. It also helps individual family members build stronger relationships, improve communication, and manage conflicts within the family structure.

The key perception of family therapy about family-owned enterprise is that it incorporates both an effective business and a caring, respectful family, enabling the business and the family members to prosper and produce developmental projects in society due to good relationships that exist within the family circle. Techniques used in family therapy focus on improving emotional awareness, assisting with the major changes within a family, helping people accept things they cannot control, and improving communication and collaboration (Kendra, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Many family businesses face the challenge of smooth continuity without rancour after transiting to the next generation to determine who becomes the next leader or successor when the occupant steps aside. Fueglistaller et al (2004) opined that every individual in a family lives through different phases in their personal and professional life in contrast to the life of the legal person corporation their lifetime is limited. Eventually, every entrepreneur or business owner must step down after spending some reasonable time managing the venture and allow other family members or other managers to take over the business for continuity.

Kaye (2005) asserted that crisis plays a pivotal role in making healthy operation of

family business both productive and destructive levels that can lead to the prosperity of family members, stakeholders and beyond. At that time, the question arises of what should happen to the enterprise and the family involvement. Because of the crucial role family enterprises play in many countries of the world, successful succession is crucially for the economy at large in all of these places operating and managing the family business.

In Nigeria, 90% of family-owned businesses do not survive to the second and third generation because of leadership succession crises (Onuoha, 2013). It is a known fact that all organizations have leadership succession problems alike including family owners and operators of family businesses in Nigeria and across other parts of the world. However, the challenges tend to be more complex with owners of the family businesses as it creates crisis because beyond requisite qualifications and skills for the leadership position. Family members certainly prefer that successors should emerge among them. In most cases, crisis occurs during the process of selecting the successor(s). Based on this, the study found it demanding to assess leadership succession, crisis resolution, and the contribution of family therapy on family business performance in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined leadership succession crisis resolution and the contribution of family therapy on family business performance in Nasarawa State. To achieve this, the specific objectives below were set and looked as to:

- i Evaluate succession crisis resolution on family business performance in Nasarawa State.
- ii Examine the effect of family therapy on family business performance in Nasarawa State.

Research Questions

The following questions were investigated in the study:

- i. To what extent does succession crisis resolution affect family business performance in Nasarawa State?
- ii. How does family therapy affect family business performance in Nasarawa State?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant, as it has donated to the current body of literature in the field of family business especially using family therapy as the methodology of resolving family crises for better performance of their enterprises. It broadens the knowledge of family business management team, owners and practitioners on the contribution of family therapy in solving leadership succession crises amongst families with businesses.

The study also serves as a guide to the management and owners of family businesses to come up with a blueprint and provide a clear, level playing ground for policy formation, direction and implementation of methods to choose a successor and improve, generally; the performance of family business ventures. This submission aligned with the findings of this study which connotes that in selecting successors to the family business, the personal attributes of the successors are critically important to be taken into cognizance to choose successors with outstanding qualities that will attract customers and other stakeholders' attention to the business which will lead to the growth and sustainability of the firms to benefit other generation of the businesses and the general society ahead as well not to create a crisis.

Furthermore, it gives the government of Nigeria an understanding of the viability and the role family businesses play in the economic development of the country and the world at large in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national product (GNP); among other variables. Finally, the study serves as a reference point to policymakers of both public and other private organizations on how to set up structures for succession and guides toward boosting the performance of the businesses after assuming the leadership position.

Operational Definition of Terms

Business Performance: Business performance refers to the accomplishment of a given business mission measured against preset standards to be carried out in the organization.

Crisis Resolution: Crisis resolution is a method applied by an individual, group of persons or an organization to resolve the disagreement between two or more parties for a common and peaceful grounds among themselves.

Family Therapy: It is described in this study as a category of psychological remedy that helps family members to improve and bridge the communication gap and resolve skirmishes existing among family members through the effort of a psychologist, clinical social worker and family business professionals.

Family-Succession: Family succession in this study refers to the shifting management or headship tasks of family-owned businesses from the incumbent leadership to a potential successor or next-generation leaders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study adopted the Transformational Leadership Theory. Transformational leadership was first coined and propounded by James Victor Downton in the year, 1973. The theory was thereafter, modified by James Burns in 1978. James Burns was a leadership professional and a biographer who proposed the strength of the vision and personality that team members could be encouraged to follow the laid down steps.

A few years later, Bernard Bass (1990) added even more value to the concept which is being tagged as Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory. Bass (1990) brought about ways and methods to measure and rank the success of transformational leadership as well as the idea of expressing genuineness with a display of focused energy to encourage other team members to remain proactive like them in the organization.

The Transformational Leadership theory is also known as relationship theory which focuses on the relationship between the leaders and their followers. This theory talks about the kind of leader who is inspirational and charismatic, encouraging their followers to transform and become better at an assigned task. Transformational leaders are typically motivated by the ability to show their followers the significance of the task before them and the higher-good quality involved in carrying out the responsibility for better performance. These leaders are not only focused on the team's performance but also give individual team members the required push to reach their potential.

