An investigation into the barriers to successful implementation of succession planning in Small- Medium Enterprises: A Case of Creative Group.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents; Ignatius and Winnie.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Almighty for giving me strength and guidance throughout the research. I would like to extend my gratitude to my supervisor, for pushing me this far. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my friends and family especially my sisters; the sky is the limit girls. Irdah, you are a shining star in my heart. Lastly, Florence and Tawanda, your unwavering support and unconditional love is much appreciated.

May God Bless You All
ABSTRACT

Succession planning focuses on strategies used to guarantee job continuity in the event that key personnel are unexpectedly absent from work. The study sought to investigate the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning at Creative Group. The research was motivated by the fact that management noticed that work would come to a standstill in the event that a key employee is unexpectedly absent. The study will therefore come up with factors that address the challenges to succession planning.

This research was based on a quantitative research design using the case study approach in particular reference to Creative Group as the understudy for the research topic. Data was collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires. The scope of the study was limited to three departments of Creative Group namely Sales and Marketing, Technical and Workshops and the Administration and Finance Department. The targeted sample was 130 respondents and the response rate was 74%.

Research findings led to the conclusion that weak organizational culture, resistance to change and lack of training amongst other barriers were the major barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning. The moderate and minor barriers were concluded to be ignorance, limited resources, poor/lack of communication of the organization’s vision, and job insecurity.

From the research findings, it is recommended that continuous training be carried out for all employees, create a strong organizational culture that operates in sync with the business strategy and the organization as a whole, that the organization adopt a flat structure to allow for ease of communication amongst employees and for management to regularly have progress meetings and reports to remain conscious of the importance of the implementation of succession planning within the organization.

Key words: succession planning; SME; barriers; organizational culture; resistance to change
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 provides background to the study, background to the organization the researcher studied, statement of the problem, objectives of the research, research questions, scope and significance of the study. The study investigates the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning in SME’s with particular reference to Creative Group. The study was stimulated by the importance of succession planning in organizations. It was also motivated by the need to illustrate that SME’s need management to consider strategies such as succession planning to ensure continuity of business under any circumstances for all key positions in an organization. The study therefore intended to identify the challenges that hinder the successful implementation of succession planning in SME’s.

1.1 Background to the study

According to Mehrabini et al (2011) it was discovered that recently, most organizations have realized that they need to rely on their employees as the sole way to ensure that they remain competitive and stable in this competitive era. This has led organizations to adopt such strategies as succession planning to ensure that the organization maintains a powerful leadership and other important and key positions filled in order to ascertain job continuity. Mehrabini et al (2011) noted that succession planning also allows the employees to develop their knowledge base, improve their skills, identify their talents and their capabilities.

Authors such as Mehrabini (2011) noted that succession planning is one of the important human resources tools that address an organization’s existing needs and potential needs that might come up in the future, mainly in maintaining continuity for key positions in an organization.

Sikomwe et al (2012) noted that approximately 80% of the businesses in Zimbabwe are classified as family businesses and are mainly small to medium sized. Family
businesses are increasingly becoming the dominant form of business enterprise in Zimbabwe where they play a pivotal role in the economic and social spheres. However, the family businesses have encountered difficulties such as rising global competition, high taxes and harsh economic and financial problems. Other challenges include the complexities of family business dynamics such as ownership, succession, family harmony and solidarity. These difficulties may be attributed to lack of formal organizational and corporate structures and this compromises their performance.

According to Haraf (2005) a high need for the implementation of succession planning has hit an increase but, however, many organizations do not give attention to succession planning and most of the organizations face many challenges that hinder the successful implementation of such strategies.

1.2 Organizational Background

Creative Group comprises of three subsidiary companies namely Creative Computers, Creative Credit and Creative Cellular. Creative Group is a total solution and service provider in the IT Industry and has recently ventured into cell phones. It has been operational for the past 18 years. Such service requires a skilled staff, mainly expert skills.

Creative Group mission is to offer smart partnership to a portfolio of corporate and non-corporate clients. To their clients, Creative Group strives to be a total service provider encompassing hardware and software procurement, networking, upgrading, product initialization, service contracts on site, upgrading, repairs, sourcing and stocking of spares and 24-hour support.

Creative Computers deals mainly with the corporate clients and walk in clients who want to trade on a cash basis. It is also in charge of the technical department which is responsible for repairs of clients’ hardware and software, networking and a 24 hour support system.

Creative Credit deals with clients who would like to acquire products on a credit basis. This subsidiary mainly caters for civil servants who find it difficult to acquire its products on a once off cash basis.
Creative Cellular deals with the retailing of cell phones. It offers both cash and credit options to its clients. Its uniqueness from other cell phone companies is that it specializes in selling one particular brand that they only have in Zimbabwe. The company falls under the SME type of businesses, having a compliment of 46 employees.

The three main departments at Creative Group are indicated below:

- Sales and Marketing
- Technical and Workshops
- Administration and Finance

1.3 Business Model

According to Johnson, Christensen and Kagermann (2008) there are four main elements that consist of a firm’s business model. These four elements, if taken together, they create value and also deliver. The four being:

- Customer value proposition;
- Profit formula;
- Key resources;
- and Key processes

The above four interlocking elements of a business model as given by Christensen et al (2008) are discussed below in relation to Creative Group.

Customer Value Proposition- Johnson et al (2008) states that a successful company is one that has found a way to create value for customers. A value proposition of a firm highlights the benefits, costs and value that an organization can deliver to its customers. Creative Group’s main goal is to provide excellent and affordable service for its customers. The core business of the organization is to provide IT hardware and software for its clients. For its cash clients, the organization has made its products affordable by reducing the organization’s costs, hence managing to reduce prices for the clients. The organization also tries to ensure that the products they offer do not appeal as luxury products but more of a necessity to their clients. Creative Group has also adopted a credit scheme for clients that cannot
afford to purchase a product once off, especially the civil servants. Its products range from standard to high definition products depending on what the client needs to use the product for.

**Profit Formula** - According to Johnson et al (2008), the profit formula consists of the following:

- Revenue model
- Cost structure
- Margin model
- Resource velocity

The above elements have been the epitome of operating business for Creative Group. Initially on profit formula the price required to deliver the CVP is set and then worked backwards from there to determine what the variable costs and gross margins must be. This then determines what the scale and resource velocity needs to be to achieve the desired profits. By doing this, Creative Group manages to achieve customer satisfaction and also achieve a reasonable and sustainable profit for their business.

**Key Resources** - a definition given by Johnson et al (2008) for key resources was those resources in the organization, that keep the organization running such as technology, organizational facilities, human resources, operating equipment, distribution channels and the brand that is needed to deliver perfect service to the customer. This requires the implementers of the business model to ensure that that these key elements are creating value for the customers and the organization as a whole.

Creative Group has a staff compliment that is fully capable to assist a customer achieve value proposition. It has specialized skilled staff that are able to repair clients machines effectively. Their staff has vast knowledge with regard to product knowledge. For example, a sales representative is able to highlight the positives of acquiring a product. The sales team is also able to play an advisory role to customers helping them decide which machine or IT gadget suits their needs. For example, differentiating a laptop that is for general home use or a machine that is suitable for professionals such as architects.
Other assets such as office premises, technology, which is constantly upgraded to match the world standards, various products and different brands, other than their main Acer brand are also in place at the organization.

**Key Processes** - this was defined by Johnson et al (2008) as recurring tasks that each organization should consistently practice such as planning, budgeting, training and development, manufacturing, sales and service delivery. Key processes also include an organization’s rules and regulations, norms and values and metrics. Continuous training of staff is very vital in the organization since the organization has to keep up with the fast pace of the IT industry. The IT world constantly advances; therefore there is need for the organization to keep on training its staff so as to keep abreast with IT changes. The organization is also strict with following the organization's systems whenever undertaking any business. The organization's norms and culture are also a part of the key process of the organization.

1.4 **External Environment Analysis**

Ritson (2013) alluded that there are generally two parts or levels considered when undertaking external analysis- Environmental analysis of the ‘far’ or ‘macro’ environment affecting all firms, and the industry analysis of the ‘near’ or ‘micro’ environment which is much more specific.

Ritson (2013) defined the macro environment as forces that affect all firms across all industries. There are common issues such as PEST (Political and Legal, Economic, Socio-cultural and Technological conditions). The researcher chose to use the PEST framework to analyze Creative Group’s macro-environment to identify the factors that affect its business that the organization does not necessarily have control over.

Ritson (2013) also went on to define the micro environment as the industry or competitive environment analysis. Wilson and Gilligan (2005) highlighted that the micro environment is made up of those elements that are closest to the company and that exert the greatest and most direct influence over its ability to deal with its markets. This includes the organization itself, its suppliers, its distribution network, customers, competitors and the public at large. The researcher used Porter’s Five Forces Model for industry analysis. Porter’s Five Forces can give a clear picture of
the competition within competing firms in the industry and potential threats to the organization.

### 1.4.1 Macro-environment

**• PEST Framework**

**Political and Legal Environment**

This part of the environment is composed of laws, pressure groups and government agencies, all of which exert some sort of influence and constraint on organizations and individuals in society (Whalley, 2010). Political factors include areas such as tax policy, labour law, environmental law, trade restrictions, tariffs, and political stability.

Currently the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology and the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe are on a drive to educate all students on ICT. This has seen the government engage in installing IT hardware and software in schools, mainly in the rural schools. The Creative Group has managed to chip in, particularly engaging in IT hardware and software donations in rural schools. A recent project that it has been involved in is the installation of IT hardware and software at Rushinga Secondary School.

