

## Are Inheritors an Obstruction to Continuity of Family Passenger Transport Businesses in Mutare District, Zimbabwe?

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**Abstract:** The study untangles why inheritors are believed to be obstructive to the stable growth of the family business passenger transport in Mutare District, Zimbabwe. A qualitative approach was used to understand the dynamics on family business leadership and failure for successful succession within the Zimbabwean context. Observations and in-depth interviews were conducted with business owners, family members and business inheritors. The findings showed that most selected family passenger transport inheritors chose the eldest son respecting the Zimbabwean African culture of the patriarchal ideology. The first male in the family was selected as the person to inherit the bereaved family business founder and assumed to play the role of the father. The choice of the successor ignored the criteria of the knowledge or experience that first son possessed. The study recommended that there should be document with policies to solve a myriad of problems because it would address the specific terms for family and nonfamily members with respect to recruiting, hiring, promoting, compensating and terminating. It was also recommended that family members should meet an appropriate educational background; three to five years' outside work experience; and an open, existing position in the firm that matches their background

**Keywords:** inheritors, family business, passenger transport business, succession plan, continuity

### 1. INTRODUCTION

While many family business transport owners would like to see their business transferred to the next generation, the most critical issues facing business-owning families are family-based issues more than they are business-based issues. Inheritors of the succeeding generation deemed to be incompetent in managing the inherited family passenger transport business. Many of the succession challenges are common to family businesses. Professional advisers to family businesses need to incorporate into their advisory services proven strategies to assist family business owners and their successors in managing the family business component. This paper is oriented by the following emerged themes from the research questions of this study and are discussed in the proceeding paragraphs of this article.

### 2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There is a sharp increase of passenger transport operators in Zimbabwe and as a result they need to remain competitive, hence, there is need for a progression plan. Failure to have a succession plan means the transport operator risk losing the business to other new rivals. Debapriya (2009) gave the following statement about succession planning: 'With the attrition rate for companies increasing, succession planning has become an inevitable strategy to be considered by every organization. To mitigate risk and to enhance quality of life of an organization, succession planning is highly necessary (Debapriya, 2009). Various definitions for succession planning are given by various authors. Ward (2000) defined succession planning as the process of preparing to hand over control of the business to others in a way that is least disruptive to the business operation and values Chrisman, Sharma, 1999). The definition shows that the inheritance planning process is an on-going process and this means it should take a long time. Ward (2000) and Asiado (2009) encourages at least five years before retirement. The definition also shows that succession planning aims at transferring information and knowledge from the founder to the successor of the business as the founder grooms the successor on how to run the business as it results in the continuation of the business after the death or retirement of

the founder (Nelson & Constantinidis, 2017). The purpose of this study was to find out why the inheritors failed to maintain the smooth significant continuity as expected by the founder of the business.

The survival and longevity of the Zimbabwean family business is a cause of concern if it must be a major contributor to the social and economic well-being (Nyamwanza *et al*, 2018). The running of an enterprise is usually closely aligned to the personality and style of the founding entrepreneur. A number of research studies (Miller, Steier and Miller, 2003; Martin *et.al*. 2002; Maynard, 2017) found that when owners or managers retire, less than one-third of family-owned businesses are continued by the next generation. A comparative gap was created to find out whether these inheritors under study were also affected.

Cabrera-Suárez *et. al.* (2001) suggested that succession is a multi-stage process, not an isolated event that includes involvement of the successor in the business and a simultaneous decrease in time the predecessor is involved in the business until a real transfer of power in the organization takes place. It implied that the training should be a slow, evolutionary and mutual role adjustment process between the founder and the next generation family members, in which the inheritors enter the business at a lower level and eventually assumes top management functions and receives appropriate training (Constantinidis, & Nelson, 2009; Cabrera-Suárez *et al*, 2016). This showed that a slow and subtle process of role adjustment between the incumbent and inheritor is critical, sharing the same sentiments with Handler, (2004). Succession planning should begin as early as 20 years before or the moment a CEO assumes his or her job as suggested by Debapriya (2009) and Cesaroni, & Sentuti, 2017; Barach & Gantisky, 1995). This also gave an opportunity for this study to assess when the founders begin the succession plan.

### **3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Most inheritors of the succeeding cohort are incompetent in managing the inherited family passenger transport businesses effectively in Mutare District, in Zimbabwe. Are inheritors an obstruction to continuity of family passenger transport businesses in Mutare District, Zimbabwe? This is the overarching question to be addressed in this study.

