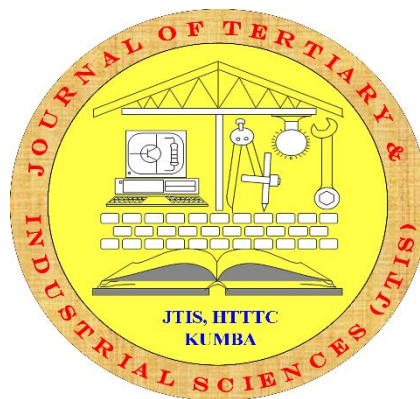


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ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Management Succession Planning and its Effect on the Sustainability of Entrepreneurial Business in the North-West Region of Cameroon

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the effect of Management succession planning on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region of Cameroon. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected with the help of questionnaires distributed to 189 business entrepreneurs in the NWR selected by convenience. The research uses OLS technique to estimate the regression. The findings revealed that mentoring and coaching have a negative and significant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses, training and development have a positive and insignificant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses and employee retention has a positive and significant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses. The study recommends that, Policymakers should consider implementing initiatives that encourage and incentivize entrepreneurial businesses to establish structured mentoring programs. This could involve providing tax credits, subsidies, or other financial support to businesses that invest in mentoring initiatives

Keywords: Succession Planning, Sustainability, Entrepreneurial Business, NWR Cam

1. Introduction

According to Rothwell (2010), management succession planning is the identification organizational critical management positions and broadening the skills of internal high-potential leaders to hold the future vacant or created key leadership positions in the organisation for the purpose of achieving organisational objectives. The concept has long been a point of emphasis for academics concerned with the long-term viability of businesses. A few of these scholars have even gone so far as to claim that a generation may give unto the next a gift of competent succession planning.

However, one of the difficulties entrepreneurial businesses faces is that of managing succession of one generation leader to the next according to Dalpiaz *et al.* (2014). There is no clear concise plans or systematic process for implementing succession planning in many entrepreneurial businesses Fiang *et al.* (2015) reason why many entrepreneurial businesses are not able to succeed beyond the first generation as stipulated by Sanntarelli and Lotti (2005). It is estimated that over 70% of entrepreneurial businesses may not survive up to the second generation while in the third generation not up to 90%. Villegas *et al.* (2019) say the lack of succession planning processes is the reason for the failure in the continuity of entrepreneurial businesses. The issue of sustainability in

entrepreneurial businesses is eminent because according to Walsh (2011) it is estimated that, 70% of entrepreneurial businesses do not survive into the second generation and 90% do not make it to the third generation.

According to Ogundele *et al.* (2012), 94.2% of family owners in Nigeria were said to have lacked an effective succession plan. It was further discovered that the owners either died in active service or were being compelled to stop working due to health challenges without an appropriate succession plan put in place. So, according to Morgan *et al.* (2021) in spite of the relevance of family owned businesses to economic and social development, their lack of long-term sustainability is a major call for concern.

Cho *et al.* (2018), carried out a study on the effect of succession planning on family owned businesses in Cameroon; results prove that these businesses usually fail because of lack of sustainability and also because of the sudden death or incapacity of the predecessor without a succession plan for the survival of the business.

The sum of these findings led the researcher to carry out a research on the effect succession planning on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region of Cameroon.

Also, literature indicates that 87% of the Tanzanian Family businesses collapse after the first generation (Maseyi, 2016). The lack of management succession planning is mentioned as the major cause (Budotela, 2016; Negou *et al.*, 2023).

The sum of these observations in literature urge the researcher to investigate the effect of management succession on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North-West region of Cameroon.

2. Literature Review

2.2. Conceptual Literature

The major concepts used in this work are management succession planning and the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses.

2.1.1. Management Succession Planning

According to Ugoani (2020), a comprehensive management succession planning involves strategic HRM policy in order to provide a fertile ground for organizational sustainability. Strategic HRM is the process through which management designs the components of its HRM system so as to be consistent with each other, with other elements of the organizational architecture, and with the organizational strategy and goals (Ugoani, 2020).

According to Adedayo *et al.* (2016), the process of succession planning is the handoff of the family business's ownership and management responsibilities from the founder to someone else. Succession planning is a process that helps businesses reach their goals by identifying key jobs that need to be filled in the event that the current owner steps down. In a 2019 study, Ali *et al.* Talents are those that regularly contribute to the success of the organisation via their initiative, devotion, and ability to generate outcomes (Promise-Elechi and Onuoha, 2023). Succession planning describes this procedure. It comprises

figuring out who needs to be in charge, what skills are lacking, and how to fill those gaps, as well as assessing the organization's current and future personnel requirements. The goal of succession planning is to lessen the impact on the business in the event that key personnel retire or depart by arranging for the smooth handoff of responsibilities. With the rise of more fluid leadership roles and the increased turnover in management that comes with the complexity and innovations of the modern era, succession planning for leaders must be a deliberate part of any company's human resource development strategy. Proactive succession planning and continuous leadership skill development have helped successful organisations tackle the emerging challenges of temporary management (Ali & Mehreen, 2019).

Having the correct people in the appropriate roles at the right times is also important since it will assist the organisation tackle both strategic and operational difficulties. With increasing employee engagement and the dispersion of decision-making authority to empowered workers throughout organisations, it is said that succession planning is no longer confined to top managers but is now visible for every role in the company.

The major components of strategic HRM include strategic workforce planning, talent acquisition and retention, mentoring and coaching, performance management, employee development and training, succession planning, employee engagement, HR planning, and compensation management (Hamid et al., 2022).

2.1.1.1. Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring may be understood in many different ways, as Rolfe (2021) notes. The author emphasises that in order to assist the mentee in progressing towards their own objectives, the mentor uses their own wisdom. The roots of the word "men" in Indo-European imply "to think," as pointed out by Garvey and Stokes (2022), whereas the Greek term "mentor" implies "advisor" in ancient times. An advisor who enables others to think. go further to explain that mentoring evolved over time and can be dated back to Homer's *Odyssey* when Odysseus asked his friend and mentor to guide and support his son Telemachus in his absence. The root of the word 'mentor' refers to the nurturing role of a mentor and to facilitate thinking. Thomson (2013) reflects on mentoring as being more directive, telling, feeding back, modelling practice, and guiding colleagues

Coaching according to Alexis Fedor (2023) is a method or process, with the help of which a person aims to achieve set goals by developing their skills and improving their performance. A coach is not a teacher, but rather a facilitator who facilitates the coachee in their process of growth in order to enhance their productivity and overcome their work-related or other issues. Coaching usually includes observation by different techniques, accountability, and providing relevant feedback.