Goswami et al. (2016) described transformational leadership theory as a philosophy that talked about maintaining a positive relationship with stakeholders,

employees' work engagement, job performance, friendliness, and organizational citizenship of members especially, a family that owned the business. This study aligns with the theory of leadership transfer because it focuses on the dynamics that emerge between the predecessor and potential successor during the process of power transition. The attempt to retain the family value and legacy in the family-owned businesses drive most founders to transfer leadership position to a member of their own family. As a result of such a decision, the choice of transformational leadership theory becomes appropriate to this study because the theory stimulates interactions between the founder or owner and potential successor which also promote unity amongst family members for smooth transition any time, any day.

Empirical Review

Vilaseca (2002) researched the shareholder role in the family business. Conflict of interests and objectives between non-employed shareholders and top management team examined the role of family business shareholder and relationship between non-employed shareholders and the top management team regarding their diverse interests in a family business. The diverse interests in the organization create conflicts inevitably. Based on Agency Theory, the study examined the elements that influence the conflict of interests and objectives between non-employed shareholders and the top management team and its impact on a commitment to the family firm. From the findings, the study stated that there is a relationship between employment in the business and organizational commitment that will decrease conflicting interests.

The study suggested that non-employed shareholders should be active in the firm's decision-making process and outsiders would also contribute to the family business's success when they participate in the decision-making process. The result shows that the degree of commitment to the family business is negatively correlated with the number of family members on the board of directors. Nevertheless, the most robust and statistically significant correlation (positive) was found between the number of external board members and the commitment level of the non-employed shareholders.

Siakas, et al. (2014) carried out a study on family businesses: a diagnosis and self-therapy model in Finland and Greece. The "Family Business in the New Economy: How to Survive and Develop" (FAMOUS) project aims to develop a model for diagnosis and self-therapy (diagnostics – therapy, including conflict resolution, modernization, adoption of environment, globalization and many others). The model aims to promote healthy personal relationships and build high-performing teams, as well as to serve as an outside resource that brings objectivity and direction to a certain situation in family businesses. It may unfold unfinished or unspoken issues and help the family business members to work toward their own unique solutions.

The creation of the model is based on the results of the quantitative study (a survey comprising a structured questionnaire completed by 200 Finnish and Greek family businesses) and qualitative study (Personal site visits and interviews comprising 20 interviews in both Finland and Greece) for obtaining a deeper understanding of the research problem and to support the design of the diagnosis and self-therapy model. The most important contribution of this work is anticipated to be the novel family business diagnosis and self-therapy model and subsequent electronic tool in three languages, English, Finnish and Greek, for the identification of potential problem areas and potential activities for their solutions. The aim of the model is to aid family businesses to avoid difficulties at an early stage and to serve as a self-therapy model.

Onyeukwu and Jekelle (2019) conducted research on leadership succession and sustainability of small family-owned businesses in South-East Nigeria. The study surveyed Onitsha and Nnewi commercial and industrial hubs of Anambra State and employed a survey research design. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 298 registered small business owners. A five-point Likert scale structured with a 6-item questionnaire was adopted for data collection. The study employed Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Also, the Paired Sample t-test was employed to verify the existence of statistical evidence proving that the mean difference between the paired observations in

the hypothesis is significantly different from zero.

The findings revealed that mentoring and human capital development have a significant influence on the sustainability of small family-owned businesses. The study, therefore, recommended that family businesses owners should identify their successors early enough and adopt the practice of mentoring as a process of equipping successors, who must however willingly show genuine interest and is not coerced into the business, and adequate time should be devoted to the training of chosen successors, in order to equip them with relevant skills that will make their businesses survive beyond the present through several generations.

Ogundele et al (2012) conducted research on entrepreneurial succession problems in family businesses in Nigeria. The outcome of their research was that the succession laws coupled with the multi-cultural nature of Nigeria caused a stumbling block to smooth succession in family businesses. They also found out that the existing succession laws are too ambiguous as it comprises native laws and the customs of the people. Musa and Semasinghe (2014) researched leadership succession problems in small family businesses in Nigeria. The study discovered that most founders of family businesses refuse to embark on a succession plan due to fear of losing control of the business to subordinates or any member of the family. They also found out that the problem of inheritance in family businesses militates against the continuity of family businesses.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Succession crisis resolution will not have significant effect on family business performance in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
2. Family therapy will not have significant effect on family business performance in Nasarawa State

METHOD

Participants: The targeted population for this research work comprised selected family businesses in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and forty-five (145) family businesses were selected based on the experience using the purposive sampling technique. The selected businesses were those that experienced succession from the second generation and above.

Instruments: The survey study utilized questionnaires. The study utilized a five-point Likert scale to solicit information from the respondents. Basically, SA = strongly agreed, A = Agreed, IND = indecisiveness, D = disagreed, and SD = strongly disagreed.

