SUCCESSION PLANNING PRACTICES AMONG THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS' IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Succession planning is described as the process through which organisations prepare to replace managers or employees who may leave the organisation for any reason and ensure that there is continuity of the right workforce needed in the organisation. This study assessed succession planning practices among Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Kenya. The relevant literatures were reviewed in order to develop theoretical background, assist in fine tuning the statement problem, establish the gap for the study and guide in the development of the various research tools. The research designs adopted descriptive and quantitative research designs. The targeted population of the study was 1172 NGOs based in Nairobi and the sample for the study was (n=270). The primary data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 21. Secondary data was collected through review of relevant literatures. Findings revealed that majority of the organisations (n=270) had lean establishments staff of about 10 employee, although low levels of succession planning practice was evident. The practice of succession planning among NGOs indicated that; less than half of these organisations had written succession planning policies (39%) and only (18%) indicated that they identify potential successors.

Key Words: *Succession planning, Non- Governmental Organisation (NGO), Kenya*

Introduction

The origins and legitimacy of the term Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) are multiple. The United Nations (UN) charter first used the term NGO in one of its clauses in 1947 (Markay, 1998). Global history of NGOs dates back as far after World War II with the initiation of the relief and development programmes. Prior to the 1980's, the entire voluntary NGO sector remained generally unknown in most areas of Africa (Escobar, 1997). Through this historical

evolution, NGOs came into being mainly to fill the gap when it was realized that the government alone was unable to bring about development. The NGO's existence has, therefore, been broadly described in terms of social and welfare reform everywhere in the world. Alternatively poverty, as the main subject of intervention has been perceived to be impeding peoples' access to opportunities such as good health, education, justice, good nutrition, safe water, and clean environment among others that NGOs seek to provide to the populace (Kirongo & Abdalla, 2009).

In Kenya, the NGOs Co-ordination Act of 1990 defined an NGO as a private voluntary grouping of individuals. It further explained that it is an association operated not for profit or other commercial purposes but which is organized nationally or internationally to operate solely for the benefit of the public at large. The scope of NGOs operations have, thus, been identified in areas such as health, agriculture, education, industry and supply of amenities, advocacy on good governance and other related services. According to NGO Coordination board (2009), Kenyan NGOs are categorized based on their scope of operation as either National or International. National NGOs are those that operate within Kenya whereas, International NGOs operate beyond the national boundaries. By and large, NGOs are also categorized by the sectors in which they operate. Such categories include: welfare, water, youth, gender, environment, HIV/AIDS, agriculture, disability, refugees, health, population, relief, governance, children, micro-finance, informal sector, information and education (Rick, 2002).

In Kenya, the recent developments in the NGO sector are marked with the enactment of Non-Governmental Organisations' Act 2012. The main objective of this bill is to encourage and support NGOs in their contribution to national development. This would ensure that NGOs maintain high standards in their internal governance, practice transparency and accountability. Over and above, the Bill seeks to establish the authority of Non-governmental Organisations as a corporate body with perpetual succession (GoK, 2012). However, with such legal requirements in an era of stiff competition characterized with mobility of professionals, it will be necessary to identify and develop leaders from within the organisation to empower and enhance continuity.

The need to develop succession plans as strategy for sustaining NGOs therefore becomes critical. This is due to the fact that many of the organisations indicate that they are having a formal succession plan. However, the depth and effectiveness of these plans are yet to be determined since most of the organisations continue to select their leaders through crisis management. According to GoK (2007), vision 2030 takes cognisance of this and points to the fact that Kenya's ability to fully benefit from its existing human capital has been hampered by inadequate management and planning. The vision 2030 of the country further notes with great concern that this mismatch between demand and supply needs to be corrected. As a consequence, the rapidly growing economy of this country has started showing human resource constraints, particularly in the private sector, thus hampering sector performance. This notwithstanding Rothwell, (2001) noted that succession planning and management should support strategic planning and strategic

thinking of the organisation. This provides an essential starting point for management of employee development programmes in support of continuous organisation performance.

Literature Review

Succession planning is defined as a process through which organisation prepare employees to take over key positions in over a period of time as a long term strategy. According to Bain (1995), Succession planning seeks to address fundamental questions relating to: what happens in the outside world that can have a direct profound influence on the personnel plans in the organisation that would bring about changes to the quantity and quality of man-power needed to support the mission and vision of an organisation. As a process, Rothwell (2001) asserts that, succession planning can help organisations to ensure stability and tenure of their workforce. For him, it is conceivably best understood as an effort by organisation to designed continued effective performance of work group by making provision for the development, replacement and strategic application of key people over time. Consequently, succession planning and management should support strategic planning and thinking of the organisation, provide essential management and employee development programmes.