Browne (2020) refers to coaching as a form of development, and outlines that it is the coach's role to enable the coaches to find solutions within themselves. Whitmore (2017) points out the main difference between mentoring and coaching is that in mentoring the mentor is the expert, and they aim to share their expertise with the mentee through guidance and advice. However, Lancer *et al.* (2016) argue that there are some similarities between coaching and mentoring in the United Kingdom, the authors argue that in both instances powerful questioning is used, and mentors and coaches, enable their mentees or coachees to find solutions. However, Hall (2019) state that the mentor relationship stretches over time, and that the mentor holds the expertise, whereas in coaching the

assumption is made that the coachee holds the solutions within themselves. Tolhurst (2010) state that the coach not only helps to unlock the potential of the coachee in the learning relationship; the coach's role is to affirm the coachee's progress and celebrate success with them. The author highlights the importance of not only supporting the coachee to succeed, but to ensure that successes are valued, as it leads to greater motivation and confidence building. Connor and Pokora (2016) refer to coaching as a creative partnership.

2.1.1.2 Training and Development

In Siddiqui's research study (2018), he examined the significance of training and development programs as an integral component of human resource development (HRD). It is well acknowledged that all tasks, regardless of their scale or the size of the organization, whether in the primary, secondary, or tertiary sector, necessitate the involvement of human resources. Human resources are a vital asset for any organization to which they are affiliated. It is imperative that these human resources receive comprehensive training and development to acquire optimal skills, knowledge, and competences. This will enable them to function with greatest confidence and contribute to both personal career success and organizational advancement. Training and development programmes are utilized as effective means to transmit essential knowledge and facilitate learning processes. Training methods can be classified into two categories: on-the-job training and off-the-job training and development approaches.

On the other hand, development involves getting the skills, knowledge and other behaviours which are necessary for a project or an activity (Australian Film Television and Radio School AFTRS, 2011). Development prepares employees to occupy positions in the firm and as well assists the employees to get future jobs (Drummond, 2000). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007), states that development involves activities such as coaching, formal educational commitments and experiences. Training and development is very important for organizations. According to Katcher and Snyder as cited by Kum *et al.* (2014), training and development aids an organization to adapt to changes that meet the tastes and preferences of customers and equally improves employees skills and boosts their morale, thereby making them efficient, reducing waste and operations and increasing productivity.

Also, an organization may decide to train its employees while still on the job, or off the job. In the case of the former, the worker is trained inside (internally) the organization. Some of the training and development methods that may be adopted by an organization to upgrade the skills of its employees include apprenticeships, induction and job rotation.

2.1.1.3 Employee Retention

Employee retention is a very essential problem encountering organizational management due to the shortage of talented workers, economic development and loss of workers. Employee withdrawal is more expensive to an organization in monetary terms; it's consequences on worker motivation and buyer happiness Eshiteti *et al.* (2013). Tunje

(2014) asserted that employee retention is the ability of an organization to retain its employees from quitting organization whereas reducing employee turnover. It is utilized to retain the most skilled and productive employees without withdrawal from the company. According to Abbasi and Hollman (2000), turnover concept described as the flow of workers among various companies as well as jobs. Retaining competent and talented human capital develops a similar value for staff and also for an organization. Tews *et al.* (2014) stated that favourable inner work events negatively impacted employee turnover. Retention of staff and poor turnover leads to quality of output and buyer satisfaction Schroeder *et al.* (2013). According to Chitsaz Isfahani and Boustani (2014) asserted that staff retention is generally considered a capability to sustain a secure human resource. The number of researches has examined that controlling turnover is a challenging task for companies as distinct companies utilizing several strategies to keep the workforce (American Management Association, 2001)

This research focused mentoring and coaching, training and development and employee retention but other determinants of succession also include

2.1.1.4 Employee Turnover Rate

Armstrong (2006) defines employee turnover as the rate at which an employee gains or losses employees in the organization. The lack of potential for advancement or promotions has caused many mid-level executives to leave the organization Employee turnover also measures the number of employees who leave an organization during a specified time period, typically in one year. While an organization usually measures the total number of employees who leave, turnover can also apply to subcategories within an organization, such as individual departments or demographic groups.

2.1.1.5 Working Environment

The working environment includes physical factors around the work area of an employee and also all aspects that form part of the worker's involvement with the work itself. Hytter (2008) assessed that the working environment has usually been addressed by industrial viewpoint for example with a focus on physical facets such as massive loads, disturbances and access to the poisonous materials. Employees are happy to work in those companies which offer a favourable working environment where they know that they are creating a difference and where many of the employees inside the organization are competent and are working together to drive the business forward (Milory, 2004). A good succession planning program can help to make employees happy and satisfied which as a result will produce a more productive and successful working environment

2.1.2 Business Sustainability

To put it simply, business sustainability is the process of ensuring that an organisation can weather the inevitable storms that are sure to come its way. The use of biological analogies instead of financial measures alone reflects the extra concern for viable growth, both in terms of size and the sensation of wellbeing. Along with Ramstad and Boudreau (2005). For an organisation to be sustainable over time, it must take into account a lot of factors. These include, but are not limited to: the following: the mission and identity of the organisation as it relates to strategic planning; product, service, and programme planning; human resources and organisational culture; and financial stability, which includes ethically sourced funds that would not pose a threat to the organization's continuation (Kurucz and Colbert, 2007). One way to shed light on the limitations of efficiency and effectiveness models is to acknowledge their precariousness in dealing with risk and uncertainty (Bendell, 2014).

Having a succession plan in place is essential to a company's performance and, by extension, its longevity, as stated by Fahed- Sreih & Djoundourian (2008). Succession planning, according to Rothwell (2001), is an organization's calculated and methodical attempt to maintain important leadership roles, build and preserve intellectual and knowledge capital, and promote personal growth. Effective personnel training is an essential component of any successful succession plan, which aims to facilitate a seamless transfer of ownership from one generation to the next.

