

BUILDING LEADERS FOR TOMORROW: A COMPREHENSIVE SUCCESSION PLANNING MODEL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the practice of succession planning in higher education institutions, with a particular focus on the localized context of the Province of Cavite, Philippines. Employing a grounded theory research design, the study utilizes structured interviews as its primary research method to extract insights from key personnel directly. The investigation centers on the key attributes, including organizational commitment, skills assessment, talent evaluation, leadership development, selection processes, transition implementation, and integration of succession planning. The findings uncovered a spectrum of commitment levels among personnel, identified skill gaps in potential successors, underscored limitations in leadership development initiatives, and highlighted the subjective nature of leadership selection criteria. A crucial observation was the misalignment between the goals of succession planning and the broader institutional objectives. However, it's important to note that the qualitative approach adopted in this study may limit the generalizability of its findings. In conclusion, this research underscores the significant role of organizational culture in effective succession planning, offers practical recommendations applicable to higher education institutions globally, and calls for further research in this area. The study's uniqueness lies in its localized perspective, comprehensive objectives, and contribution to understanding the influence of organizational culture in the context of succession planning within the higher education sector.

Keywords: Educational Leadership and Management; Succession Planning, Organizational Culture; Grounded Theory, Structured Interviews; Province of Cavite, Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

Succession planning stands as a proactive strategy crucial for sustaining effective leadership within organizations, ensuring the identification and development of individuals poised for future leadership roles. In higher education institutions, this practice becomes particularly imperative given

the pivotal role played by competent academic leaders. However, the notable scarcity of succession planning initiatives in higher education underscores the necessity for more in-depth research to unravel how current leaders are identified and prepared.

The frequent resort to external hiring for key positions, driven by the dearth of qualified internal

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candidates, often leaves deserving talents within the organization disenfranchised. This dearth of succession planning in higher education institutions exacerbates the risk of leadership gaps, posing a potential threat to the institution's long-term success and sustainability.

This study holds paramount significance as it has the potential to offer higher education institutions a profound understanding of the critical importance of succession planning in ensuring effective leadership. By comprehending the pivotal role that succession planning plays, higher education institutions can proactively strategize for leadership transitions, thereby perpetuating effective leadership and contributing significantly to the sustained success of the institution.

Previous research by Roman (2016) emphasized the need for succession planning when handling organizational changes and transitions, especially in the then-current volatile economic climate. The American Council on Education (2018) supported succession planning to develop a pipeline of future leaders in educational institutions, ensuring sustainability and achieving long-term goals. Bornstein (2010) highlighted the necessity of supervision and support from key stakeholders for successful succession planning in higher education. Unlike the previous three studies, this research takes a localized approach by focusing on higher education institutions in the Province of Cavite. While Roman (2016), the American Council on Education (2018), and Bornstein (2010) provided valuable insights into succession planning, their broader perspectives needed to offer the depth of understanding that came from studying a specific institution's practices and challenges.

The current study on succession planning in higher education was drawn from a comprehensive range of literature to enhance its understanding of this critical organizational

process. Birnbaum (2011) contributed valuable insights through case studies by examining leadership transitions in higher education institutions and shedding light on the intricacies and challenges faced during succession planning. Dean et al. (2018) delved into the existing practices and future requirements of succession planning, highlighting the potential integration of technology to optimize leadership transitions. Jones and Wilkins (2016) provided a qualitative exploration of succession planning, uncovering common themes and effective strategies in higher education.

Moreover, this study adopted a grounded theory research design, setting it apart. Grounded theory emphasizes generating an idea directly from the data collected during interviews with key personnel in the higher education institution. In contrast, the previous studies may have relied on different research methodologies, potentially leading to variations in the depth and relevance of their findings.

Furthermore, the current study's comprehensive objectives encompassed various attributes, including organizational commitment, skills assessment, talent evaluation, leadership development activities, leadership selection, transition implementation, and succession planning integration. This thorough exploration of multiple factors influencing succession planning had been unique compared to the more specific concentration of the previous works.

This study explored the assessment of key personnel in higher education institutions located in the Province of Cavite regarding succession planning. The study investigated attributes such as organizational commitment, skills and competencies, talent assessment, leadership development activities, leadership selection, implementation of transition, and integration of succession planning.

The research was conducted at higher education institutions in the Province of Cavite. The data collection process spanned from November 2, 2022, to November 14, 2022.