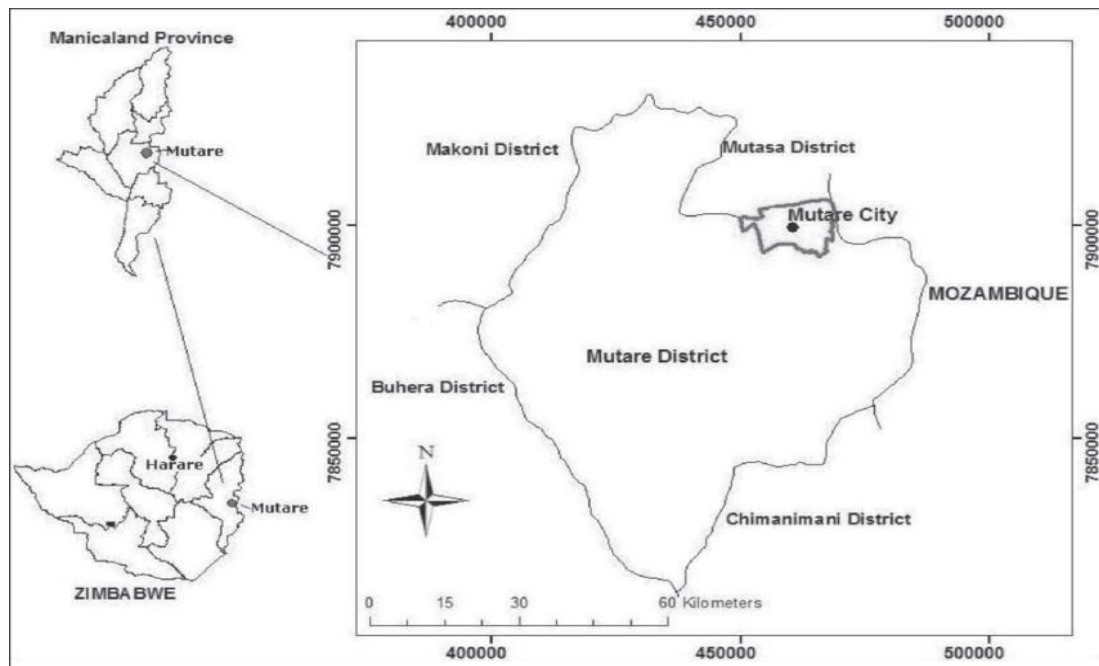
### **4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How does the business owner prepare the inheritor before he/she takes over management of the inherited family passenger transport business in Mutare District, Zimbabwe?
2. Why are inheritors of unskilled in managing the inherited family passenger transport businesses effectively in Mutare District, Zimbabwe?
3. What are the characteristics portrayed behind by the inheritors on 'passes on' or 'leaves the scene' of the founder in Mutare District, Zimbabwe
4. How does the change of ownership affect continuity of family passenger transport businesses in Mutare District, Zimbabwe?

### **5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

The study used a qualitative research methodology to generate the real facts on why inheritors of the succeeding generation were incompetent in the effective management of the inherited family passenger transport businesses in Mutare District, Zimbabwe. A corresponding case study design was used to explore in-depth events, activities, processes of one or more individuals (Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Creswell, 2009) in Mutare District, Zimbabwe. The main objective of this single case study was to afford an in-depth explanation on why inheritors failed to sail through with the family business as noticed by (Glaser & Strauss, 2007). Data collection methods included interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The researchers interviewed 25 participants who included family passenger transport business owners, inheritors, family members, other employees not related to the owners and business advisors in Mutare District, Zimbabwe.

## Are Inheritors an Obstruction to Continuity of Family Passenger Transport Businesses in Mutare District, Zimbabwe?



**Figure 1.1.** Map of Mutare District

The word *Mutare* originates from the word 'Utare' meaning iron (or possibly meaning gold). The name was probably given to the river as a result of gold being discovered in the Penhalonga valley through which the Mutare River runs. Mutare, originally known as Umtali, is the most populous city in the province of Manicaland, and the third most populous city in Zimbabwe, having surpassed Gweru in the 2012 census. Mutare, originally known as Umtali, is the most populous city in the province of Manicaland, and the third most populous city in Zimbabwe, having surpassed Gweru. Mutare is also the capital of Manicaland province and the largest city in Eastern Zimbabwe.

Located near the border with Mozambique, Mutare has long been a centre of trade and a key terminus en route to the port of Beira (in Beira, Mozambique). Mutare is hub for trade with railway links, pipeline transport and highways linking the coast with Harare and the interior. The city's climate is also influenced by its proximity to the ocean, compared to other Zimbabwean cities. This leads to warm to hot summers and mild winters. Mutare is home to several tourist attractions such as, the Mutare Museum, the Utopia House Museum dedicated to Kingsley Fairbridge, the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Murahwa Hill, known for its rock paintings and Iron Age village, Cross Kopje with a memorial to Zimbabweans and Mozambicans killed in World War I and a nature reserve Cecil Kopje and Tigers Kloof.

Mutare is well connected by several roads which are asphalted and decent but potholes are increasingly common. The A3 motorway leads inland towards Harare and also passes through Rusape and Marondera, while the A9 turns southward into the southern Eastern Highlands and Chimanimani. To the east is EN9 which connects Mutare to Chimoio and with the coastal city of Beira. Traffic is often heavy since this is one of Zimbabwe's main routes to the sea. There is also a lot of cross-border traffic with people visiting the nearby cities of Manica and Chimoio. Commuter buses are a popular way of travelling for traffic across the border and from outlying villages. Higher quality intercity buses are also available to both Harare and Beira, Mozambique. Mutare is served by a small airport that is largely geared toward small aircraft and chartered flights. The National Railways of Zimbabwe serves Mutare with overnight train service from Harare three times a week. There are no cross-border rail services from Mozambique, which are limited to freight. The Mutare railway station is just southwest of the city centre

### 6. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The discussion of the research findings were presented thematically. More specifically the data generated produced five themes as tabulated in Table 1.1.