The concept of succession planning has evolved over the years as summarised above. To assess the effect of succession planning on organisation performance among the NGOs, there is a need to benchmark on models of succession planning to expose the theoretical background of succession planning as envisioned from best practice. Specifically, two models have been taken into consideration. They are: the seven pointed star Model for systematic succession planning and management as developed by Rothwell and the best in class Pressure, Action, Capabilities and Enablers (PACE) model developed by the Aberdeen Group .

Recent development since the year 2000 to date in the areas of succession planning is characterized with linking succession planning to human resource outcomes and strategic management outcomes. According to Lynn, (2001), key elements of the succession concepts emerging in the last decade are identified with: succession contingencies such as industry, organisational characteristics, and selector variables, causes for CEO departure, CEO roles, and candidate issues. Succession event such as process, candidate choice issues, organisational effectiveness, stakeholder issues, and evaluation outcomes are gaining prominence. Over and above, the post 21st century is also dominated with Rothwell, (2001) seven point star model that has been reviewed and improved with a focus on the process.

The implementation of succession planning leverages on key strategic human resource management components. These include; employee resourcing, training and development, performance appraisal, carrier development and total rewards system. The above mentioned are not complete without being tied in together with Succession management characteristics that include; Linking the succession plan to organisations strategic plans, gaining top management

support and total employee involvement for effective implementation. For purposes of monitoring and evaluation the designed program hence needs period assessment. The above indicators are attributed to the assessment of succession planning program of organisation.

Research Methodology

The study adopted both quantitative and descriptive research designs. According to Couchman and Dawson (1998), quantitative research generates quantifiable data. Whereas, the main purpose of descriptive research is to describe the state of affairs on succession planning and organisation performance as it is perceived and practiced. According to Sekaran (2003), descriptive study is undertaken to ascertain and describe the characteristics of the variables of interest in a situation.

The study population comprised of 1172 NGOs based in Nairobi that were registered with the National NGO coordination Board of Kenya and in operation (NGO Coordination Board Database, 2012). The sample was 270 NGOs drawn from the population. The researcher adopted multiple sampling strategies to effectively carry that included proportionate stratified sampling and random sampling. The researcher considered all the sectors of NGOs operations in Kenya that included: Health, Food and nutrition; Environment, energy and conservation measures; water and sanitation; research, learning and capacity building; shelter and informal settlement; population and relief services; programmes for disabled persons, children, youth, women, and religion; social policy, communication and advocacy; community development and economic empowerment; and education.

The main instrument for collecting primary data was a questionnaire. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a questionnaire is a research instrument with various advantages that includes; information collected from a large sample, confidentiality, time saving and minimized biases that arise from interview. To ascertain the reliability and validity of the instrument of data collection, a pretest was carried out. The case summary after the listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure was found to be (α= .950). The Cronbach's Alphas for each of the items was consistently above (α= 0.70) which indicates that the information gathered with the research questionnaire was highly reliable.

Data analysis, presentation and discussion were done systematically starting with: descriptive statistics, inferential statistics through correlations and multiple regressions analysis. In details, the descriptive statistics analysis of the categorical data was presented in frequency tables with Chi Square statistic. This was used to compare tallies or counts of categorical responses between two (or more) independent groups.

Research Results

Background information

Back ground information pertaining to the years of existence, number of staff and the levels of budged was found to be directly impacting on the kind of succession planning practiced by the organisation. Out of the sampled population (n=270), the average of the years of existence was (M =2.93, SD=1.023) representing a majority of the organisation that have existed for 11 to 15 years. In terms of staff establishment, however, the entire sample (n=266) had lean staff establishment (M =1.74, SD=1.005). Most of these organisations had about 10 employees on average. The magnitude of the budget range for organisation which provided there budget estimates (n = 232) was on the second quartile (M= 2.10, SD= 0.760) representing 11-30 million Kenya shillings annually.