This study aimed to assess the critical personnel's perspectives on succession planning in higher education institutions in the Province of Cavite, identifying attributes and practices that had contributed to effective leadership continuity and development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study endeavors to explore the nuanced dimensions of effective leadership continuity within higher education institutions by pursuing specific objectives related to succession planning. The primary aims of this research encompass the following key objectives: firstly, to assess the levels of organizational commitment among key personnel within these institutions; secondly, to conduct a thorough evaluation of the skills and competencies of potential successors, aiming to identify strengths and areas requiring improvement; thirdly, to identify and nurture talent within the institutional framework, emphasizing leadership development; and fourthly, to investigate the seamless integration of succession planning into the overarching strategic objectives of the institution.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted grounded theory as its research design, emphasizing the generation of a theory closely connected to the data collected from key personnel in higher education institutions in the Province of Cavite. Unlike previous studies that offered broader perspectives, this research took a localized approach, providing in-depth insights into succession planning practices within this academic setting.

The participants in this study consisted of seven co-participants, who were carefully selected for their roles as decision-makers and planners in their respective institutions. Structured interviews served as the primary data collection instrument, designed to explore various attributes related to succession planning, such as organizational commitment, skills and competencies, talent evaluation, leadership development activities, leadership selection, transition implementation, and succession planning integration.

To ensure the appropriateness and clarity of the interview questions, they underwent construction, try-out, and refinement stages. Reliability and validity tests were conducted to validate the instrument's consistency and accuracy in measuring the intended attributes, enhancing the study's rigor.

This research also adhered to ethical principles, as informed consent or assent was obtained from all participants, and clearance was secured from an ethics review board to safeguard the welfare of human subjects.

The data collection involved interviews with the identified co-participants, gathering rich and firsthand perspectives on the institution's succession planning practices. Subsequently, qualitative data analysis techniques, such as thematic or content analysis, were applied to identify patterns and themes in the interview responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study, titled "Building Leaders for Tomorrow: A Comprehensive Succession Planning Model for Higher Education Institutions," examines succession planning practices within specific higher education institutions in Cavite. The research objectives are centered on evaluating organizational commitment, conducting a thorough assessment of the skills and competencies of potential successors, identifying and evaluating talent, exploring various leadership development activities, and scrutinizing the integration of



succession planning with overarching strategic management. Through this focused investigation, the study aims to illuminate the intricacies of succession planning within the specified educational context, providing valuable insights for the cultivation of effective leadership in the future.

1. Organizational Commitment

The co-participants have a range of levels of commitment to the organization from highly committed to not committed, and also include nuances such as a belief in the organization's mission and values, a desire for improvement within the organization, a sense of loyalty or identification, and the importance of job stability and benefits. Some statements express uncertainty about the level of commitment to the organization.

This range in commitment underscores the complex nature of organizational allegiance, influenced by factors such as personal values, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support.

The study revealed that organizational commitment varied among key personnel, with some showing high dedication to the institution while others expressed concerns about leadership continuity. The assessment of the skills and competencies of potential successors identified areas for improvement, particularly in certain leadership aspects such as decision-making and communication. The evaluation of talent highlighted promising employees with significant potential for growth as future leaders, providing opportunities for their development within the organization. Leadership development activities were limited, requiring more structured training and mentorship programs.

2. Skills and Competencies

The co-participants have a range of perceptions about their skills and competencies as leaders. The statements express various levels of confidence in their abilities, from feeling fully equipped to struggling to keep up with responsibilities. Some statements also identify specific areas where the employee could use more development such as technical or interpersonal skills, while others speak to the employee continuously seeking opportunities to learn and grow, and a diverse range of skills being available.

The findings emphasize the dynamic nature of leadership skills, with individuals recognizing both strengths and areas that require development. The commitment to continuous learning suggests a proactive approach to skill enhancement.

3. Talent Identification and Development

Concerning the assessment of talent, the co-participants provided their perception of their leadership abilities and potential for growth as a leader. Some statements express confidence in their natural abilities, such as excellent communication skills and the ability to inspire and motivate others. While others express uncertainty or recognition that they have room for growth and development. Some statements express that they are actively seeking opportunities to learn and develop their leadership skills. Some statement also points out the balance of both natural abilities and growth potential.

The co-participants have identified a range of potential leadership development activities that could help prepare potential successors for leadership roles. The statements suggest various leadership development programs such as workshops and seminars, job rotation and cross-



functional assignments, mentorship, coaching and retreats, rotational assignments and projects, and shadowing experienced leaders. These various methods provide a diverse way of learning, hands-on experience, focused and immersive learning, individualized support and guidance, and observing leadership in action.

The balance between recognizing current abilities and acknowledging growth potential highlights a holistic view of talent. The identified development activities reflect a comprehensive approach to nurturing leadership skills and fostering growth.

