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## SUCCESSION PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY OF FAMILY BUSINESSES IN THE FAST-FOOD SERVICE FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *This paper examined the relationship between succession planning and organisational sustainability of family businesses in fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design and a quasi-experimental research design. The study targets 52 registered fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. 194 copies of questionnaire were distributed based on the accessible population of 26 registered fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient Statistical tool was used with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0). The study used content validity, and Cronbach Alpha verified the internal consistency and validity status, and the results were positive. The findings of the study showed that succession planning is positively associated with the organisational sustainability of family business in fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Thus, enhancing social organisational sustainability, environmental organisational sustainability, and economic organisational sustainability. The study concluded that succession planning has positive and significant relationships with the organisational sustainability of family businesses. Based on the findings, the study recommends that family firms should periodically evaluate, through continuous interaction and engagement with employees, how their organization's systems and procedures are organized towards succession planning programs.*

**Keywords:** Succession Planning, Social organizational sustainability, Environmental organizational sustainability, Economic Organizational Sustainability

## Introduction

The provision of quality and nutritious food is a fundamental requirement for human survival. Access to such food has the potential to positively impact various aspects of society, including economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction, trade opportunities, increased security, stability, and improved healthcare. According to the Consumption Expenditure Pattern (CEP) report released by the National Bureau of Statistics, the typical Nigerian allocates approximately 55% of their income towards food expenses. The CEP serves as a metric for gauging the spending habits of the populace regarding both food and non-food items. Although the government does not oversee the sector, private individuals are authorised to establish and operate commercial food services, which significantly contribute to the economic development of society. The consumption of fast food has demonstrated a consistent upward trend, as evidenced by Anifowose and Olaleye's (2016) research. Considering the ongoing worldwide crisis, the Quick Service Restaurant industry in Nigeria remains a lucrative avenue for investment with promising returns (Mustapha et al, 2014). Despite the multifaceted challenges in the economic, social, and political spheres of the nation, commercial enterprises persist in their efforts to thrive (Mustapha et al., 2014). In 1985, the fast-food industry in Nigeria underwent a significant transformation with the introduction of the Mr. Biggs brand by the United African Company (UAC), which currently stands as the largest fast-food franchise in Nigeria. The introduction of Mr. Biggs brought about a transformation in the industry. The emergence of Mr. Biggs can be likened to a revolution that sparked significant growth in the fast food and restaurant industry. This development led to a widespread perception of the industry as a profitable venture. As the population expanded, the demand for more restaurants also increased proportionally. The fast-food industry has undergone significant expansion, resulting in the emergence of fast-food restaurant chains. Presently, Nigeria boasts a plethora of restaurants, including locally owned fast-food franchises. Despite the expansion of this sector and its capacity to bolster the national economy, particularly in terms of employment opportunities, the industry has yet to be fully recognised as a significant economic contributor by the nation. Like numerous enterprises in Nigeria, food service establishments frequently encounter significant business obstacles. According to Ahmad et al. (2014), business enterprises are facing noteworthy obstacles due to the ever-changing characteristics of the enterprise, the market, and environmental conditions. Food service businesses encounter various challenges, such as notable infrastructural inadequacies and the need to adapt to the evolving dynamics of the fast-food industry. Additionally, the insecurity prevalent in the food basket region of northern Nigeria poses a significant risk to the distribution of goods and tourism, thereby increasing costs. Certain enterprises are confronted with unfavourable industry regulations, while others contend with intense competition. Family-owned food service businesses in Nigeria, like other family businesses, face various challenges that impede their long-term sustainability and growth across generations. This has been highlighted in previous studies by Shafieyoon, et., (2014), Gupta et al. (2013), and Zellweiger et al. (2012). Several studies have identified various factors that contribute to challenges in family-owned businesses. These factors include conflicts within the family, insufficient preparation for succession, limited innovation in business operations, overall difficulties in firm performance, lack of continuity in business, and crises among family members induced by polygamy (McMullen, et al., 2015; Samei & Feyzbakhsh, 2015; Adedayo et al., 2016; Ghee et al., 2015; Charles, 2015). It is evident that these exhibit a deficiency in terms of social, environmental, and economic sustainability within their organisational structure. The issue of sustainability poses a significant obstacle for family firms. According to Oforbruku and