2.1.6 Conceptual Framework

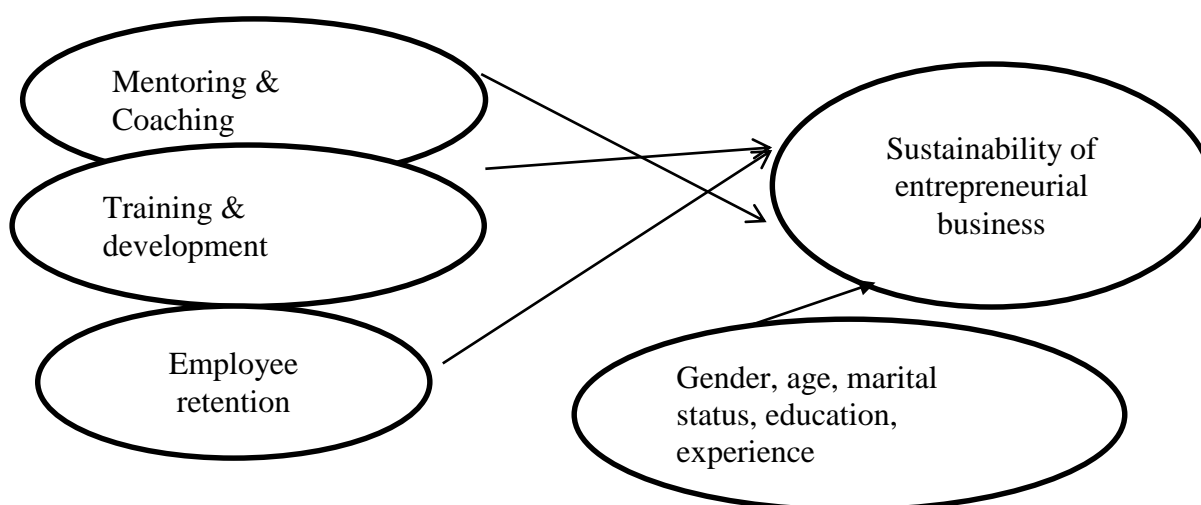


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher Work (2025).

The study which aimed to ascertain the effect of succession planning on sustainability of entrepreneurial business in NWR in Cameroon. Succession planning is the independent variable, the sub independence variables are mentoring and coaching, training and development and employee retention and the dependent variable for the study is the sustainability of entrepreneurial business. In this study succession planning was operationalize or captured using mentoring and coaching, training and development and employee retention. According to the framework above, sustainability of entrepreneurial business depends on these sub independent variable, any change of them will cause a

change in the sustainability of entrepreneurial business. More so, control variables were used which include gender, age, education, marital status, level of experience.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

2.2.1 Relay Succession Planning Model by Santorin (2004)

Santorin (2004) created the first concept for succession planning, which is called relay succession planning. A key tenet of Santorin's strategy is the idea that a company's present leadership team needs a lot of time to pass the torch to their successor. By putting their potential successors through a series of tests designed to gauge their business aptitude, companies that implement relay succession plans tend to do better in the long run, as shown by Santorin's study. A company's incoming boss might learn from the departing boss while simultaneously gauging the status of management.

This technique is being studied by Santorin in order to compare and contrast the effects it has on businesses that do not have similar tactics. Therefore, relay succession plans work better since the new chief executive officers are well-versed with the company's problems and difficulties upon taking over (Osibanjo et al., 2011). Although studies conducted at the University of Santorin showed that businesses with an internal relay succession model outperformed those without in the long run, it's understandable that some organisations would rather seek outside assistance when launching new projects or fulfilling long-term goals.

Since this research aims to examine the relationship between succession planning and organisational sustainability, specifically how managers and directors might be better prepared to educate successors over time, the Relay Succession plan model is an appropriate framework to utilise. The approach was useful for identifying the characteristics that influenced the transfer of authority, such as talent retention, development and training, and mentorship. You may hire people, help them grow professionally, and prepare them for higher-level roles by following the steps outlined in the Relay succession planning model. He stressed the need of succession planning in making sure employees are prepared to fill any role. To make sure you have employees who are prepared to take on new roles when your company grows, offers promotions, loses important employees, or experiences an increase in income, succession planning is essential.

2.2.2 Otto Scharmer's Theory U Model (2007)

As Otto Scharmer (2007) would have you believe, Scharmer aims to help individuals break out of their regular thinking patterns by offering them points of reference in his Theory U, sometimes known as the u theory. How can an individual contribute to solutions that are in line with society's true needs? He explains. As a school of thought, Theory U is all about individual initiative and fresh perspectives. When thinking about succession planning, it's helpful to picture a U-shaped process with five steps that might facilitate change, starting with the near future. With the support of these shifts co-initiating, co-sensing, presencing, co-creating, and co-evolving a company may better adapt to change and put succession planning procedures and strategies into place for the future. Both Kolhatkar and Banerjee (2015) and Maguta (2016) agree. Here is how this idea is being put into practice:

According to the idea, the first step is "Co-initiating," during which the company and all of its stakeholders agree on a shared goal for a future occurrence; in this example, the preparation for a successor. The next step is "Co-sensing," during which the company

solicits collective feedback in an effort to generate novel ideas for potential models and methods that might work within the framework of the company. The third stage, known as presencing, marks the beginning of the future's emergence as a potential reality. A lack of "presence" is a contributing factor to the fact that many organisations become complacent and fail to plan for the potential issues posed by unfilled critical roles that have not been adequately prepared for. At the fourth level, co-creating, top-level management participating in the succession planning process prepares future leaders for important roles in the company for when current leaders depart. In the co-creating phase, a network of agents of change opens the door to the future. The final step, co-evolving, is when the invention takes place after the leadership has determined which of many prototypes are viable and useful. According to Adewale et al. (2011), companies who have used "Scharmer's U" method have achieved significant and long-lasting success, which means that Scharmer's concepts may be applied to succession planning as well (Kolhatkar and Banerjee, 2015).