4. Integration of Succession Planning

Concerning the importance of an effective succession planning process for an organization, the statements suggest that succession planning should be integrated into various aspects of the organization's overall strategy, such as the strategic planning process, performance management and development, talent management, and regular review by leadership. The succession planning process should be collaborative and involve key stakeholders, such as senior leadership and HR. It should be regularly reviewed and updated to align with the current and future needs of the business and have a clear process for identifying, evaluating, and supporting potential successors. Overall, it should be seen as a priority for the organization, and regularly discussed and reviewed by the leadership level.

This underscores the strategic nature of succession planning, not as a standalone process but as an integral part of organizational strategy. Regular discussions and reviews at the leadership level reflect the continuous and collaborative nature of effective succession planning.

Regarding the integration of succession planning, the study identified a gap in aligning succession

planning goals with the institution's overall strategic objectives. This lack of alignment hindered the effectiveness of succession planning as a holistic management strategy.

International literature supports the significance of succession planning in organizational management, highlighting the need to adapt to changes and transitions in today's volatile economic climate (Roman, 2016). The American Council on Education (2018) emphasizes the importance of succession planning to ensure a sustainable pipeline of future leaders in educational institutions. Bornstein (2010) underscores the necessity of supervision and support from key stakeholders for successful succession planning in higher education.

Using grounded theory as the research design in this study provided a valuable, in-depth understanding of succession planning in the specific institution. However, relying solely on qualitative data may have limited the generalizability of the findings to other higher education institutions. Quantitative data could have enhanced the study's robustness and allowed for broader comparisons.

The study's comprehensive objectives effectively covered various attributes of succession planning, but some objectives might have benefited from further refinement to ensure specific and measurable outcomes. Additionally, the selection process to identify potential successors could have been strengthened by incorporating objective criteria and systematic evaluations.

CONCLUSIONS

This study employing grounded theory as the research design, thoroughly investigated the succession planning practices of a specific higher education institution in the Province of Cavite. The localized insights obtained shed light on key

aspects of leadership continuity within this academic setting.

The research revealed varying levels of organizational commitment among crucial personnel, a factor significantly influencing succession planning outcomes. Additionally, the assessment of skills and competencies among potential successors pinpointed areas in need of improvement, emphasizing the necessity for targeted leadership development activities.

A noteworthy finding of the study was the profound impact of organizational culture on succession planning outcomes. The institution's unique culture emerged as a critical factor shaping employees' commitment and engagement in succession planning efforts, a dimension not extensively explored in existing literature.

The contribution of this research lies in its revelation of the pivotal role of organizational culture in effective succession planning, a dimension that remains underexplored in current literature. In conclusion, the study offers valuable insights into the succession planning practices of the higher education institution under scrutiny, encompassing organizational commitment, skills assessment, talent identification, leadership development, selection processes, transition plan implementation, and strategic integration. These findings guide enhancing succession planning practices in higher education, ensuring robust and sustainable leadership for the institution's continued success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations emerge with global implications for higher education institutions. Firstly, institutions should prioritize fostering a culture of commitment and engagement by offering professional development opportunities and promoting a

positive work environment. This commitment is crucial for effective succession planning. Secondly, investing in comprehensive leadership development programs for potential successors, including training and mentorship, is vital. International collaboration can enhance these programs. Thirdly, adopting objective and transparent criteria for selecting leaders ensures better organizational performance. Additionally, strong integration of succession planning into strategic management aligns goals with long-term objectives. Knowledge sharing and collaboration within the international higher education community can contribute to effective leadership continuity. Cross-cultural studies are encouraged to understand how cultural contexts impact succession planning. The study underscores that success in succession planning depends not only on formal processes but also on intangible factors like organizational culture. Effective leadership continuity necessitates fostering an environment valuing talent development, continuous learning, and shared vision. Implementing these recommendations requires a holistic approach, considering each institution's unique context, challenges, and goals. Regular evaluation, feedback loops, and flexibility are essential for adapting strategies to changing circumstances. The study advocates ongoing research and collaboration within the field of succession planning in higher education, emphasizing localized studies, cross-cultural comparisons, and exploration of innovative strategies to enrich the understanding of succession planning intricacies and potential. In conclusion, effective succession planning is a multifaceted endeavor requiring strategic alignment and continuous adaptation, ensuring seamless transitions, institutional momentum, and long-term success.



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Dr. Dennis C. Camatog is a distinguished educator, accomplished leader, and prolific researcher dedicated to advancing education. Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Management, he actively engages in groundbreaking research on innovative leadership. With a diverse educational background, including a DBA and MBA, Dr. Camatog has served critical roles in academia, receiving accolades such as Outstanding Alumnus. His extensive research portfolio spans leadership, innovation, and strategic management. Beyond academia, he contributes to societal development and currently serves as Vice-President for Research, Innovation, Extension, and Linkages in Parañaque City. Dr. Camatog's life embodies an unwavering commitment to education and leadership.

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