Nwakoby's (2015) research, it is estimated that only 13% of family businesses manage to endure beyond the third generation, and less than one third of these businesses can survive into the second generation. Sustainability is the ability to fulfil current requirements while ensuring that the capacity of future generations to fulfil their own needs is not compromised. The concept of business sustainability entails the strategic management of a firm, considering its economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Okeke, et al., 2021). According to Banker et al. (2014), a business can be deemed sustainable if it can withstand market threats and environmental changes, while concurrently devising tactics to enhance market share, augment stakeholders' benefits, reduce operational expenses, minimise workforce turnover, and cultivate employee skills. According to Nkam et al. (2017), organisational sustainability refers to a business's ability to withstand the test of time and effectively manage disruptions while promoting economic, social, and environmental well-being. Organisational sustainability can be defined as a strategic management approach that aims to ensure long-term viability by effectively aligning business operations with dynamic economic, social, and environmental factors, while simultaneously maintaining profitability (Okeke et al., 2021). The primary objective of establishing businesses is to generate value and profitability. Therefore, maintaining continuity is imperative in order to sustain ongoing value generation and profitability. The implementation of succession planning is a crucial tactic for ensuring effective leadership and maintaining business continuity. The significance of efficient succession planning in family firms cannot be overstated. According to Cho et al. (2018), certain businesses were established by families, overseen by the founding families, and exerted significant influence over global economies. According to Ali et al. (2019), to achieve the desired outcomes, it is imperative to incorporate succession planning into the organisational learning and expertise of employees and family members. This can be accomplished by designing and promoting developmental paths. Several studies have been identified in the literature that aim to determine the sustainability of organisations. The study conducted by Olatunbosun and Onuoha (2020) explored the correlation between succession planning and the sustainability of family-owned schools. The results reveal a noteworthy positive association between the various aspects of succession planning, namely successor selection and successor preparation, and the sustainability of such institutions. The recommendation posits that the process of selecting a successor serves to enhance the level of commitment towards the goals of the firm, foster individual growth, and guarantee the continuity of business operations towards achieving sustainable outcomes. Therefore, it is recommended to promote the process of selecting a successor. The process of successor preparation is known to effectively preserve and cultivate intellectual capital, promote career advancement, and facilitate on-the-job learning, all while emphasising the importance of sustainability. Thus, it is recommended that the process of preparing successors be formalised within the institution. The study conducted by Bokhari et al. (2020) aimed to examine the effects of succession planning and strategic flexibility on business sustainability. The results suggest that there exists a noteworthy and affirmative correlation among succession planning, strategic flexibility, and the enduring viability of a business. In another study by Adeleke et al. (2021) assessed the impact of succession planning on the operational outcomes of Small and Medium Enterprises that are owned by families. The results indicate that implementing succession planning will impact heavily on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises that are family-owned. Similarly, Adedayo et al. (2016) study indicate a favourable association between succession planning and the longevity of a firm. Also, several authors, including Cella-de-Oliveira (2013), have acknowledged the Triple Bottom Line model as a widely accepted framework. Gultekin and Argon (2020) have created a scale for assessing organisational sustainability that

encompasses various dimensions such as social, environmental, economic, cultural, and managerial aspects. Despite the existence of prior research, there is a dearth of empirical investigations that examine the sustainability of family businesses across various segments to comprehensively capture organisational sustainability. Nevertheless, the sustainability of family businesses is a critical factor in establishing generational enterprises in Nigeria. This study aims to address a research gap by conducting an empirical investigation into three dimensions of organisational sustainability, namely social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Additionally, the study suggests the need for further research on cultural and managerial aspects of organisational sustainability

