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The impact of succession planning on stakeholders in higher education institutions

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Abstract

Succession planning has become an important part of making sure that higher education institutions can keep going, that leaders can stay in their jobs, and that the organization can grow. This paper examines the impact of succession planning on three primary stakeholders: teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and students. It looks at how organizations that use structured succession frameworks are more stable, motivated, and efficient. Teaching staff benefit from professional development and leadership opportunities; non-teaching staff gain from increased job security and recognition; and students benefit indirectly through consistent quality of academic services. This study employs qualitative and secondary analysis in order to explain the diverse effects of succession planning and its importance for institutional performance and student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Succession Planning, Higher Education, Teaching Staff, Non-Teaching Staff, Students

Introduction

Succession planning is a strategic process that finds and trains possible leaders in an organization so that key positions can be filled quickly when they become empty. In higher education, where principals, heads of departments, and administrative officers are very important, succession planning makes sure that schools can keep running and growing. Universities and colleges are having more and more problems, like changes in leadership, the retirement of experienced teachers, and new educational needs. These problems make it very important to create a clear plan for how to keep leadership going.

Succession planning gives teachers a way to move up in their careers and makes them more motivated and feel like they belong. Non-teaching staff members gain new skills and a sense of stability at the school. Good succession planning means that students will have stable teaching environments, consistent leadership, and high-quality educational experiences.

So, succession planning not only keeps the organization running smoothly, but it also creates a good place to learn and work for everyone at the school.

Review of Literature

Awanis Ku Ishak and Bidayatul Akmal Mustafa Kamil (2016) ^[1] state that at Malaysian public universities, the effectiveness of succession planning is largely contingent upon leadership style and knowledge-management practices; however, career development opportunities did not exhibit a significant direct impact on succession effectiveness. Their research indicated that when institutional leaders implement participative or transformational leadership styles and effectively manage knowledge—through sharing expertise, mentoring, and documentation—succession planning becomes more efficient and apparent. But just giving people career development paths without the help of leadership and knowledge transfer didn't work very well. This implies that for both teaching and non-teaching personnel, the manner in which leadership engages with them and the institutional culture regarding knowledge sharing are more significant than generic development programs. This means that for your research, the effects of succession planning on stakeholders are influenced more by leadership and culture than by training alone. Felix Kwame Opoku, Millicent Serwaa Frimpong, and Isaac Tetteh Kwao (2021) ^[2] looked at how succession planning affects employee commitment in a study of non-academic senior staff at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana.

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They discovered that institutions with well-defined succession frameworks and training programs for non-teaching personnel experience an increase in staff commitment. Job satisfaction specifically affected the relationship: non-teaching staff who were happier with their jobs were more likely to respond positively to succession-planning efforts. This shows that succession planning that includes more than just faculty members is good for everyone involved, including administrative, support, and technical staff. This emphasizes the significance of recognizing non-teaching staff as a stakeholder group and demonstrates that their dedication, which influences institutional operations, is positively associated with succession planning.

Kazi Enamul Hoque and Chunli Zheng (2024) ^[3] conducted a systematic review of succession planning literature in higher education from 2012 to 2022. They found that while interest in the topic is growing, many institutions still face serious gaps. For example, there aren't enough talented people, there aren't enough pipelines that include women, and personnel systems are out of date. They stress that keeping leadership and developing talent are very important, but many colleges and universities don't do as well as businesses do. The review notes that there is a lot of literature on the subject, but not many empirical studies look at how succession planning affects students, non-teaching staff, or the academic community as a whole. This review provides a robust foundation for your study, demonstrating that succession planning plays an essential role for institutional stability and stakeholder experiences, while also highlighting a research gap concerning its direct impact on students and non-teaching staff.

A 2020 study conducted by Abd Rahman Ahmad, Tan Zan Ming, and Hairul Rizad Md Sapry at a Malaysian public university utilized a seven-point model of succession planning. The authors discovered that, while strategic key positions were prioritized, numerous teaching and non-teaching roles were excluded from the succession pipeline. They discovered that leadership continuity was more secure for senior positions, yet this assurance did not apply to wider stakeholders or subordinate roles. This shows that succession planning doesn't always work, even when it's formalized. For example, teaching and support staff may still feel left out, and the benefits may not reach students through continuity of teaching and administration. Therefore, your research should examine whether succession planning encompasses all stakeholder levels and the impact of such inclusion (or exclusion) on those stakeholders.