Findings indicated that majority of the organisations have about 10 staff (68%) and these have been in existent for about 6-7 years. These findings also revealed that most organisations (47 %) of the sampled population have been in existence for about 11 to 15 years and have about 11-20 employees. The study also revealed that of these organisations that have been existence for more than 20 years had the majority of employees of about 31-40 representing (39%). The findings further indicate that the longer the organisation has been in existence, the larger the staff establishment. As such Pearson Chi- square with a value of 83.33 with a $P<0.005$ was observed. Majority of the organisation that have staff of about 1-10 had most of their budget range between 31- 50 million Kenya shillings representing (83%). Of those organisations that had about 11- 20 employees, majority representing (45%) had their budgets between 11- 30 million Kenya shilling. Alternatively, those organisations with the largest number of employee of 41 and above had the largest budget of 51 million Kenya shilling and above. From the findings above it can be deduced that, organisations' annual budget depends on how long the organisation has been in existence. This is further supported by a high statistical significance with a Pearson chi-square value of 32.804 and $p=0.001$ which is less than 0.005.

Succession practises among NGOs

The results showed that among those organisations that have been in existence between for about 6-10 years (33%) are likely to have potential successors identified for key positions compared to those that are 1- 5 years (11%). However, there is a decrease in percentage from those organisation that are 11-15 years (31%) and 16-20 years (20%). A further decline is evident among orgaisations that are over 21 years old (4%).

Findings shows that very few organisations that are only 1-5 years old have written succession planning policy (9%). A steady increase in the number of organisation that have written succession planning policies is evident among organisation that are 6-10 years (33%) and 11-15

years (31%). However, only (6%) half of the total number of the organisation that are 21 years and above had written succession planning policies. Chi- Square test results indicates that 2 cell (20%) have expected count less than 5 and the minimum expected count is 2.80. The sample size requirement for the Chi-Square test of independence is not satisfied. The Chi- Square test of independence of the relationship between how long the organisation has been in existence and how the potential successor are identified shows test statistic (X2= 2.835) at a significance level of p=0.586 that is greater that than alpha level of significance of 0.05. The null hypothesis potential successors would be identified are not independent of the difference of the years of organisation existence. We therefore accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between the means of identifying potential successors and the number of years the organisation has been in existence.

Succession planning involvement was considered fewer than three main categories. This was based on level of management from the top, liner manager and all employees. As shown in the result above, majority of the organisation that involves top management in succession planning representing (34%) were of 6-10 years of existence. This exceeded organisation that are 1-5 years old (8%). However, under this cartegorisation of organisations, those that were over 21 years old represented (6%). Again, organisation that are 11-15 years old involved most of the line management staff in succession planning (64%). This was closely followed with organisations that are about 6-10 years old with only (18%). The results also showed that (58%) of the organisation that are 11-15 years old involve all employees in the succession planning process. This was closely followed with (42%) of the organisations that are16-20 years old. However, none of the organisations that are 1-5 years old involved all employees in succession planning (0%). The Chi- Square test, the results indicates that 7 cell (47%) have expected count less than 5 and the minimum expected count is .80. The sample size requirement for the Chi-Square test of independence is not satisfied. The Chi- Square test of independence of the relationship between how long the organisation has been in existence and how the potential successor are identified shows test statistic (X2= 34.987) at a significance level of p=0.000 that is less than alpha level of significance of 0.05. The null hypothesis level of succession planning scope of involvement is dependent on the difference of the years of organisation existence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is relationship between level of succession planning scope of involvement and the number of years the organisation has been in existence.

On the type of succession planning practice, majority of the organisation that are 6-10 years old have paper based succession planning (33%). This closely similar to (21%) of the organisation that are 11-15 years old. However, majority of these organisations that are 16-20 years old (46%) have partially automated succession planning programmes. A stable increase in number of organisation partially automating there succession plans is also evident as the number of years of existence increases consecutively; 1-5 years (3%), 6-10 years (17%), 11-15 years(28%) and 16-20 years (46%). Very few organisation have a fully automated succession planning programmes

that is only represented with (1%) of the organisations under the 6-10 years old organisations. Among the organisation that neither indicated that there succession planning practices are neither, paper based, partially automated or fully automated, majority were those that have been in existence for 11-15 years (48%) whom indicated none. This is closely followed with (32%) of the organisations that are 6-10 years old. Chi-Square results indicates that 9 cell (45%) have expected count less than 5 and the minimum expected count is 0.06. The sample size requirement for the Chi-Square test of independence is not satisfied. However, the Chi- Square test of independence of the relationship between how long the organisation has been in existence and type of succession planning shows test statistic ($X2= 22.467$) with a significance level at $p=0.033$ that is greater that than alpha level of significance of 0.05. The null hypothesis organisation type of succession plan is not dependent of the difference of the years of organisation existence. We therefore accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between the type of succession plan and the number of years the organisation has been in existence.