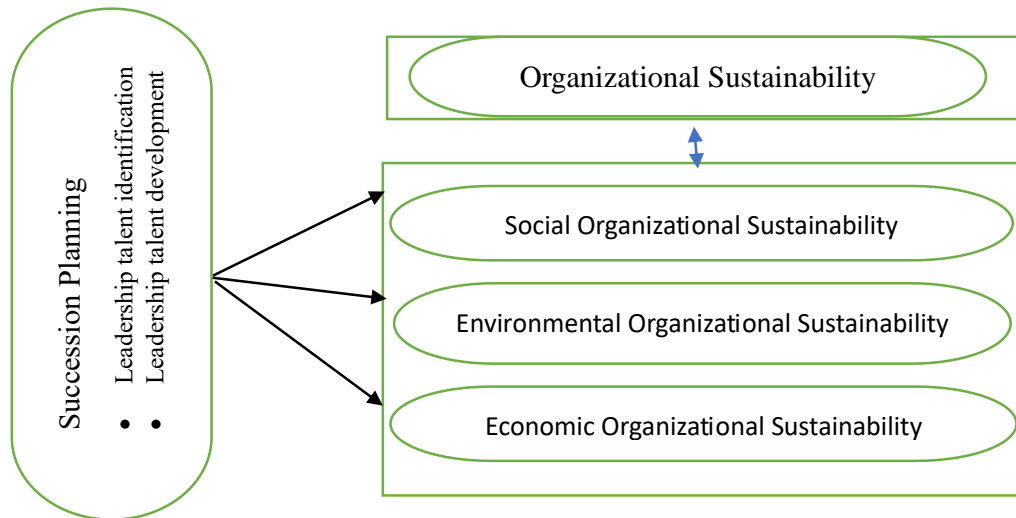


Figure 1.1 Operational Framework of the Research

## Review of Related Literature

### Theoretical Review

The theories that underpin this research work are the universalistic and the upper echelon theories.

The universalistic theory encompasses strategic human resource management best practices and contingency approaches. The theory focuses on aligning human resource practices with firm strategy, it stresses how Human resources can help firms gain sustainable competitive advantage. Early management succession planning research relied on best practices, emphasizing strategic human resource management homogeneity across (Hamid, 2013). This position holds that some human resource management practices are better than others and should be adopted by the firms. Leadership succession planning best practices would improve firm performance through smooth transition, professional training, result-oriented assessments, career progression, and succession planning (Cavanaugh, 2017). On the other hand, the upper echelon theory was on the grounds that the outcomes of firms are driven by the knowledge, experiences and expertise of the persons who occupy prominent managerial roles in the firms (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). The upper echelon theory states that firms' outcomes can be anticipated based upon the characteristics of the principals or executive managers. It canvasses demography to call to mind that managerial characteristics are considerable proxies for fundamental disparity in knowledge, values, and perceptions (Carpenter, et al., 2004). The thesis of the upper echelon theory is that the strategic apex of the firms has the extreme obligation of visioning and is thus charged with the responsibility to ensure that the firm serves its mission effectively. The implication of the upper echelon theory for research is in the areas of leadership and the elaboration of top-level management

in firms. Research studies that center on leadership, board membership, management committees, and ownership will be better within the upper echelon theory.

### **Succession Planning**

Succession planning, according to Adedayo et al.(2016), is a process involving the successfully passing of ownership and management of the family business from the founder to a successor. To achieve the intended results, succession planning entails choosing one or more successors for crucial positions and putting them in place if the firm owner is no longer in office (Ali, et al., 2019). To maintain corporate operations and achieve long-term objectives, organizations must identify talents and develop them into future leaders. According to Promise-Elechi and Onuoha (2023) Talents are those who demonstrate initiative, show dedication, and can consistently produce results for the success of the firm This process is known as succession planning. It entails identifying critical roles, evaluating the organization's present and future talent needs, and designing and putting into action plans to fill any leadership or skill gaps. If important employees leave or retire, succession planning aims to facilitate a seamless transfer of responsibility and reduce company interruptions. It is crucial that succession planning for the leaders receive intentional attention in the organization's human resource development due to the advent of fluid leadership roles and increased changes in management of organizations because of 21st century developments and complexities that lead to management termination, disability, death, and retirement. To address the new difficulties of transient management, effective organizations have made investments in ongoing leadership talent development and proactive succession planning (Ali & Mehreen, 2019). These organizations were required to prepare operational succession plans and focus on the leadership development of potential successors. The adoption of succession planning programme that ensure the organization of the stability at the management level, knowledge or skill level, and personnel level when the current managers depart has made leadership succession planning necessary as a cyclic process (Ali & Mehreen, 2019). Succession management, therefore, is a proactive approach to ensure smooth knowledge transfer, continuity towards the desired organizational goals, and maintenance of organizational stability.