The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority recently relaxed its customs duty laws by making IT products such as computers, cell-phones and other selected information and communication products and gadgets to be imported duty free. Customs Duty on the importation of IT products was scrapped in order to promote the development of the information and communication technology sector. This law has worked in favour of Creative Group as it has eased the cost of importing IT products.

**Economic Environment**

The economic environment includes economic growth, interest rates, exchange rates and the inflation rate (Ritson, 2013). These factors have major impacts on how businesses operate and make decisions. For example, interest rates affect a firm's
The cost of capital and therefore to what extent a business grows and expands. Exchange rates affect the costs of exporting goods and the supply and price of imported goods in an economy (Whalley, 2010).

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe introduced the multi-currency system officially in February 2009. The change in currency has helped most organizations maintain reasonable prices for their products. During the hyperinflation period, it was difficult for most organizations to maintain a constant price for their products. The multi-currency system has helped Creative Group to offer constant prices to their customers and this also allows them to engage in advertising and promotions. It was difficult during the hyper-inflation period to advertise since the prices would change almost on a daily basis.

Socio-cultural Environment

According to Ritson (2013) social factors refer to the cultural aspects and include health consciousness, population growth rate, age distribution, career attitudes, class and segmentation of the market and emphasis on safety. Trends in social factors affect the demand for a company's products and how that company operates.

Following the need for the society to advance technologically, the organization has grown significantly. The market has grown, from students, professionals and even for home use. Products such as Laptops, Tablets, and Cell phones have become a must have for most people. Considering that some clients, for example, civil servants can find these products difficult to purchase once off, the organization has made it manageable by introducing the Credit Terms Facility, whereby a client can purchase the IT products on credit for a certain period.

IT products are hardly affected by attitudes, values and beliefs including ethnic minorities simply because IT products can be used across all cultures.

Technological Environment

This refers to the rate of new inventions and development, changes in information and mobile technology, changes in internet and e-commerce or even mobile commerce, and government spending on research. There is often a tendency to
focus technological developments on digital and internet related areas, but it should also include materials development and new methods of manufacture, distribution and logistics (Oxford Learning Lab; 2012).

Creative Group being an IT company has to keep up with the global pace of technology change. The IT world has always been a fast changing environment. It is an industry that thrives on innovation. Creative Group has managed to keep abreast with the IT world by fostering relationships with well to do international IT organizations specifically Acer.

The use of Business Information Systems and Management Information Systems at Creative Group has come in handy, improving its day-to-day activities. Day-to-day activities such as distribution and logistics are made easier by the use of technological systems.

1.4.2 Industry environment

- **Porter’s Five Forces**

  Michael Porter’s Five Forces Model helps the organization have a thorough understanding of its industry competitors. The five key factors the model uses to identify and evaluate potential opportunities and risks are:

  - Competitive rivalry
  - Threats of new entrants
  - Threats of substitutes
  - Bargaining power of suppliers
  - Bargaining power of customers

Fig 1.1 below is a diagramatised Porter’s Five Forces model
Industry Competition

The competition between firms determines the attractiveness of the sector or industry. Of late there has been an influx of IT companies in Zimbabwe considering the need for Zimbabwe to be technologically intelligent. However, Creative Group has a competitive advantage over other IT firms. It is larger than other IT companies, and has managed to be the number one retailer of Acer products in Zimbabwe. The organization has managed this by striking a deal with their main supplier, that is, Acer. The agreement between Acer and Creative Group has binding trade clauses which give Creative Group an upper hand over its competitors.

Threats of New Entrants

The IT industry can have lucrative profits but if there is no customer loyalty, threats of new entrants are low. Creative Group has been operating for close to two decades and it has managed to earn customer loyalty. It has done this by having a 24 hour support workshop, in case the client has problems with its machinery. It has direct
contact with the international supplier and purchase products in bulk allowing it to reduce prices of its products. This is difficult for other upcoming retailers or those that wish to penetrate the market because it requires them to push volumes of products in order to have a lower price than of their competitors.

**Threats of Substitute Products**

The IT industry having other brands apart from Acer, there is a threat to substitute products. There are other brands that have almost similar products and the same functions as that of the Acer brand. Creative Group has managed to curb this issue of threats of substitutes by also retailing other product brands apart from Acer.

**Bargaining Power of Customers**

The availability of substitute products can increase the bargaining power of the customers. The bargaining power of customers is also high where the buyer has the ability to switch costs. Creative Group customers do have bargaining power over Creative Group but it is not very high solely because the customer’s ability to switch costs is very low due to the prices it offers its clients.

**Bargaining Power of Suppliers**

Creative Group has been a consistent buyer from its suppliers. It has managed to be one of the top clients the supplier cannot afford to cut out due to the volumes that it purchases. Creative Group can arm twist its supplier when it comes to prices because it is aware that the supplier cannot afford to cut them off as their buyer.

**1.5 Statement of the problem**

The Harvard Business Review (2012) states that some 70% of family owned businesses fail or are sold before the second generation gets a chance to take over. Just 10% remain active, privately held companies for the third generation to lead. In contrast to publicly owned firms, in which the average CEO tenure is six years, many family businesses have the same leader for 20 to 25 years, and these extended tenures can increase the difficulties of coping with shifts in technology, business models, and consumer behaviour (Harvard Business Review, 2012). Beckhard and Dyer (1983), Lansberg (1988), Maynard (1999) established that a third of family owned businesses in the event of the absence of the key personnel, that is the
owner or manager, are continued by the generation. It is therefore of major concern whether there will be job continuity in the event of the absence of key personnel.

Many organizations do not realize how critical succession planning is as a human resources strategic objective. According to Sikomwe et al (2012) the survival and longevity of the Zimbabwean family business is a cause for concern if it must be a major contributor to the social and economic well being. The running of an enterprise is usually closely aligned to the personality and style of the founding entrepreneur.

1.6 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning in Small-Medium Enterprises, with particular reference to Creative Group.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

a) Find out how succession planning is implemented at Creative Group.

b) Identify key success factors for the successful implementation of succession planning.

c) Identify the barriers/ constraints to the successful implementation of succession planning.

d) Identify ways of addressing the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning.

e) Make relevant recommendations following the findings of the study.

1.7 Main Research Question

The main research question was: What are the barriers against the successful implementation of succession planning at Creative Gr

Research Sub- question

The research sub- questions were:

a) How is succession planning implemented at Creative Group?
b) What are the success factors for the successful implementation of succession planning?
c) What are the barriers/ constraints to the successful implementation of succession planning?
d) How can these barriers be addressed to the successful implementation of succession planning?
e) What are the relevant recommendations following the findings of the study?

1.8 Main Argument/ Hypotheses

The study sought to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Training is an important determinant to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.
H2: Job rotation is a key success factor to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.
H3: Resistance to change is a barrier to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

1.9 Scope of the Study

This study sought to investigate the barriers against the successful implementation of succession planning in SME’s. The study focused on Creative Computers based in Zimbabwe.

1.10 Justification of the Study

According to Mehrabani et al (2011) the main aim of the succession planning strategy is to ensure that the employees at an organization are kept motivated and engaged in any form of change within the organization. Fulmer and Conger (2009) asserted that a successful succession planning program can aid talented employees to move their tracks more rapidly and more appropriately. If the study is done, it carries with it potential direct and indirect benefits to identified key stakeholders of
the study. This includes the management, shareholders, employees and lastly the researcher.

Stakeholders and management will benefit in that the organisation maintains an on-going supply of well-trained, broadly experienced, well-motivated people who are ready and able to step into key positions as needed. Positive goals for key personnel, which will help keep them with the company and will help assure the continuing supply of capable successors for each of the important positions included in the succession plan. Retention of the best employees is made possible since those identified for succession planning will be looking forward to more responsibilities and more challenges. Defined career paths, will help the company recruit and retain better people.

The researcher will also benefit from the study as it will assist her to fulfil the requirements of the MBA programme with the University of Zimbabwe. The study is also a possible benefit in closing the literature gap on succession planning in Zimbabwe as it has not been exhausted by researchers.

1.11 Dissertation Outline

The dissertation contains five chapters. The structures of the chapters are as follows:

- **Chapter 1** introduces the study. It gives a background to the study and the organization under study.

- **Chapter 2** reviews literature on succession planning and SME’s. The chapter provides parameters for the discussion of the results in Chapter 4.

- **Chapter 3** provides and justifies the research methodology that the researcher adopted for the study.

- **Chapter 4** provides findings of the study and their discussion.

- **Chapter 5** concludes the study and offers recommendations in light of findings in Chapter 4.
1.12 Chapter Summary

Of late, succession planning has become a subject of interest, specifically in SME businesses to ensure continuity of business in the event the owner is unavailable for any reason. Of particular interest, Sikomwe et al (2012) did a research on succession planning in the transport sector in Zimbabwe. Succession planning has grown beyond replacing the owner of the business but has spread out to easy replacement of any key position in an organization to enhance continuity of business. The finding of the study, if accepted will be of great significance to Creative Group in that if barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning are identified, ways of addressing these challenges can be put in place and improve the implementation of succession planning.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a review of literature on succession planning. It is an acknowledgement of work on the topic under research done by various authors. This chapter will give definition of key terms, models and underpinning theories on the topic under study. The chapter gives a conceptual framework underpinning the study.

2.1 Definitions and Explanation of Key Terms

2.1.1 Succession planning

Garman and Glawe (2004:120) provide a general definition of succession planning as “a structured process involving the identification and preparation of a potential successor to assume a new role”. Barnett and Davis (2008:721) define succession planning as “any special efforts to invest in the best, highest performing, or highest potential talent at any organizational level or function, but particularly at the top”.