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**Table 1.1:** Themes Emanating from the Study

Research question	Themes	Source and confirmation
How does the business owner prepare the inheritor before he/she takes over management of the inherited family passenger transport business in Mutare District?	Effective succession planning for the inheritor,	Business founder, business Advisor & inheritor Interview, Focus group discussion
Why do inheritors of the proceeding generation unskilled in managing the inherited family passenger transport business effectively in Manicaland Province?	Failure of continuity of business to next generation inheritors,	Business owner, advisors Inheritors Interview, Focus group discussion
What are the characteristics portrayed behind by the inheritors on 'passes on' or 'leaves the scene' of the founder?	Action behind if the owner 'passes on' or 'leaves the scene'	Business owners, inheritors Direct observation, interviews
How does change of ownership affects business continuity in Mutare District?	The impact of change of ownership of business continuity	Founders, business advisors Interviews, direct observation. Focus group discussion
What strategies can be implemented by business owners to empower the business successor' competencies in order to minimise the challenges experienced?	Resolution strategies to sustain family business growth.	Business inheritors, owners, business owners Interviews, focus group discussion

Source: Authors, 2023

### Theme 1. Effective succession planning for the inheritor

Data that was generated through interviews contacted with business founders, business successors and the company Advisors to know how the business owner prepared the successor before he/she takes over the running of the inherited family passenger transport business emerged two themes. Theme 1: Effective planning processes and Theme 2: significance of succession planning. In general, information to show how family business is transferred successfully to the next selected person showed that succession is the process of replacing one leader with another within the biological families (Sambrook, 2005) When asked why succession planning was to be done, most of the business founders echoed that management of succession in family business passenger transport are often forced upon the family due to need for retirement and the successor is often selected with the purpose of continuing the family traditions. The founders addressed that succession in a family business is not an event that is done and completed immediately but a process that takes even more than two to five years. The business owners evaluated the process taking more time because it would involve the transfer of both management and ownership and is not complete until both management authority and ownership rights pass on to the next generation. To confirm this long process one among the business founders stressed that:

**Founder 3:** *In an African context, succession planning in family business will not be as involving as big companies. (Isumacompanyeduayazvinongoperamumhurichete) succession planning is from the family context because we don't have much to teach. There is very little attention being paid to the people or non-technical component such as family communication, family expectations, family values and beliefs, family competencies, family dynamics of the succession process.*

Among the interviewed business advisors they all agreed that these family businesses do not see the importance of business advisors in their established companies, yet their involvement are very instrumental for profitable benefits and growth.

To approve the findings one of the advisors had this to say:

**Business Advisor 5:** *For effective succession planning, there is need to include into their advisory services confirmed strategies to assist family business owners and their successors in managing for continuity. Usually, they listen to your advice but you will find out that it will not be implemented due to unknown reasons*

On another note one of the Advisors said that the greatest challenge they faced was of managing family businesses since many of the advisors who participated in this study were non-technical and many had only reached Ordinary Level qualifications. There was recognition that skills beyond professional qualifications were required to be an effective advisor to family businesses sharing the same views with (Abouzaid, 2008). In this study results revealed that business Advisors were frustrated with the challenge of being listened to and getting clients to act on their advice. It was noted during interviews that Advisors were usually needed when a family business reached the limits of their own resources. It was resounded by some of the advisors that their close contact would be when the older generation reaches retirement or when there was a family crisis. Interviews with the advisors on how the company owner should do to prepare the successors before they were left to run the business gathered the following Information. From the above citations from the advisors, it showed that the role of the business Advisors could be his/ her help with the decision that should be based on ability and merit not based on family position and expectation. The findings showed that the advisors would provoke discussions with the family about how the next leader would be selected and who and what should be involved in that process. Sharing the same sentiments with studies done by (Abouzaid, 2008; Agyapong, 2010) that the advisor helped by having an objective and transparent process in place and this would be based on merit which can help to make these decisions fairer and can lead to more acceptance of the outcome.

Data generated through interviews to show how the business founder prepared the successor who would run the business effectively results showed that for crucial successful service there was need for the right selection process in place and this finding was established by one of the founders who echoed that:

**Founder 7:** *When I select my successor, I make sure that I train not only with suitable experience, skills and track record. Asianofanirakuvaneunhu (integrity and she /he should understand our culture, values and norms. I don't mind gender yake (his/her), but I train mwanaakakodzera (capable child). I choose the best child as my successor.*

Among the founders, advisors and staff members from interviewed family passenger transport companies, they were asked a question that needed the factors that would improve the chances of succeeding with succession planning. The results showed that a succession plan is a multidisciplinary process providing a comprehensive and strategic approach to guiding the transition of the family business management succession, in support of Cabrera Suárez & Martín Santana,(2010). The results noted that there was great need for a thorough plan that looked-for a roadmap for each family business until the succession process was over. The founders said that the processes were not all size fits all but most of the founders and advisors saw it to be a dynamic document that could change over the time in different family business transport companies Cater, Kidwell & Camp, 2016), as was divulged by most founders in Mutare district. To show how effective succession should be planned, research findings reflected that most participants had a common understanding on the process that should be taken before transition and most of the founders were in support of African cultural values and norms should be put into considerations before any move was actioned.

The above comments the founders, advisors and successors, it implied that succession planning is very personal regarding the needs and the requirements of each family business but they all viewed it very fundamental to all. They all believed that this process must start early and collaborative activities or events should be seen among the founders, the successor and the family advisor, in congruent with studies by (Ram and Jones, 2002). Results advised that the process should take the successor as a student on industrial attachment where both formative and summative evaluations should take place to support the successor.

Data generated to tell when the appropriate time should be for succession planning was informed by all interviewed participants. From a cultural perspectives, most business founders said that usually succession was driven by the death or ill health of the company owner. Therefore, the family would

be hard-pressed by untimely death to start succession planning as soon as possible so that the company continues to run. But the question still stands on whether the randomly chosen successor would be competent enough to continue with the administration and day to day activities of the inherited business.

On the contrary, one among the founders had a different perspective on succession planning. This was his views.