### **Organizational Sustainability**

According to Nkam *et al.* (2017), a company's sustainability is determined by how long it can survive under adverse circumstances. It involves ensuring that the business can manage any issues that may arise without doing too much harm, harming people, or harming the environment. According to the Triple Bottom Line concept, businesses should evaluate their success by considering both their financial health and environmental and social performance. The goal of organizational sustainability is to maintain a balance between the organization's financial interests and its support of the environment and social interactions under the guidance of its stakeholders. To continue to be in accordance with environmental standards, many organizations have been compelled to alter their practices (Hahn & Scheermesser, 2006). Because it is widely believed that an organization's only goal is to maximize the capital of its owners, the conflict with the economic pillar is one of the main obstacles to organizational sustainability. An organization is considered sustainable if its operations were developed in a social-environmental context that affects the quality and availability of natural and human capital. Economic, environmental, and social developments are balanced within and outside of the organization through



organizational sustainability. It gives the organization the ability to continue operating and recoup its investment. According to Munck and Souza (2009), cited in (Cella-de-Oliveira 2013) organizational sustainability is the condition in which an organization shows a relationship to economic, environmental, and social factors. Therefore, a company must maintain these levels of sustainability to be considered sustainable. The capacity of a company or organization to continue operating and carrying out its mission over an extended period while considering how its actions may affect the environment and society is known as organizational sustainability. To do this, a firm must strike a balance between its financial success, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship to build a strong, resilient business that will endure for generations.

### **Social Organizational Sustainability**

Social sustainability depicts the overall interactions between the organization and the environment i.e. accessibility, participation, sharing, cultural identity, stability and empowerment ( Adedayo, et al., (2016). It is much more about the people and the firms' internal environment. In business, human capital is concerned with the employees' skills, motivation and loyalty, and business partners. It compels the firm to internalize the social costs, to provide and maintain the growth of the social capital; aiding democracy, not exploiting the people, and appropriate resources and property rights properly (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002). These embrace the management of the impact caused by the firm on the social systems by the firms' operations and activities. Social organizational sustainability should genuinely consider the expectations of the different social groups as it relates to the firm. It answers questions related to human development; education, training, workplace safety, employee wellbeing, and competency development, inequality, fair pay and benefits, equal opportunities, and workplace discrimination and ethical considerations such as human rights, cultural values and norms (Munck, *et al.*, (2011), cited in (Cella-de-Oliveira 2013). Social organizational sustainability covers such characteristics as sustained fair pay, equal opportunities, wellbeing and safety conditions, competency development and training, career plans and ethical organizational behaviour. (Azapagic, 2003). Social organizational sustainability means the ability of the firm to maintain its social responsibility and positive impact on the society over the long term. It is to consider the impact of the firm's actions on the employees, customers, suppliers, and the local communities and making decisions that balance these interests with the long-term success of the firm. Social organizational sustainability includes initiatives such as promoting diversity and equality, fair labor practice, and contributing to local community development. Its goal is to create a positive and responsible image for the firm and to ensure that its operations and practices contribute to a better society.

### **Environmental Organizational Sustainability**

Environmental organisational sustainability is about a sustained prevention of the firms' negative effects on the living and non-living things. It is more than compliance to the initiatives and regulations of the government, such as efficient use of energy or recycling. It includes the approach to firms' operations, managed by the evaluation of the impacts generated by firms' product, processes, and activities, and by eliminating needless cost, and minimising some practises which may affect the future generations from accessing critical resource (Munck, et al., (2011), cited in (Cella-de-Oliveira, 2013). Environmental organisational sustainability is a firm's ability to operate in a way that minimises environmental harm, meets current demands, and safeguards future needs. To achieve long-term environmental sustainability, it entails analysing all elements of an

organization's operations and reducing waste, pollution, and resource use. Environmental organisational sustainability keeps a company running while protecting the environment.