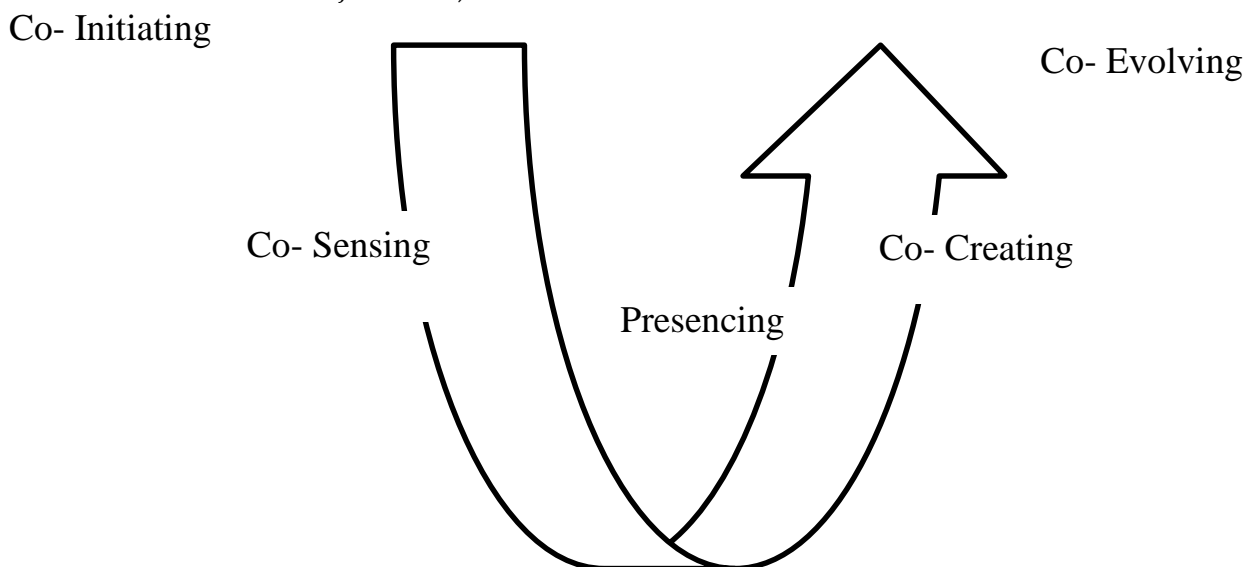


Figure 2: Scharmer's Theory U Model

Source: Scharmer, 2007

2.2.3 The Agency theory by Eisenhardt (1989)

A framework for comprehending the connection among succession planning, career advancement, and employee retention is provided by Eisenhardt's (1989) agency theory. Agents, in this case workers, are said to be driven by self-interest and may engage in adverse selection or moral hazard, which includes remaining or leaving the organisation, in conjunction with principals, in this case employers; this is sometimes referred to as agency cost. According to the hypothesis, this expense may be reduced if employers support their employees' interests—career development and participation in the succession plan program—and employees' interests—the retention of talented workers—in the same programme. Citation: Cruz et al. (2010). This idea posits that in order to prevent the negative effects of employee turnover—which include a loss of competitive advantage—organizations must provide opportunities for professional growth, such as succession planning, to their staff. By influencing the employee's decision to stay or leave

the company, development initiatives reduce agency cost. According to Cummings et al. (2007). Agency costs, or the turnover of a trained staff, may be mitigated, say Gomez et al. (2001), by offering incentives and bonuses to employees, most notably opportunities for professional advancement.

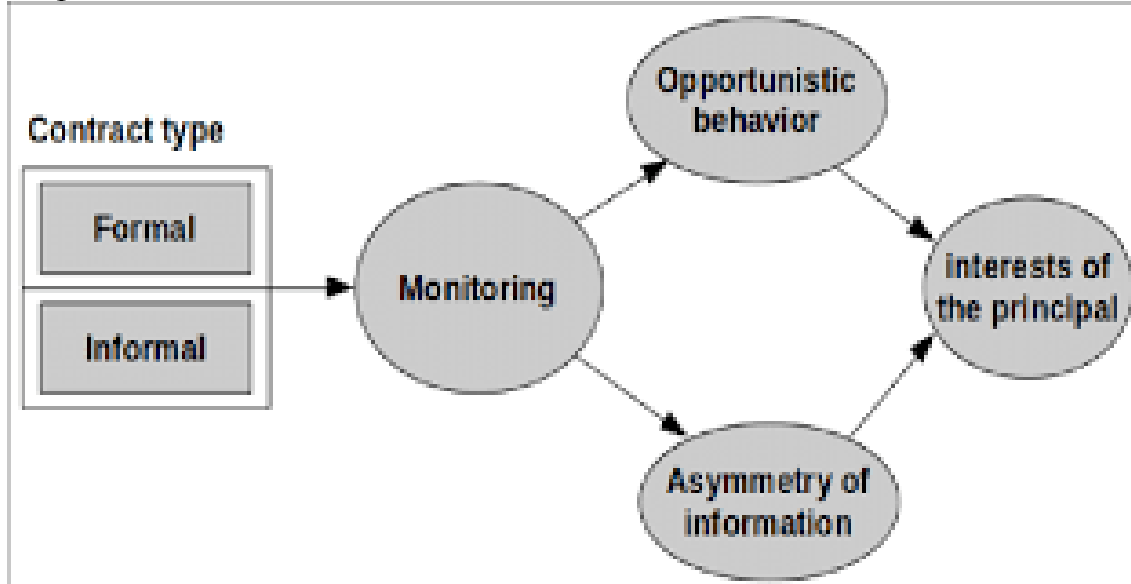


Figure 3: Eisenhardt Agency Theory

Source: Eisenhardt (1989)

2.3 Empirical Literature

Yahya et al. (2012) used three viewpoints managerial, enterprise-level, and external to examine the elements influencing training in SMEs. Next, the correlation between instruction and output is investigated. A t-test, stepwise regression approaches, descriptive analysis, and Pearson correlation are used. The study's data came from questionnaires delivered to specific SMEs via the mail. A total of 27.6% of the 500 SMEs in Malaysia that were surveyed actually filled out the surveys. Training improves the performance of SMEs, and the desire for training is influenced by manager's, enterprise's, and external factors, according to the empirical evidence derived by examining SMEs' data.

Another study by Agbim *et al.* (2016) investigated the impact of succession planning on firm performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms. The study collected data from 120 Nigerian manufacturing firms and employed regression analysis to examine the relationship between succession planning and firm performance. The study found that effective succession planning practices, such as identifying and developing successors, were associated with higher financial performance and overall firm performance. In Ethiopia, Tadesse (2017) explored the relationship between succession planning and firm performance in private banks. The study collected data from 207 employees and 58 managers of private banks in Ethiopia and employed regression analysis to examine the relationship between succession planning and firm performance. The study found that effective succession planning practices, such as talent identification and development, were positively related to financial performance and overall firm performance. Mubarik and Kiruja (2017) study on the impact of succession planning on firm performance in Kenyan family-owned businesses showed that effective succession planning practices,

such as identifying and grooming successors, were associated with improved financial performance and overall firm performance

Furthermore, succession training significantly affects the performance of family businesses, according to Ghee, Ibrahim, and Abdul-Halim (2015). This study found that succession planning, staff retention, and organisational efficiency are all interrelated, according to research conducted by Tetteh (2015) in Accra, Ghana. Career development programmes acted as a go-between for succession planning and organisational efficacy, according to this research.