**Founder 10:** *It's terrifying to tell your children that they will take over the business whenever something bad happened to me. These days people, even your own children are very evil. They will kill you so that they will remain with the company. So I don't tell them about the succession planning but I will just work together with my family (vasingazivinezvenhakaizvi, vanokuvadzana) should not know about the will).*

Results from the above founder are interesting to note. However, such primitive emotional views might lead to serious developments to the business because the succession process might not be carefully planned over time due to fear. This will lead the family members to make thoughtless choices in support of Shingirai et. al., (2012) who stated that it is necessary for the leaders to anticipate early the potential situations for how the family business will progress. The findings share the same sentiments with Cabrera Suárez & Martín Santana, (2010) who conclude that the family passenger transport businesses that prosper and succeed across generations are those that possess a core vision and philosophy and set of values linked to a sense of community and value. This is also consistent with the findings by Shingirai et. al., (2012) who said that crisis succession is brought about by the death or disability of the founder, divorce and threat of departure of the heir apparent or hiring of an outsider manager in an attempt to finally fix things gone wrong.

Among the interviewed successors (70%) of them had no succession plan in place before the death of their family business leader. As a result the business was transferred to the first son who did not have the knowledge, skills and expertise as he had not been involved to the running of the family business before.

Data generated from the company advisors on how effective the succession planning should be run shared the same views that there is need to develop the successor's capabilities widely by establishing a training process in order to better answer to his/her new role. During the process the family business founder should invest in developing the successor's competencies and grooming him/her for the leadership role. It was established that the preparation to the role should happen in stages starting at a young age if it was conceivable. The business advisors advised that the succession training process was strongly recommended that the selected successors should achieve experience outside the family business in order to develop their perspective, in support of Cabrera Suárez & Martín Santana, (2010). It was explained that once the successor is inside the family company a training process phase could be a transmission of acquired knowledge. In other words, putting theory into practice in his/her family business. In addition, the business went further to say the successors would start by following senior executives and owners to learn about their routines, priorities, and ways of operating before him/her leads or owns the family business.

To summarise, how the business owner prepared the successor before he/she takes over the running of the inherited family passenger transport business in Manicaland Province, showed that there was a dearth of guidelines on how the inheritor was effectively trained by the founder in the family passenger transport sector in an African context, particularly in Mutare District of Manicaland. There was also a lack of literature on logical steps documented by either the founder or the business advisor in the passenger family transport from an African perspectives in Zimbabwe, being there search gap that was identified in the review of related literature. Therefore, an important finding showed that the majority of the founders were not professionally qualified to run their business and even the advisors also lacked professional skills of how succession planning should be logically followed sharing the same findings with Ram and Jones (2002). In addition, the policies are silent on the pedagogical approaches used to effective implementation of succession planning of family passenger transport from a Zimbabwean context. Therefore, this was an important conclusion that this study established. Consistent with literature, effective succession planning is a major example of where holistic advice

was needed. From an analytic point of view of the researcher, the advisors should have brought skills to succession planning and these were supposed to be set objectives for management skills and acting as neutral observers for individual family members. In this study most business advisors lacked these skills so that they would be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses in business growth among the family passenger transport in Manicaland province.

**Theme 2: Failure of continuity of business to next generation inheritors,**

Data generated to assess the reasons why the second generation does not grow smoothly as compared to the business founders were constructed from the in-depth interviews with the business founders, the business inheritors, the advisors, the staff and family members. From the definition provided by business founders and advisors, saw succession planning as a process where company plan for the future transfer of ownership taking the likes of Sambrook's (2005) definition cited in Sonfield and Lussier (2004). Therefore, for the next inheritors to succeed there is need for the current ownership to plan the company's future and later on implement the resulting plan. This occurs when the Founder of the business wishes to exit from the firm but might want the business to continue as usual. From general perspectives challenges to the continuity of family business succession of a family business represented a challenge for many family businesses all over the world (Ward, 2000; Carr, Chrisman, Chua, & Steier, 2017) and Zimbabwe in particular. From the research findings, it proved very difficult for the succeeding generation to grow and continue running smoothly as before. Most participants noted that the chosen heir might not be as gifted or involved as the founders might be which could be the pushing factors to businesses growth compared to non-family businesses taking the likes of Burkat, et.al., 2003; Cesaroni & Sentuti, 2017).

Most interviewed participants shared collective views regarding failure of business continuity by the second generation and they noted that they lack proper training where professional guidelines, policies are formulated and the actual procedures to be followed during training sessions. When the founders were asked to lay down the procedures followed in training the business inheritors, it was discovered that, there was no evidence of professional documents used to follow the training sessions in most family founders who participated in this current study.

To support the above findings some of the founders stated that:

**Founder 9:** *I don't have professional books to train my successor, neither do I use a plan in teaching. Ndinongofungazvokuita (think what to do) so that he knows profit and loss. I also teach how to plan daily routes, do bus services after travelling for about 5000km on each truck.*

In addition, some advisors echoed very advisory procedures that business founders should follow in teaching the second generation successors.

**Business Advisor 4:** *Teaching the second generation should be like teaching someone on industrial attachment. There is need for a proper plan and activities to be followed on daily basis. There should be dos and don'ts in a family business. Key issues should be taken into consideration so that we promote growth of the company.*

There was evidence of professionalism on some of the business advisors because educational qualification of this study revealed that (100) percent of the advisors were professional people who had acquired relevant educational qualifications to run the business profitably. From the dialogue contacted with the business advisors they echoed that when the founder has more than one child or if he is a polygamous family it was very difficult to select a successor from which house the founder chose his/her heir? Research findings reflected that whoever was chosen if not the first child was going to cause conflict within the family, among the children and even the wives.

From the research findings of this current study, lack of continuity to the second generation was also caused by conflict among the family members who might want to share the benefits of the family and they proposed that each family member can manage his /her own inherited shares. Such confirmations usually affected the heir to continue successfully and this might eventually lead to deficit in support of Sonfield and Lussier (2004). The general observations from such conflicts support the views by Bertrand and Scholar (2006) cited in Tataglu, Kula & Glaser, (2008) who state that such conflict usually happen when more than one sibling is involved in the family business.