### **Economic Organizational Sustainability**

Economic sustainability is the organization's growth, development, profitability, and return on investment (Khan, 2014). Economic viability provides profit and jobs, which improves society (Azapagic, 2003). Even in a sustainable development environment, traditional accounting must be recognised (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002) because the company cannot survive without economic capital. Thus, economic organisational sustainability requires above-average stockholder returns to ensure sufficient liquidity cash flow. Long-term profit and market entry are included. In summary, economic organisational sustainability means that the firm acts responsibly and earns social and economic benefits (Munck, et al., (2011), cited in (Cella-de-Oliveira 2013). Economic organisational sustainability is the ability of the firm to maintain its economic viability and profitability over time while considering its environmental and social impacts. Balance financial performance with social and environmental responsibilities to achieve long-term success and stability. It implies considering the firm's economic, social, and environmental impact and improving while conserving financial resources.

### **Empirical Review**

Monyei, et al., (2021) examined how succession management affects the long-term profitability of Lagos SMEs. The descriptive survey study employed the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and showed that succession planning was linked to business sustainability of SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. Bienose, et al., (2021) evaluated how management succession planning affects family company continuity in Lagos State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey study used inferential statistics, which showed that management style had no significant impact on the survival of family businesses, but organisational structure, culture, and the managerial transition process did. Ule, P. A. (2019) studied knowledge sharing and organisational sustainability of ICT firms in Nigeria using cross sectional research survey and linear regression in the analyses of hypothesis. It discovered that knowledge sharing has significant positive effect on organisational sustainability. And resolved that knowledge sharing measured in terms of socialization, internationalization and externalization promotes organisational sustainability through economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability. It stated that managers should encourage knowledge sharing amongst all the employees in the workplace to promote organisational sustainability. Olatunbosun and Onuoha (2020) explored the correlation between succession planning and the sustainability of family-owned schools. The results reveal a noteworthy positive association between the various aspects of succession planning, namely successor selection and successor preparation, and the sustainability of such institutions. It recommends that the process of selecting a successor serves to enhance the level of commitment towards the goals of the firm, foster individual growth, and guarantee the continuity of business operations towards achieving sustainable outcomes. Therefore, it is recommended to promote the process of selecting a successor. Nkam, et al., (2017) carried an empirical study of factors affecting the sustainability of family businesses in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon. Exploratory research with a survey-based approach through the purposive sampling technique, and descriptive statistics. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used, and the data analyzed using SPSS 17 and Stata 14 software programs. The results show that many family business initiators do not prepare for succession as they do not consider the sustainability of the businesses. It recommends that owners of family

business should market their businesses to the younger generation by allowing them to see the rewards, benefits profitability they derive from the businesses, than make their children see only the stressful side of the businesses. Also, they should constantly offer training opportunities to their employees to achieve sustainability in their businesses. Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2015) investigated the effect of mentoring, communication, and training on the sustainability of selected family businesses in South-East, Nigeria. A survey research design was implemented. Multiple Regression Analysis method was used in testing the hypotheses. The result of the hypotheses shows that training, mentoring, and communication has significant effect on sustainability of family businesses.

### **Methodology**

The study employed a cross-sectional quasi-experimental research design. The cross-sectional survey approach is appropriate as the study areas are geographically distinct and the sample elements are assessed only once. The research focused on 52 fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria as contained in the yellow pages of the Rivers State Ministry of Commerce, the study included a sample of 194 employees from the accessible population of 26 fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size of 194 was representative of the study population. The research employed content validity, Cronbach alpha reliability, and simple random sampling. The study employed the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient and descriptive statistical measures to test hypotheses. This technique was employed to establish a linear relationship between the predictor and criterion variables, given the ordinal nature of the questionnaire items. The statistical software SPSS was utilised for data analysis.