Rothwell (2010) defined succession planning as deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future and encourage individuals. Tarashah et al; 2011) note that succession planning is no longer limited to top managers, since nowadays there is need for succession planning for every job in the organization and distribution of decision making to empowered employees across organizations.

Mehrabani et al (2011) offer a more widespread definition, where they define succession planning as a strategy to try and have a plan for the correct number of employees, and quality of key position employees particularly in the event there is need for a manager to replace a retired one, in the event of promotion, in event a key position employee leaving the organization for either new opportunities, death or illness, which may come up in the future of the organization’s plans.
2.1.2 Small-Medium Enterprise

The definition of the SME sector has been fraught with the problem of definitional clarity (Simpson et al, 2010: 26-27). For instance, the distinction between “informal or micro-sized enterprises” and small-scale enterprises has been one source of such definitional fuzziness, while the distinction between “small enterprises” and “medium enterprises” has also wrought contestation. To that extent, the SME sector in Africa has been prone to varied labelling: “micro and small enterprises” or MSEs (USAID, 1991) and “micro, small and medium enterprises” or MSMEs and also referred to as “small, micro, and medium enterprises or SMMEs (Gelb, et al., 2009).

However, the standard definition of the SME sector has been provided by the SME Department of the World Bank (2003) views small to medium enterprises as those formal sector businesses with 300 employees and a total revenue of $15 000 000 and total assets worth $15 000 000. On the other hand, the UNDP as cited in van der Vaardt (2008) states that an SME has a maximum of 200 employees and there is no clarification as to the amount of turnover an SME should have and the amount of assets it should possess.

2.1.3 Benefits of succession planning

The key elements of the succession planning process allow organisations to address their top talent management challenges, which in turn provide a platform for their risk management strategy in relation to staffing. In addition to this, well implemented SPM programs have been shown to increase productivity and financial returns (CedarCrestone, 2008).

Succession planning is an essential part of doing business, no matter how certain your future appears. Alberta Government (2012) note that on a more strategic level, succession planning will help the organization remain successful even after the loss of a key worker. Other benefits include:

- Having the right people in the right place at the right time
• Developing a qualified pool of candidates who are ready to fill key positions
• Helping employees realize their career plans and aspirations
• Improving employees ability to respond to changes in the workplace
• Creating more opportunities for the timely transfer of knowledge at the corporate level.

The Alberta Government (2012) also notes that human resources professionals say succession planning helps retain valuable workers and lowers the costs of recruiting new talent.

### 2.1.4 Succession planning success factors

Mehrabini et al (2011) highlighted 8 factors that are likely to influence the successful implementation of succession planning. The factors are as follows:
- Training and talent development
- Management support
- Clarification of a career path to employees
- Creation of a positive vision
- Strong organizational culture
- Technology advancement
- Flat structure
- Financial conditions of the organization

### 2.1.5 Barriers to succession planning

According to Mehrabani et al (2011) applying and planning an SP model is not a simple task. There are obstacles and barriers that are met in an organization that are either internal or external that hinder the successful implementation of succession planning. Below is a brief discussion of barriers of succession planning as cited by different authors.
Lack of training and development

According to Mehrabani et al (2011) lack of training and development can cripple the successful implementation of succession planning by disadvantaging the employees to learn new skills and share a vast amount of knowledge. If an employee is trained, they are empowered. Job rotation is another extent of training whereby employees are rotated to perform different tasks than their usual tasks.

H1: Training is an important determinant to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

H2: Job rotation is a key success factor to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

Resistance to change

Ward (2000) notes that succession planning can be especially complicated because of the relationships and emotions involved in its implementation and because most people are not that comfortable discussing topics such as their aging, death and their financial affairs. This discussion might be thought of as an unpleasant change management strategy which most employees are not particularly comfortable with. Employees resist any form of strategy changes mainly because of the fear of the unknown. However, if there is a clear explanation of the change and a clear career path, employees can allow change to be implemented.

H3: Resistance to change is a barrier to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group

No positive vision

Sikomwe et al (2012) alluded that an organization should have a well communicated and clear vision that has a positive insight towards succession planning so as to give
employees confidence in the SP program. If there is a poor vision, this will hinder the implementation of succession planning.

**Lack of management support**

Lack of support by top management is a challenge that can lead to the failure of the successful implementation of succession planning in organizations. Succession planning needs to be aligned with the business objectives of the company. CEO and other senior management involvement is a critical step. Succession planning will not become a companywide initiative if the management is not involved and playing an active role in ensuring a more cohesive succession planning initiative (Aberdeen Group, 2006).

**No clarification of a career path**

The Aberdeen Group (2006) highlighted challenges with making the process work which include inability to locate or create a pool of active and passive candidates and lack of interest from senior executives. These concerns in succession planning represent a broader challenge in human capital management, that is, getting the talent needed and addressing the talent requirements for the future.

**Weak organizational culture**

The Albertina Government (2012) allude that if the organization makes learning part of the organization’s culture, knowledge transfer will become part of the employees everyday duties. A demonstration that learning new procedures and improvements on current practices is a priority in the organization will make it easy for employees to embrace succession planning and other changes in the organization. It is important for management to take time to discuss with employees the importance of succession planning and sharing knowledge.

**Slow technological advancement**
Technology challenges noted were lack of assessment tools and lack of succession planning tools and career development tools (Aberdeen Group, 2006)

**Tier structure**

Sharma et al (2003) state that a tier structure is a barrier to the successful implementation of succession planning because hierarchies deter ease of communication amongst employees.

**Lack of financial resources**

Organizations have found it difficult and expensive to develop and maintain the large pool of candidates suggestive of an effective insider succession process. Furthermore, the process which was once usually lengthy, (CEO tenures of 10-14 years), is shortening, (Charan, 2004; Karaevli and Hall, 2003) and in the end, only a few are chosen from the pool, thus ushering in the problem of talent retention (Bickford, 2001; Cannella Jr. and Shen, 2001; Cappelli, 2000).

### 2.1.6 Measures of succession planning

Success of Succession Planning programs can be measured in numerous ways. These include (Busine & Watt, 2005):

- the number of job-ready people to fill senior jobs when they become vacant;
- the percentage of jobs filled by internal candidates;
- cost of acceleration pools against the cost of finding outside hires;
- cost of turnover and de-motivation inside the organisation when an external hire is made;
- time it takes for an outside hire to get up to speed;
- turnover of external hires;
- turnover of identified pool members/high potentials.

Other ways of measuring succession planning success include:

- Frequency of external CEO searches (Greer and Virick, 2008).
• Size of the business (Checkley, 2010)

2.2 Underpinning Theory

Hedum (2010) in his research notes that succession planning has had its inception as a critical leadership tool to ensure that there remains business continuity by eliminating gaps in organizational skills and knowledge, and by strategically preparing for the future placement of key position personnel. Succession planning is not a new concept, as it has been employed from time back in some way. Below is a discussion of the existing succession planning frameworks or models.

2.3 Discussion of Existing Frameworks/Models

Figure 2.1. An integrated model of the succession planning process (Garman and Tyler, 2007)
The six step model has been adopted by some organizations as a succession planning model. Below are the steps as summarised by Garmen and Tyler (2007):

**Step 1 – Identify Key Positions**
Succession Planning identifies necessary competencies within key positions that have a significant impact on the organization. Criteria for key positions may include:
- Positions that require specialized job skills or expertise.
- High-level leadership positions.
- Positions that are considered “mission-critical” to the organization (Garmen and Tyler, 2007).

**Step 2 – Build Job Profiles for each Key Position**
Determine the key success factors of the job and how proficient the job holder would need to be. This information can be obtained in several ways, including performing job analysis or gathering critical information during the performance appraisal process. The information that should be gathered includes the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that the current employee in a position possesses that allow for the competent and efficient performance of the functions (Garmen and Tyler, 2007).

**Step 3 – Competency Gap Analysis**
- Using the job profile of competencies determine the tool required to gather data on current employee competencies for the key positions
- Analyze the difference between current employee competencies and future needs
- Document findings for development opportunities (Garmen and Tyler, 2007).

**Step 4 – Development Opportunities**
- Assess the abilities and career interests of employees
- Candidates should demonstrate high potential or ability that will enable them to achieve success at a higher level within the organization. Preferably, the list of possible replacements should be stored in a database so that the organization can easily track candidates.(Garmen and Tyler, 2007).
Step 5 – Individual Development Plans

- Design a plan for each candidate – developmental plans should be available for candidates and then incorporated into their performance management plans. Plans may include identifying career paths for high-potential candidates and others who have the interest and ability to move upward in the organization.
- Provide development opportunities – This can be accomplished through job assignments, training, or job rotation, and it is one of the best ways for employees to gain additional knowledge and skills (Garmen and Tyler, 2007)

Step 6 – Maintain Skills Inventory

- Continually monitor skills and needs to determine any gaps and develop plans to meet deficiencies.
- Keep an inventory of current and future needs and maintain the information for individual and group development (Garmen and Tyler, 2007)

The DISC Model

![DISC Model Diagram](image)

Fig 2.2 DISC Model as illustrated by Rohre (2012)
The DISC Model is an adaptation of Rohre (2012). Each DISC Assessment tool has different processes. Below are the modules stated:

1. **Self Discovery**- This stage requires an individual to identify his or her own strengths and weaknesses within the organization. An employee discovers their own talents and then explore their talent within the organization (Rohre; 2012)
   - Walking through the DiSC model
   - Understanding the DiSC management styles
   - Identifying your management strengths and challenges

2. **Building Collaborative Teams**- this stage has to do with developing each other within the organization. A good way of doing this is by training each other of another’s duties.
   - Motivation
   - How to develop others
   - Working with your manager

3. **Communication**- This is a vital stage in every organization. Communication if done properly leads to the smooth sailing of any business. Communication allows the employees to embrace change management. (Rohre; 2012)
   - Start with heart
   - Learn to look
   - Make it safe
   - Master my stories
   - State my PATH
   - Explore others’ paths
   - Move to action

4. **Employee Engagement**
   - Leaders play a key role in employee engagement
   - Understanding coaching, feedback & motivating through recognition
   - Navigating the mentoring relationships
5. Planning & Organization

- Setting goals and planning time to obtain them
- Procrastination
- Clutter styles

6. Leadership

- Thinking strategically - the role of human resources
- Choose to be a change leader
- Change leader vs. Change management
- Trust building
- Increasing trust in your organization

2.4 Discussion of Key Dimensions

2.4.1 Identification of key position

Both the 6 step model and the DISC model require identification of key positions in an organization initially before taking into consideration the succession planning implementation (Garmen and Tyler, 2007 and Rohre, 2012).