According to Sonfield and Lussier (2004) failure of continuity to second generation was seen as a historical and a social construct. Research results purports that family owned businesses face succession challenges as from the second and once the second generation failed, do not expect manna from heaven, it will be a complete fail of the family business to even continue to the third generation stage. To confirm the findings this was what one among the business advisors and family members believed.

**Business advisor 7:** *If the second generation has failed to continue, what then do you expect from the 3<sup>rd</sup> generations where there are too many people involved such as cousins, nephews and many other relatives who hope to be part of the business. All these have differences in financial needs and their competencies, then you hope for growth. Never!*

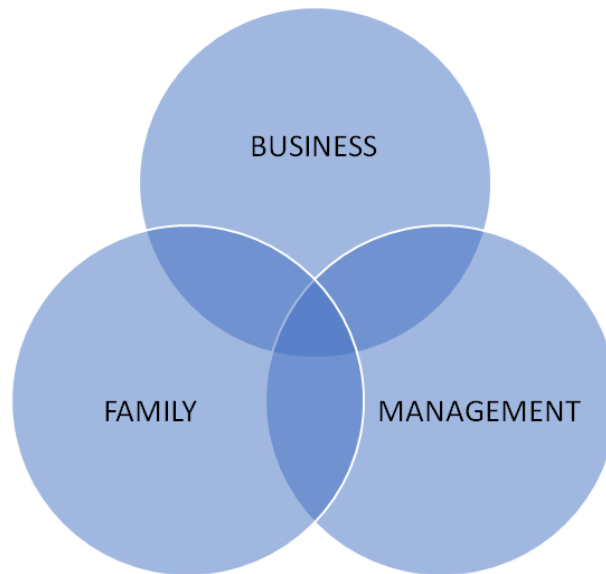
From the comments above it can be seen that family passenger businesses in Mutare region are mostly run by the second generation. Basing on the above remarks, it was most likely that those businesses failed to grow to the third generation because the companies were run by cousins with weaker family ties and obligations unlike being run by biological siblings. The current findings share the same opinions with research studies established by Malone (1989) and Handler (2001) who share the same findings that when owners or managers retire, less than one-third of family-owned businesses are continued by the next generation. However, the high failure rate among first and second generation family businesses are attributable to the inability to manage ownership and succession process successfully in congruent with Martin & Martin (2002). The findings of this current study found out that failure to plan for succession is a recipe of failure to family business continuity to both the second and the third generation in Mutare District of Manicaland province. However, there was a common understanding that the right ownership structure and strategy can help the business pass from generation to generation as noted by most business advisors, founders and successors who participated in this study.

In agreement, review of related literature advise that succession planning is not only there to ensure that the business continues after the death or retirement of the founder but it is there to make the organization continue to be competitive in its industry as Debapriya (2009) pointed out. Consequently, it is important to take that failure to have a succession plan means the transport operators have very high risk of losing the business to other new rivals, sharing the same sentiments with Shingirai et al., (2012) cited in Roussow (2017) in their study on succession planning in the commuter transport sector in Zimbabwe.

Despite the importance of family owned business (FOB), those businesses were threatened by challenges that are unique to their small size (Carr et al., 2017). Research findings revealed that problems were often handled by a single person, who cannot possibly be a jack-of-all-trades in most family passenger transport in Mutare.

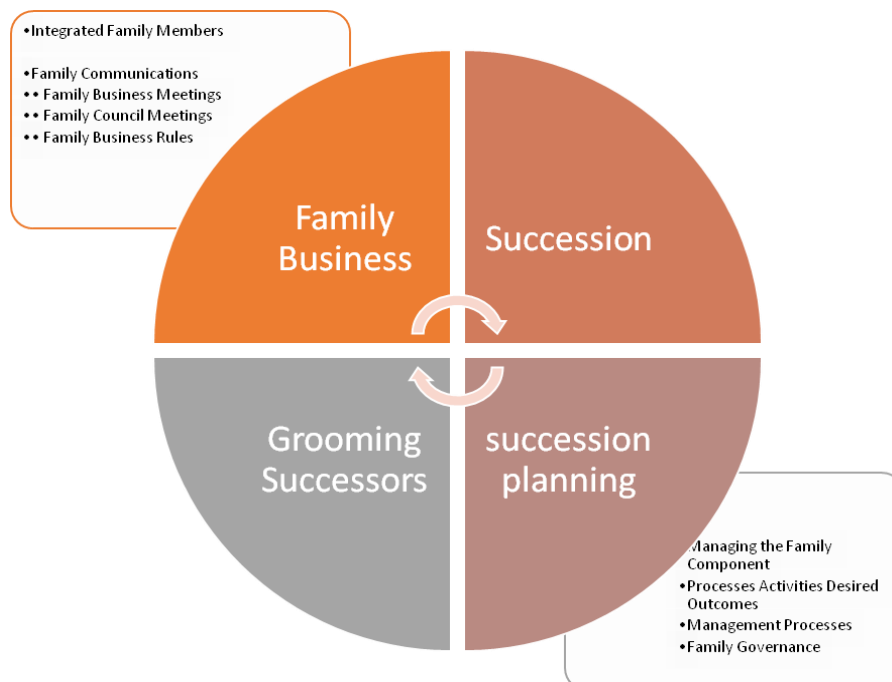
Supportive related literature reviewed that the macro-economic environment presents many challenges to FOB as compared to non-FOB (Van Eeden et al., 2003, Volker 1997), often in the form of downsizing and credit limitations and passenger transport in Manicaland were not spared at all. For example when credit limitations are enforced during periods of collapse, the credit standing of FOB were often the first to be affected. It was noted by one of the advisors that a family business that was poorly capitalized has a weakened chance of survival, particularly during downturns because of the minimized ability to purchase and maintain facilities, appoint and reward skilled employees. The greatest challenge faced by family owned passenger transport was the lack of capital, adhering to ever-changing government procedures, as well as coping with interference from the government and other regulatory bodies proved challenging to family passenger transport business compared to non-family passengers transport sectors who participated in this study. To ensure regulatory compliance FOB owners are required to complete large amounts of paperwork which were said to be difficult for them to understand and owners were not unaware of the necessary regulations by the government (Nelson and Constantinidis, 2017; Miller, Stever & Brenton, 2003). From the dialogue administered by the researcher, most founders and advisors had a common problem experienced of inadequate management and many FOB managers and owners had poor management skills, limited business knowledge and experience, hence were unable to plan effectively for the continuity of business to the second generation