Procedure: The researchers presented a letter of introduction to the management of each selected family business examined in order to obtain data needed for the study. After granting the permission, the researchers then worked with one staff from each of the businesses in order to reach the individual employee. The staff assisting the researchers was briefed about the aim of the study and how to administer the questionnaire. Written instructions on how to respond to each of the items in the questionnaire were clearly detailed for the participants. At first, their informed consent was established and therefore they were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, no deception, and privacy. However, the participants that were involved in the study were those that met the inclusion criteria. They must willingly accept to participate in the study and must have worked in the enterprise for a minimum of three months. The exclusion criteria for not participating in the study was on the premises of un-willingness to participate, being a manager/supervisor, and not having worked up to three months in that enterprise. On the whole, a total of 150 copies of the questionnaire were distributed out of which 145 were returned but 139 were properly completed and subjected to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for data analysis. The process took the researchers a month and three weeks to complete.

Design and Statistics: The study adopted a cross-sectional design. This design was considered appropriate and suitable for the study that involves gathering data from members of the study population to determine its current state regarding one or more variables. The data collected for this study were analyzed using the regression method with the aid of SPSS version 26. The model specified for the hypothesis is presented below:

$$FBP = a + \beta_1 SCR + \beta_2 FTP + \mu$$

Where: FBP = Family business performance; SCR = Succession crisis resolution; FTP = Family therapy; A = Constant term; $\beta_1 - \beta_2$ = Estimates of the regression parameters; μ = Stochastic error

RESULTS

Test of Hypotheses

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.750 ^a	.562	.556	.294

a. Predictors: (Constant), SCR, FTP

Source: SPSS Output

Table 1 above showed the correlation coefficient between independent variables (succession crisis and family therapy) and family business performance in Keffi LGA is 0.750 implying a strong linear relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. The coefficient of R²

adjusted is 0.556 indicating that 55.6% of the variation in family business performance in Keffi LGA can be accounted for by Succession crisis and family therapy.

Table 2: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.754	2	7.877	91.242	.000 ^b
	Residual	12.259	142	.086		
	Total	28.012	144			

a. Dependent Variable: FBP; b. Predictors: (Constant), SCR, FTP

Source: SPSS Output

Table 2 showed an ANOVA test performed on succession crisis and family therapy. It has a p-value equal to 0.000 which is lower than alpha value (0.05), therefore concluded that the model is significant and fit.

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.562	.139		4.045	.000
	SCR	.287	.069	.306	4.153	.000
	FTP	.461	.067	.512	6.933	.000

a. Dependent Variable: FBP; Source: SPSS Output

Family-succession crisis and its resolution and family business performance in Keffi LGA: The result above shows that succession crisis resolution has a positive significant effect on family business performance in Nasarawa State with a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha value (0.05). Consequently, there is sufficient evidence that that increase in succession crisis resolution will increase family business performance of the companies.

Family therapy and family business performance in Nasarawa State: The above result shows that family therapy has a positive significant effect on family business performance with p-value less than 5% significant level. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that family

therapy has a significant effect on family business performance.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis state that there is no significant effect between family-succession crisis resolution and family business performance in Keffi LGA. From table 3 above, it can be observed that the regression coefficient for succession crisis resolution (SCR) is 0.287 with a p-value is 0.000 which is less than the alpha value (0.05). This indicates that increase in succession crisis resolution will increase family business performance in Nasarawa State. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect between succession crisis and family business performance in Nasarawa State. This finding is consistent with the study of Adedayo et al.,

(2016); Akinyele et al (2015) and Vilaseca (2002) that there is a significant relationship between family business performance and succession crisis resolution. However, the study does not agree with Ogbechie and Anetor (2015) which does not show a significant effect on family business performance.

The second hypothesis stated that family therapy has no significant effect on family business performance in Nasarawa State. Furthermore, table 3 above shows observed that the regression coefficient for family therapy (FTP) is 0.461 with a p-value is 0.000 which is less than the alpha value (0.05). This indicates that increase in family therapy will increase family business performance by 0.461 coefficient. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that family therapy has a significant effect on family business performance. Family therapy is a key factor that if properly managed can improve family business performance not only in Nasarawa State but Nigeria in general.

Implications to Research and Practice

1. The findings of the study will be very beneficial to owners and managers of family businesses that have experienced succession from the second generation and beyond.
2. The findings of the study have increased the span of literature in the area thereby improving the methodology of the subject matter.

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Conclusion

The study investigated family-succession crisis, its resolution and the contribution of family therapy to family business performance in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Findings showed that family-succession crisis and its resolution have positive and significant effect on family business performance. Also, family therapy has shown a significant and positive impact on family business performance. This has led us to the conclusion that leadership succession crisis resolution is a significant tool in increasing the performance of businesses.

Recommendations

1. Family business owners should imbibe the culture of leadership succession and crisis resolution to ensure a smooth transition of leadership succession in the organization.
2. Owners and managers of family businesses should engage their workers in psychological therapy, so as to enable them to be more productive within and outside the business environment.

Future Research Suggestions

The study suggests that future research should be conducted in a different location with different demographic characteristics and other exogenous variables not studied can be studied by future research.

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