## Results and Discussion

**Table 1: Measurement Model: Reliability and Validity for SP, SOS, EVOS and ECOS**

Construct	Item	Loading	CR	AVE	A
Succession Planning	<i>SP1</i>	0.845	0.95	0.80	0.832
	<i>SP2</i>	0.921			
	<i>SP3</i>	0.894			
	<i>SP4</i>	0.911			
	<i>SP5</i>	0.888			
Social Organizational Sustainability	<i>SOS1</i>	0.899	0.94	0.77	0.793
	<i>SOS2</i>	0.847			
	<i>SOS3</i>	0.798			
	<i>SOS4</i>	0.901			
	<i>SOS5</i>	0.931			
Environmental Organizational Sustainability	<i>EVOS1</i>	0.873	0.92	0.76	0.803
	<i>EVOS2</i>	0.855			
	<i>EVOS3</i>	0.844			
	<i>EVOS4</i>	0.802			
	<i>EVOS5</i>	0.841			
Economic Organizational Sustainability	<i>ECOS1</i>	0.894	0.96	0.82	0.817
	<i>ECOS2</i>	0.911			
	<i>ECOS3</i>	0.944			
	<i>ECOS4</i>	0.891			
	<i>ECOS5</i>	0.893			

**Source: SMARTPLS Result Output**

Table 1 displays high factor loadings, ranging from 0.798 to 0.944 of all observed variables (statement items) against their corresponding elemental factors (latent variables). All values exceeded the threshold of 0.6, indicating their legitimacy as latent factor measures. All measures, including CR, AVE, and Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ), surpassed the designated threshold of 0.5. The data exhibit convergence. Validity is assessed by comparing the Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients. Our analysis indicates that the statement items of our research instrument provide objective and valid measurements for succession planning, social organisational sustainability, environmental organisational sustainability, and economic organisational sustainability.

**Table 2: Conditions for Decision Rule**

Decision	Relationship	Remark
P<0.05	Ho	Reject
P>0.05	Ho	Accept
+(-) 0.1 to 0.3	Positive/Negative	Weak
+(-) 0.4 to 0.6	Positive/Negative	Moderate
+(-) 0.7 to 0.9	Positive/Negative	Strong
+(-) 1	Positive/Negative	Perfect

**Hypothesis One**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Succession planning does not relate with social organizational sustainability.

**Table 3: Correlation showing the relationship between Succession Planning and Social Organizational Sustainability**

		Succession Planning	Social Organizational Sustainability
Succession Planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.833**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	188	188
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	.833**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	188	188

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 displays the Spearman Rank Correlation between succession planning and social organisational sustainability in fast-food service firms in Rivers State. Significant correlation was found between succession planning and social organisational sustainability (rho = 0.833, P < 0.05, P-value = 0.000). The study indicates that implementing consecutive planning can enhance social organisational sustainability. The null hypothesis Ho<sub>1</sub> was rejected due to its p-value (0.000) falling below the predetermined significance level of 0.05.

**Hypothesis Two**

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Succession planning does not relate with environmental organizational sustainability.

**Table 4: Correlation showing the relationship between Succession Planning and Environmental Organizational Sustainability**

		Succession Planning	Environmental Organizational Sustainability
Succession Planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.739**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	188	188
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	.739**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	188	188
Environmental Organizational Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.739**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	188	188

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Spearman Rank Correlation was used to analyse the relationship between succession planning and environmental organisational sustainability in fast-food service firms in Rivers State, as presented in Table 4. The correlation between succession planning, environmental organisational sustainability, and fast-food service firms in Rivers State is significant ( $\rho = 0.739$ ,  $P < 0.05$ , P-value = 0.000). The study indicates that implementing consecutive planning can enhance environmental sustainability. Ho2 was rejected due to its p-value (0.000) being lower than the predetermined 95% significance level for the decision rule.

### Hypothesis Three

Ho<sub>3</sub>: Succession planning does not relate with economic organizational sustainability.