**Figure 3.1:** Proposed unity for effective growth

The diagram above shows the relationship between the concerned parties for business succession ownership circle. The ownership circle represents the interaction/impact that the owners have on the family and on the management of the business. The management circle represents the interaction and impact that management has on the family and on the ownership of the business. The impact can take either the positive or negative side of continuity. For effective and significance of the three agents in the intersection, it calls all family members in business to have effective communication and be diverse leaders as agents to the success of the family business. Therefore, for effective management it was noted that most founders did not enforce such an ownership circle that would promote continuity of the family business as proposed by the business some business Advisors and other Founders in Mutare District, Zimbabwe.



**Proposed Family Business Succession Planning (participants’ making)**

Family business owners need to develop structures, such as family councils, or constitutions to lay out agreed ground rules and objectives for the firm. These should provide methods for dealing with major decisions like succession, while minimizing the threat of the business being damaged by the conflict of family members’ personal aspirations.” *“Keeping it in the Family” Harvey, David; April 2004*

**Theme 3: The impact of change of ownership affected business continuity and Theme 4: Action behind if the owner 'passes on' or 'leaves the scene,**

Data generated from all participants to address how change of ownership affected business continuity had two emerged themes, Theme 3: The impact of change of ownership affected business continuity and Theme 4: Action behind if the owner 'passes on' or 'leaves the scene, shared common various views. The research findings discovered that increasing complexity of family involvement in the business was a recurring theme in this case study. This was seen in the number of individual family transport businesses members directly involved in the ownership and management of the businesses in Mutare District. It was discovered that most family passenger transport business success was measured using two variables, namely the perceived future continuity of a family business and family harmony. From the interview carried by founders, the advisors and the inheritors all resolved that the continuation of the family business is regarded as being of high significance and the more cohesive the family, the greater the aspiration to share the responsibility of continuing with the family business, taking the likes of Shatilwe & Amukugo, 2016; Nyamwanza, et., al., 2015 and Chima, 2013). The findings of this study highlighted five areas in which inheritor leadership varied from founder leadership and the action behind the passed on of the family founder.

- ❖ The external differences included business environmental concerns, such as competition, technology
- ❖ demographics company changes, such as size, formality and professionalism
- ❖ Ownership complexity, such as the number of family members involved in the ownership and management of the business.
- ❖ The first internal distinction involved the entrepreneurial leadership style of the founder contrasted with the manager approach of the inheritor
- ❖ The differences in the approach to risk, in particular, adopted by the founder in later years versus the more risk-taking approaches of the inheritor generation.

It was noted that these internal and external differences after the death of the business owners were similar to finding from the contingency approach to leadership (Fiedler, 1972; Ram and Jones, 2002). From the business advisor's comments, revealed that if the younger family members were passionate about introducing new philosophies but are not engaged seriously, they would quickly be discouraged and would not want to get involved in the family business in the long period. The research findings augment the study findings by Rwigema and Venter (2004) who noted that by nature, successful business leaders have a tendency to be remarkably determined and committed to their ideas, which may make them inflexible and stifle growth.

Those who have successfully done this tend to dominate their markets and continue for many generations. If the second generation has failed to continue, what then do you expect from the 3<sup>rd</sup> generations where there are too many people involved such as cousins, nephews and many other relatives who hope to be part of the business

The result findings showed that the family business literature addressed many concerns among inheritors who participated in this study. The findings of the impact of change of ownership are summarised below.

- ✓ there was a hesitation of qualified family members to enter the firm
- ✓ prestige personality, I want the larger population to see and admire me
- ✓ The improper use of human resources within the family business (King, et., al., 2001; Rossouw, 2017).
- ✓ The inheritors' failure to understand the sacrifices made by founders so that the business would grow (Rothwell, 2010).
- ✓ The inheritors' lack of forgiveness for mistakes made by founders.
- ✓ I want to do things the way I propose not the old '*madhara*' parents' way.

The noted characteristics of inheritors added literature to the body of knowledge on one area that has not been adequately addressed is the personality traits portrayed after the founder left the scene of business inheritors in Manicaland Province. Further, probing was with the founders on strategies that should be done to impact positive personality on the successors to change their mind set. Among the founders they had a common understanding and all agreed that there was need for “hands-on” technical knowledge and that founders should see the reputation of long-term orientation as advised by Sambrook, (2005). To confirm the findings both the business advisors and the founders shared the same opinion as cited.

