



PRIVATE SCHOOL SUCCESSION PLANS: IMPLICATIONS FOR POVERTY ERADICATION IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

Education is widely acknowledged as a potent instrument for socio-economic transformation, especially in regions facing challenges of poverty like Lagos State, Nigeria. Within the educational landscape, private schools hold a significant position, catering to diverse demographics and playing a vital role in shaping the future generation. However, the sustained quality and effectiveness of these institutions rely heavily on efficient leadership transitions, a factor often overlooked yet profoundly impactful in the realm of education. The concept of succession planning, particularly within the private educational sector of Lagos State, emerges as a critical area for exploration to address the broader issue of poverty eradication. This study investigates the pivotal role of strategic succession planning in private educational institutions within Lagos State, Nigeria, and its profound implications for poverty eradication. This paper examines how adept succession planning can significantly impact poverty eradication by ensuring sustained educational quality, institutional stability, and community empowerment. Through a comprehensive analysis, it explores the multifaceted dimensions of succession planning and its direct link to breaking the cycle of poverty within Lagos State.

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Introduction

Lagos State, a dynamic urban hub, faces the complex challenge of poverty amidst its economic vibrancy (Adebola, 2019). As a melting pot of cultures and economic disparities, it represents an ecosystem where educational systems have the potential to either perpetuate or break the cycle of poverty in the society.

The Lagos State government has said that the ratio of private to public schools at both primary and secondary school levels in the state is 1 to 22. With over 20,000 private schools and counting located in the state, the need to understand and implement robust succession plan within private school becomes pivotal in leveraging education as a potent tool for poverty eradication.

This paper seeks to delve deeply into the often underestimated, yet profoundly influential, domain of succession planning within private educational institutions. It aims to highlight the fundamental role these strategic plans play in not only ensuring the continuity of educational standards and institutional stability but also in addressing the broader socio-economic issue of poverty within Lagos State. By assessing the implications of effective succession planning, the research endeavors to offer insights into how these plans can lead to sustained educational excellence, community empowerment, and poverty alleviation.

The discussion will explore various dimensions of succession planning, emphasizing the need for a long-term vision, the identification and development of leadership talent, and the transfer of institutional knowledge. Furthermore, it will underscore the importance of integrating these plans within the local socio-economic context, considering the unique challenges and opportunities presented in Lagos State. Central to this exploration is the clear understanding that an adeptly structured succession plan directly impacts the stability and sustained quality of education in private institutions. A coherent, effective succession strategy serves as a linchpin in mitigating disruptions, maintaining educational standards, and fostering an environment conducive to breaking the chains of poverty.

The subsequent sections will examine the close interrelation between educational continuity, sustained quality, and poverty eradication. It will elucidate how well-structured succession plans not only secure the financial and operational stability of private schools but also provide a consistent, high-quality education, thereby equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to transcend socio-economic barriers.

This research will further address the challenges and opportunities that accompany the implementation of succession plans in private schools in Lagos State. It will delineate the financial, cultural, and developmental impediments while concurrently exploring collaborative approaches and best practices to optimize the integration of these plans within the fabric of educational institutions in Lagos State.

The research aims to underscore the indispensable nature of succession planning in private educational institutions and to illuminate its direct implications for poverty eradication within Lagos State. It emphasizes the urgent need for proactive measures, collaboration among stakeholders, and a strategic roadmap to ensure sustained educational quality, fostering a direct path toward poverty alleviation and community development.



Private School Succession Plans in Lagos

Succession planning is a strategic process aimed at identifying and developing potential future leaders within an organization to ensure the continued success, stability, and sustainability of that organization (Akinola, 2017). In the context of private schools in Lagos, Nigeria, succession planning involves several key elements:

- i. **Identification of Talent:** Succession planning starts with identifying individuals within the school's organization who exhibit the potential to assume leadership roles in the future. This identification process often includes assessing skills, knowledge, and leadership qualities.
- ii. **Development of Leadership Skills:** Once potential candidates are identified, the next step is to actively develop their leadership skills and competencies. This involves providing training, mentoring, and experiences that prepare these individuals to take on greater responsibilities.
- iii. **Long-Term Vision:** A successful succession plan is based on a long-term vision for the organisation. It looks beyond immediate needs and aims to build a pipeline of capable leaders who can guide the institution in the future.
- iv. **Knowledge Transfer and Continuity:** It involves the transfer of institutional knowledge and values from current leaders to the upcoming ones. This ensures a seamless transition and the preservation of the school's ethos, culture, and educational standards.
- v. **Adaptation to Local Context:** Effective succession planning should consider the specific cultural, social, and economic context of the region. It needs to align with the local needs and challenges, contributing to the development and growth of the community.
- vi. **Mitigation of Disruptions:** Succession planning aims to minimize disruptions during leadership changes. This includes ensuring that transitions are smooth and that the quality and mission of the school remain consistent. Overall, effective succession planning in private schools involves a proactive, systematic approach to cultivating leadership talent, ensuring organizational stability, and guaranteeing a smooth transfer of leadership from one generation to the next.

Challenges of Private School Succession Plans in Lagos State

Assessing the current level of succession planning in private schools in Lagos State involves a critical examination of existing practices, strategies, and their effectiveness in preparing future leaders within these educational institutions.

As of the present, there is a significant need for improved succession planning in many private schools in Lagos (Okonkwo, 2019). While some institutions might have initiated succession plans, the overall level varies, and there are identifiable gaps. Some schools have rudimentary plans or informal mentorship schemes, but a comprehensive, structured approach to succession planning is often lacking.

The absence of formalized strategies might result in ad-hoc transitions, risking institutional stability (Okonkwo, 2019). Also, the identification and grooming of potential future leaders is not a consistent practice across all private schools in Lagos State (Akinola, 2017). A



systematic approach to talent identification and robust leadership development programs remains deficient in numerous institutions.

Furthermore, many schools in Lagos State have short-term measures or contingency plans, but long-term visionary succession planning is frequently overlooked (Adeniran, 2018). This short-term perspective can lead to inadequacies in preparing and transitioning leadership roles effectively.

Another challenge is that; while some schools recognize the importance of aligning succession plans with the local context, it is not uniformly integrated. Understanding and adapting plans to the unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics of Lagos State are essential, and this aspect is often neglected.

In addition to, ensuring the transfer of institutional knowledge, values, and best practices is crucial. However, this facet might be overlooked in many instances, leading to potential disruptions during leadership changes.

Developing and implementing succession plans will usually require significant financial resources, posing a challenge for many private schools, especially smaller institutions or those facing economic constraints. Considering these challenges, the overall level of succession planning in private schools in Lagos State might not currently align with the high standards required for long-term sustainability, stability, and effective leadership transitions.

While this researcher believes that there might be isolated instances of robust succession planning practices in certain schools, the general observation suggests a need for more extensive and comprehensive strategies to enhance the level of succession planning across private educational institutions in Lagos. Instituting structured, forward-thinking, and culturally sensitive succession plans would be pivotal in ensuring the continued success and sustainability of these schools in addressing the educational and socio-economic needs of the region.

To mitigate these challenges, this research makes the following recommendations:

- i. *Formalization and Structured Plans*: Encourage schools to formalize succession plans with clear strategies for identifying, grooming, and transitioning future leaders. Provide guidelines or frameworks for instituting these plans.
- ii. *Long-Term Vision*: Emphasize the importance of long-term planning and encourage schools to adopt strategies focusing on grooming leaders for sustained success.
- iii. *Talent Identification and Development*: Offer training and resources to aid in the identification and development of leadership talent within the school community. Implement mentorship programs and leadership training courses to nurture potential leaders.
- iv. *Financial Support*: Provide financial aid or guidance to help institutions, especially smaller or under-resourced schools, in implementing succession plans. This might involve grants, subsidies, or access to resources for leadership development.
- v. *Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity*: Encourage and facilitate programs that promote diversity and inclusivity in leadership development. Promote the development of leadership skills among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The implementation of succession plans in Lagos' private schools is not without challenges. Financial constraints, leadership development, and cultural barriers pose significant hurdles. However, opportunities for collaboration, sharing best practices, and resource optimization exist, fostering an environment for successful implementation.