2.4.2 Communication and Employee Engagement

Communication is a success factor to the successful implementation of succession planning. Lack of communication can pose as a barrier to the SP processes due to the fact that employees do not know what to expect from the organization (Checkley, 2010).

2.4.3 Resistance to Change

Succession planning involves change management. It is important that change implementers ensure that the change processes are clearly stated to the employer.

2.4.4 Employee Development
Employee development can be used as a motivational tool to the succession planning process. This eases the implementation of succession planning as employees see the benefit in it.

2.5 Experiences from Other Countries

Australia

Checkley (2010) notes Australia as one of the countries with a Government that supports succession planning. The Australian Government does this by way of offering grants to private organizations and advocate groups to provide educational programs on succession planning. These groups appear to provide a span of support and information to assist small businesses address important aspects of succession (Checkley, 2010).

United Kingdom

The government of the United Kingdom also plays a role in the assisting of especially SME’s to implement succession planning, particularly how to address the barriers to the implementation of succession planning. Such barriers that the SBS (2004) have noted are then compiled into a report. Below are some of the barriers:

- Raise the necessary awareness training programs with SMEs of the importance of succession planning;
- Encourage business owners to address succession planning at an earlier stage
- Work with advisors to provide business owners with information, training, advice, and support for business transfer.

SBS (2004) has gone further to allow business owners and managers to call, or communicate via email if there are areas they do not understand.
2.6 Literature Synthesis

Taylor (2011) defines literature synthesis as a way of combining different pieces of literature into a whole. It concisely summarizes and links different sources of data so that meaningful literature is combined on the topic under study.

The Alberta Government (2012) highlights the benefits implementing fully succession planning as retaining valuable employees, cutting recruitment costs of new talent, having the right people at the right place and improving employees’ ability to adapt to change. However, according to Mehrabini et al (2011) succession planning has barriers to its successful implementation which include resistance to change, lack of training and development, weak organization culture, no clarification of a career path, no positive vision, slow technology advancement, flat structure and lack of financial stability. These barriers were also highlighted by de Koning (2005).

Garmen and Tyler (2007) gave a 6 Step Model to the implementation of succession planning namely, identifying a key position, building a job profile for a key position, competency gap analysis, opportunity development, individual development plans and maintenance of skills inventory.

Rohre (2012) with her DISC Model like Garmen and Tyler’s model have similarities on identification of key positions. However, the Disc model requires self discovery where one identifies their talent. The disc model also speaks on employee engagement, communication, planning and organizing, leadership and building collaborative teams for training.

The researcher therefore integrated literature from the above authors to address the topic under study. The integrated literature therefore came up with a conceptual framework graphically interpreting the relationship between the barriers to succession planning and its implementation.

2.7 Literature Gap

The succession planning models have shortcomings and gaps that are discussed in the table given below:
Table 2.1 Literature Gap of the succession planning models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Literature Gap</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 6 Step Model</td>
<td>• This model views succession planning as an event and not an ongoing process.</td>
<td>The model needs to take into consideration the fact that succession planning is an ongoing process therefore it also needs to incorporate training intermittently before moving to the next step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Garmen and Tyler, 2007)</td>
<td>• The model does not address the barriers to succession planning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DiSC Model</td>
<td>• The main disadvantage of this model is that it only views leadership positions as key positions. However, succession planning has since grown to inclusion of all key positions regardless of level or position of the employee.</td>
<td>This model tries to address some of the barriers to succession planning such as communication and employee engagement, however, the barriers of succession planning are not only limited to these two barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rohre, 2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.8 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework was defined by Huberman (1994) as a written or visual creation that explains either narrative, or graphically the key concepts, variables and factors and the supposed relationship between them. Below is a conceptual
framework that depicts key concepts and variables as reflected in the reviewed literature.

Fig 2.3 Conceptual Framework on barriers to successful implementation of succession planning

Source: Merged from literature review gathered by the researcher

2.9 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 is a reflection of reviewed literature of other authors who studied the topic under study before. This chapter defined key terms, looked at the underpinning theory, discussed existing models on succession planning, discussed the models and synthesized data from literature on succession planning. The chapter also
looked at gaps in literature that was reviewed and the study’s conceptual framework merged from the reviewed literature.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the research methodology implemented by the researcher to deal with the research’s intent and aim as outlined in the introduction and background chapter. This chapter gives detail as to the research design and the data collection techniques the researcher used and how the researcher sampled the study population. This chapter also looks at the issues of the reliability and validity of the study. Limitations of the research are also highlighted. This chapter seeks to collect data that will be used to answer the research questions as highlighted in Chapter 1. A recap of the research questions is given below:

a) How is succession planning implemented at Creative Group?
b) What are the success factors for the successful implementation of succession planning?
c) What are the barriers/ constraints to the successful implementation of succession planning?
d) How can these barriers be addressed to the successful implementation of succession planning?
e) What are the relevant recommendations following the findings of the study?

3.1. Definition of Research Methodology

Greener (2008) identifies research methodology to be more about the researcher’s attitude to and their understanding of research and the strategy they choose to answer research questions. Greener (2008) differentiated research methodology and research methods, defining research methods as usually referring to specific activities designed to generate data for example questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observation. According to Rajasekar et al (2013) research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. It is a science of studying how research is to
be carried out. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena is called research methodology (Rajasekar; 2013). It is also defined as the study of methods by which knowledge is gained. Its aim is to give the work plan of research.

Rajasekar et al (2013) stated that research methodology is concerned with the explanation of the following:
(1) Why is a particular research study undertaken?
(2) How did one formulate a research problem?
(3) What types of data were collected?
(4) What particular method has been used?
(5) Why was a particular technique of analysis of data used?

3.2. Research Philosophy/Paradigm

According to Saunders et al (2009) a research philosophy is about the nature and development of knowledge. There are three main ways of viewing research philosophy which are ontology, epistemology and axiology.

Kuhn (1970) as quoted by Bryman (2011) defined a research paradigm as a cluster of beliefs and states which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be considered in the study, how research should be undertaken and how results should be inferred. A paradigm according to Saunders et al (2009) is a term often used in social studies, but one which could lead to misunderstanding because it appears to have numerous meanings. A further definition by Saunders et al (2009) of a paradigm is that it is seen as a way of exploration of the social event from which particular understandings of these events can be achieved and justification is given. Saunders et al (2009) identified four paradigms in research which are realism, positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism.

For this research, the researcher chose the pragmatism paradigm as the research paradigm. The most key determinant for the pragmatist is argued to be the research question. This means that each question is made to be appropriate to answer and address particular questions (Saunders, 2009). Furthermore, if research questions
do not suggest definitely that either a positivist or interpretivist philosophy the pragmatism philosophy is adopted. The researcher chose this paradigm because there were responses in the questions that needed a participants opinion and feelings and there were other questions that required to choose a fitting response, hence the reason for adopting the pragmatism philosophy.

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) pragmatism paradigm does not have to deal with concepts such as truth and reality when undertaking a study. In their view a researcher should research what the researcher deems as interesting to them and is of value to their research and what one deems as appropriate in ways that can bring about positive consequences within the researchers value system (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998:30).

3.3. Research Strategy

As business and management researchers Johnson and Clark (2006) state that there is need for a researcher to be conscious of the idealistic commitment we make by the research strategy that we choose to use for the study since it has considerable impact on what we do and how we understand what it is we are examining. There are different types of research strategies that a researcher can adopt. As pointed out by Yin (2003) the research strategies are the experiment, survey, case study, action research, classic grounded theory, archival research and ethnography. The researcher chose the case study approach which is explained below:

Robson (2002:178) defines a case study as “an approach for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular existing phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence”.

3.3.1 Case Study Approach

According to Bryman (2011) a basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. Trochim (2002) goes on to explain that a case study is an intensive study of a specific individual or specific context. The research, using a
single organization for its study—Creative Computers, the case study approach is the appropriate research strategy for this research. Rowley (2002) states that one chooses a case study when how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 2003).

Greener (2008) notes that a case study may involve more than one way of deriving data about the case or organization or unit under study. According to (Saunders et al, 2009) data collection techniques used can be various and can also be used in combination. Such data collection methods that can be used are the questionnaires, interviews, observation, and documentary analysis. There are four dimensions of the case study, but for this particular research, the researcher used the single-case approach since the researcher is studying one organization.