**Business Advisor:** *The inheritors think they can do everything alone since they believe they are more educated than the founder. However, they are not aware that their qualification are not for business administration. So in such a scenario they need guidance and orientation of how the business should be management. (All Founders).*

In addition, the family members echoed that there is need for a spirit of cooperation among family members and the relevance of family leadership. The findings suggested that there should be collaborative strategies among the most important body of directors, in this study were the founders, the advisors, the family representatives and the inheritor. Data generated from FGD with the founders, business advisors and the business inheritors revealed that although some founders believed they have tried and established best ways of doing things the research findings disclosed that the next generation had innovative ideas on how things can be done better than the family passenger transport founder did, sharing the same observation by Schneider, et., al., (2007).

In-order to equip the inheritor, most founders agreed that they should move with the prospective inheritor so that he/she became aware of the market of the business and which shops that sell spare parts were. By so doing, it was urged by some founders that they will be creating and introducing business friendship with the business community. Research findings also noted some benefits if family passengers founders try to listen to the younger generation in their day to day activities, sharing the same views with Mulholland (1997),

Apart from the findings above, founder 5 shared how he equips his inheritor.

**Founder 5:** *Since I do not have business continuity plan because of how I started my business also I don't have professional books to train my prospective inheritor, neither do I use a plan in teaching. (Ndinongofungazvokuita) I just think what to do so that he knows profit and loss. I also teach how and where to buy spare parts that should be kept in the garage.*

In addition, some advisors echoed very advisory procedures that business founders should follow in teaching the second-generation successors. In a family business in which only one succession has taken place (a second-generation family business), it is a fairly straight-forward exercise to compare the leadership styles of the first and second generations

### **Theme 5: Strategies to unravel obstructive challenges in business' failure under inheritors**

Data to find appropriate strategies that could be used to minimise challenges experienced among the business founders, the successors and the advisors were generated through the interviews, the FGD and the direct observations conducted by the researcher. From the specific research question that addressed the strategies that were implemented by business owners to empower the business successor' competencies in order to minimise the challenges experienced, emerged Theme 5: Strategies to unravel obstructive challenges in business' failure under inheritors. From the information gathered from all participants reflected that there were no reservations that one of the main purposes of any entrepreneur is to have their enterprise grow gainfully. To accomplish this, it is very imperative to comprehend the factors that contributed to growth of the family passenger transport business under business inheritors.

Research findings established that succession planning is crucial for family business achievement, therefore, the succession processes must be applied appropriately by all concerned stakeholders. Research findings addressed that one of the causes of failure of a family business over successive generations was lack of succession planning. It was noted by business advisors that sometimes business founders thought that they could run the business forever, that was one among the reasons

that should be attended to so that they see succession plan as a strategy to mitigate failure of business gain. From the findings it was established that about 45% of the family passenger business sectors in Mutare district had documented plans for future of the business and 27% had a process of appointing a new business successor, these findings shared the same sentiments with studies done by the KPMG (2018) family Business Survey Report, where only 17% of family-owned businesses have a documented joining plan for the forthcoming of the business and only 37% have a process of employing a new successor. This was an important finding because that unifying process was used as a mitigating factor that would promote family passenger business' growth under inheritors. It was even recommended by interviewed inheritors that succession is not something that could be achieved overnight, therefore, business founders should get started before it becomes urgent. These findings supported studies by Sikomwe et al (2012); Nyamwanza et al (2018); and Dumbu (2018) who have studied succession planning in the Zimbabwean context. However, these studies have not addressed the issue of lack of expertise by the successors that may lead to failure of continuity of business.

From the observation conducted by the researcher, it was noted that about 30% of the passenger business founders created a board of directors that were non-family members. This was used as a strategy to mitigate challenges of failure of growth of the business. This was another imperative findings that also supported the findings by Bradley and Short (2008), in their studies that formore successful succession, it was suggested that a board of directors should be shaped that includes non-family directors. The assumption was that they would bring a much-needed outside perspective and not let family issues influence their decisions and it was urged to make sure that all stakeholders countersign the succession plan and would be willing to support it, taking the likes of Bradley and Short (2008) and Roth well , (2005),

The research findings uncovered that there is a sharp increase of family passenger transport operators in Manicaland province and in Zimbabwe at large. Therefore, the results for the transport operators to remain competitive needed a succession plan that is documented professionally sharing the same sentiments with Debapriya (2009) who uttered that "With the attrition rate for companies increasing, succession planning has become an inevitable strategy to be considered by every organization Sonfield, &Lussier, (2004). To mitigate risk and to enhance quality of life of an organization, succession planning is highly necessary.

Data generated from interviews and FGD with the founders, successors and business advisors addressed that putting family members into positions who are not able to do is unfair to the family members and it was noted that this move would hinder the performance of the business. Most participants had a common understanding that if a family member is given a part he/she was not equipped for, it would cause frustration among staff and jealousy among siblings. Among the business advisors, one suggested that to avoid the above finding it should be made sure the selected inheritors was to be given the role that was based on distinction. The advisors went further and recommended that if the successor is not yet ready it was essential for the founder to give more training and work experience would be required to gain the skills needed. All these suggested options were done to mitigate the pushing factors to business growth among the family passenger transport in Manicaland province.