Strategic HRM Programmes

To a greater extent, the practise among NGO's affirmed that talent reviews are the key to effective Succession management, including identified gaps. However, organisation talent reviews for succession planning should be executed within the context of a talent strategy as a rigorous competency-based assessment of employees, in order to identify high-potential employees and future leaders, and to determine bench strength at a particular level that links well with the seven point model. This is not explicitly identified as a practise among NGO's as discussed in the review of literature under section 2.4.1 on the seven pointed star model, (Karien, 2011). With respect to training and development, more than a quarter indicated that it was very important (30%) and another (33%) indicated its importance. Rewards and incentives were recognized as very important with nearly half (40%) and (31%) as only important. On the contrary, almost a quarter (13.0%) felt that incentives and rewards for identified successors for succession planning were not very important. The mentioned aspects of training and development, rewards and incentives are also considered critical in the analysis of the PACE model of Aberdeen Group (2007). As capabilities and enablers, they provide essential ingredients of a succession planning strategy that produce top results in maintaining performance measurement as the key functionality of solutions required to support the organisation's enabling business practices (Jayson and Martins, 2008).

These findings synchronises with the increasing interest in tactical succession planning using talent management. This is considered as key in the development of the concept of Succession planning as a dynamic and ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing leadership talent (Nink and Fogg, 2006). Performance management was recognized with half of (50%) who agreed, whereas (23%) disagreed on the same. Almost a quarter of (21%) strongly agreed while about half (59%) agreed that training and development is key. Slightly

more than half (52%) agreed that it's important to integrated rewards systems to succession planning. However, (21%) disagreed with additional (8%) strongly disagreeing. As such therefore, talent management remains key as supported by (Dessler, 2005) that, the process of succession planning general demands three steps that include: First, identifying and analysing key jobs; secondly, creating and assessing candidates; and thirdly, selecting the right individuals who will fill up the key positions and stating the program over the lifetime of the organisations.

The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 78.058) was p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that differences in strategic HRM programme are related to differences in succession planning characteristics of: Established way of recruitment to forecast future talent needs, established means to compare individual skills to the requirements of a future position performance appraisal, tied succession planning programme to training programme, tied succession planning programme to individual career plans and established incentives/rewards for identified successors in the succession planning programme is supported by this analysis.

Linkage to strategic plans

Tied succession plans to the organisation strategic plans were considered important with (45%) as important whereas (23%) stated that it is not very important. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2=138.32) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that differences in tied succession planning programmes to the organisation strategic plans are related to differences in linkage to strategic plan is supported by this analysis. NGOs are therefore considering linkage to strategic plans as a key capability to succession planning as championed by best in class mode (Aberdeen Group, 2007).

Almost half (40%) considered action planning as very important and further qualified with (72%) as important to establish ways to forecast future talent needs of the organisation. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2=168.07) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis differences of linkage to strategic plans are related with the differences of established programme action plans as supported by this analysis. The findings summarised is found to be in support of (Shen and Cannella, 2003) significance of succession planning towards delivering business strategy as effective implementation of succession management strategies is linked to various outcomes, including shareholder wealth, post-Succession senior executive turnover, business continuity and the retention of key talent. These findings, resonates with public sector pitfalls identified with (Wyatt, 2007) where he emphasised that it is important to make succession planning part of an overall talent management strategy linked to organisation's strategic goals without which succession planning programmes will not achieve their desired results.

Top management support

Nearly half (41%) indicated fixed responsibility for organisations oversight considered very important on the programme statement to guide the succession planning programme. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2=287.06) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference in top management support as a characteristic of succession planning are related to the difference of fixed responsibility for organisations oversight of the programme statement to guide as support by this analysis.

However, almost half (49%) considered developed means to budget for a succession planning to be somewhat important. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2=168.07) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference in top management support as a characteristic of succession planning are related to the difference in developed means to budget for a succession planning support as by this analysis.

Whereas established way to plan for meeting succession planning needs through individual development plans was also considered somewhat (46%). The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2=168.07) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that difference in top management support as a characteristic of succession planning is related to the difference of established way to plan for meeting succession planning needs through individual development plans as support by this analysis. The descriptive statistics relating to top management support in succession planning practises in the NGOs are found to be of importance as the same applies to findings from other studies in small and medium enterprises in South Africa. As such, (Richtermeyer, 2011) concluded that top management support is need for succession planning to be done correctly and with foresight where leadership provides solid foundation for the board, employees, and managers for continuity.