3.4. Research Design

Greener (2008) defines a research design as a grand plan of approach to a research topic. There is no one way of conducting research—this will depend on a number of factors such as research topic, audience for the research, time and other resources available for the researcher, and the kind of study which is considered appropriate for the research topic. There will also be other practical considerations such as access to information and people. Trochim (2004) defines research design as that which provides the glue that holds the research project together. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project, the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, and methods of assignment work together to try to address the central research questions.

There are three types of research designs as identified by Harwell (2009) namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods design. Qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants—that is, qualitative research explores meaning, purpose, or reality (Hiatt, 1986). Rowland (2005) gives a justified use of the qualitative approach to
research on SME’s and training centres, justifying the researcher’s use of the qualitative method for the organization under study.

However, mixed methods have currently been adopted in business research, both qualitative and quantitative, are possible, and possibly highly appropriate, within one study (Saunders et al, 2009). Mixed methods research design combining data collection techniques is known as the mixed methods research design. According to Greener (2008), it has become increasingly usual for business research to mix methods of data collection and analysis, which can be done by using different data collection methods. For instance, in this research, personal interviews and semi-structured questionnaires were used. The mixed methods approach is increasingly advocated within business and management research by authors such as Curran and Blackburn (2001), where they highlight that a single research study may use quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures in combination. According to Saunders et al (2009) you may take quantitative data and represent it in a qualitative manner. Alternatively, the researcher may convert qualitative data into quantitative findings.

**Quantitative methods research design**

The researcher for this study used the quantitative methods research design. Harwell (2009) states that quantitative research methods attempt to maximize objectivity, replicability, and generalizability of findings, and are typically interested in prediction. Integral to this approach is the expectation that a researcher will set aside his or her experiences, perceptions, and biases to ensure objectivity in the conduct of the study and the conclusions that are drawn.

According to Saunders et al (2009) a quantitative research design is based on meanings derived from numbers, collection results in numerical and standardised data and the research analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics.

**3.5. Study Population and Sample Size**
The objective of the study was to investigate the overall barriers to successful implementation of succession planning at Creative Group. The study population was therefore Creative Group employees and Directors. Creative Group has three major departments which are Administration and Finance, Sales and Marketing and the Technical and Workshops Department. Creative Group has five branches in Zimbabwe, namely, Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi and Mutare branches bringing its staff compliment to a total of 170 employees.

Greener (2008) states that an absolute sample size is more important to look at than its relative size to the total population, therefore absolute size is more important than relative size. The bigger the sample size, the more sample is likely to represent the population and the lower is likely to be the sampling error (Greener, 2008)

Bryman and Bell (2011) highlights that the decision about sample size is not a straightforward one which depends on a number of considerations and there is therefore no one definitive answer. Increasing the size of the sample increases the precision of a sample. The larger your sample’s size the lower the likely error in generalising to the population (Saunders et al, 2009). In this research, a sample of 130 was chosen which is above 70% of the target population.

3.5.1 Sampling methods

It is difficult in most cases to use all possible cases of the target group therefore according to Saunders et (2009) the use of sampling techniques is preferred so as to reduce the amount of data one needs to collect. There are two sampling techniques used in research methods which are the probability sampling technique and the non-probability sampling technique (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Each technique has different types to it. Under probability sampling there is simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling and multi-stage cluster sampling. Non-probability sampling includes convenience sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling and purposive sampling. For the purposes of the study, one probability sampling technique was used namely stratified sampling.
Saunders et al (2009) defines stratified simple sampling as a tailored method from the random sampling method. This method requires the researcher to divide the sample frame into two or more relevant strata to the study based on one or a number of similar attributes. In effect, the sampling frame is separated into a number of necessary subsets. The researcher divided the sample into three subsets which are the main departments of the organization.

The sample was split into three according to their departments, namely Sales and Marketing, Technical and Workshops, and Administration and Finance Departments. The sample size distribution for each level is shown below:

Table 3.1 Strata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Pilot Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Marketing</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and Workshops</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and Finance</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6. Data Collection Techniques

According to Robson (2002) data collected depends on the research objectives and questions which give a particular focus to the study. Robson (2002:320) suggests that data may either be descriptive or narrative (Saunders et al, 2009). The main objective of the study was to investigate the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning at Creative Group. One data collection method was used which is the self administered questionnaires. This technique was chosen because of its ability to collect data about occurrences that cannot be directly observed such as the employees' inner feelings and opinion on the particular subject under study through the use of open ended questions.

3.6.1 Sources of Data

There are two types of sources of data which are primary and secondary data. According to the Concordia Library (2010) a primary source is a document created at
the time of your research subject, about your research subject. Primary sources are directly connected with the events or people being researched. A secondary source is a document created at a later time than the event being researched, by someone who did not experience the said event (Concordia Library, 2010). Secondary sources of data do not have any direct connection with the events or people being researched. For purposes of this research, the researcher used primary sources of data through the use of self administered questionnaires.

3.6.2 Self administered questionnaires

Saunders et al (2009) defines a self- administered questionnaire as a data collection method that respondents can read and answer the same set of questions without the interviewer present. Self- administered questionnaires are normally filled out by the respondent. The advantage of using a questionnaire as a data collection technique is that there is no bias when the respondent is giving responses. The self- administered questionnaire can also be filled out by the respondent at any time they are free, unlike interviews, where the interviewee can leave without completing all the responses. Siniscalco (2005) defined a questionnaire as a survey instrument used to collect data from individuals about themselves, or about a social unit such as a household or a school.

The questionnaire used both open- ended and close- ended questions. As quoted by Saunders (2009) open questions, sometimes referred to as open-ended questions (Dillman 2007), allow respondents to give answers in their own way (Fink 2003). Closed questions, sometimes referred to as closed-ended questions (Dillman 2007) or forced choice questions (deVaus, 2002), provide a number of alternative answers from which the respondent is instructed to choose. The open ended questions were mainly used to determine the true feelings and perceptions of the respondents.

The self- administered questionnaire was used for the sample under study to gather information on the study’s objective to find the barriers that hinder the successful implementation of succession planning in SME’s particularly Creative Group. 130 respondents were targeted to fill out the self- administered questionnaires.
3.7. Pilot Study

Arain et al (2010) define a pilot study as a small study for helping to design a further confirmatory study- such kinds of study may have various purposes such as testing study procedures, validity of tools, estimation of the recruitment rate, and estimation of parameters such as the variance of the outcome variable to calculate sample size.

A pilot study was done for this research. The pilot study was administered to 8 members of staff; 1 manager, 2 skilled staff, 3 semi-skilled staff and 2 unskilled staff. The participants for the pilot study were not involved in the collection of the research data because participating for the second time would have led to biased responses.

3.8. Credibility of research findings

According to Saunders et al (2009) reducing the possibility of getting the answer wrong requires a researcher to be attentive to areas of research design which are validity and reliability.

3.8.1 Reliability

Reliability is defined by Saunders et al (2009) as the extent to which the data collection technique(s) used can repeatedly yield the similar research findings.

Easterby-Smith et al (2008:109) states that reliability can be assessed by posing the following three questions which are: will the measures yield the same results on other occasions, will similar observations be reached by other observers and is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?

Threats to Reliability

Robson (2002) states that there are possibly four threats to reliability. The four are highlighted below:

- Subject or participant error- different levels of enthusiasm of participants at the same workplace for their job and superiors might yield different results in a space of a week (Saunders, 2009).
• Subject or participant bias- interviewees might give responses based on what they think their superiors would want them to say (Saunders, 2009).
• Observer error- observers in those type of error might be getting different observations on one particular participant (Greener, 2008).
• Observer bias- there may have been three different ways of interpreting the replies and the observer chooses one that best suits his or her interests (Saunders, 2009)

The researcher took care whilst undertaking the study to avoid the above four threats to reliability of the research. This was mainly done when the researcher was undertaking personal interviews.

3.8.2 Validity
Saunders et al (2009) defines validity as that which is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about. Greener (2008) noted that there are three main ways of characterizing validity, namely; face validity, construct validity and internal validity. Robson (2002) went on to highlight threats to validity as noted below:

History
If for example a researcher is undertaking a study on customer opinions on a particular product and however, a major problem occurs and the product is called back, the responses can be misleading and can affect the findings of the research (Saunders et al (2009).

Testing
Greener (2008) defines this as when the respondent feels that their responses are going to compromise them. For example, asking how long a till operator takes to serve a client in a supermarket.

Instrumentation
This is the instrument that is used to for data collection.

Mortality
This refers to participants dropping out of studies (Saunders et al, 2009). This is because participants might feel that the research will not benefit them in any way.

**Maturation**

Other events happening during the year have an effect on the respondents’ responses and attitudes to that particular study.

Fielding and Fielding (1986) discussed triangulation as a strong way to use as a validity testing strategy. The researcher therefore found it fit to triangulate data collection methods as a way of doing a validity test.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

According to Cooper and Schindler (2008:34) ethics are defined as the values, norms, standards of behaviour that guide decisions about how we relate with others. Saunders et al (2009) therefore states that as researchers, the process of research must be done on a moral and responsible way, from data collection to data analysis and presentation. According to Zikmund (2000), the way we design our research should both be morally acceptable and methodologically sound.

Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) highlighted the following as major ethical issues when conducting research; that is, informed consent, respect for confidentiality and anonymity, beneficence- do not harm, respect for privacy and other ethical issues.