Nwonso (2014) found a correlation between excellent succession planning and the long-term performance and development of a company, indicating that this is the best strategy for ensuring a company's sustainability and growth. It was decided that parts of the succession strategy worked. Leadership development and succession planning best practices were investigated by Kevin (2007). In light of these results, it is recommended that businesses establish a mentor network in which all managers actively participate in mentoring relationships with both their immediate reports and exceptionally talented individuals from all departments. A project-based learning experience is one of these leadership development programmes that managers at all levels may participate in. Succession planning, according to Haroski (2010), aids in the pre-existing acquisition of knowledge, working connections, and information from important competent personnel with extensive experience. Organisations rely on their personnel to carry out their purpose and achieve their vision, therefore having this data at their disposal will allow managers to evaluate a larger pool of applicants for available positions. Despite the importance of succession planning for any firm, Saan et al. (2013) found that many family-owned businesses in the Wa municipality lacked formal, written succession plans, making it difficult to regulate the level of planning done by family business founders and their impact on the longevity and success of these businesses.

Small family-owned firms in South East Nigeria were studied by Onyeukwu and Jekelle (2019) to determine their leadership succession and sustainability. Onitsha and Nnewi, two major cities in Anambra State, were the sites of the survey research that formed the basis of the study. We used a basic random selection approach to choose 298 small firms that were already registered. The data gathering tool used was a six-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. In order to establish the connection between the independent and dependent variables, the research used Pearson Product Moment Correlation. To further confirm that there is statistical evidence indicating that the mean difference between the paired observations in the hypothesis is substantially different from zero, the Paired Sample t-test was also used. The results show that small family held firms are more likely to be there in the long run if they participate in mentorship programmes and work to improve their human capital. The research concluded that family company owners would be wise to start planning for the future of their companies' leadership with an early succession plan that includes mentoring. The leadership model hypothesis of succession is in agreement with this result.

In order to provide stakeholders with guidance on how to handle succession planning issues, Cho et al. (2018) investigated the impact of succession planning on Cameroonian family companies. Tragically, most family firms inevitably fail, particularly when the founder passes away, according to the study, even though they represent the backbone of economic prosperity and employment creation in most nations, including Cameroon's.

Ten well-known family companies in Cameroon were the subjects of the case study responders in the exploratory study. The study used logistic regression and descriptive statistics to demonstrate that succession planning significantly impacts the longevity of family businesses in Cameroon. It also found that the degree to which successors are prepared to take over the company from their founders significantly impacts succession planning and, by extension, the longevity of family businesses in Cameroon. Applying qualitative and quantitative approaches via survey, interview, and observation. One hundred participants from ten well-known family companies in Cameroon were polled for the study. The study used logistic regression and descriptive statistics to demonstrate that succession planning significantly impacts the longevity of family businesses in Cameroon. It also found that the degree to which successors are prepared to take over the company from their founders significantly impacts succession planning and, by extension, the longevity of family businesses in Cameroon.

2.4 Literature Gap

It was discovered that, most of the existing literature such as (Buckner and Slavenski, 2000). Garman and Glawa (2004) deal with succession planning without giving attention to organizational sustainability and its specific variables and benefits in examining their influence Entrepreneurial businesses in Cameroon. It was also discovered that, most organizations, although acquiring information on the consequences of succession plan were still low in the organizational sustainability principles. Thus, lack of adequate training and development, mentoring and coaching and employee retention of the staff of these organizations were also observed as essential quality for lack of application of a sustainable succession plan among organizations of Riege (2016). And also it was discovered from the above empirical evidence by Cho *et al.* (2018) in Cameroon above the reason why most businesses fail is because of lack of sustainability especially when the leader dies. It is based on these gaps that; this study was designed to examine the Effect of succession planning on the Sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region of Cameroon. This study however intends to look at the direct relation between succession planning and business sustainability using the regression analysis.

3. Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach to administer 189 questionnaires to employees and key stakeholders of entrepreneurial businesses selected by convenience and by referral.

The functional model of this study links the different ways by which succession planning is related the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses as seen in equation 3.1

$$SEB_i = f(SP_i, X) \dots \dots \dots 3.1$$

Where SEB= sustainability of entrepreneurial business, SP= Succession Planning, x is vector variables for MC, TD, ER

Mathematically, the function is expressed as:

$$SEB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MC_i + \beta_2 TD_i + \beta_3 ER_i + \beta_4 Gen_i + \beta_5 Edu_i + \beta_6 YE_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7$ are parameters to be estimated

SEB= sustainability of entrepreneurial business, MC stands for Mentoring and Coaching, TD stands for Training and Development, TR stands for Talent Retention, Edu stands for employees' level of education, YE = years of Experience captures the number of years the

employee has been working for the company, Gen is for Gender represents the employees; sex.

Since this study makes use of qualitative data, the following formula will be used

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \pi(1-\pi)}{D^2}$$

π is the probability risk

where the interval level is at 95% meaning there is a 5% of inaccuracy

so the interval level will be 1.96

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.15) (1-0.15)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{0.489803}{0.0025}$$

Sample size = 189

Therefore the sample size of this study is 189 employees of Entrepreneurial businesses in Bamenda.

4. Presentation of Results

4.1. Demographic Information

The characters in demographic information consisted of gender, age groups, marital status, educational qualifications, and level of experience. All the statistical information of these features is explained below.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic Features	Elements of demographic features	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	101	53.4
	Female	88	46.6
	Total	189	100.0
Ages of respondents	20-29years	31	16.4
	30-39years	41	21.7
	40-49years	98	51.9
	50years+	19	10.1
	Total	189	100.0
Highest educational qualification	No formal education	7	3.7
	Primary education	18	9.5
	Secondary education	70	37.0
	Tertiary education	94	49.7
	Total	189	100.0
Marital Status	Unmarried	75	39.7
	Married	114	60.3
	Total	189	100.0
Years of experience	<5 years	13	6.9
	5-9 years	58	30.7
	10-15 years	64	33.9
	16-20 years	45	23.8
	21 years +	9	4.8
	Total	189	100.0

Source: Author's Research (2025)

According to the demographic information on table 1, it tells us that the statistics of male respondents was 101 of them, making a percentage of 53.4% meanwhile 88 were female giving a corresponding percentage of 46.6 %. From this study, we can say that the majority of the entrepreneurial business respondents who partake in the survey are males

as seen above. The high percentage of males than females indicate that males are more into business reason being that they like to be independent for themselves unlike females who prepare secretariats and easy jobs. Also, for age groups, 26.4% are between 20-29 years, and 21.7% were between 30-39 years, 51.9% are from 40-49 years and 10.1% are those from 50 years and above. This informs that the majority of the participants are adults and youths, the justifiable reasons for why there are many adults and youths is because adults are more into profit making business and children (still leaning work) and ageing who are mostly into farming for home consumption than businesses. More so, the study reviews that the majority of the participants are married covering 60.3% out of the sample, meanwhile unmarried people were of 39.7%, as can be seen in the table above. The reason why married people are into business might be because they prepare early married in other to have partners and children to assist them in their works and also to have and advising and pushful partner.