Yasmeen Bano, Siti Sarah Omar, and Fadillha Ismail (2022) ^[5] conducted an empirical quantitative study of Malaysian higher learning institutions to examine the relationship between succession planning practices and employee retention, encompassing both academic and non-academic staff. The results indicated a significant positive correlation, revealing that institutions with more robust succession planning practices—such as successor selection, leadership development, and the involvement of top leaders—experienced higher employee retention rates. The study underscores that retention, a crucial organizational outcome, is improved when stakeholders discern a transparent future, an agenda for growth, and institutional commitment. This indicates that a quantifiable effect of succession planning on both teaching and non-teaching personnel is enhanced

retention, which may indirectly advantage students through institutional stability.

Statement of the Problem

Due to retirements, resignations, or changes in the organization, colleges and universities often have a hard time making sure that leadership stays the same. If there isn't a clear succession plan, things could become unstable, employee morale could drop, and student services could become inconsistent. Teaching staff may be unsure about their future career opportunities, non-teaching staff may not get enough credit for their work at the school, and students may notice that the school's academic delivery and management aren't always the same. Consequently, this study aims to examine the effects of succession planning on diverse stakeholders within higher education institutions, specifically targeting teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and students.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the impact of succession planning on teaching staff in higher education institutions.
- To examine the impact of succession planning on non-teaching staff in higher education institutions.
- To assess how succession planning influences students' experiences and academic outcomes.
- To understand the review of literature in the related areas.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design added by secondary data analysis. Data were gathered by examining research articles, reports, and institutional case studies that concentrate on succession planning in higher education. The qualitative approach was chosen to enhance comprehension of the impact of succession planning on diverse stakeholders from various viewpoints.

The research includes theoretical and analytical discussion informed by scholarly literature and institutional methodologies. Data interpretation emphasizes thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to leadership continuity, employee development, and student outcomes. The results presented are derived from synthesized insights rather than numerical data, guaranteeing a comprehensive, narrative-driven analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Impact on Teaching Staff

Structured succession planning is very helpful for teachers because it gives them clear chances to grow professionally and become leaders. When faculty members are seen as possible future leaders, they want to improve their skills by taking part in mentoring and training programs. This lowers the number of people who leave and creates pathways for academic leaders. When schools have clear succession plans, their faculty is more committed and happier with their jobs. Mentoring programs also let more experienced teachers share their knowledge with newer teachers, which helps build a culture of collaboration and continuity.

Impact on Non-Teaching Staff

Non-teaching staff are very important to the administration, upkeep, and support services at colleges and universities. Good succession planning makes them feel safe and valued

at work. Giving employees chances to learn about administration, work with people from other departments, and be recognized for their work boosts morale and productivity. By making sure that knowledge and skills are shared systematically between departments, succession planning makes it less likely that one person will be needed. This not only reduces disruptions to operations, but it also encourages internal mobility and inclusivity.

Impact on Students

Students benefit from good succession planning, even if they don't directly see it. Stable institutional leadership makes sure that academic programs, policies, and quality standards are all the same. Students learn without interruption when teachers and administrators are ready for changes. Also, developing leadership skills in faculty members improves the quality of mentorship, which has a direct effect on students' motivation and academic success. On the other hand, schools that don't plan for succession often have problems with administration, inconsistent policies, and unhappy students.

Conclusion

Succession planning in higher education institutions is not merely an administrative function but a strategic necessity. It ensures leadership continuity, promotes employee growth, and enhances student learning experiences. Teaching staff gain motivation and career development; non-teaching staff experience recognition and stability; and students benefit from consistent and quality education. The success of any higher education institution depends on its ability to nurture future leaders through systematic talent identification, mentoring, and development initiatives. Therefore, integrating succession planning into institutional policies is essential for achieving long-term sustainability, innovation, and academic excellence.

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