The researcher had to seek for permission to undertake a study at the organization from the company directors. The researcher also had to seek for permission to collect data from the respondents. Ethical considerations were put in place before the respondents could participate in the study. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondent and issues of confidentiality were addressed.

### 3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative analysis involves labelling and coding all of the data in order that similarities and differences can be recognised (Greener; 2008). Data from the open
ended questions used to gather perceived responses of the respondents was quantified and represented on Microsoft Excel. Data collected from the questionnaires was coded and cleaned before using Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Science. The data was presented on graphs, tables and charts for analysis.

3.11 Limitations to the study

The main limitation to the study was the use of a case study for the research. The researcher used Creative Group as its understudy to study the barriers against the successful implementation of succession planning in SME’s. More information could have been gathered if more SME organizations could have been used for the study. The results from the study therefore are not clear whether they are generalizable or not since the research was case specific. However, because of time frame of the study and the cost of studying more than one organization, the researcher used one case organization as a case study.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter was about the research methodology. Adopting the pragmatism paradigm, the research design the researcher chose was the mixed methods design. The chapter reflects how sampling was done from the sampling frame. This chapter gives an understanding to how the researcher collected data for purposes of investigating the barriers against the successful implementation of succession planning. The research methodology chapter helps the researcher collect data that will answer the research questions and address the objective of the study.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

Chapter 4 is based on the findings of the research to respond to the research questions as indicated in Chapter 1. This chapter also gives the researcher forum to discuss the findings of the research. The research questions are as follows:

a) How is succession planning implemented at Creative Group?

b) What are the success factors for the successful implementation of succession planning?

c) What are the barriers/ constraints to the successful implementation of succession planning?

d) How can these barriers be addressed to the successful implementation of succession planning?

Data was mainly collected through questionnaires which were done to validate data given on the questionnaires. Data was coded, cleaned, and then analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Data that was collected during the research is presented on tables and graphs for easy interpretation by users and readers.

The research findings are presented and analyzed in tandem with the following concepts that shaped the questionnaire and interview questions:

- Demographic information
- How succession planning was introduced to the participants
- The benefits of succession planning
- Key success factors of the successful implementation of succession planning
• Barriers or constraints that hinder the successful implementation of succession planning
• Propositions given by the participants on how succession planning can be improved in the organization.

4.1 Response Rate and Demographic Information

Saunders et al (2009) defines a response rate as the proportion of cases from the sample who will respond or from which data will be collected. Neuman (2005) suggests that a response rate of between 10 and 50 per cent for questionnaire surveys and up to 90 per cent for face-to-face interviews reflects an adequate response rate.

This study had a distribution of 130 questionnaires and 96 of these were completed and returned on time. This gives a percentage response rate of 73.8%. According to Fisher (2007), where questionnaires have been administered to employees in an organization, a response rate of at least 70% is good enough. Smith (2002) also states that a response rate of at least 60% is sufficient. However, (Rogelberg and Stanton, 2007) note that a higher than normal response rate does not prove that your findings are unbiased and similarly, a lower than normal response rate does not necessarily mean that responses are biased.

An illustration of the response rate of the study is shown in Fig 1. The table shows the different response rates by age and department. The table shows different response rates per each age group and department.

Age of Respondents

The table Fig 1 shows that the majority of the respondents were aged between 20-30 years. 89.1% of respondents belonged to this age group. This reflects that most of the respondents of this research were those between the age of 20-30 years, which is a very active age group. However, the most targeted age group was that of between 31-40 years of age.
Table 4.1 shows the response rate according to the department and age group of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age * Department</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Technical and Workshops</th>
<th>Administration and Finance</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Targeted</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 30 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response Rate</strong></td>
<td><strong>64%</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>77.8%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>73.8%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

**Department of Respondents**

The number of participants for each department is shown in the table Fig 1 above. This information was important to the researcher to assess whether the sample was a representative of each department. Each department had a fair distribution of respondents who undertook the study.

**Respondent’s Gender**

Table 4.2 shows that there is a fair distribution of the respondent’s gender for this research were females were 51% and males 49%. The results reflect that Creative Group is an equal opportunity company that does not discriminate based on gender, and strives to encourage gender balance in its organization.

Table 4.2 below illustrates the respondent’s gender.
Respondent’s level of Education

Fig 4.1 below shows the distribution of the respondent’s level of education

![highest Edu Level chart]

Fig 4.1 Highest educational level

Figure 4.1 shows that almost half of the respondents have degrees in their areas of work. This shows that the organization has skilled employees in their line of work. The fig 4.1 above shows that 46% of the respondents have degrees, 29% have diplomas, 8% attained advanced level, 4% attained ordinary level and the other 12% has other qualifications apart from the stated ones.
The respondent’s level of education was important to the researcher, because according to Malhotra (2004) Questionnaires should also be designed with the target respondents in mind, taking into account their educational level and experience.

**Respondent’s Length of Service**

Most of the respondents, as shown by Table 4.3 are those that have served less than three years in the organization, making them fairly new to the organization taking up 53% of the respondents. Those that served above 3 years range from 4 to over 15 years of service. Table 4.3 shows the length of experience of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid 1 - 3 years</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 10 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>98.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 15 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

**4.2 Respondent’s Understanding of Succession Planning**

Figure 4.2 below illustrates the level of understanding of succession planning of the respondents
The researcher assessed the respondent’s level of understanding of succession planning by asking them to judge their own level of understanding to the subject under study. 52% highlighted that they had a moderate understanding of succession planning in their organization. 13% of the respondents stated that they had a very high understanding of succession planning and 25% had a high rate of understanding succession planning. This shows that the 15% of the respondents either stated they had low or very low level of understanding of succession planning.

The percentage of those that understand the subject under study is high, and there is a likelihood that it will be easy for the organization to fully implement succession planning since the sample shows that there is a better understanding of succession planning, that is its benefits when implemented fully.
The researcher also sought to find out the views of the respondents on whether succession planning was being fully implemented or not. Below is a figure showing how the respondents responded to whether the company was fully implementing succession planning or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation of Succession Planning</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 4.3 Implementation of Succession Planning

The diagram shows that 39% stated that there is full implementation of succession planning whilst 34% highlighted that there is no full implementation of succession planning and 27% stated that they did not know whether it was being fully implemented or not.

Hypothesis Testing for Independence of Association

In order to test for independence of association between gender, age, designation, and highest level of education, using the chi-square test at 5% level of significance, the results showed that there was no relationship between the rate of level of
understanding of succession planning. This is because the P value for the chi-square test was greater than $\geq 0.05$.

### 4.3 How Respondents were made to Understand Succession Planning

The researcher was interested in determining how respondents were made to understand succession planning within the organization. There are two strategies that were being used in the organization to apply succession planning. Respondents were either exposed to training or job rotation.

**Training**

Fig 4.4 illustrates the respondents that were sensitized of succession planning using training.

Fig 4.4 Training of other employees

Fig 4.4 Training

Fig 4.4 shows that 60% of the respondents were made aware of succession planning using training and 40% stated that they had never been trained on the subject under study. This shows that over half of the company was sensitised on succession planning by means of training.
Job rotation

Fig 4.5 Respondents sensitised on succession planning through job rotation

Figure 4.5 illustrates that 28% were sensitised on succession planning by means of job rotation whilst 72% stated that they had never gone through job rotation.

The above two figures, Fig 4.3 and 4.5 show that the organization uses training mainly as their tool to sensitise employees on succession planning.

Hypothesis testing for Independence of Association

The researcher carried out a chi-square test at 5% level of significance to test for the independence of association between the participant’s level of education and training of other employees. The analysis revealed that there was an association between the respondent’s level of education and the training of other employees on the job. The p value was less than 0.05; that is $p(0.049) \leq 0.05$. 
This test result is an analysis of:
H1: Training is an important determinant in the successful implementation of succession planning.

Table 4.4 Level of education and training of other employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>9.555&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>11.850</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>3.904</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.58

A chi-square test at 5% level of significance was used to test for the independence of association between the participant’s department and training of other employees. The analysis revealed that a relationship exists between the respondent's level of education and the training of other employees on the job for the successful implementation of succession planning. We therefore reject H0 and accept H1The p value was more than 0.05; that is p (0.932) ≥0.05

Table 4.5 Department of respondent and training of other employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>.141&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.48.
The findings reflect that 60% of the sample has trained a fellow employee and 40% have not trained a fellow employee before. The most percentage of those that have not trained another employee comes from those with degrees, diplomas and advanced level. As the level of education decreases that is from ordinary level, the number of those that have not trained a fellow employee decreases, having 0% of the respondents having said no to training another employee. All of the respondents with an Ordinary level qualification had trained another employee on how to perform their duties and this might be owing to the fact that their designations might be that of general work employees and duties of employees performing general work are usually simple duties for positions like cleaners, messengers and drivers.

Department of Respondent and Training of Fellow Employee
The results show that 60% of the respondents have trained another employee before whilst 40% have not trained a fellow employee before. There is a fair distribution of training in each department having 33% from sales and marketing, 29% of technical and workshops and 38% of administration and finance having trained a fellow employee in their respective departments. The highest percentage of respondents that have not trained another employee are from the Sales and Marketing department and the Administration and Finance department with each both 34%.

### 4.4 Success Factors that can be employed for Succession Planning

The researcher noted that the two main strategies used for implementing succession planning at the organization were training and job rotation. The researcher then paused a multiple response question to the respondents on other strategies that they
thought could improve the implementation of succession planning. Below is a figure that shows how the respondents responded.