Moreover, for educational qualification it shows that majority of the entrepreneurs have attended tertiary educational level about 49.7% these business peoples. 37% have study up till secondary level of education. Also, 9.5% of the respondents have completed primary education. A small proportion, approximately 3.7%, indicated that they have no formal education. These results provide insights into the educational qualifications of the participants, indicating the distribution of different educational levels among the respondents. Furthermore, about the years of experience entrepreneurial business; the largest proportion, that is 33.9%, of the participants reported having 10-15 years of experience. Around 30.7% of the respondents have 5-9 years of experience. Also, 23.8% have been into business for about 16-20 years while 4.8% have been for 21 years and above in entrepreneurial business.

4.2. Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha)

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Obs	Sign	Cronbach's Alpha
SEB	189	+	0.6734
MC	189	+	0.6320
TD	189	+	0.5959
ER	189	+	0.5806
Female	189	+	0.7150
Pedu	189	+	0.7246
Sedu	189	+	0.7236
Tedu	189	+	0.7304
F16 20years	189	+	0.7214
A21years	189	+	0.7255
Total scale			0.7172

SEB (sustainable Entrepreneurial Business), **MC** (monitoring & Coaching), **TD** (training & Development), **ER** (employee Retention)

Source: Author's Research (2025) Via STATA

From the table above, it shows that the data can be reliable this is because the total Cronbach alpha value for the variables is 0.7172 which is greater than 0.70, hence our analysis can be reliable.

4.3. Descriptive statistics

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
SEB	189	-1.00	1.308	0.846	0.001
MC	189	9.30	1.513	0.271	0.011
TD	189	1.43	1.59	0.327	0.000
ER	189	-1.27	1.753	0.682	0.000
Female	189	.466	.5	0.424	0.000
Primary edu	189	.095	.294	0.000	0.000
Secondary edu	189	.37	.484	0.003	0.000
Tertiary edu	189	.497	.501	0.951	0.000
Experience(16_20years	189	.238	.427	0.000	0.108
Experience (21years +)	189	.048	.214	0.000	0.000

SEB (sustainable Entrepreneurial Business), MC (monitoring & Coaching), TD (training & Development), ER (employee Retention)

Source: Author’s Research (2025) Via STATA

Table 3 indicates components of descriptive statistics that were derived which make mention of mean, standard deviation, sample space (N), minimum and maximum values. The total observations from the statistics is 189 sample observation. The mean indicates the average value of the variables used. The remaining mean values are displayed on the table above. The standard deviation indicates the variation of the variables away from the mean, the higher the standard deviation, the higher the dispersion. Here the variable employee retention (ER) has 1.753 value of standard deviation implying high dispersion. The values are also displayed on the table above. More so, the demographic features are all displayed on the table above with their respective mean and standard deviation.

Mentoring and Coaching

Table 4: Mentoring and Coaching

Statement	SA	A	I	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
My organization has a mentoring and coaching program	25.9	33.9	20.6	12.2	7.4
Periodic checkpoints are in place for evaluating the process of mentoring and coaching in your organization	32.8	41.8	15.3	8.5	1.6
There is a need for mentoring in my organization	29.1	46	12.7	6.3	5.8
The mentor in your organization encourages you to take courses, seminars and workshops to develop your competences in administration	25.9	42.9	16.4	9.5	5.3
The mentor in your institution discusses career paths with you	30	38.8	22.2	5.8	3.2
Your mentor or coach helped you develop a professional reputation	26.5	49.2	16.4	5.8	2.1
My mentor or coach takes personal interest in my career	34.9	32.3	22.2	7.9	2.6

Source: Author’s Research (2025)

Table 4 shows percentages of information from respondents of the study about monitoring and coaching for their entrepreneurial businesses. According to the first view, that their organization has a mentoring and coaching program; majority of the response percentage from the participants agreed that is 33.9% that there is mentoring and coaching programs, 25.9% strongly agreed while 20.6% were neutral, only about 12.2% and 7.4% turn to disagree and strongly disagreed respectively about it. Also, most the participants about 32.8% and 41.8% strongly agreed and agreed responsively that

Periodic checkpoints are in place for evaluating the process of mentoring and coaching in their organization business, 15.3% were neutral while 8.5% and 1.6% disagree and strongly disagreed respectively. According to all the responses above it shows that monitoring and coaching turn to influence the sustainability of entrepreneurial business in NWR. All the rest of the statistics or information's are shown in the table above.

Training and Development

Table 5: Training and Development

Statement	SA	A	I	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
There are formal training programs in my organization to teach employees the skills needed to perform their jobs	48.1	22.8	20.1	8.5	0.5
The organization links training and development with your company's business strategy	24.9	38.6	22.2	8.5	5.8
My company sets targets and objectives are achieved and identified the organization through training and development programs	16.4	40	21.7	6.9	15
Training and development programs to me and the organization in the long run	48.7	20.6	22.8	4.2	3.7
Training programs help increase motivation between employees and increase performance	51.9	25.9	15.9	6.3	0
When employees arrive from training supervisors encourage them to share what they have learnt with different employees	25.4	42.9	22.8	7.4	1.6
Supervisors help employees set realistic goals for performing their work as a result of training	22.2	47.6	19.6	7.4	3.2

Source: Author's Research (2025)

Table 5 shows percentages of information from respondents of the study about training and development for their entrepreneurial businesses. Based on if are formal training programs in their organization to teach employees the skills needed to perform their jobs; majority of the respondents approximately 48.1% agreed, while 22.8% strongly agreed but 20.1% were neutral, though only 8.5% and 0.5% turn to disagree and strongly disagreed respectively about it. Also, most the participants about 24.9% and 38.6% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that organization links training and development with their company's business strategy, 22.2% were neutral while 8.5% and 5.8% disagree and strongly disagreed respectively. According to all the responses above it shows that effective training and development turn to influence the sustainability of entrepreneurial business in NWR. All the rest of the statistics or information's are shown in the table above.