Implications for Poverty Eradication in Lagos State

The link between private school succession planning and poverty eradication in Lagos is nuanced yet significant, as effective succession plans directly impact educational quality, socio-economic empowerment, and, consequently, poverty alleviation (Ibe & Madichie, 2017). This research highlights the various ways succession planning of private schools affects poverty levels in Lagos State.

1. **Sustained Educational Quality:** Successful succession planning in private schools ensures the continuity of educational standards and the preservation of the institution's ethos and mission. Consistent high-quality education equips students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to break the cycle of poverty (Oni & Adewale, 2020). A robust academic foundation becomes a catalyst for empowering individuals to access better opportunities in the future.
2. **Community Empowerment and Social Mobility:** Effective succession plans in private schools lead to a stable educational environment that benefits the broader community. By preparing future leaders to maintain educational standards and serve their communities, these institutions contribute to empowering individuals, fostering social mobility, and breaking socio-economic barriers that perpetuate poverty.
3. **Skill Development and Economic Opportunities:** Succession plans that focus on preparing students with relevant skills and knowledge offer them improved prospects in the job market. A well-rounded education, sustained by effective leadership transitions, empowers individuals to secure better employment opportunities, contributing to economic growth and, subsequently, poverty reduction. A well-structured succession plan focuses on grooming future leaders by imparting leadership and critical thinking skills. This not only ensures the sustainability of the institution but also equips students with essential skills beyond academic knowledge. Such skill development directly contributes to their ability to compete in the job market, fostering economic independence and reducing poverty.
4. **Local Context Integration and Relevance:** Succession plans tailored to the local context of

Lagos ensure that educational strategies are aligned with the specific needs and challenges of the community (Adebola, 2019). Education that addresses local socio-economic issues prepares individuals to tackle these challenges, contributing to poverty eradication by fostering solutions from within the community.

5. **Stability and Sustainability of Institutions:** Institutions with well-executed succession plans are more likely to be financially stable and operationally sustainable (Adebola, 2019). This stability ensures continued access to education, reducing the risk of interruptions that could impede educational progress and, subsequently, perpetuate the cycle of poverty.
6. **Educational Continuity and Impact on Poverty:** Successful implementation of succession plans ensures the seamless transfer of leadership, preserving institutional knowledge, and sustaining the quality of education. This continuity in educational standards directly impacts poverty eradication by equipping students with consistent, high-quality learning experiences. An improved education equips individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and mindset to break free from the cycle of poverty.
7. **Local Relevance and Community Engagement:** Tailoring succession plans to the local context of Lagos involves addressing community needs and challenges. Education designed to meet these specific needs empowers individuals with problem-



solving skills, creating avenues for local economic development and sustainable solutions. Addressing local issues through education leads to community engagement and proactive measures to combat poverty.

8. **Social Mobility and Breaking Barriers:** Access to quality education, sustained by effective leadership transitions, breaks socio-economic barriers. It fosters social mobility, allowing individuals from underprivileged backgrounds to access opportunities that were previously beyond their reach. As students gain better access to quality education, they are better equipped to overcome poverty and contribute positively to society.
9. **Economic Growth and Innovation:** A quality education facilitated by well-managed succession plans fosters innovation, critical thinking, and creativity. These elements are crucial for economic growth. Students equipped with these skills become contributors to economic progress, thereby participating in poverty reduction efforts at a broader societal level.

Conclusion

In summary, effective private school succession planning in Lagos, when implemented with a long-term vision, alignment with the local context, and a focus on educational quality, directly impacts poverty alleviation. By empowering individuals with a high-quality, relevant education, such planning lays the groundwork for breaking barriers and enabling individuals to overcome poverty, thereby contributing to the overall socio-economic development of Lagos State.

The direct implication of private school succession planning on poverty alleviation in Lagos lies in its ability to provide sustained, quality education that empowers individuals, fosters economic opportunities, and aligns with the local context. Effective succession planning ensures that these schools serve as engines for breaking the chains of poverty by equipping students with the necessary tools to thrive, succeed, and contribute positively to their communities and society at large.



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