From direct observations and in-depth interviews contacted with all participants, they all shared the same thoughts that much of the information needed to run the business was in the mind of the founders. This was an essential finding that would recommend on a micro level that, the founders should write down policies and procedures for day-to-day operations and this was a strategy that would confirm an ongoing business performance if a founder leaves or could no longer work in the business (Tatoglu, et., al.,2008 and Utami, 2017). To confirm the findings one among the ten advisors urged that:

**Business advisor 3:** *In order to mitigate the pushing factors to failure, I advise the business founder to put structures into place for good company governance. It's better to include a board of directors with outside members that will prevent passageway vision. By bringing in outside managers I believe this will enable family members to step back and accomplish wealth instead of day-to-day operations.*

In addition, both the founders and the advisors agreed that there was need to form a family council that would enable the family employees to discuss business issues, create more cohesion and establish goals, taking the advice by Thornhill and Saunders 2000; Asiado, 2009 and Motwani et.; al., 2006). Information generated from the FGD and in-depth interviews came a recommendation as a strategy that the founders should get the next generation involved earlier, so that it would make it possible to get a feel for the family business and learn and discover hidden issues that would negatively impact the family business growth. To approve the findings this was what one of the business successors said.

**Business inheritor 5:** *My father used to call me working as a conductor during the weekends and school holidays. I gained a lot of experience and I was able to discover challenges faced because I was also involved as a worker.*

From the recorded citations, it reflected that getting the next generation involved earlier would enable them to determine if continuing in the family-owned business is for them. By observing from a young age would foster skills and would also get an overview of how the business works (Van Eeden, et., al., 2003; Martin & Martin, 2012). The family business advisors and the successors shared the same views that the family needed to be open to new ideas from the next generation as the requirements for success. It was even recommended that they would change over time and the newcomers would typically have very different working styles from their predecessors taking the advice by Vera & Dean (2005; Rowe & Hong, 2000). In-order to secure bonding was another strategy to sustain the continuity of the family transport business. Among the participants the founder advised all on how he started his family business.

**Founder 3:** *I started my business and anchor it through farming. It took me a lot of time and serving to acquire this fleet of commuters. I understand business is all about hard work not what people think about 'Tokoloshi', it is extra hard work needed to business growth. For continuity then it should be the guidance of the founding member.*

In support of the above advise most inheritors shared the same interpretations that hard work is very important but training business successors is more crucial since the business may expand to more than one generation in agreement with studies carried out by Nyamwanza et al, (2018), that empowering business inheritors is more fundamental for continuousness into the next generations.

**Business Advisor 1:** *Teaching the second generation should be like teaching someone on industrial attachment. There is need for a proper plan and activities to be followed on daily basis. There should be dos and don'ts in a family business. Key issues should be taken into consideration so that we promote growth of the company. Business continuity plan should be established since it is necessary to protect assets and continue key business processes after a disaster, an unexpected business interruption caused by natural or man-made events occurs including death of the sole owner.*

It seemed everyone would want to be a leader in the second generation.

From the research findings of this current study, lack of continuity to the second generation was also caused by conflict among the family members who might want to share the benefits of the family and they proposed that each family member can manage his /her own inherited shares. Such confirms usually affects the heir to continue successfully and this might eventually lead to deficit. The general observation from such conflicts supports the views by Bertrand and Scholar (2006) who state that such conflict usually happens when more than one sibling is involved in the family business.

Failure of continuity to second generation was seen as a historical and a social construct. Research results purports that family-owned businesses face succession challenges as from the second and once the second generation failed, do not expect mana from heaven, it will be a complete failure of the family business to even continue to the third-generation stage. To confirm the findings this was what one among the business advisors said;

**Business advisor 2:** *Family owned and operated businesses need to modify and, in some cases, discard conventional business thinking in favour of customized solutions in order to incorporate their family component. If a family business can effectively manage its family component, it has the opportunity to not only maximize the use of existing best business practices but also maximize the unique benefits provided by its family component.*

The research findings emphasized the importance of training people through work experience. Knowledge and skills develop as a function of experience and certain types of experiences would prove particularly beneficial (Day, 2001; Volker, 1997), as a strategy of promoting continuity under the next generation and these include: (1) job assignments that provide exposure to new and challenging problems, (2) mentoring, (3) appropriate training, and (4) hands-on experience in solving related problems. (Wang, 2010; Jacobs and Fleishman, 2000).

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was concluded that education level was found very significant in succession planning since it had a positive influence on the growth and continuity within the family passenger transport company. The assumption also accepted that most businesses fail due to lack of succession planning, hence, made a conclusion that lack of succession planning has a great negative impact on the survival of the passenger transport companies in the future generation.

The findings showed that most selected family passenger transport successors were the eldest son was chosen from the Zimbabwean culture, he is seen as the person who would take over the bereaved family and assumed to play the role of the father/ founder. Selection of the family passenger successor ignored the criteria of the knowledge or experience that he possessed. This is identified by Ward, (2004) who illustrated that the Zimbabwean tradition expects the eldest son to inherit his father's fortune. This resulted in the increase in the failure rate of the family business in the second generation as the business was transferred to incapable hands. These results of ineffective succession planning because even if the successor had the qualification, the succession plan usually fails if the successor is not interested in running the business. The researcher concluded that passenger transport operators in Zimbabwe do not know the factors to consider when selecting the successor of the business and that the family businesses in the passenger transport business had limited knowledge on the process of preparing the successor of the business. Therefore, an important conclusion showed that most of the founders were not professionally qualified to run their businesses and their chosen advisors also lacked professional skills of how succession planning should be logically followed.

The study made the following recommendations:

- A written family-business employment policy can solve a myriad of problems because it spells out the specific terms for family and nonfamily members with respect to recruiting, hiring, promoting, compensating, and terminating.
- Children of business owners should have an appropriate educational background coupled with relevant experience of working in the family business on a permanent basis and/or work experience that matches the position they wish to assume in the family business.
- Family passenger transport businesses in Mutare District, Zimbabwe should have standard operating procedures.
- Training can be organised by financial institutions to empower family members on how to run their businesses financially. This can enable them to account for their expenses well to calculate profit in each financial trading period.

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