Employee Retention

Table 6: Employee Retention

Statement	SA	A	I	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
In your organization, management is able to retain majority of employees by practicing succession planning	24	16	16	24	20
If it were up to me, I will definitely be working for this institution for the next five years	20.6	52.4	18.5	5.3	3.2
A sense of being in management encourages you to stay in the organization	36.5	46	10.1	7.4	0

The existing succession plan in your organization motivates employees to consider working	40	29.3	23.8	4.8	2.1
I see a future for myself in this institution	29.6	38.6	19.6	11.1	1.1
Within this company, my work gives me satisfaction	31.7	36.5	21.2	8.5	2.1
Employees are allowed to take responsibility and authority	22.8	42.9	21.7	9.0	3.7

Source: Author's Research (2025)

Table 6 gives statistics for employee's retentions in business organisations. Based on the information above, the participants approximately 24% strongly agreed and 16% agreed that the organisational management is able to retain majority of employees by practicing succession planning, 16% were neutral, though only 24% and 20% turn to disagree and strongly disagreed respectively about it. In addition, the majority of the participants approximately 52.4% agreed and 20.6% strongly agreed that there will definitely be working for their institution for the next five years, 18.5% were neutral, though only 5.3% and 3.2% turn to disagree and strongly disagreed respectively about it. According to all the responses above it shows that effective employee retention turns to influence the sustainability of entrepreneurial business in NWR. All the rest of the statistics or information's are shown in the table above.

Sustainability of Entrepreneurial Business

Table 7: Sustainability of Entrepreneurial Business

Statement	SA	A	I	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
Workers are aware of succession practices and they are being used whenever need arises	20.6	45	23.8	7.9	2.6
Succession in my organization is based on family inheritance	24.9	42.9	22.8	6.9	2.6
There is transparency and succession processes are effectively communicated to all relevant stakeholders	28	35.4	25.4	10.1	1.1
There is continuity of the business in case the owner of the business is no longer available for the running of the business	19	44.4	25.4	9	2.1
In your organization, succession plans are formally documented	46	21	18	12	3

Source: Author's Research (2025)

Table 7 shows statistics for sustainability entrepreneurial businesses. Based on the information above, the participants approximately 20.6% strongly agreed and 45% agreed that the Workers are aware of succession practices and they are being used whenever need arises, 23.8% were neutral, though only 7.9% and 2.6% turn to disagree and strongly disagreed respectively about it. In addition, the majority of the participants approximately 42.9% agreed and 24.9% strongly agreed Succession in their organization is based on family inheritance, 18.5% were neutral, though only 6.9% and 2.6% turn to disagree and strongly disagreed respectively about it. All the rest of the statistics or information's are shown in the table above.

4.4. Correlations Results

Table 8: Correlations Results

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) SEB	1.000									
(2) MC	0.339	1.000								
(3) TD	0.505	0.686	1.000							

(4) ER	0.590	0.683	0.881	1.000						
(5) female	0.089	0.245	0.174	0.164	1.000					
(6) Pedu	0.073	0.010	0.043	0.026	0.059	1.000				
(7) Sedu	0.056	0.109	-0.035	0.004	0.119	-0.249	1.000			
(8) Tedu	-0.024	-0.089	0.010	0.014	-0.122	-0.323	-0.763	1.000		
(9)F16_20years	-0.048	-0.092	-0.052	-0.111	0.001	0.115	-0.069	-0.034	1.000	
(10) A21years	0.020	-0.074	0.065	0.076	-0.009	0.012	-0.120	0.125	-0.125	1.000

Source: Author’s Research (2025) via STATA

The correlation matrix above shows the relationship between the variables, as well as the relationship between their selves. It tells us whether each pair of variables is positively or negatively related and if they do, whether the relationship is strong or weak. The results show that all the correlation coefficients at the diagonal are unitary showing that each variable has a perfect positive correlation with itself. From the table it is observe that there is positive correlation between the main independent variables used in this work, and the dependent variable. Quantitatively, the results show that MC, TD, ER and SEB with values seen respectively on table 2.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA Table)

R-squared	0.445	Number of obs	189
Adjusted R-squared	0.410	Root MSE	1.0047
F-test (11, 177)	12.873	Prob > F	0.000

According to the table above the coefficient of determination for our regression that is the R-square is 0.445 implying that 44.5% of variation in sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses can be explained by the joint variation of the independent variables. The adjusted R-square value of 0.410 further confirms this. By conclusion therefore, it could rightly be said that, the variables used in this model are moderately explaining variation in sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the NWR.

Also, the F-Ratio (the Fisher Test) test whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data and it’s also depend on the level of significant. The table shows that the independent variables significantly predicts the dependent variable, F (11, 177) = 12.873, p (0.000) < 0.05 that is the regression model is a good fit of the data. This probability value implies that our model is globally significant at 5% and can be used for policy recommendation.

OLS Regression Results

Table 9: OLS Regression Results

SEB	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
MC	-.132	.071	-1.84	.067	-.272	.009	*
TD	.034	.103	0.33	.743	-.169	.237	
ER	.49	.093	5.27	0.00	.306	.673	***
Female	.008	.153	0.05	.959	-.294	.31	
Primary edu	1.147	.455	2.52	.013	.25	2.044	**
Secondary edu	.866	.413	2.10	.038	.051	1.682	**
Tertiary edu	.842	.402	2.09	.038	.049	1.636	**
Experience(5-	-.743	.309	-2.40	.017	-1.353	-.132	**

9years)							
Experience(10-15yrs)	-1.27	.31	-4.10	0	-1.881	-.658	***
Experience (16-20yrs)	-.888	.322	-2.76	.006	-1.523	-.253	***
Experience (21year+)	-1.215	.446	-2.72	.007	-2.095	-.335	***
Constant	.074	.487	0.15	.879	-.887	1.035	
*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$							

Source: Author's Research (2025) via STATA

According to the results in table 9 mentoring and coaching (MC) has a negative effect on sustainability of entrepreneurial business. This means that a unit increase in mentoring and coaching will lead to a decrease in sustainability of entrepreneurial business by 0.132 as seen in the table above. This effect is significant since the probability value (0.067) is not more than 0.1 significant level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and bring in the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effect between monitoring and coaching and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