**Table 5: Correlation showing the relationship between Succession Planning and Economic Organizational Sustainability**

		Succession Planning	Economic Organizational Sustainability
Succession Planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.825**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	188	188
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	.825**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	188	188
Economic Organizational Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.825**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	188	188

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 displays the Spearman Rank Correlation between succession planning and economic organisational sustainability in fast-food service

firms in Rivers State. Significant correlation ( $\rho = 0.825$ ,  $PV < 0.05$ ) exists between successive planning and economic organisational sustainability. The results indicate that implementing consecutive planning can enhance economic sustainability. The null hypothesis

Ho3 was rejected due to its p-value (0.000) falling below the predetermined significance level of 95%.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Relationship between Succession Planning and Social Organizational Sustainability**

Hypothesis one examined the important association between succession planning and social organisational sustainability of family businesses among fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient tested the hypothesis. Succession planning and social organisational sustainability were positively correlated (Rho= 0.833). The construct variables are strongly and positively correlated. We rejected hypothesis one because the probability value (0.000) was less than the level of significance. Studies like (Olatunbosun and Onuoha 2020; Nkam, et al., 2017; Ofobruku and Nwakoby 2015) are in support of our findings that succession planning and social organizational sustainability are positively associated.

### **Relationship between Succession Planning and Environmental Organizational Sustainability**

Hypothesis two examined the important association between succession planning and environmental organisational sustainability of family businesses among fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient tested the hypothesis. Succession planning and environmental organisational sustainability were positively correlated (Rho= 0.739). The construct variables are strongly and positively correlated. We rejected hypothesis two because the probability value (0.000) was less than the level of significance. Some studies are in line with succession planning and environmental organisational sustainability: (Bienose, et al., 2021; Ule, P. A. 2019) support our findings that succession planning affects environmental organisational sustainability.

### **Relationship between Succession Planning and Economic Organizational Sustainability**

Hypothesis three (Ho3) examined the substantial association between succession planning and economic organisational sustainability of family businesses among fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient tested the hypothesis. Succession planning and economic organisational sustainability were positively correlated (Rho= 0.825). The construct variables are strongly and positively correlated. We rejected hypothesis three because the probability value (0.000) is less than the level of significance. Some research data supported succession planning and economic organisational sustainability: (Monyei, et al., 2021; Nkam, et al., 2017) found that succession planning considerably affects economic organisational sustainability and therefore supports the relationship between succession planning economic sustainability.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The results demonstrated that succession planning has a substantial impact on the social, environmental, and economic organisational sustainability of family businesses among

fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The research results indicate a significant and favourable correlation between consecutive planning and the long-term viability of fast-food service establishments in Rivers State, Nigeria. This is attributed to the establishment of a connection with leadership, which fosters organisational sustainability, encompassing social, environmental, and economic dimensions. Consequently, the ensuing suggestions are put forth:

- I. It is recommended that fast-food service firms regularly evaluate their succession planning methods and procedures by means of consistent communication and involvement with their workforce.
- II. Owners of family businesses, particularly, the fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria should market their businesses to the younger generation by making their children to understand and see the rewards, benefits and profits they derive from the business, to enable their children build passion for the business and desire for generational enterprise
- III. Family-owned fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, should ensure sufficient succession preparation by identifying leadership talents, including family member employees and develop them to align to the firms' strategy for long-term sustainability and growth across generations.
- IV. Initiators of family-owned fast-food service firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, can separate the businesses from their families by setting standards to avoid conflicts within their families and crises among family members induced by polygamy to maintain continuity and sustainable value generation and profitability.
- V. It is recommended that managers of fast-food establishments establish well-defined approaches for consistent engagement with their personnel. This will facilitate the transfer of knowledge, foster a sense of reliance, and secure their dedication to the organisation for an extended period.
- VI. Executives in the fast-food industry are required to possess an entrepreneurial mindset to effectively devise succession planning strategies that can accommodate the ever-changing nature of the succession process.
- VII. The responsibility of succession planning should not solely rest on enterprises. Considering the significant role that these businesses play in the economy, it is imperative that the government takes charge in providing education and ensuring that they have established succession plans.
- VIII. It is possible to offer government incentives to firms to encourage succession planning. This strategy can be effective, as successful enterprises can contribute to job security, poverty reduction, and improved living conditions, thereby indirectly benefiting the government.



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