Fig 4.8 Succession Planning Strategies/ Success Factors

![Succession Planning Strategies](image)

Fig 4.8 Succession planning strategies

23% and 12% respectively felt that job training and job rotation are the strategies that would improve succession planning at the organization. 20% of the respondents thought that employee engagement is a strategy that will improve on managements implementation of succession planning.

The other strategies identified by the respondents as strategies for the improvement of succession planning were talent retention, leadership agility, knowledge management, and development of the employee.

The researcher also identified other success factors of the successful implementation of succession planning, from the respondents. Below are the stated factors:

- Creating a positive vision
• A strong organizational culture
• Flat structure

According to Mehrabani et al (2011) creating a positive vision helps employees to have a positive insight towards implementation of strategies such as succession planning.

Mehrabini et al (2011) also gave insight that a strong organizational culture which provides values, beliefs and standards that support succession planning, it would be easier for employees to support the system.

Sikomwe (2012) highlighted that flat structures result in better communication and easier knowledge sharing within the organization.

4.5 Perceptions of Respondents on Benefits and Barriers to Succession Planning

The researcher sought to establish the feelings and perceptions of respondents to identify the benefits and barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning. To achieve this, the researcher, according to Saunders et al (2009) used open questions, sometimes referred to as open-ended questions that allow respondents to give answers in their own way

4.5.1 Benefits of Succession Planning

Before establishing the benefits of the successful implementation of succession planning, the research asked the respondents whether they thought that there was need for succession planning in the organization. Below is a figure showing how the respondents responded.
The majority of the respondents noted that there is need for succession planning and stated the benefits of succession planning within the organization. 59% of the respondents stated that the organization needed succession planning. 22% stated that succession planning was not needed in their organization whilst 19% of the respondents did not know whether succession planning was required at their organization or not.

Benefits of succession planning are stated below, as highlighted by respondents who saw the need of succession planning in the organization.

According to Saunders et al (2009) coding of open ended questions requires coding of different responses. For this data, data was presented in Microsoft Excel. Below is a figure showing the benefits of the successful implementation of succession planning.
70% of the respondents highlighted that if succession planning is implemented successfully, there is a high likelihood of company growth. 47% stated job continuity as a benefit of succession planning.

Apart from company growth and job continuity, other benefits of succession planning are noted below:

- Team work
- Quality improvement
- Innovation
- Creativity
- Motivation
- Ease of work
- Customer satisfaction
- Employee development
- Competency.

Fig 4.10 Benefits of succession planning

![Benefits of Succession Planning](image)
4.5.2 Barriers to the Successful Implementation of Succession Planning

Table 4.6 Barriers to SP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>1.216E2a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>120.256</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>55.504</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.15.

The relationship between the responses to the question; Is the company fully implementing the succession planning? And the question; Are you comfortable with any strategy changes? yielded the chi-square P-value = 0.000 < 0.05, therefore we reject the null hypotheses and we conclude that there is a relationship between those who are comfortable with change and those who view the company as fully and successfully implementing the succession planning. The relationship is very strong with the Cramer’s V = 0.796 which is close to 1. In addition, the bar graph in the Fig. below derived from a quantified free response questions on the barriers to the succession planning question, shows that most respondents highlighted that resistant to change was the major barrier with 24 respondents mentioning them. We conclude that resistance to change is a barrier to the successful implementation of the succession plan.

Table 4.7 Cramers test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symmetric Measures</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>.796</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A question was given to the respondents in their view of what could be the constraints of the successful implementation of succession planning in the organization and the figure below illustrates what the respondents perceived to be the constraints that hindered the successful implementation of succession planning.
The question given to the respondents was an open-ended question which required the respondents to give multiple responses to the question in order to get the perceptions of the respondents (Dillman; 2007).

**Fig 4.11 Barriers to SP**

**Resistance to Change**

Individuals go through a reaction process when they are personally confronted with major organisational change (Jacobs, 1995). The research showed that 24% of the respondents highlighted resistance to change as a barrier to the successful implementation of succession planning. According to Bovey (2001) resistance occurs because change involves going from the known to the unknown and therefore has to be managed so as to achieve the goal of implementing any form of change.

**Poor Organizational Culture**

From the respondents multiple responses on barriers to succession planning, 16% of the respondents noted that organizational culture was a barrier to the successful implementation of succession planning. Booz and Company (2010) define organizational culture as self-sustaining patterns of behaving, feeling, thinking, and believing – that determine how things are done around the organization. This therefore means the organizational culture is as much important to the implementers as the organization itself and strategy. The three should be in sync.
Lack of Training

It was also found out from the research that lack of training contributes to the barriers that affect the successful implementation of succession planning. The results show that 16% of the respondents stated that lack of training was a barrier to succession planning. Mehrabani et al (2011) states that training helps the employees learn new skills and knowledge and therefore giving employees new abilities.

Ignorance and Job Insecurity

14% of the respondents noted ignorance as a barrier to succession planning and job insecurity with 12% of the respondents noting it as a barrier to succession planning. Respondents stated that in the case of ignorance, some of the employees had no idea of what the benefits of succession planning were because they just did not have interest in the implementation of strategies in the workplace.

Some respondents noted job insecurity as a barrier because employees feared losing their jobs, especially if another employee could perform all their tasks. This could also be classified as fear. 4.2% of the respondents noted fear as a barrier to succession planning.

Limited Resources and Poor Vision of the Organization

7.4% of the respondents listed limited resources as a barrier to the successful implementation of succession planning. These could either be financial or human resources. However, a small percentage of the respondents highlighted limited resources as a barrier to the successful implementation of succession planning.

8% of the participants stated that a poor organizational vision could also be a barrier to the successful implementation of succession planning. Mehrabani et al (2011) if a positive vision is created in an organization this gives insight to the employees.
4.6 Ways of Addressing Challenges

According to the responses given in the research regarding barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning, the researcher designed a follow up question to find out from the respondents on measures to address the challenge of the barriers to a successful implementation of succession planning. Below is a chart showing the respondents’ responses in regard to what they perceived to be the ways to address these challenges.

40 of the 96 respondents revealed that there is need for clarification of a career path. This in turn would reduce resistance to change and fear of losing one’s job. A flat structure would also make it easy for employees to communicate within the organization making it easy to train and support each other. 26% of the respondents stated the need for a flat structure within the organization.

Other ways of addressing the challenges as given by the respondents are as follows:

- Training and development
- On the job training
- Management support
- Strong organizational culture

Fig 4.12 Ways of addressing succession planning
4.7 Conceptual Framework Revisited

The initial conceptual framework had a hub and spoke designed by the researcher to attempt to draw the key variables that pose as barriers to successful implementation of succession planning. Literature had showed the barriers to succession planning but from the responses from the research, some variables do not pose as barriers to the successful implantation of succession planning at Creative Group. Alternatively, other barriers came up from the research findings that were affecting the implementation of succession planning.

The researcher will therefore remove slow technology advancement, lack of career path and lack of financial stability. The researcher will replace these variables with ignorance, fear and job insecurity, limited human and financial resources.

The researcher also found out that resistance to change was the major barrier that contributed to the emergence of the other barriers that came about in the research.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 presented the research findings and these were discussed in relation to Chapter 2- Literature Review. The research had had an average response rate of 74% from a sample of 130 targeted respondents. These were divided by the three main departments in the organization. Data was collected through self administered questionnaires that were semi-structured to give room for the employees perceptions in other areas of research that needed clarification or that had multiple responses. The research findings were that for there to be a successful implementation of succession planning there was need for vivid education of the employees so that they all have a better understanding of the subject under study. Most of the respondents had a moderate understanding of succession planning. Success factors of the successful implementation of succession planning were noted as employee engagement, on the job training, job rotation, development of the employee, talent retention management, leadership agility and management support,
a strong organizational culture and knowledge management. The barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning that respondents listed were resistance to change, ignorance, limited resources, fear, weak organizational culture, lack of training, poor/ lack of communication of the vision, and job insecurity. These barriers were also noted in Chapter 2.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is mainly on the conclusions and the recommendations drawn from the findings of the study. Conclusions drawn from the results answer the overall objective of the study; that is to investigate the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning in Small-Medium Enterprises, with particular reference to Creative Group. The recommendations given in this chapter are mainly from the respondents’ recommendations and some are from the literature review of the research. This chapter also reveals other areas of further research around the topic under study.

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1. Find out how succession planning is implemented at Creative Group.

Succession planning is implemented at Creative Group to manage the growth the company is facing since its inception of the Credit facility it is offering to the Civil Service employees. It is also being implemented to ensure continuity of business in the case of an individual’s absence from their position. However, the implementation of this strategy is based on the effectiveness of the manager, and their understanding of the worth of the full and successful implementation of succession planning. This strategy involves continuous training of employees, job rotation and other succession planning strategies used within each department.

5.1.2. Identify key success factors for the successful implementation of succession planning.

The second objective of the study sought to identify the key success factors for the implementation of succession planning. The research findings show that for succession planning to be successful, there is a list of success factors that need to
be considered. The key success factors to succession planning being; training and development, management support and the financial conditions of the organization as revealed from the research findings.

- Training and talent development
- Management support
- Clarification of a career path to employees
- Creation of a positive vision
- Strong organizational culture
- Financial conditions of the organization
- Talent retention scheme
- Employee engagement
- Development of the employee

It can be concluded that if these success factors/drivers of the successful implementation of succession planning are carried out at Creative Group, the implementation of succession planning could be fully realised. The main key success factors as revealed in Chapter 4 are training and development, employee involvement, a strong organizational culture and availability of both human and financial resources.