More so, training and development (TD) has a positive effect on sustainability of entrepreneurial business. It shows that a unit increase in training and development will lead to an increase in sustainability of entrepreneurial business by 0.034, this effect is insignificant since the P-value (0.743) is greater than 0.05, we do not accept the alternative hypothesis and therefore we retain the null hypothesis, which states that there is insignificant effect between training and development and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Further, employee retention has a positive effect on sustainability of entrepreneurial business. It shows that a unit increase in employee retention will lead to an increase in sustainability of entrepreneurial business by 0.49, this effect is significant since the P-value (0.000) is less than 0.01 as seen in table 9. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and bring in the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effect between employee retention and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

In addition, the results for gender informs that, on average the female has a positive effect on sustainability of entrepreneurial business. This means that an increase in female in business will cause a 0.008 increase in sustainability of entrepreneurial business otherwise male. This effect is insignificant since the P-value (0.959) is greater than any of the significant level, therefore, we do not accept the alternative hypothesis and therefore we retain the null hypothesis, which states that there is insignificant effect between female and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

More so, for the level of experience in business, those with 5-9, 10-15 years', 16-20 years of experience and those with 21 years and above have a positive and significant effect on sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR. This means that an increase in these levels of experience of the participants will cause an increase in sustainability of entrepreneurial business with respect to their coefficients as seen in the table above. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and bring in the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effect between levels of experience and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR

4.5. Econometric Test Statistics

Table 10: Econometric Test Statistics

Mean VIF value	4.05	
Ramsey reset test	F (3, 170) = 3.04	Pro>F 0.0304
Breusch began/cook Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity	Chi2 (&) = 0.03	Prob >chi2 = 0.8536

Source: Author's Research (2025) via STATA

- Multicollinearity test using VIF test, since there mean VIF value is less than 10, it implies that there is absent of multicollinearity
- From the Ramsey test above it shows that there is no omission of variables this is because the calculated statistical value (F-test) is greater than the probability value.
- According to results above for testing heteroskedasticity using Breusch began/cook Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity. It can be observed that the value of the chi square test 0.03 is less than the corresponding probability value 0.8536. This means that we reject the alternative hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis which state there is constant mean and variance.

5. Conclusions, Discussion, Implications of the study, Contributions to science, Recommendations and suggestions for further studies

Conclusion

The research which was to ascertain the effect of succession planning on the Sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region of Cameroon. It uses monitoring and coaching, training and development and employee's retention as specific research variables. So, after running analysis and testing the hypothesis for each variable, the following conclusion were state below

Specific objective one; monitoring and coaching has a negative and significant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and bring in the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effect between monitoring and coaching and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Specific objective two; training and development has a positive and insignificant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region. Therefore, we do not accept the alternative hypothesis and therefore we retain the null hypothesis, which states that there is insignificant effect between training and development and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Specific objective three; employees retention has a positive and significant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and bring in the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effect between employees' retention and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Discussion

The research which was to ascertain the effect of succession planning on the Sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region of Cameroon. It uses monitoring and coaching, training and development and employee's retention as specific research variables. So, after running analysis and testing the hypothesis for each variable, the following conclusion were state below.

Specific objective one; monitoring and coaching has a negative and significant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region. This result was significant with the findings Arinze (2022). Arinze established the effect of succession planning on sustainability of family businesses in Anambra and Lagos States of Southern Nigeria. He used variables such as mentoring and delayed retirement to capture the successful planning. The findings show that there is a significant linear relationship exists between mentoring and successful management transference in family businesses. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and bring in the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effect between monitoring and coaching and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Specific objective two; training and development has a positive and insignificant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region. Yahya et al. (2012) found a favourable correlation between this and their results. Based on three viewpoints the manager's, the enterprises, and external characteristics these researchers examined the elements that influence training in SMEs. Therefore, we do not accept the alternative hypothesis and therefore we retain the null hypothesis, which states that there is insignificant effect between training and development and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Specific objective three; employees' retention has a positive and significant effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the North West Region. This result was significant with the findings Goud (2014), who endeavours to stress the importance of employee retention and the role of employee retention in promoting sustainable development at business organisations. The findings were predicted to be significant in that the retention of employees plays a significant role to the sustainable development of business. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and bring in the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effect between employees' retention and sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Conclusively, succession planning has a positive effect on the sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR.

Implications of the study

This study has implication for sustainability of entrepreneurial business in North West Region, suggesting that Policymakers should consider implementing initiatives that encourage entrepreneurial businesses to establish structured mentoring programs

Contributions to science

This study will aid researchers who may like to focus on understanding the reason why it is important every organization to have a succession plan which will reflect on the sustainability or survival of the organization. Scientists may be able to use this study's findings in ways that have far-reaching consequences for society. Additional discoveries

that could be useful in implementing improvements to the company can be made using these.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the research on the effects of succession planning on the sustainability of entrepreneurial businesses in the northwest region of Cameroon, the following recommendations can be made:

1. **Promote and Incentivize Mentoring Programs:** Despite the negative relationship found between mentoring and business sustainability, mentoring can still play a crucial role in knowledge and skill transfer. Policymakers should consider implementing initiatives that encourage and incentivize entrepreneurial businesses to establish structured mentoring programs. This could involve providing tax credits, subsidies, or other financial support to businesses that invest in mentoring initiatives.
2. **Enhance Training and Development Opportunities:** While the study found that training and development had a positive but insignificant effect on business sustainability, investing in employee training and development remains essential for building a skilled and adaptable workforce. Policymakers should work to improve access to high-quality training programs, either through government-sponsored initiatives or by partnering with educational institutions and industry associations.
3. **Strengthen Employee Retention Strategies:** The study's finding of a positive and significant relationship between employee retention and business sustainability underscores the importance of retaining talented and experienced employees. Policymakers should consider implementing policies that encourage entrepreneurial businesses to develop and implement robust employee retention strategies, such as competitive compensation and benefits packages, career development opportunities, and a positive work culture.
4. **Provide Business Support and Coaching Services:** In addition to the succession planning factors studied, policymakers could also consider establishing or expanding business support and coaching services specifically tailored to the needs of entrepreneurial businesses in the northwest region of Cameroon. These services could include access to business consulting, financial management guidance, and strategic planning assistance.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. More research work should be conducted to re-ascertain the effect of succession planning on the sustainability of entrepreneurial business in the NWR
2. They should examine the impact of monitoring and coaching on the sustainability of entrepreneurial business
3. They should investigate the effect of training and development on the sustainability of entrepreneurial business

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