Total employee involvement

NGO's (n=246) had a mixed opinion on whether articulated written philosophy about the Succession Planning programme was of importance. More than a quarter (28%) indicated this is an important aspect, whereas (25%) indicated that this is of slight importance. A considerable percentage of (15%) felt that this is not important at all. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 43.02) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference in top management support as a characteristic of succession planning are related to the difference of articulated written philosophy about the Succession Planning programmes supported with this analysis that shows statistically significant association. However, top leadership support is considered key as best practise. The first step for systematic succession planning and management is for the organisations to make the commitment. In this step the organisation's decision makers are expected to: Assess problems and practices, demonstrate the need for the program, determine the organisation's exact succession planning and management

program requirements, link the program directly to organisational and human resource strategic plans, benchmark practices in other organisations, clarify the roles of different groups in the program (Rothwell, 2001).

On the other hand, identified groups to be served in the programme, in priority order was considered as important with nearly half (39%) and subsequent 15.4% very important. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 92.83) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference in total employee involvement are related to the difference in identified groups to be served in programme in priority order as justified by this analysis show statistically significant association. Whether the organisation creates workshops to train management and employees about the succession planning programme that was rated 38.6% as important whereas 19.1% indicated that this is not important. Aspects of training in this case related to whether the organisations had tried succession plans to training programme. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 92.83) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference in total employee involvement are related to the difference in identified groups to be served in programme in priority order as supported by this analysis show statistically significant association.

Over and above, established means to track development activities to prepare successors for eventual advancements was considered to be of importance with a majority constituting 40% of the sampled population. This aspect of succession planning is linked to performance appraisals. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 122.45) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference of total employee involvement are related to the difference in established means to track development activities to prepare successors for eventual advancements, as supported by this analysis show statistically significant association. This is further supported with (Ibarra,2005) argument on importance of identifying critical positions which are essential for the organisation, department, division, work unit, or team to achieve the necessary work results and factoring them into succession planning programme through engaging employees.

Periodic assessment

Almost half (31%) indicated that established means to evaluate the results of succession planning programme is important. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 41.32) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference in periodic assessment are related to the difference in established means to evaluate the results of succession planning programme as supported by this analysis show statistically significant association.

Majority (41%) indicated that established means to track development activities to prepare successors for eventual advancement is important. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 122.49) was at a significance level of p< 0.005. The research hypothesis that the difference

in periodic assessment are related to the difference in established means to track development activities to prepare successors for eventual advancement as supported this analysis shows statistically significant association.

Nearly a quarter (22%) indicated that an established way to review organisational talent at least annually is somewhat important. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 88.89) was at a significance level of $p< 0.005$. The research hypothesis that difference of periodic assessment is related to the difference in established way to review organisational talent at least annually is supported by this analysis and shows statistically significant association. About, (20%) were convinced that devised means to keep records for individuals who are designated as successors are very important. The probability of the chi-square test statistic (X2= 132.22) was at a significance level of $p< 0.005$. The research hypothesis that difference of periodic assessment is related to the difference in devised means to keep records for individuals who are designated as successors is supported by this analysis and show statistically significant association.

These findings support the importance of ensuring continuous evaluation in management. These findings therefore, accounts for the criteria for assessing SP program as suggested with (Greer and Virick, 2008) that include; establishing number of successors for a key position, percentage of vacancies filled internally, average number of successors for a key position, number of key positions that have one or two developed candidates, satisfaction of successors, and rate of change in Succession pool. Aquila (2007) states that Succession planning is now more complex than 15 years back and recommended 7 key best practices for succession planning implementation that included: a deployment of a process that links succession planning and firm's overall business strategy, continuous identification of future leaders, development plans for future leaders, measure result for success, keeping it simple and aligned with firms' overall strategic objective and gaining support from top management.

Conclusions

The practice of succession planning in the surveyed NGO's conforms well to the integrated model of best practices. The degree of compliance to best practices of the integrated model varied mainly between important and very important as being practiced. Throughout succession planning characteristics, human resource management programmes such as recruitment, training and development, performance management, talent management and reward managed are considered very important with the sampled NGOs. Both strategic HRM programmed and succession planning share development as a means to an end but approach from different directions: HRM programmes tend to be bottom up (from individual to organisation) where succession planning tends to be top down. It can therefore be concluded that NGOs partially practice succession planning.

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