5.1.3 Identify the barriers/ constraints to the successful implementation of succession planning

The third objective of the study was to identify the respondents’ perception on what they view as the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning. The barriers can be split into three, namely major barriers, moderate barriers, and minor barriers as given by the respondents. This is according to the frequency of respondents, the highest frequency for a barrier concluding it as a major barrier

Major barriers
It can be concluded that the perceived major barriers, according to the respondents are:

- Resistance to change- that employees do not appreciate change mainly because of fear of the unknown.
- Weak organisational culture- that a weak organizational culture can affect the implementation of any strategies as an organizational culture should work in sync with strategy and the organization.
- Lack of training- that lack of training reduces the knowledge an employee has on any subject area.

**Moderate barriers**

Moderate barriers are those that had a moderate frequency and it can be concluded that the moderate barriers are:

- Ignorance of an employee
- Job insecurity and fear of losing ones job

**Minor barriers**

Minor barriers are those that had less frequency than that of the major and moderate barriers. The following are the minor barriers:

- Limited resources- human and financial resources.
- Poor/ lack of communication of a vision.

The main barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning are therefore, resistance to change, weak organizational culture and lack of training.

**5.2 Validating the Hypotheses**
The researcher used the chi-square test to confirm the hypotheses made in Chapter 1. Below is a summary of findings as was analysed in Chapter 4.

**H1:** Training is an important determinant to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

**Validation:** The null hypothesis was rejected and a conclusion was made that training is an important determination of succession planning at Creative Group.

**H2:** Job rotation is a key success factor to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

**Validation:** The null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that job rotation is a key factor to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

**H3:** Resistance to change is a barrier to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

**Validation:** the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that resistance to change is a barrier to the successful implementation of SP at Creative Group.

The overall research findings point to the resistance of change, lack of training, and weak organizational culture amongst other barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning. These, however, are not the only barriers but the mentioned are the major barriers mentioned by the majority of the respondents. The research hypotheses are therefore partially confirmed in that the barriers from the research findings confirm the hypotheses but there are other findings that show a relationship between that variable and succession planning.

### 5.3. Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

The researcher confirmed researches that were done by other researchers but these researches were done in developed countries therefore some of the barriers are not
as recognised as they are in Zimbabwe, which is a Third World country. It is therefore going to be a research that is applicable in Third World countries.

5.3.1 Modified Conceptual Framework
Research findings in Chapter 4 show that the original conceptual framework in Chapter 2 should be modified because there are other barriers that were adopted on the modified framework from the findings. It is also a finding that resistance to change is the major barrier that gives birth to other barriers to succession planning.

![Modified Conceptual Framework](image)

Fig 5.1 Modified Conceptual Framework
Source: Modified Conceptual Framework by the Researcher

5.4 Recommendations

The last research objective sought to give recommendations on the research findings in Chapter 4. The following are the recommendations for this research:

1. **Train staff on succession planning**
For Creative Group to successfully implement succession planning in their organization, it is important that they continuously train their staff on succession planning, how it works, the benefits of it and what they are expected to do in their varying departments. This training should not be subjected to management only but should also be done for all levels of positions in the organization.

2. **Create a strong organizational culture**

It is therefore important for the organization to ensure that a strong culture exists in their organization. If organizational culture is weak, it is highly likely that it will affect the business strategies and the organization as a whole.

3. **Adopt a flat organizational structure**

A flat organization structure is ideal for the organization so that it enhances communication between employees. Succession planning requires high interaction between employees because it involves training each other on how to perform another’s tasks in case of their absence, and it is easier for knowledge sharing.

4. **Conduct progress meetings**

To ensure the continuous efficiency of the strategies employed to improve on the implementation of succession planning, it is important that the company’s management hold progress meetings and reports to have a continuous follow up on the progress of the implementation of succession planning. This will assist management to make necessary checks and balances and more attention where it is required to improve on the implementation of succession planning.

5.5 **Areas of Further Research**

This study focused on the barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning. Respondents pointed out to certain areas of succession planning that require further research.
The impact of training on resistance to change- the research finding show that resistance to change is a major barrier not only to succession planning, but to change management as a body. It would therefore be an area of further study.

The role of organizational culture in the implementation of succession planning- from the research findings, organizational culture is a wide research area that need its ample period to be researched as it has different dimensions to it.

5.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 gives the conclusions to the research and offers recommendations that are generated from the research findings in Chapter 4 and conclusions. The Chapter summarises conclusions for each research objective given in Chapter 1. The chapter also tested the research proposition given in Chapter 1. It also covers recommendations that the researcher gives in reference to the conclusions drafted from the research findings. Lastly, areas of further research are highlighted in this chapter.
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4. Booz and Company (2010) *A Perspective on Organizational Culture*, The Katzenbach Center


38. Rohre A. (20120 *Successful Succession Planning*, Austin HRMA


45. Whitmore M. (2006) Success through Succession Planning at the Texas Department of Insurance, Texas State University


Dear Respondent

Thank you very much for accepting to complete this questionnaire. My name is Isabel Sithole, an MBA student with the Graduate School of Management, University of Zimbabwe. As part of the requirements of the MBA programme, I am carrying out a research programme entitled, AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE BARRIERS TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCCESSION PLANNING: A CASE OF CREATIVE GROUP.

Respondents to this questionnaire have been randomly selected and you have been selected through this method. You are therefore requested to complete the attached questionnaire and return it to the undersigned not later than 20 December 2013. Please note that you are not required to write your name anywhere on the questionnaire and do not hesitate to contact me should you need any clarification regarding completing it. Also take note that your responses remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. You are therefore encouraged to honestly answer all questions without seeking other people’s opinions since there is no right or wrong answer.

Please contact the undersigned when you have completed the questionnaire or should you need further assistance on the following contact details:
Email address: isabel@creative.co.zw
    isabelsith@yahoo.com
Mobile:  0773414980

Thank you for your assistance

Yours sincerely

I Sithole
(MBA Student)
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES IN CREATIVE GROUP

RESEARCH TOPIC: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE BARRIERS TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCCESSION PLANNING IN SMALL-MEDIUM ENTERPRISES: A CASE OF CREATIVE GROUP.

Section A: Personal Details of Respondents (Please tick the applicable)

1. Sex
   a) Female ☐
   b) Male ☐

2. Age
   a) 20-30 years ☐
   b) 31-40 years ☐
   c) 41-50 years ☐
   d) 51-60 years ☐
   e) 60 years and above ☐

3. Highest formal education attained.
   a) Degree Level ☐
   b) Diploma Level ☐
   c) Advanced Level ☐
   d) Ordinary Level ☐
   e) Any other (please state in space provided)............
4. How long have you been working for Creative Group?  [ ] Years

5. Which department do you belong to  
   a) Sales and Marketing  [ ]
   b) Technical and Workshops  [ ]
   c) Administration and Finance  [ ]

6. What is your designation?  .............................................................................................

Section B: How succession planning is being implemented in the organization. (Please tick the applicable)

7. How do you rate your level of understanding on succession planning?  
   a) High  [ ]
   b) Moderate  [ ]
   c) Low  [ ]

8. Is the company fully implementing succession planning  
   a) Yes  [ ]
   b) No  [ ]
   c) I don’t know  [ ]

9. Are you comfortable with any strategy changes  
   a) Yes  [ ]
   b) No  [ ]
   c) I don’t know  [ ]

10. Have you trained a fellow employee on how to perform your duties?  
    a) Yes  [ ]
    b) No  [ ]
    c) I don’t know  [ ]
11. Can another employee perform all your tasks and duties in the event of your absence?
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐
   c) I don’t know ☐

12. In your department, how many days can an individual be away from work with guaranteed continuity of work? (Please write in the space provided)
    ........................................................................................................................................................

13. Can you go on a month’s leave and return without any work pending?
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐
   c) I don’t know ☐

14. Please give an explanation for your answer to Q12 above
    ........................................................................................................................................................
    ........................................................................................................................................................
    ........................................................................................................................................................

15. Does your department apply job rotation? a) Yes ☐
    b) No ☐

16. If yes to Q14 above, how often is there job rotation? .........................................................

Section C: Perceptions of the respondent regarding barriers to the successful implementation of succession planning. (Please give short answers)

17. In your view, what are the benefits of the implementation of succession planning
18. Creative Group being a Small-Medium Enterprise, is there any need for the full implementation of succession planning
a) Yes ☐
b) No ☐
c) I don’t know ☐

19. Please explain your response to Q17 above
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

20. What challenges have you encountered in the implementation of succession planning?
   i) ........................................................................................................................................
   ii) ........................................................................................................................................
   iii) ........................................................................................................................................

21. In your view, is resistance to change a barrier to succession planning implementation
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐
   c) I don’t know ☐

22. In your opinion, what have been the other barriers to the successful implantation of succession planning? List in short below
   i) ........................................................................................................................................
   ii) ........................................................................................................................................
   iii) ........................................................................................................................................
iv) ........................................................................................................................................

v) ........................................................................................................................................

23. How can the challenges be addressed? State in short below.
   i) ........................................................................................................................................
   ii) ........................................................................................................................................
   iii) ........................................................................................................................................
   iv) ........................................................................................................................................

24. What are your recommendations to management regarding how succession planning can be successfully implemented? State your answer in short below
   i) ........................................................................................................................................
   ii) ........................................................................................................................................
   iii) ........................................................................................................................................
   iv) ........................................................................................................................................

25. Is there anything else you wish to say with reference to the implementation of succession planning in your department?
   i) ........................................................................................................................................
   ii) ........................................................................................................................................
   iii) ........................................................................................................................................

END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION