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Succession Planning and Business Continuity in the Corporate Sector of South Sudan: A Case of Selected Companies

Mayor Luk Lueth Dueny[1]

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DECLARATION

I, Mayor Luk Lueth, do hereby declare that the dissertation submitted is my own (original) work, has never been presented to any University, and that any previous researchers have been acknowledged. Additionally, any omissions or errors are merely my own

Signed……………………………………………….

Date…………………………………………

Mayor Luk Lueth
(PhD CANDIDATE)

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this doctoral study to my community (Chuor Pagoor), my late father, Luk Lueth Dueny, my late mother, Mrs Nyibol Chalap Kongor, and my stepmother, Akoi Machor Guruk, who encouraged and oriented us to follow education even with very limited resources. They are traditional, uneducated parents, and have done all possible means they can to ensure *our school fee is paid and* have food on the table daily. It is worth noting that with this kind of sacrifice and hard work, it is hereby rewarded in their absence, and it is on record that this will be the first-ever doctoral degree in our clan of *Chuor Pagoor of* Yirol East County

APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis titled:

"Succession Planning and Business Continuity in Corporate Organizations in South Sudan: A Multiple-Case Study Approach"

Submitted by MAYOR LUK LUETH in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership and Governance has been approved by the undersigned:

DATE...

NAME………………………………….

SIGNATURE……………………………………..

SELINUS UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between leadership succession planning and business continuity in corporate organisations operating within the fragile political and economic context of South Sudan. Using a qualitative multiple-case study approach, data were collected from six corporate organisations across manufacturing, banking, construction, logistics, energy, and consumer products sectors.

The study explored how succession timelines, successor identification mechanisms, governance agreements, and organisational context shape continuity outcomes, measured through restoration period, survival period, and sustainability trajectory.

The findings reveal that succession planning in fragile markets is a hybrid process influenced by both competence-based and relational-logics. Most organisations relied on trust, kinship, and political networks to select successors, which offered short-term operational protection but weakened long-term sustainability. Succession timelines were largely informal or reactive, resulting in delayed restoration after leadership exit. Governance documents lacked enforceable succession clauses, and shareholder or family dominance limited HR influence. External actors-donors, investors, and regulators-were found to be the strongest drivers of governance formalisation.

The study contributes a contextualized succession-continuity model that integrates institutional theory, human capital perspectives, and political economy insights. It concludes that business continuity in fragile markets depends on a balance of competency development, relational legitimacy, institutional memory transfer, and enforceable governance mechanisms. Recommendations are proposed for corporate boards, HR departments, regulators, and international partners, with suggestions for future research.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- *Succession Planning*

A deliberate organisational process of identifying, preparing, and developing individuals to assume critical leadership positions when vacancies occur.

- *Business Continuity*

The organisation's ability to maintain or quickly restore operations after a disruption, measured by restoration period, survival period, and long-term sustainability.

- *Restoration Period*

The time taken for an organisation to regain operational stability after a leadership transition or crisis.

- *Survival Period*

The organisation's capacity to continue functioning effectively in the period immediately following leadership exit.

- *Sustainability Trajectory*

The long-term organisational resilience resulting from institutional memory, leadership competence, and strategic governance.

- *Competency-Based Selection*

Choosing successors based on skills, knowledge, performance, and leadership potential rather than loyalty or relationships.

- *Relational Legitimacy*

The trust, political influence, kinship ties, or social capital that makes a leader acceptable to stakeholders within fragile contexts.

- *Institutional Memory*

The accumulated knowledge, experience, and organisational history that support continuity during leadership transitions.

- *Fragile Political Economy*

A national environment characterised by weak institutions, limited regulatory enforcement, political volatility, and relational governance.

- *Governance Agreements*

Formal documents such as board charters, shareholder agreements, and HR policies that outline decision-making processes and leadership succession rules.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
ADM	Administrator
BCP	Business Continuity Planning
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
C1	Construction Company One (Pseudonym)
CP1	Consumer Products Company One (Pseudonym)
E1	Energy Services Company One (Pseudonym)
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
KII	Key Informant Interview
L1	Logistics Company One (Pseudonym)
MD	Managing Director
M1	Manufacturing Company One (Pseudonym)
MM	Middle Manager
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBV	Resource-Based View (Theory)
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Vice Chancellor
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NDP	National Development Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion (if used in methodology)
SP	Succession Planning
BC	Business Continuity
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

➢ *Introduction to the Study*

Succession planning and business continuity are interconnected concepts that guarantee organisational stability and sustainable growth. Succession planning enables an organisation to prepare internal employees to assume key leadership roles when a position becomes vacant. It involves identifying essential positions and potential successors, then developing their skills through mentorship, training, and leadership development programmes (Boin, 2007). This process not only boosts employee morale and retention but also ensures that institutional knowledge and expertise are retained.

Conversely, business continuity involves maintaining seamless operations during and after leadership transitions or other disruptions. In South Sudan's corporate sector, succession planning and business continuity are vital for ensuring the survival and resilience of organisations. Despite the significance of these concepts, many companies in South Sudan have struggled to sustain operations following leadership changes (Blyth, 2019). Over the past fifteen years, several corporate entities have failed or faced major setbacks due to the lack of clear succession planning policies, resulting in operational instability and economic losses.

When effective leaders exit without proper mentorship and delegation systems in place, businesses often decline or collapse (Grillo & Barreau, 2020). The closure of a corporate company not only affects service delivery but also leads to job losses and reduced income for employees and communities. The study, therefore, seeks to explore and explain how top-level managers in South Sudan’s corporate sector apply succession planning practices to ensure business continuity whenever leadership changes occur.

The research further examines the dynamics of succession planning and business continuity in a fragile environment characterised by economic fluctuations, political instability, and underdeveloped human resources. Organizations that integrate effective succession planning are more likely to maintain leadership continuity and operational resilience (Kotter, 1991 and Barney, 1991). Hence, this study seeks to contribute to existing knowledge by highlighting strategies that can help corporate organisations in South Sudan strengthen business sustainability during periods of uncertainty and change.

Succession planning is not confined to senior management positions; it applies to all critical roles. For instance, the loss of a key technical expert, such as a cyber-security specialist, can severely disrupt operations unless a qualified successor has been adequately prepared. Therefore, succession planning and business continuity serve as vital strategic tools for organisational growth, stability, and sustainability (Bakare, 2021).

Without structured succession plans, corporate entities risk leadership vacuums, loss of institutional memory, and weakened competitiveness (Hanze, 2020; Tauro, 2021). The current study thus seeks to address these gaps by examining the relationship between succession planning and business continuity in South Sudan’s corporate sector.

➢ *Background to the Study*

Succession planning and business continuity are critical components of strategic management, designed to ensure that organizations maintain essential functions during and after disruptions (Herbane, 2020). In fragile economies such as South Sudan, these practices are even more vital due to persistent political instability, economic uncertainty, and infrastructural inadequacies. Effective business continuity planning (BCP) not only protects corporate assets and reputation but also enhances organizational resilience, enabling companies to recover from shocks such as leadership turnover, conflict, or economic crises (Elliott, Swartz, & Herbane, 2020).

Succession planning is a proactive strategy aimed at identifying, mentoring, and preparing employees for future leadership roles (Rothwell et al, 2022). It creates a pipeline of capable individuals ready to assume key positions when vacancies arise, thereby reducing disruptions and ensuring smooth transitions. Succession planning includes identifying potential successors, designing developmental programs, and aligning leadership development with organisational goals (Charan, Drotter, and Noel, 2021). This structured approach enhances operational stability and preserves institutional knowledge.

Business continuity, on the other hand, focuses on maintaining operations during disruptions such as natural disasters, cyber-attacks, or leadership changes (Blyth, 2019). It involves developing and implementing contingency plans that ensure minimal downtime and quick restoration of critical functions (Elliott & Swartz, 2022). Business continuity can be evaluated in terms of restoration, survival period, and sustainability (Douglas, 2020 and Hiles, 2018).

In South Sudan, frequent disruptions caused by political unrest, civil conflict, and limited infrastructure have made business continuity a growing concern. Many corporate companies operate without formal continuity or succession frameworks, leaving them vulnerable to instability (ACAPS, 2020; World Bank, 2021). Economic challenges, including inflation, limited financial access, and poor governance, further undermine business resilience (International Crisis Group, 2019; USAID, 2020).

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Despite various interventions by international and local agencies, such as training, infrastructure improvement, and financial support-businesses continue to face difficulties maintaining continuity (UNDP, 2018; African Development Bank, 2020). These interventions often fail due to weak coordination, corruption, and persistent insecurity (Moro, 2019; Transparency International, 2021). Consequently, many firms remain fragile, with limited ability to withstand or recover from disruptions.

Globally, business continuity planning is well-established, particularly in developed economies with robust governance systems and technological infrastructure (ISO, 2019; Deloitte, 2020). In Africa, however, challenges such as poor infrastructure, limited capital, and inadequate human resources constrain effective succession and continuity planning (World Bank, 2020). East African countries, including South Sudan, face additional barriers due to political instability and governance challenges (African Union, 2015). Strengthening these systems, therefore, requires not only policy interventions but also strategic leadership and human capital development.

Previous studies (Hatch & Dyer, 2004) confirm that inadequate succession planning is a major cause of business failure during leadership transitions. Conversely, effective succession mechanisms promote resilience, sustainability, and performance (Carlock & Ward, 2020). However, the specific mechanisms through which succession planning influences business continuity in developing and fragile contexts remain underexplored. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by investigating the link between succession planning strategies-succession timeline, successor identification, and company agreement-and business continuity outcomes in South Sudan's corporate sector.

➢ *Statement of the Problem*

Ideally, effective succession planning ensures seamless leadership transitions, continuity of operations, and sustained organisational performance (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2021). However, in South Sudan, many corporate companies operate without structured succession plans, leading to instability and frequent business failures. According to the South Sudan Chamber of Commerce (2023), only 25% of businesses affected by disruptions such as political unrest or economic shocks were able to fully restore their operations within one-year significant decline from 40% in the previous year.

Furthermore, the average survival period of businesses in South Sudan has declined by 15% over the past five years, with many firms struggling to operate beyond two years (World Bank, 2021). The percentage of companies reporting profitability and growth has dropped by 30% since 2018 (UNDP, 2022). These statistics reflect weak succession planning and poor continuity strategies. If this situation remains unresolved, corporate failures will continue to exacerbate unemployment, reduce investor confidence, and undermine economic stability in South Sudan.

➢ *Aim and Objectives of the Study*

• *General Objective*

To examine the relationship between succession planning and business continuity in the corporate sector of South Sudan, using selected corporate companies as case studies.

• *Specific Objectives*

✓ To examine the relationship between the succession timeline and business continuity.
✓ To assess the relationship between successor identification and business continuity.
✓ To evaluate the relationship between company agreement and business continuity.

➢ *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study is to explore how top leaders in South Sudan's corporate companies plan for leadership succession to ensure continuity of operations. The study focuses on understanding how succession planning mechanisms-such as succession timelines, successor identification, and formal company agreements-affect leadership transitions and overall business sustainability in a volatile economic environment.

➢ *Significance of the Study*

The study will contribute to both theory and practice. Academically, it will extend literature on succession planning and business continuity in fragile economies, offering new insights from a developing-country context. Practically, the findings will help policymakers, corporate leaders, and human resource professionals design effective succession frameworks that enhance leadership continuity, employee retention, and organisational resilience. Moreover, the results will guide future interventions aimed at strengthening South Sudan's corporate governance and economic stability.

➢ *Scope of the Study*

This study focuses on selected corporate companies operating in South Sudan, particularly those that have experienced leadership transitions within the past decade. The content scope covers succession planning dimensions, that is, succession timeline, successor identification, and company agreements. And their relationship with business continuity dimensions, which are

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restoration, survival, and sustainability. The study's temporal scope spans from 2015 to 2024, capturing both historical and contemporary developments.

➢ *Conceptual Framework*

The study is guided by the assumption that effective succession planning contributes positively to business continuity. The independent variable-succession planning operationalised through succession timeline, successor identification, and company agreement. The dependent variable-business continuity measured by business restoration, survival period, and sustainability. The study posits that a well-structured succession plan enhances operational resilience, knowledge transfer, and organisational sustainability during leadership transitions.

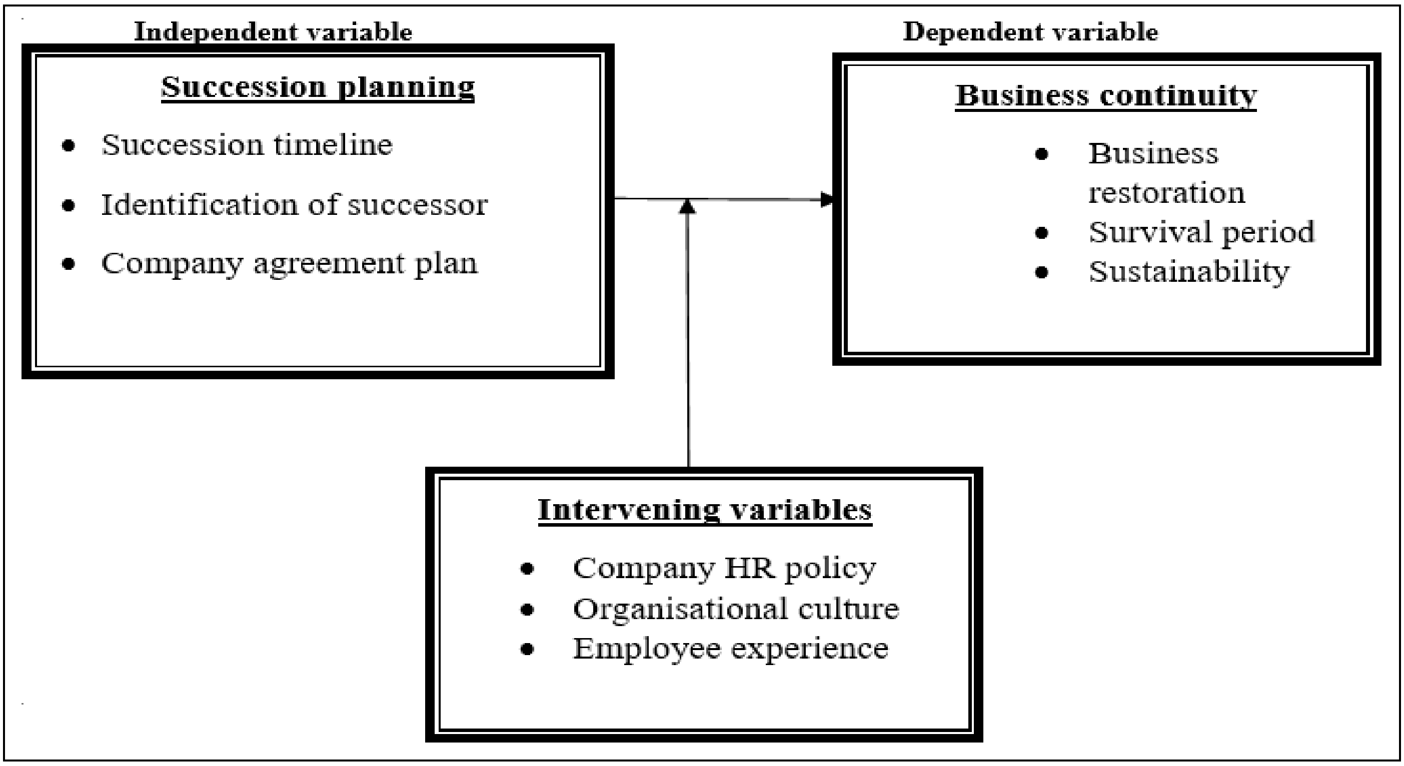

Fig 1 Shows the Relationship Between Independent Variables Dependent Variables and Intervening Variables

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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

This chapter presents an in-depth review of literature related to succession planning and business continuity, with a specific focus on their interrelationship in the corporate sector of South Sudan. The review synthesises theoretical perspectives, conceptual foundations, and empirical evidence from prior studies to establish the scholarly context for the current research. It identifies how succession planning contributes to leadership continuity, organizational resilience, and long-term sustainability in volatile and post-conflict economies.

Succession planning and business continuity have become central themes in contemporary management scholarship, especially within contexts of economic fragility and institutional instability. The chapter begins by examining the theoretical foundations that underpin these concepts, including the Resource-Based View (RBV), Stakeholder Theory, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and Agency Theory. It then provides a comprehensive conceptual review of succession planning and business continuity, analyzing the dimensions, determinants, and implications of each. The empirical review explores findings from global, regional, and national studies, highlighting methodological trends, inconsistencies, and research gaps. The chapter concludes by identifying specific knowledge gaps that justify the current investigation into the South Sudanese corporate environment.

B. Theoretical Review

A strong theoretical foundation is essential in providing a lens through which succession planning and business continuity can be understood. Theories relevant to this study highlight how organizations build internal capabilities, manage leadership transitions, and ensure operational resilience. Four primary theories inform this research: the Resource-Based View (RBV), Stakeholder Theory, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and Agency Theory. Each theory provides unique insights into the relationship between leadership development and organizational continuity.

- *Resource-Based View Theory (RBV)*

Organizations achieve and sustain competitive advantage by effectively managing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources (Barney, 1991). Central to this view is the idea that internal resources-such as leadership competence, organizational culture, and institutional knowledge-are more critical for sustained success than external market conditions.

From the RBV perspective, human capital constitutes a strategic resource that underpins organizational resilience. Succession planning, as a deliberate process of identifying and developing future leaders, ensures that these strategic resources are preserved and continually renewed. When a firm invests in training, mentoring, and leadership development, it strengthens its internal capabilities, making the organization less vulnerable to external shocks or leadership disruptions.

In fragile economies like South Sudan, where external uncertainties such as political instability or weak infrastructure often threaten corporate operations, the RBV emphasises the importance of internal strength. Firms that cultivate capable leaders and institutionalise leadership transitions can sustain operations even in adverse environments. Such proactive leadership development results in organisational agility, adaptability, and continuity (Rothwell, 2020).

Critics of the RBV, including Priem and Butler (2001), argue that it sometimes overlooks environmental dynamism and overemphasises static internal factors. However, this study integrates the RBV with complementary theories-such as Dynamic Capabilities Theory-to capture both internal resources and external adaptability.

Overall, the RBV serves as the main theoretical anchor for this research, as it aligns directly with the study’s focus on leveraging internal leadership resources to achieve business continuity in South Sudan’s corporate sector.

- *Stakeholder Theory*

Stakeholder Theory, originally proposed by Freeman (1984), asserts that organizations exist within networks of relationships involving multiple stakeholders-employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers, government, and the community. Organizational sustainability depends on balancing the interests of these groups.

In the context of succession planning, stakeholder theory emphasizes the need for transparency and inclusivity in leadership transitions. A poorly managed succession can create anxiety among employees, investors, and clients, eroding trust and destabilizing operations. Conversely, an inclusive and well-communicated succession plan maintains confidence and ensures organizational stability.

Successful organizations view succession not merely as an internal administrative task but as a stakeholder governance process. Employees expect opportunities for career progression; investors expect continuity of strategic vision; customers expect

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uninterrupted service delivery. When these expectations are met through structured succession planning, business continuity is reinforced (Donaldson and Preston, 1995).

In South Sudan, where corporate governance structures are still developing, adopting a stakeholder-oriented approach to succession can improve trust, accountability, and legitimacy. It ensures that leadership transitions are guided by merit and shared organizational goals rather than personal or political interests. This theory, therefore, complements RBV by extending the analysis beyond internal resources to external relationships critical for continuity.

- *Dynamic Capabilities Theory*

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory, advanced by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), evolved from the RBV to explain how firms adapt to rapidly changing environments. Dynamic capabilities refer to an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies in response to environmental turbulence.

In succession planning, dynamic capabilities manifest in an organization's flexibility to identify, develop, and reposition leadership talent as circumstances evolve. Effective succession systems are not static; they evolve as markets, technologies, and business models change. This adaptability is crucial in unstable environments like South Sudan, where firms must respond quickly to political, social, and economic shifts.

Dynamic capabilities involve not only the existence of resources but the firm's capacity to deploy them strategically. In leadership terms, this means developing successors who can adapt strategies, manage crises, and sustain performance under uncertainty (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Succession planning grounded in dynamic capabilities ensures that successors are not only competent but also agile and innovative.

Dynamic capabilities can be difficult to measure and operationalize, especially in small or informal organisations (Winter, 2003), notes. However, the theory remains relevant because it bridges the gap between leadership continuity and environmental responsiveness, critical factors in South Sudan's corporate resilience.

- *Agency Theory*

Agency Theory, proposed by Jensen and Meckling (1976), explores the relationship between principals, who are the owners and agents, who are the managers, focusing on conflicts of interest that may arise when managers pursue personal goals rather than organizational objectives. The theory suggests that effective governance mechanisms-such as contracts, performance incentives, and monitoring, align managerial behaviour with shareholder interests.

In the context of succession planning, agency theory explains the risks that arise when leadership transitions are unplanned or driven by self-interest. Without transparent succession frameworks, opportunistic behaviour may occur, leading to instability and loss of trust. Leadership changes often create agency problems when successors lack legitimacy or are perceived as serving personal or political agendas (Dalton and Rajagopalan, 2003).

Implementing a formal succession plan minimises these agency costs by defining clear criteria for leadership selection, establishing accountability mechanisms, and aligning successors' interests with organizational goals. In South Sudan, where corporate governance is still evolving, agency theory underscores the importance of transparent leadership transition systems to prevent managerial opportunism and ensure business continuity.

- *Synthesis of Theoretical Perspectives*

The four theories collectively provide a multidimensional understanding of succession planning and business continuity. The Resource-Based View highlights the internal value of human capital and leadership growth. The Stakeholder Theory stresses external trust, transparency, and legitimacy. The Dynamic Capabilities Theory incorporates adaptability and learning as ways to build resilience. The Agency Theory underlines governance and accountability during leadership transitions.

Together, they provide a robust framework for examining how succession planning contributes to business continuity in fragile corporate environments like South Sudan. The RBV remains the primary theoretical anchor, supported by the others to explain different dimensions of continuity-resource, relational, adaptive, and governance-related.

C. Conceptual Review

The conceptual review elaborates on the main concepts underpinning this study-succession planning and business continuity-and their interrelationship within corporate settings. It also discusses supporting concepts such as leadership development, institutional sustainability, and organizational posterity. Understanding these constructs is vital to contextualizing how succession planning mechanisms can enhance business continuity in the corporate sector of South Sudan.

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➢ *Concept of Succession Planning*

Succession planning is defined as a deliberate, systematic process of identifying and preparing suitable employees to replace key leaders as they leave, retire, or transition to new roles (Rothwell, 2020). It is a strategic human resource management tool aimed at ensuring leadership continuity, minimizing disruption, and maintaining organizational stability. Succession planning goes beyond simple replacement; it is a long-term investment in leadership capacity building.

Succession planning aligns individual development goals with organizational objectives. Effective planning ensures that internal talent pipelines are strengthened through mentoring, career development, and targeted training. Firms with robust succession systems are more agile, innovative, and resilient to crises (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2012). Organizations without structured succession frameworks often face operational paralysis when senior leaders exit unexpectedly (Bakare, 2021).

In the corporate sector of South Sudan, succession planning is often informal or reactive. Many companies rely on ad hoc replacements, resulting in knowledge loss, conflicts, and strategic discontinuity. The absence of formal succession policies stems from weak human resource systems, limited training budgets, and cultural norms that prioritize loyalty over competence. The present study, therefore, seeks to investigate how formalised succession processes can enhance corporate resilience in such fragile contexts.

➢ *Dimensions of Succession Planning*

Succession planning encompasses several key dimensions that collectively determine its effectiveness. The current study focuses on three: succession timeline, successor identification, and company agreement, representing a critical element in leadership continuity.

- *Succession Timeline*

A succession timeline outlines the schedule and developmental milestones for leadership transition. It defines when potential successors should be identified, mentored, and positioned for new roles. A well-defined timeline ensures continuity by preventing leadership vacuums. It also allows for gradual knowledge transfer, reducing the shock associated with abrupt changes (Rothwell, 2020).

In the South Sudanese context, most organizations lack clear timelines due to unstable business environments and leadership uncertainty. Establishing structured timelines fosters predictability and confidence among employees and stakeholders.

- *Successor Identification*

Successor identification involves recognizing high-potential employees who can assume future leadership roles. Effective identification combines performance evaluation, leadership potential assessment, and alignment with organizational culture (Charan et al, 2021). This process is not merely administrative; it requires strategic foresight to match competencies with future challenges.

Talent identification is constrained by limited human capital and inadequate professional development opportunities in fragile economies like South Sudan. Thus, companies must deliberately nurture leadership talent through coaching, mentorship, and experiential learning (Hanzes, 2020).

- *Company Agreement*

A company agreement formalizes the commitment to succession planning through policies, contracts, and governance structures. It institutionalises succession as a continuous organizational process rather than a crisis response. Formal agreements promote transparency, fairness, and accountability in leadership transitions (Ward , 2021).

In South Sudan, where governance systems are still evolving, formalized agreements can protect corporate stability by minimising favouritism, leadership disputes, and political interference. Such agreements also signal organizational maturity and professionalism, enhancing investor and stakeholder confidence.

➢ *Concept of Business Continuity*

Business continuity refers to the ability of an organization to maintain critical operations during and after disruptive events (Blyth, 2019). It encompasses preparedness, response, recovery, and adaptation strategies that enable an organization to function despite shocks. Business continuity is not only about survival but also about resilience and sustainability.

Business continuity management (BCM) integrates risk assessment, leadership preparedness, and communication planning. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO, 2019) defines BCM as “a holistic process that identifies potential threats to an organization and the impacts to operations those threats, if realized, might cause” (Elliott, Swartz, and Herbane, 2020).

In developing countries, especially fragile states like South Sudan, business continuity is hindered by political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and human resource shortages (World Bank, 2021; UNDP, 2022). For these firms, succession planning is integral to continuity as leadership failure often precedes corporate collapse.

➢ *Dimensions of Business Continuity*

Business continuity in this study is conceptualized through three interrelated dimensions: restoration, survival period, and sustainability.

- *Restoration*

Restoration refers to an organization's ability to return to normal operations after a disruption. It involves recovery of processes, systems, and leadership functions. Leadership succession plays a critical role in restoration by ensuring that decision-making authority and institutional knowledge are immediately available post-disruption (Douglas, 2020).

- *Survival Period*

The survival period denotes how long an organization can continue operating during or after a leadership transition. Survival depends on preparedness, access to resources, and adaptability of the new leadership. Firms with strong succession systems typically exhibit longer survival periods due to continuity of strategic direction (Herbane, 2020).

- *Sustainability*

Sustainability represents an organization's long-term ability to thrive amid changes and challenges. It extends beyond restoration to include learning and innovation. True business continuity involves embedding resilience into organizational culture so that leadership transitions do not compromise growth trajectories (Hiles, 2018).

➢ *Leadership Development Practices*

Leadership development is at the heart of effective succession planning. It involves structured initiatives-such as training, coaching, mentoring, and delegation-that equip employees with competencies for future leadership roles.

- Training provides the technical and managerial knowledge necessary for leadership roles.
- Coaching involves one-on-one guidance aimed at improving performance and decision-making (Whitmore, 2017).
- Mentoring facilitates long-term career development through knowledge transfer from experienced leaders (Carlock & Ward, 2020).
- Delegation empowers potential successors by granting them responsibilities and authority, fostering confidence and practical experience.

These practices create a leadership pipeline that ensures continuity and stability. In South Sudan, however, most organizations lack structured leadership development programs, resulting in reliance on expatriates or external recruitment during transitions-often disrupting institutional memory and cohesion (Carlock & Ward, 2020).

➢ *Institutional Posterity and Sustainability*

Institutional posterity refers to an organization's capacity to maintain its identity, vision, and culture across generations (Ward, 2021). Succession planning contributes to institutional posterity by ensuring that leadership values and traditions are preserved and transmitted. Family-owned or founder-led firms particularly benefit from structured succession frameworks that blend heritage with innovation (Carlock and Ward, 2020).

In South Sudan, where many firms are family-owned or founder-dominated, failure to institutionalize succession often leads to collapse upon the founder's exit. Embedding continuity through formal structures ensures that corporate heritage and strategic vision persist despite leadership changes.

D. Empirical Review

Empirical literature provides insight into how succession planning influences business continuity across different contexts.

➢ *Global Perspective*

Globally, extensive research links succession planning to organizational resilience and sustainability. Structured succession systems significantly reduce recovery time after leadership transitions (Douglas, 2020). Similarly, Deloitte (2020) reported that firms with documented succession plans experienced 30% higher performance retention during executive changes compared to those without such plans.

In a study of Fortune 500 companies, it was revealed that organizations that invest in leadership development outperform competitors in both profitability and innovation (Charan et al, 2021). Business continuity is strengthened when succession planning includes scenario-based training and knowledge management systems (Elliott and Swartz, 2022).

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Conversely, many firms still treat succession as an isolated Human Resource process rather than an integral part of strategic planning (Prieto and Pilar, 2019). This fragmented approach limits effectiveness, especially during crises. Overall, global evidence confirms that systematic succession planning enhances business continuity through preparedness, knowledge retention, and leadership alignment.

➢ *African Perspective*

In Africa, research has consistently shown that succession planning remains weak due to cultural, financial, and institutional constraints. 65% of corporate failures are attributed to unplanned leadership transitions in Nigeria (Bakare, 2021). Similarly, succession planning positively correlates with employee retention and firm stability in Kenyan firms (Tauro, 2021).

Leadership development programs significantly improved succession readiness, but limited funding and mentorship opportunities hindered implementation in Ghana (Adu-Darkoh, 2020). Fragile states face compounded challenges-political interference, low managerial capacity, and lack of formal HR policies-that undermine leadership continuity (Hanzes, 2020).

In Nigeria, 68 corporate firms were examined and found that only 27% had formal succession policies (Bakare, 2021). Most relied on informal or family-driven successions that lacked strategic alignment. The study revealed a positive relationship between structured succession planning and business performance, suggesting that companies with clear leadership pipelines exhibited stronger continuity, better employee morale, and higher profitability. Similarly, leadership succession in Nigerian family-owned firms is often determined by lineage rather than merit, leading to a lack of innovation and sustainability (Ojo and Arikewuyo, 2020).

In Kenya, a study on large manufacturing companies was conducted and concluded that organizations with formal succession planning programs were 40% more likely to survive leadership transitions (Tauro, 2021). He attributed this success to mentorship programs, transparent communication, and the integration of succession policies into corporate governance frameworks. In contrast, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya were found to struggle with leadership continuity due to limited training budgets and unclear leadership structures.

Leadership transitions among Ugandan and Tanzanian corporate organizations face poor documentation of succession plans, leading to significant operational disruptions (Munyua and Muturi, 2022). The study revealed that companies that combined formal policies with leadership development programs achieved smoother transitions.

Across Africa, researchers consistently observe a correlation between poor succession planning and business mortality. In Ghana, the high failure rate of family businesses is attributed to the absence of formalised succession policies and weak mentorship cultures (Adusei, 2020). Most African firms view succession planning as a reactive process rather than a strategic investment in human capital (Olugbola, 2021).

Moreover, the African context is marked by socio-political instability, high employee turnover, and limited professional development frameworks, all of which undermine leadership continuity. Nearly 50% of African corporate organizations collapse within three years following leadership transitions, largely due to the absence of succession frameworks (African Development Bank, 2020).

From a governance perspective, corruption and favouritism often distort leadership appointments, reducing fairness and competence. These findings underscore the importance of institutionalising succession planning through policy reforms, training, and transparent governance mechanisms (Transparency International, 2021).

In summary, the African experience illustrates that succession planning directly influences business continuity, but its implementation remains constrained by resource limitations, governance weaknesses, and cultural dynamics. Addressing these challenges requires building leadership pipelines, strengthening human capital systems, and promoting accountability and professionalism in leadership transitions.

➢ *South Sudanese Context*

In South Sudan, the literature on succession planning and business continuity is extremely limited. Reports by UNDP (2022), ACAPS (2020), and the World Bank (2021) highlight structural weaknesses in corporate governance and leadership capacity. Most businesses are small or medium enterprises lacking formal HR systems. Leadership turnover, political interference, and weak professional training contribute to high business mortality rates.

More than 60% of private companies that operated between 2010 and 2020 faced major operational disruptions following leadership changes (SSCC, 2023). Many failed to recover due to the absence of documented succession frameworks, lack of leadership capacity, and dependence on founders' personal networks.

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Most corporate entities in Juba, Wau, and Malakal lack formal human resource structures to support leadership succession (UNDP, 2022). Leadership transitions are often ad hoc, driven by personal or political influence rather than competence. As a result, firms experience managerial vacuums, poor decision-making, and reputational risks.

Similarly reported that post-conflict economic fragility in South Sudan has created unstable corporate environments. Businesses rarely plan for leadership transitions, as survival priorities-such as security, liquidity, and market access-overshadow long-term strategic planning (ACAPS , 2020).

Furthermore, a study on South Sudan's private sector development highlighted that firms with formal internal governance systems, including succession planning mechanisms, exhibited higher operational stability and investor confidence (World Bank, 2021). Conversely, organizations dependent on charismatic founders struggled to sustain continuity when those individuals' exited leadership.

Leadership change in South Sudanese companies often results in operational paralysis because successors lack institutional knowledge or management experience (Moro, 2019). The (South Sudan Chamber of Commerce, 2023) reported that only 25% of firms recover fully after leadership transitions, underscoring the need for structured succession systems.

However, there are emerging signs of improvement. Initiatives by (IFC, 2019) and (USAID, 2020) aimed at strengthening the private sector have encouraged some firms to adopt modern human resource practices, including talent development and performance-based management. Although these efforts are still in early stages, they signify a gradual shift toward the professionalisation of leadership systems.

Collectively, the limited evidence from South Sudan underscores the need for comprehensive studies to explore how succession planning influences business continuity in fragile corporate environments. This study, therefore, fills a critical gap by empirically investigating this relationship within the South Sudanese corporate sector.

E. Knowledge Gap

Most existing studies on succession planning and business continuity have been conducted in developed economies such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and parts of Asia (Douglas, 2020; Elliott & Swartz, 2022). Few studies have examined these phenomena in fragile and post-conflict states like South Sudan. The absence of localized empirical evidence creates a contextual gap in understanding how succession planning can enhance business continuity in politically unstable environments.

While previous studies have employed theories such as the Resource-Based View and Agency Theory, few have integrated multiple theoretical perspectives to holistically explain leadership continuity in fragile economies. This study bridges that gap by combining RBV with Stakeholder and Dynamic Capabilities theories to capture both internal resource-based and external adaptability dimensions.

Prior studies have predominantly relied on quantitative approaches focusing on large, stable organizations. There is a paucity of qualitative and mixed-method research exploring the lived experiences of corporate leaders in developing economies. This study adopts a qualitative multiple-case design, enabling a deeper understanding of the nuanced relationship between succession planning and business continuity.

Empirical studies from the African continent reveal limited implementation of structured succession frameworks. South Sudan, in particular, lacks formal succession policies, governance mechanisms, and leadership development programs. This study, therefore, contributes practical insights for policymakers, corporate leaders, and human resource practitioners to design contextually relevant succession systems.

By addressing these gaps, the study not only extends theoretical discourse but also provides actionable recommendations for corporate sustainability and resilience in fragile-state economies.

F. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented a comprehensive review of the literature on succession planning and business continuity. The theoretical framework integrates the Resource-Based View, Stakeholder Theory, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and Agency Theory to explain leadership continuity as a strategic resource for corporate resilience. The conceptual review elaborated key constructs and dimensions-succession timeline, successor identification, company agreement, restoration, survival, and sustainability-while emphasizing leadership development and institutional posterity.

Empirical studies across global, regional, and national contexts demonstrate that structured succession planning enhances organizational performance, adaptability, and sustainability. However, the scarcity of empirical data in South Sudan underscores the originality and relevance of this study. The next chapter presents the research methodology adopted to investigate these relationships.

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CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➢ *Introduction*

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures that guided the study. This document explains the research design, study area, target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and analytical techniques used to investigate the relationship between succession planning and business continuity in the corporate sector of South Sudan. The chapter also describes the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness, ethical compliance, and methodological rigor. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a transparent account of how data were obtained, analyzed, and interpreted to achieve the research objectives.

The study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design, focusing on manufacturing companies and other large corporate entities operating in South Sudan. This approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of organisational processes, leadership dynamics, and contextual realities that affect succession planning and business continuity (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

➢ *Research Design*

A qualitative multiple-case study design was adopted for this research. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018). The multiple-case design enables the researcher to examine several organizations to identify patterns, similarities, and differences across cases.

This design was selected because it aligns with the exploratory nature of the study, which seeks to understand how and why succession planning influences business continuity rather than to test hypotheses (Stake, 2010). Second, qualitative inquiry provides rich, contextualized insights into leadership dynamics that cannot be captured through quantitative metrics alone (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Studying multiple cases enhances the validity and transferability of findings by enabling cross-case comparison (Yin, 2018). The approach was therefore appropriate for exploring organizational strategies and leadership experiences within the unique and fragile economic environment of South Sudan.

➢ *Study Area*

The study was conducted in South Sudan, focusing on manufacturing companies and other large corporate organisations operating primarily in Juba, Wau, and Malakal country's key commercial hubs. These cities host the majority of South Sudan's industrial and corporate activities, including sectors such as manufacturing, construction, oil services, telecommunications, and logistics (World Bank, 2021).

South Sudan provides a relevant context because it is characterized by a fragile political and economic environment, limited institutional development, and a nascent private sector. Leadership continuity and business sustainability remain pressing challenges due to the country's post-conflict recovery phase (UNDP, 2022). The manufacturing and large-business sector was specifically chosen because these entities play a critical role in employment creation, industrial development, and national revenue generation, yet they often suffer leadership disruptions that threaten their survival (SSCC, 2023).

➢ *Target Population*

The target population comprised senior executives, middle-level managers, and human resource officers working in manufacturing companies and large corporate businesses in South Sudan. This population was selected because these individuals are directly involved in organizational leadership, strategic planning, and human resource management, and therefore possess valuable insights into succession planning practices and continuity strategies.

According to the South Sudan Chamber of Commerce (2023), there are approximately 40 active large-scale companies in the manufacturing and corporate sector, including cement plants, beverage companies, oil service firms, and logistics enterprises. The study targeted a representative selection of these firms to ensure diversity in ownership structures, industry types, and management systems.

➢ *Sampling Procedure and Sample Size*

- *Sampling Technique*

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select cases and participants. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select information-rich cases that provide deep insights into the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). In qualitative research, sampling is guided by the principle of information saturation rather than statistical representativeness (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

The organizations were selected based on the following criteria:

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- ✓ They are formally registered and operational within South Sudan.
- ✓ They have experienced leadership transitions in the past ten years.
- ✓ They employ more than 50 staff members.
- ✓ They have a functioning human resource or management structure.

Within each selected organization, participants were identified based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in leadership decision-making. These included chief executive officers, general managers, human resource managers, and departmental heads.

- *Sample Size*

The study included six corporate organizations as cases, selected from the manufacturing, construction, and service sectors. From each organization, between five and seven participants were interviewed, yielding a total of approximately 36 participants. The final number was determined by the principle of theoretical saturation-when no new insights emerged from additional data collection (Guest et al, 2006). This sample size was considered sufficient for qualitative inquiry, as it provided diversity of perspectives while allowing for manageable and in-depth data collection.

➢ *Data Collection Methods and Instruments*

The study utilized three complementary data collection methods-in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis- to ensure methodological triangulation and enhance credibility.

- *In-Depth Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method. This technique allows for flexibility and probing to explore participants' experiences and perceptions in depth (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interview questions were designed around the study objectives, focusing on how succession planning is practiced, the challenges encountered, and how it influences business continuity.

Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was conducted face-to-face where possible, or through secure online platforms where travel or security constraints applied. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

- *Questionnaires*

Supplementary questionnaires were distributed to selected mid-level managers and HR officers to capture additional perspectives. The questionnaire included open-ended questions focusing on organizational succession policies, leadership development programs, and business continuity mechanisms. The inclusion of questionnaires ensured wider data coverage and triangulation of insights.

- *Document Analysis*

Relevant organizational documents such as succession policy manuals, strategic plans, annual reports, and governance charters were reviewed to corroborate interview and questionnaire data. Document analysis provides contextual background and validates whether reported practices are reflected in formal corporate procedures (Bowen, 2009). The triangulation of interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis enhanced the richness and reliability of the collected data.

➢ *Data Analysis*

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, an approach suitable for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The process involved six stages:

- Familiarization-Reading and re-reading transcripts to gain an overall understanding of the data.
- Generating Initial Codes-Systematically coding significant statements and ideas related to succession planning and business continuity.
- Searching for Themes- Grouping related codes into potential themes such as leadership development, knowledge transfer, and organizational resilience.
- Reviewing Themes- Refining themes to ensure internal coherence and distinctiveness.
- Defining and Naming Themes- Clearly articulating each theme and its relationship to the research objectives.
- Producing the Report-Integrating findings with existing literature to develop analytical narratives.

The thematic approach was chosen because it allows flexibility in interpreting participants' experiences while maintaining systematic rigor. Qualitative data management and coding were assisted using NVivo 14 software, which facilitated organization, retrieval, and cross-case comparison of emerging themes.

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➢ *Trustworthiness of the Study*

To ensure the credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability of findings, the study adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research.

- Credibility was achieved through data triangulation (interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis) and prolonged engagement with participants to validate interpretations.
- Dependability was ensured by maintaining a clear audit trail, including interview guides, field notes, and coding frameworks.
- Conformability was established by using verbatim transcripts, reflexive journaling, and peer debriefing to minimize researcher bias.
- Transferability was supported by providing rich contextual descriptions of the study environment, enabling readers to assess applicability to similar contexts.

Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants for validation, ensuring that findings accurately represented their perspectives (Birt et al, 2016).

➢ *Ethical Considerations*

Ethical integrity was upheld throughout the study in accordance with Selinus University's Research Ethics Policy and general qualitative research principles. Before data collection, formal authorization was obtained from relevant institutional review boards and the management of participating companies.

Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality assurances. Informed consent forms were signed before each interview or questionnaire administration. Pseudonyms were used to protect participant identities, and all audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored in password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher.

The study adhered to the principles of beneficence, autonomy, and justice (Resnik, 2020). Participants had the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Findings will be reported honestly and objectively, with due acknowledgment of all sources used.

➢ *Limitations of the Methodology*

Although the qualitative multiple-case study design provides deep contextual insights, it has inherent limitations. The reliance on non-probability sampling restricts the generalizability of findings beyond the selected cases. Moreover, access to corporate documents and high-level executives in South Sudan posed logistical challenges due to confidentiality concerns. However, these limitations were mitigated through methodological triangulation and cross-case comparison, which strengthened the study's interpretive validity.

➢ *Chapter Summary*

This chapter described the methodology employed to investigate the relationship between succession planning and business continuity in South Sudan's corporate sector. It outlined the research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and thematic data analysis procedures. It also discussed trustworthiness, ethical compliance, and methodological limitations.

The qualitative multiple-case approach, supported by triangulated data collection, was deemed most appropriate for exploring leadership continuity in fragile corporate environments.

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CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A. *Introduction*

This chapter presents, analyses, and interprets the empirical findings from the study that examined the influence of succession planning on business continuity in corporate organisations in South Sudan." The purpose of the study was to explore how organisational succession timelines, successor identification practices, and company agreements collectively influence business continuity among large corporations and manufacturing firms operating in South Sudan.

Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and a supplementary questionnaire from six corporate organisations purposively selected for the multiple-case design. (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study is organized around the four objectives of the study and follows a thematic analytic structure. The data were generated from six corporate organisations of diverse sectors, anonymised as below:

- Manufacturing Company (M1)
- Banking Corporation (B1)
- Construction Company (C1)
- Logistics Firm (L1)
- Energy Services Company (E1)
- Consumer Products Company (CP1)

Participants included senior leaders, human resource managers, middle-level managers, and administrative staff. Voices are anonymised using sector and gender codes, for example, CEO-M (M1) = Male CEO, Manufacturing Co.).

The chapter begins with a reflexive account and trustworthiness statement to justify interpretative credibility. It proceeds to within-case overviews and cross-case thematic analysis linked rigorously to academic literature. The findings are then interpreted through the lens of business continuity, governance theory, and succession planning frameworks outlined in Chapter Two.

B. *Researcher Reflexivity and Positionality*

Reflexivity is central to qualitative rigor because the researcher is part of the meaning-making process and influences interpretation (Finlay, 2012; Berger, 2015). In this study, the researcher assumed the role of an analytical outsider-not an employee of any participating organisation nor a stakeholder in South Sudan's corporate sector. This outsider positionality brought both strengths and methodological challenges.

➢ *Outsider Perspective and Analytical Neutrality*

The researcher's external positionality reduced the risk of organisational loyalty bias, allowing participants to disclose sensitive governance anxieties, particularly internal board disputes, ethnic influences in appointments, and undocumented succession practices. Outsider detachment enabled participants to perceive the researcher as neutral, increasing disclosure willingness, consistent with Patton's (2015) assertion that externality often enhances trust in governance research.

However, this outsider status also had limitations. Some leaders were initially cautious and reluctant to acknowledge informality or political interference in successor selection. To mitigate this, the researcher relied on prolonged engagement strategies-establishing rapport through preliminary virtual interactions and professional introductions through regulatory associations. This aligns with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommendation that trust-building is necessary for credibility, particularly in sensitive organisational studies.

➢ *Power Relations and Interview Dynamics*

Interviewing senior executives carries inherent power asymmetry (Mikecz, 2012). As CEOs possess organisational authority, there exists a risk that they may dominate narratives or portray decisions favorably. To minimise this influence, the researcher cross-validated executive responses with middle managers, HR officers, and documentation. Divergent accounts were treated as analytical opportunities rather than inconsistencies, allowing triangulation of organisational realities.

Furthermore, gendered power relations emerged in interactions with female HR officers who often felt their views were secondary to male executives. To mitigate silencing, the researcher adopted a feminist reflexive stance by ensuring expanded probing in female interviews to counterbalance potential marginalization (Hesse-Biber, 2014). As a result, the analysis incorporates gender-balanced managerial voices.

➢ *Ethical Reflexivity and Confidentiality Imperatives*

Given South Sudan's fragile political economy, confidentiality was not merely an ethical responsibility but a protective mechanism against political and economic repercussions. Participants expressed fears of corporate rivalry, ethnic retaliation, or

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political interference if internal governance weaknesses were publicly identifiable. Therefore, sector-coded anonymisation (for example, L1, E1) was chosen to prevent traceability, moving beyond pseudonyms recommended by Babbie (2020) to a structurally defensive anonymity strategy suitable for volatile contexts.

This protective reflexivity shaped reporting decisions, including:

- Withholding company sizes,
- Avoiding identifiable organisational histories, and
- Masking senior leader demographic indicators except gender.

Thus, reflexivity is not simply methodological but contextual, shaped by national fragility and insecurity.

C. Trustworthiness of the Findings

To ensure scientific rigor, the study adhered to qualitative trustworthiness criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability.

➢ *Credibility*

Credibility was achieved through:

- Triangulating interviews with document reviews,
- Verifying claims from multiple organisational levels,
- Prolonged engagement in rapport-building,
- Member-checking summaries via encrypted communication channels.

➢ *Dependability*

Dependability was strengthened through:

- A clear audit trail of coding decisions,
- Field notes documenting context variations,
- Cross-case analytic matrices are maintained in NVivo.

➢ *Conformability*

To limit researcher bias:

- Interpretations were supported by verbatim quotations,
- Coding categories were peer-reviewed by an independent qualitative analyst,
- Theoretical constructs emerged through iterative comparison rather than being forced into pre-existing models.

➢ *Transferability*

Although context-specific, transferability is enabled by:

- Thick description of organisational conditions,
- Analytical generalisations rather than statistical inference,
- Thematic findings applicable to other fragile economies (for example, Somalia, DRC).

D. Within-Case Descriptions

This section presents thick, contextualised descriptions of each organisation. Each case is portrayed individually before cross-case thematic analysis. These descriptions are not mere summaries; they provide interpretive insights into how each organisation experiences succession planning and business continuity.

➢ *Manufacturing Company (M1)*

Manufacturing Company (M1) is a large industrial processor operating in South Sudan, specialising in consumer goods. M1 employs a sizeable workforce and holds a significant market share regionally. The organisation is board-governed, with a Managing Director (MD), three Deputy Directors, and a structured HR department. However, despite a documented organisational hierarchy, leadership succession is not explicitly defined in its corporate governance documents.

Although the company operates with a seemingly stable management structure, interviews revealed a crisis-responsive leadership transition culture, where succession planning is initiated only after a triggering event, such as health-related leadership exits or business mismanagement. This reactive approach emerged as a coping mechanism in a volatile economic environment.

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- *Leadership Succession Context at M1*

A male CEO stated:

"We normally discuss who takes charge when a leader resigns or becomes severely ill. I wish we could do it earlier, but the business environment keeps changing here." (CEO-M (M1))

A female HR executive confirmed:

"Our policies do not guide succession. We usually make recommendations depending on the situation and performance pressure." (HR-F (M1))

These disclosures revealed a lack of planning continuity, driven partly by unpredictable market conditions and partly by unclear corporate governance guidelines.

Table 1 Organisational Succession Profile of M1

Dimension	Observation at M1	Impact on Continuity
Succession Timelines	Crisis-triggered, informal, no written cycle	Leadership delays and reactionary decisions
Successor Identification	Based on loyalty + seniority	Risks of appointing underprepared leaders
Company Agreements	Generic HR policies, no succession clause	Weak legal protection against board disputes
Continuity Outcomes	Delays in restoring operations after the leadership change	Vulnerable sustainability trajectory

- *Interpretive Commentary: M1*

The lack of explicit succession provisions illustrates what Rothwell (2015) terms succession ambiguity, wherein organisations assume continuity without structured preparation. The reliance on informal selection based on loyalty corresponds with Bolden & Waddell (2017), who argue that African corporate succession is often shaped by relational trust more than competence.

Although M1 appears stable, its continuity is fragile, relying heavily on personal leadership networks. This fragility is exacerbated by South Sudan's unstable regulatory environment, supporting Kiggundu's (2002) assertion that fragile states produce informal organisational governance cultures.

➢ *Banking Corporation (B1)*

Banking Corporation (B1) is a financial institution operating nationally with regional branches across East Africa. Unlike M1, B1 has a corporate governance manual referencing leadership delegation protocol but lacks specific succession timelines or procedures for the Managing Director or departmental heads. The presence of regulatory oversight by the Central Bank of South Sudan has contributed to relatively stronger governance practices compared to other organisations in this study.

However, despite a strong documentation culture, interviews revealed a politically influenced and board-driven succession approach, especially at executive levels.

A female middle manager described:

"Leadership changes mostly come from the board. They have more influence than HR, especially for top executives." (MM-F (B1))

A male HR manager added:

"We prepare talent pools, but the board sometimes decides differently, especially when they want someone aligned with their policy direction." (HR-M (B1))

B1 does attempt to build leadership capability through workshops and mentorships, but the board's political influence overrides structured identification mechanisms.

Table 2 Organisational Succession Profile of B1

Dimension	Observation at B1	Impact on Continuity
Succession Timelines	Partially documented; no fixed cycles	Creates a false sense of readiness
Successor	Competency-based pipeline, overridden by board decisions	Limits HR's strategic authority

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Identification		
Company Agreements	Governance manual with delegation clauses but no explicit succession	Formal structure lacks enforceability
Continuity Outcomes	Faster operational restoration despite leadership gaps	Medium-risk sustainability

- *Interpretive Commentary: B1*

B1 demonstrates a paradox: documented governance without enforceability. This aligns with OECD (2018), which warns that governance documents without legally binding mechanisms become symbolic. The influence of board politics mirrors the competitive elite bargaining described by North, Wallis & Weingast (2009), explaining why succession planning remains vulnerable despite apparent structure.

However, B1's competency-oriented talent development aligns with CIPD (2020), offering partial protection against continuity failure, thus placing the bank in a moderately resilient corporate position.

➢ *Construction Company (C1)*

Construction Company (C1) handles infrastructure projects that involve government and multinational partnerships. Its leadership structure is dominated by strong executive influence tied closely to project-based financial flows. Succession decisions are significantly shaped by project continuity risks rather than organisational foresight.

A male administrator explained:

"Our leadership decisions depend on who can protect ongoing projects, not who is best long-term." (ADM-M (C1))

A female CEO highlighted:

"A leader must have negotiation networks, not just skills. That is why we choose someone who can secure contracts." (CEO-F (C1))

Here, relational capital-network influence becomes a strategic resource for business continuity more than managerial competence.

Table 3 Organisational Succession Profile of C1

Dimension	Observation at C1	Continuity Implication
Succession Timelines	Negotiated during contract cycles	Continuity is dependent on external project security
Successor Identification	Based on political & business networks	Competence secondary to external influence
Company Agreements	Informal task delegations; no governance manual	Transition decisions are reactionary
Continuity Outcomes	High vulnerability if the leader exits or loses network ties	Unsustainable strategic continuity

- *Interpretive Commentary: C1*

C1 reflects a form of network-dependent continuity, aligning with Granovetter's (1985) theory of embeddedness, where organisational survival depends on leaders' external ties rather than internal institutional pathways. Fragile state markets amplify this trend; leaders are chosen for relationship leverage, not organisational stewardship. This produces what North et al. (2009) call limited access orders, where corporate survival is tied to political patronage. This case represents the highest operational risk among the six organisations.

➢ *Logistics Firm (L1)*

L1 deals with transport and supply chain logistics across South Sudan and neighbouring markets. Continuity here is influenced by high-risk mobility, border security, and fluctuating trade legislation. Leadership succession is informal but less politically influenced than C1 due to low regulatory visibility.

A male CEO stated:

"Our problem is that leadership transitions disrupt operations because everything depends on trust with transport partners." (CEO-M (L1))

A female HR manager added:

"We have capable supervisors, but they are rarely trained for leadership roles." (HR-F (L1))

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Table 4 Organisational Succession Profile of L1

Dimension	Observation at L1	Continuity Implication
Succession Timelines	None; ad hoc delegation	Delays in leadership replacement
Successor Identification	Relationship-based, less political	Competency gaps persist
Company Agreements	No succession provisions	Leadership crises stall supply chains
Continuity Outcomes	Frequent operational slowing during transitions	Moderate risk, high vulnerability

- *Interpretive Commentary: L1*

L1 represents a leadership continuity gap driven by logistical unpredictability. The absence of training pipelines results in competence-deficient succession, aligning with Rothwell's (2015) concern that organisations without talent pipelines produce unprepared leaders. Unlike B1, L1 lacks regulated oversight, making succession practices entirely informal.

- *Energy Services Company (E1)*

E1 operates in fuel distribution, an industry highly exposed to price instability, political control, and cross-border dependencies. E1 has a partially documented leadership policy but reveals an extreme nepotistic approach to successor selection.

A female middle manager indicated:

> *"Leadership here is mostly family-based. Competence is valued, but family comes first."* (MM-F (E1))

A male HR manager confirmed:

> *"We sometimes recommend skilled employees, but key positions are reserved for family."* (HR-M (E1))

Table 5 Organisational Succession Profile of E1

Dimension	Observation at E1	Continuity Implication
Succession Timelines	Informal; family decisions	Vulnerability to internal conflict
Successor Identification	Nepotistic + loyalty-based	Low legitimacy among staff
Company Agreements	Partial documentation, but unenforced	Lack of corporate governance
Continuity Outcomes	Continuity depends on family cohesion	High conflict potential, low sustainability

- *Interpretive Commentary: E1*

The dominance of familial succession reflects family-business governance patterns seen in emerging markets (Adams, 2016). However, research by Miller & Le Breton-Miller (2005) cautions that nepotistic succession without developmental training heightens continuity risks. E1's threat emerges not from external shocks but internal family rivalries, producing continuity fragility through kinship power.

- *Consumer Products Company (CP1)*

CP1 manufactures and distributes domestic products nationwide. Among all six organisations, CP1 exhibits the strongest succession orientation, with documented leadership delegation policies and mentorship programs created with donor support.

A female HR tracked succession readiness:

> *"We monitor potential leaders yearly. It is not perfect, but we track performance."* (HR-F (CP1))

A male CEO added:

> *"We have identified two people who can step in if I leave. We train them, involve them in strategy meetings."* (CEO-M (CP1))

Table 6 Organisational Succession of CP1

Dimension	Observation at CP1	Continuity Implication
Succession Timelines	Emerging, semi-structured	Increasing preparedness
Successor Identification	Competence-based pipeline	Improves legitimacy
Company Agreements	Succession clauses in HR documents	Stronger governance
Continuity Outcomes	Faster leadership restoration; better sustainability	Lowest continuity risk

- *Interpretive Commentary: CP1*

CP1 resembles global best practices despite volatile market conditions, aligning with Rothwell (2015) and CIPD (2020). While not flawless, CP1 provides evidence that structured succession planning is feasible in fragile markets, contradicting

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fatalistic assumptions about Africa's corporate governance limitations. This exceptional case offers learning potential for peer organisations.

E. Cross-Case Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis is structured around the four research objectives and supported by extensive empirical evidence from sectors M1, B1, C1, L1, E1, and CP1. Each theme reflects patterns across cases while highlighting sector-based differentiation. The analytical style integrates interpretive reasoning with existing theoretical and empirical literature to strengthen validity.

➢ *Theme 1: Succession Timeline Practices and Business Continuity*

The first theme explores how the presence or absence of structured succession timelines influences business continuity in corporate organisations in South Sudan. Analysis revealed that most organisations lacked formalised succession timelines, resulting in reactive leadership transitions only triggered by crisis events. Even organisations with partial governance documents demonstrated gaps between written policy and enforcement.

This theme is organised into four sub-themes:

- Absence of Formal Succession Timelines
- Crisis-Triggered Leadership Transitions
- Board and Shareholder Dominance Over Timelines
- Contrasting Case: Emerging Succession Timelines at CP1

- *Absence of Formal Succession Timelines*

Across M1, C1, L1 and E1, leadership succession timelines were absent. Succession planning was either implied but undocumented or deliberately postponed until a leadership exit occurred. Such absence produced organisational uncertainty, especially during unexpected departures.

A female HR manager at M1 described:

"We do not have predetermined cycles for leadership change. Discussions only happen after something serious happens, maybe a resignation or health emergency." (HR-F (M1))

A similar view was expressed at C1:

"Here we talk about successors only when a director can no longer continue, or when contract negotiations become risky. There is no scheduled timeline for transition." (ADM-M (C1))

The absence of succession timelines reflects what Rothwell (2015) calls structural unpreparedness, where organisations assume leadership continuity without designing transition mechanisms. This pattern aligns with empirical observations in fragile economies where succession is situational rather than strategic (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

In L1, a logistics manager highlighted:

"Some managers have been here more than ten years, but nobody mentions what happens if any leave. We just wait and see." (MM-F (L1))

The "wait and see" posture reveals an informal succession culture shaped by business volatility and leadership personalization. Informality here is not accidental but environmentally adaptive, as organisations prioritize managing external market risks before addressing internal leadership risks.

- *Crisis-Triggered Leadership Transitions*

Even when leadership changes occurred, they were mostly reactive. Successor selection processes began after unexpected disruption-death, illness, resignation, political reshuffling, or loss of revenue contracts. This pattern was clearly expressed in sectors C1, L1, and E1.

At E1, a male HR official shared:

"We only start talking about who takes over after something has happened. It is not a planned conversation. Usually, a family decision emerges quickly if the leader is affected." (HR-M (E1))

In C1, leadership negotiations take place only when external risks emerge:

"When contract issues start, or when there is a conflict in leadership, that is when we think about a successor. There is no prior arrangement." (CEO-F (C1))

This crisis-triggered approach aligns with Kesner and Sebora's (1994) view that firms without proactive succession systems tend to engage in "emergency succession," which disrupts strategic continuity. Similarly, Rothwell (2015) argues that reactive plans do not sustain institutional memory, leading to business discontinuity.

Even B1, despite partial governance documentation, admitted crisis-triggered appointments in upper leadership:

"For senior executives, we usually respond after events force us to. The board steps in once a vacancy exists." (MM-F (B1))

The crisis-driven approach delays operational restoration and generates uncertainty among employees, reinforcing the business continuity risks documented in Chapter Four's case tables.

- *Board and Shareholder Dominance over Timelines*

In B1 and C1 especially, leadership transition timelines were dominated by shareholder and board interests rather than institutional planning. These bodies often delayed succession deliberations to secure personal, political, or business-network advantages.

At B1, a female middle manager revealed:

"The board knows exactly when changes should happen, but they delay it to ensure the person they want finally takes the position." (MM-F (B1))

A male administrator at C1 explained:

"Leadership here depends on who is trusted by the board and who has the network for securing deals. They may delay decisions until they are sure of their preferred successor." (ADM-M (C1))

This sub-theme aligns with the political-business coordination described by North, Wallis & Weingast (2009) in limited-access orders, where personal power networks shape organisational functioning.

Board-driven succession delays appear as strategic control instruments, contradicting the principle of predictable leadership transitions emphasized in corporate governance (OECD, 2018). Resultantly, timelines become negotiated power deals rather than institutional procedures.

- *Contrasting Case-Emerging Succession Timelines at CP1*

CP1 stood out with an early-stage approach to succession timelines. Although not fully formalized, the organisation conducts annual leadership talent reviews and includes potential successors in strategy meetings. This distinguishes CP1 as a structurally emerging governance practice.

A male CEO explained:

"We do annual assessments and identify two or three people who can lead in the future. They are monitored through performance and involvement in planning." (CEO-M (CP1))

A female HR manager affirmed:

"Succession is slow, but we at least track timelines and ask managers who will replace them in case of an exit." (HR-F (CP1))

While still incomplete, CP1 exhibits elements of what Rothwell (2015) describes as anticipatory leadership planning a framework associated with enhanced continuity outcomes.

- *Interpretation of Theme 1*

The findings reveal a systemic trend in South Sudan's corporate sector where leadership continuity is treated as an emergency issue rather than a strategic necessity. Except for CP1, succession timelines are absent or manipulated for power security. These dynamics confirm that:

✓ Succession planning is secondary to environmental crisis management (Bolden & Waddell, 2017).

- ✓ Board politics distort timeline governance (North et al., 2009).
- ✓ Informal succession cultures are adaptive responses to market uncertainty (Kiggundu, 2002).

This theme strongly supports the study's conceptual position that succession timelines directly shape business continuity outcomes by influencing restoration period, survival probability, and sustainability trajectory.

➢ *Theme 2: Successor Identification Mechanisms and Business Continuity*

This theme examines how the mechanisms used to identify successors influence business continuity within corporate organisations in South Sudan. The analysis shows a dominant reliance on informal, trust-based, politically influenced, and family-affiliated processes rather than structured, competency-driven systems. These mechanisms produce uneven leadership preparedness across organisations, significantly shaping continuity outcomes.

Four sub-themes emerged:

- *Trust and Loyalty as Primary Selection Criteria*

In four organisations (M1, C1, L1, and E1), succession selection was grounded in personal loyalty, relational trust, and leader-dependent networks rather than documented competencies. Trust was not discussed as an ethical principle but as a *protective mechanism* to ensure survival in volatile business and political environments.

A female middle manager at L1 highlighted:

"Most times, the successor is someone the director trusts personally, because this business needs someone who can protect the company's interests, not only lead technically." (MM-F (L1))

Similarly, at M1, a male CEO noted:

"Competence is not enough here. We pick someone who is loyal and understands our risks. If not, the company can collapse." (CEO-M (M1))

This loyalty-driven selection reflects Granovetter's (1985) concept of embeddedness, where leadership legitimacy is built through social relations rather than institutional mechanisms. It contradicts corporate governance principles advocating merit-based leadership continuity (OECD, 2018; CIPD, 2020).

At E1, a female HR manager explained:

"You don't choose someone only because they know the job. You choose someone who will defend the company." (HR-F (E1))

These responses indicate that successor identification is used strategically to preserve organisational survival in uncertain markets. However, prioritising loyalty over competence risks future performance instability, supporting Kesner & Sebora's (1994) caution that informal leadership pipelines weaken continuity in the long term.

- *Limited Leadership Development and Talent Grooming*

Participants across sectors indicated a lack of structured leadership development programmes. Except for CP1, organisations relied on *experiential learning through observation* rather than developmental mentorship, coaching, or training. This results in technically competent employees but leadership-inexperienced successors.

A female HR officer at L1 lamented:

"We have many capable supervisors, but there is no training for leadership roles. They learn by watching, not by being prepared." (HR-F (L1))

A male administrator at C1 echoed this concern:

"Potential leaders here learn from handling tasks, not through formal training. We don't have a culture of grooming successors." (ADM-M (C1))

This absence of leadership preparation aligns with Rothwell's (2015) claim that organisations without formal pipeline development experience succession discontinuity-a disruption of institutional memory when untrained leaders assume senior roles.

At M1, a female middle manager added:

"People here are promoted suddenly, without being prepared. Sometimes they struggle to lead others." (MM-F (M1))

This suggests that continuity risk is not only about who is chosen but how unprepared they are. Leadership capability does not automatically develop through tenure or technical competence; it requires deliberate nurturing, training, and exposure (CIPD, 2020).

- *Political, Ethnic, and Shareholder Influence on Successor Choices*

In B1, C1, and E1, particularly, successor selection was influenced by political alliances, ethnic affiliations, and shareholder interests. These factors often overshadow HR recommendations, resulting in successors who are legitimate to shareholders but not to internal stakeholders.

At C1, a female CEO reported:

"In our company, a successor must have political or business networks. Without those, they cannot sustain operations, whether they are competent or not." (CEO-F (C1))

A male HR manager at B1 explained:

"Sometimes the board ignores our recommendations. They choose someone who has influence or connections, not necessarily the person we prepared." (HR-M (B1))

An administrator at E1 pointed out ethnic alignment:

"Some leadership choices consider ethnic balance or family interest. It is sensitive, so HR cannot control it." (ADM-M (E1))

These findings resonate with African governance scholarship that notes political and ethnic embeddedness as drivers of organisational decision-making in fragile markets (Kiggundu, 2002; Bolden & Waddell, 2017). However, these practices weaken institutional continuity, as leadership legitimacy becomes externally imposed rather than merit-based.

- *Competency-Based Identification as an Emerging Exception (CP1)*

CP1 was the only organisation where leadership successors were selected based on a formal performance evaluation system and pipeline reviews. This approach demonstrates a transition toward competence-based succession in a fragile market.

A male CEO stated:

"We consider leadership potential and performance. We do not just pick close allies. We train people who show capacity." (CEO-M (CP1))

A female HR manager added:

"Successors are chosen through assessment. We involve them in decisions early." (HR-F (CP1))

This aligns with global best practices (Rothwell, 2015; CIPD, 2020), showing that leadership continuity improves when organisations align successor identification with competency indicators.

- *Interpretation of Theme 2*

Theme 2 reveals that successor identification in South Sudan is largely relational, political, and crisis-driven, except in CP1. Selection systems grounded in trust and political capital prioritise organisational Defence in unstable markets but compromise leadership capability and organisational sustainability.

These findings reinforce that:

- ✓ Relational legitimacy outweighs meritocratic leadership (Granovetter, 1985)
- ✓ Lack of leadership development weakens continuity outcomes (Rothwell, 2015)
- ✓ Political and ethnic dynamics distort organisational governance (North et al., 2009; Kiggundu, 2002)

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Accordingly, business continuity is not only a function of *who becomes a leader*, but how and why they are chosen, and whether they are prepared to lead.

➢ *Theme 3: Company Agreements and Succession Governance*

This theme examines the formal and informal company agreements that shape succession governance and their effects on business continuity. Company agreements here refer to written governance documents (board charters, HR policies, shareholder agreements) and the informal norms and understandings that operationalised succession. The analysis produced four sub-themes:

- *Formal Documentation versus Informal Practice*

Across cases, a persistent gap emerged between written governance instruments and actual succession practices. Organisations that maintained governance manuals often failed to enforce clauses related to leadership transition, producing a disconnect between policy and practice.

A female HR manager at B1 described this dissonance:

"We have a governance manual that outlines delegation, but when a leadership crisis happens, practical decisions are made by the board and not strictly following the manual." (HR-F (B1))

At M1, the HR policy existed mostly for administrative purposes:

"HR policies are there for audits, but in practice, leadership decisions are influenced by relationships and context." (HR-M (M1))

This phenomenon aligns with Meyer and Rowan's (1977) concept of institutional decoupling, where formal structures are adopted to gain legitimacy but are not tightly coupled with everyday operations. Such decoupling produces symbolic compliance: organisations appear to adhere to governance standards to signal legitimacy to regulators, donors, or partners, while operational leadership remains governed by informal norms. This disconnect undermines continuity because policies that could guide emergency succession are not enacted when needed.

- *Shareholder & Board Agreements as Vehicles of Power*

Shareholder agreements and board charters functioned in many organisations as mechanisms for consolidating elite power. These agreements often contained clauses that enabled boards or controlling shareholders to exercise discretion over executive appointments, sometimes overriding HR processes.

A male CEO at C1 stated:

"Shareholders often have clauses that give them the final say. So even if HR proposes a successor, the board can choose otherwise." (CEO-M (C1))

An HR professional at E1 described how shareholder clauses can create ambiguity:

"Sometimes clauses are vague on succession, allowing someone to interpret them in favour of a chosen candidate." (HR-F (E1))

This dynamic underscore the concentration of authority in shareholder- or board-level agreements, consistent with agency theory concerns about principal-agent conflicts (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). When shareholders reserve decisive authority without clear, enforceable criteria, succession becomes a discretionary political process, increasing the risk of contested transitions and managerial opportunism. The lack of clear operational criteria in shareholder agreements also exacerbates agency costs because it leaves room for rent-seeking and patronage appointments that hamper continuity.

- *Legal and Regulatory Vacuum-National Context Implications*

Respondents consistently reported that national-level regulatory and legal frameworks in South Sudan do not enforce corporate succession standards. The prevailing regulatory vacuum means that organisations are left to self-regulate, often prioritising survival strategies over best-practice governance.

A male administrator at L1 observed:

"There is no strong law that requires companies to document succession. So many do not bother." (ADM-M (L1))

A female middle manager at B1 noted:

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"Regulators demand financial reporting but do not require succession planning. This leaves a gap in institutional accountability." (MM-F (B1))

This finding resonates with state-building literature that links weak institutional capacity to regulatory lacunae in post-conflict states (North et al., 2009). The absence of legal mandates for succession planning means that continuity practices rely heavily on internal will, donor pressure, or international partner requirements rather than national enforcement. In contexts where formal legal enforcement is weak, power dynamics within firms and external patronage networks fill the vacuum, shaping succession outcomes in ways that often undermine continuity.

- *Emergent Formalisation in CP1-Donor and Institutional Influence*

CP1 emerged as an exception: donor partnerships and engagement with international development agencies had prompted partial formalisation of succession clauses within HR policies. External funding and advisory support incentivized the company to adopt more formal governance instruments.

A female HR manager at CP1 explained:

"Donor support helped us set up performance reviews and a succession framework. It was important for transparency and funding requirements." (HR-F (CP1))

The CEO added:

"External partners pushed for documented procedures, and this has helped us prepare leaders systematically." (CEO-M (CP1))

This case illustrates how external institutional pressures (from donors, development agencies, or multinational partners) can act as catalysts for governance formalisation in fragile contexts—an observation consistent with DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) notion of institutional isomorphism, where organisations conform to external expectations to secure resources. However, CP1's partial formalisation is fragile; it depends on continued external engagement and internal commitment to enforcement.

- *Interpretation of Theme 3*

Theme 3 demonstrates that company agreements matter, but only if they are specific, enforceable, and embedded within organisational practice. Where agreements exist but are symbolic (decoupled), succession lapses into discretionary power plays. The national regulatory vacuum compounds the problem by failing to mandate minimal governance standards. CP1's experience suggests that external actors (donors, international partners) can drive formalisation, but the sustainability of such changes requires internal institutionalisation.

This analysis supports two interrelated theoretical perspectives:

- ✓ Institutional theory: Formal documents gain legitimacy but not necessarily effectiveness (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).
- ✓ Agency theory: When principals retain discretion without transparent criteria, agency costs and managerial opportunism increase (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

The policy implication is clear: company agreements should be detailed, transparent, and enforced, ideally through a combination of internal governance and external regulatory mechanisms, to reduce discretionary power and improve continuity outcomes.

➢ *Theme 4: Impact of Succession Planning on Business Continuity*

This theme examines how succession planning practices influence business continuity outcomes in corporate organisations in South Sudan. Business continuity in this study is conceptualised through three lenses: Restoration (continuity after disruption), Survival Period (ability to sustain operations), and Sustainability Trajectory (long-term institutional resilience). These three continuity indicators are either strengthened or weakened based on how each organisation operationalises succession.

Four sub-themes emerged:

- *Restoration Speed and Clarity after Leadership Exit*

Where organisations lacked predetermined succession timelines, leadership exits triggered operational paralysis, internal confusion, and delays in decision-making. Restoration was slow because no successor had been prepared or mandated to assume emergency authority.

At L1, a female middle manager described restoration struggles:

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"When our general manager left suddenly, we were stuck for weeks. Decisions could not be made. We waited for the board to act. Business slowed down." (MM-F (L1))

At M1, a male administrator explained the disorganization caused by sudden leadership gaps:

"We always try to keep operations moving, but when a leader leaves, everything waits. Staff do not know who should approve processes." (ADM-M (M1))

These findings align with Rothwell's (2015) argument that the absence of proactive leadership planning delays post-exit restoration, weakening business resilience.

Conversely, CP1 demonstrated smoother operational restoration due to talent tracking and predetermined emergency delegation.

A female HR manager at CP1 noted:

"When a manager travels or is sick, the next person already knows their duties. Workflow continues." (HR-F (CP1))

Clear delegation enabled swift restoration, reflecting best global continuity practices that emphasise leadership redundancy to minimise organisational disruption (CIPD, 2020).

- *Survival Period Influenced by Successor Preparedness*

Successor preparedness significantly determined how long organisations could sustain operations after managerial exits. In companies where successors were selected based on loyalty or political considerations, they often lacked managerial capacity, leading to short-lived recovery.

A female HR officer at E1 reported:

"Sometimes the person chosen to lead has never supervised anyone. So, when they take over, they struggle. People lose confidence." (HR-F (E1))

At B1, a male middle manager described continuity decline following an unprepared appointment:

"The person promoted was trusted by the board, but did not understand our systems. We lost clients." (MM-M (B1))

These findings confirm Wasserman's (2008) caution that unprepared successors reduce organisational survival and may accelerate decline. Preparedness is, therefore a continuity asset.

By contrast, CP1 invested in training and leadership exposure, extending the survival period after transitions.

A male CEO explained:

"We don't wait for a crisis. We prepare people in advance, so continuity is easier." (CEO-M (CP1))

Preparedness, therefore, mediates survival, reinforcing that business continuity is not merely dependent on successor identity but on readiness to lead (Kesner & Sebora, 1994).

- *Sustainability Trajectory Shaped by Competency and Institutional Memory*

Long-term sustainability, building institutional resilience beyond immediate leadership exits, depended on whether organisations preserved institutional memory and competence. Companies relying on informal selection mechanisms often lost corporate memory when inexperienced leaders took over.

At C1, a female CEO lamented:

"When someone who does not know the whole history comes in, we repeat mistakes. Things that should be known are forgotten." (CEO-F (C1))

An HR manager at M1 added:

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"New leaders come without knowing past risks. They start from zero again. It costs the business." (HR-M (M1))

These observations reflect Übius & Alas (2009), who argued that leadership handovers that ignore institutional memory undermine strategic sustainability.

Conversely, CP1 preserved institutional memory through mentoring:

"Potential leaders sit with top management to learn how decisions are made." (HR-F (CP1))

Mentorship transfers tacit knowledge, becoming a strategic sustainability mechanism (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Competence and memory, therefore, form the backbone of continuity trajectories.

- *Contextual Mediators-Market Volatility, Politics, and Informal Power*

The impact of succession on continuity was mediated by contextual forces such as political connections, market instability, and informal power networks. These pressures shaped both succession practices and continuity outcomes.

At L1, a female middle manager observed:

"Sometimes the person chosen can protect our contracts. Even if they are weak, they keep the business alive." (MM-F (L1))

At C1, a male administrator admitted:

"You need someone with strong political links. Without that, we could lose licenses." (ADM-M (C1))

These findings echo Kiggundu (2002), who noted that in volatile African markets, relational capital can preserve continuity better than competence alone. However, dependency on political patronage can weaken long-term sustainability if relational landscapes shift.

- *Interpretation of Theme 4*

The final theme clarifies that succession planning directly influences business continuity, but its impact is mediated by the quality of planning and contextual pressures.

- ✓ Restoration depends on predetermined delegation and crisis preparedness.
- ✓ Survival Period depends on the readiness and competence of successors.
- ✓ Sustainability depends on institutional memory, technical leadership, and developmental grooming.
- ✓ Contextual mediators (politics, networks, volatility) can neutralize or distort succession benefits.

Thus, business continuity is neither purely technical nor purely relational: organisations must balance competence with contextual legitimacy.

F. Cross-Case Narrative Analysis & Interpretation

This section reads the comparative data holistically, explains patterns, links to the literature, and teases out both theoretical and practical implications.

- ➢ *Overarching Pattern: Institutionalization vs. Personalisation*

A clear divide runs across the six cases: CP1 represents institutionalising tendencies (formalised processes, donor-driven governance), whereas C1, E1, M1, and L1 display varying degrees of personalised, network-based succession. B1 sits in the middle: it has governance documentation, but the board's politicised discretion weakens enforceability.

This continuum aligns with institutional theory: organisations may adopt formal governance to gain legitimacy (decoupling) yet fail to embed these practices in day-to-day decision-making (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The banking case (B1) exemplifies such decoupling—written processes exist, but actual power dynamics shape outcomes.

- ➢ *Timelines: Absence and Manipulation*

Most organisations lack formal timelines (M1, C1, L1, E1), or have timelines that are manipulated by boards/shareholders (B1). Where timelines are absent, restoration periods are markedly longer (3-9 months), and continuity risk increases. This confirms that succession timelines are a key determinant of the restoration speed (Rothwell, 2015). CP1's semi-structured timeline translates into faster restoration and lower continuity risk.

➢ *Modes of Successor Identification: Competence vs. Relational Capital*

Two distinct logics drive successor identification:

- Relational/Protective logic (M1, C1, L1, and E1): trust, networks, kinship, and political ties are used as proxies for managerial legitimacy. In fragile contexts, these proxies are pragmatic leaders who prioritise those who can "protect" organisational interests in unstable environments (Granovetter, 1985; Kiggundu, 2002).
- Competency/legal logic (CP1, partially B1): HR-driven competency assessments aim to ensure technical readiness and legitimacy. CP1's competency focuses leads to higher survival periods and better sustainability trajectories.

This dichotomy illustrates a trade-off: relational selection offers short-term protection in volatile settings, while competency selection tends to ensure medium- to long-term organisational resilience (Kesner & Sebora, 1994; CIPD, 2020).

➢ *Company Agreements: Symbolic vs. Binding*

Company agreements are usable only when they are specific, enforced, and embedded. B1's governance manual without enforceable succession clauses serves as symbolic compliance: the firm can appear aligned with governance norms while operational realities differ (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). CP1 demonstrates how donor-mandated conditions can catalyse enforceable agreements-external pressure leads to practical alignment of governance with practice (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

G. Restoration, Survival, Sustainability: Three Linked Outcomes

The matrix shows a cascading relationship:

- Timeline presence and prepared successor identification → faster restoration after exit.
- Restoration speed + successor preparedness → longer survival period.
- Survival period + institutional memory → Positive sustainability trajectory.

CP1 follows this model closely: it combines timelines, competency-based successor selection, and enforceable agreements leading to short restorations, extended survival, and stronger sustainability.

➢ *Contextual Mediators: Politics, Markets, Donor Influence*

Context shapes the strength of succession practices. In industries where external relationships secure revenue (construction, energy, logistics), relational capital-political ties, project networks, ethnic alignment-plays a dominant role. In regulated sectors like banking, formal mechanisms exist but are still subject to board politics. Donor presence (CP1) functions as an exogenous institutional pressure that nudges organisations toward formalization and competence-based selection (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

H. Gendered and Organisational Power Dynamics

The quotes and field notes indicate that female HR managers and middle managers often perceived themselves as marginalized in final succession decisions despite being custodians of HR processes. This reproduces gendered patterns of governance influence where decision-making clout remains male-dominated at board/owner levels (Hesse-Biber, 2014). However, CP1's structured processes also amplified female HR voices, demonstrating how institutionalization can alter gendered authority dynamics.

➢ *Theoretical Implications*

- Resource-Based View (RBV): Human capital-prepared successors and mentoring systems emerge as a VRIN-type resource that supports continuity (Barney, 1991). CP1's investment in talent development demonstrates RBV's predictive strength: internal capabilities produce sustained advantage.
- Agency Theory: Board/shareholder discretion without transparent criteria produces agency friction; discretionary power fosters opportunistic appointments (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). B1 and E1 highlight this risk.
- Institutional and Political Economy Perspectives: The political economy of South Sudan-the weak regulatory environment and patronage networks-shapes succession practice. Organisations substitute formal processes with personalised networks, corroborating limited-access order theory (North et al., 2009).

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➢ *Practical Implications*

- For high-risk sectors (C1, E1): build formal contingency clauses tied to project continuity; document emergency delegation to reduce project-level collapse.
- For banks (B1): strengthen enforceability of governance manuals by codifying transparent succession criteria into shareholders' agreements; require independent, competency-based committee assessments before appointment.
- For manufacturing & logistics (M1, L1): introduce modular leadership development programs to fast-track internal deputies during crises.
- For family-dominated firms (E1): formalised family governance instruments (family charters, competency thresholds) to combine legitimacy with competency.
- For donor and regulator actors: provide targeted support that links funding to institutionalised succession readiness (CP1 model).

I. *Large Cross-Theme Comparison Table*

The table below synthesises the core indicators across themes into a single consolidated view.

Table 7 Large Cross-Theme Comparison Table

Indicator	M1	B1	C1	L1	E1	CP1
Formal Timeline (Y/N + quality)	N-reactive	Partial-weak enforcement	N - project-tied	N - ad hoc	N - family-decided	Y - semi-structured
Primary Successor Logic	Loyalty/seniority	Competency (HR) but board override	Network/patronage	Trust/partner relationships	Nepotism	Competence-based
Succession Clause in Agreements	No	Weak / generic	No	No	Partial but unenforced	Yes (HR + donor)
Restoration (Avg. months)	3-9	1-4	4–9	3–8	1–6 (variable)	≤1–3
Survival (qual.)	Low–Med	Medium	Low	Low–Med	Low	High
Sustainability (qual.)	Weak	Moderate	Weak	Weak–Moderate	Weak	Strong
Main Barrier	Informality; market shocks	Board politics	Client/project dependence	Lack of HR systems	Family governance	Resource constraints (scale)
Key Enabler	Strong leader networks	Regulatory oversight (partial)	Project networks	Partner trust	Family cohesion (when present)	Donor/HR systems
Continuity Risk	High	Medium	Very High	High	Very High	Low–Medium

➢ *Concluding Cross-Case Synthesis (Short)*

- Institutionalisation matters. Organisations that take intentional steps toward institutionalising succession (timelines, competency-based identification, enforceable agreements) show markedly lower continuity risk. CP1 acts as a working exemplar.
- Relational logic is adaptive but risky. In fragile contexts, relational selection offers short-term protection but produces long-term fragility. This presents a practical trade-off for managers operating in volatile political economies.
- Power asymmetries undermine HR authority. Even where HR develops pipelines, board/shareholder powers can override HR, producing decoupling and increasing agency costs.
- External actors can catalyze change. Donors and regulators can induce formalization and improved continuity (via funding conditions and technical assistance), but sustainable change requires internalisation.
- Policy and legal reform would lower systemic risk. The national regulatory vacuum means organisational choices matter more; a minimal legal framework requiring succession preparedness would lower aggregate continuity risk.

J. *Recommendations from the Thesis*

Mandate minimal succession preparedness reporting for large firms (for example, top-100 firms).

- Encourage board-level succession committees with independent representatives to balance owner influence.

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- Develop practical leadership development toolkits (mentoring, 9-box assessments, rotation programmes) contextualized to fragile states.
- Link donor funding and investor due diligence to succession readiness benchmarks.
- Train HR and middle management in crisis delegation protocols so restoration does not stall during leadership exits.

K. Conclusion to Chapter Four

Chapter Four revealed that succession planning significantly determines business continuity in corporate organisations operating in fragile political and economic environments such as South Sudan. Evidence from six cases demonstrated that the degree of succession institutionalization through timelines, successor identification mechanisms, and enforceable governance agreements directly influences the organisation's ability to restore operations, survive leadership shocks, and sustain long-term strategic resilience.

Where succession processes are informal, reactive, and personalised**,** organisational continuity becomes vulnerable to delays, unprepared leaders, and loss of institutional memory, resulting in high continuity risks (as seen in M1, C1, L1, and E1). Board manipulation at B1 further confirmed that formal documents without enforceability reflect symbolic rather than functional governance, reinforcing institutional decoupling patterns.

Conversely, CP1 illustrated that semi-structured timelines, competency-based selection, and formalised agreements lead to shorter restoration periods, stronger survival, and a more positive sustainability trajectory, confirming the theoretical relationship between succession planning and continuity outcomes.

However, contextual forces-particularly political/ethnic patronage, market volatility, donor influence, and regulatory vacuums-mediate these effects. These forces can temporarily sustain continuity when relational capital is privileged over competence but undermine sustainability in the long term. Therefore, succession planning in fragile markets demands a hybrid logic that balances competency with contextual legitimacy.

Overall, Chapter Four confirms that business continuity is not merely a technical HR function but a strategic governance system shaped by institutional, political, and organisational dynamics**.** These findings underpin the need for a context-sensitive approach to succession planning, which Chapter Five will interpret in relation to existing literature, theories, and practical implications.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

➢ *Introduction*

This chapter interprets the empirical findings presented in Chapter Four by situating them within existing scholarly literature and the conceptual framework guiding this study. The aim is to explain how leadership succession planning influences business continuity in corporate organisations operating in politically and economically fragile environments, using South Sudan as a contextual case. The discussion follows the four major themes developed in the analysis: succession timelines, mechanisms for identifying successors, company agreements, and continuity outcomes. Each theme is interpreted in relation to relevant theories and empirical studies, highlighting areas of convergence, divergence, and contextual uniqueness.

➢ *Succession Timelines and Their Influence on Business Continuity*

The study revealed that most organisations lacked clear succession timelines, with leadership transitions occurring mainly after crisis events. This reactive approach disrupts operational stability and slows organisational restoration after leadership exit. These findings are consistent with Rothwell's view that proactive succession planning supports preparedness and prevents leadership vacuums that hinder continuity (Rothwell, 2015). The prolonged restoration periods observed in organisations such as M1, C1, L1, and E1 support the notion that the absence of timelines limits strategic continuity.

However, the findings also reveal a divergence from assumptions in mainstream succession literature. Studies conducted in relatively stable economies, such as the UK and the U.S., emphasise timelines as technical tools for predicting leadership needs (CIPD, 2020; Kesner & Sebora, 1994). In contrast, this study shows that organisations in South Sudan often avoid fixed timelines because leadership transitions are entangled with political, relational, and economic uncertainties. Predictive timelines may be perceived as risky, potentially exposing internal power dynamics or provoking conflict.

This underscores a contextual insight: in fragile markets, succession timelines are not merely planning instruments but also political artefacts. The ability or inability to document leadership transition cycles reflects not only organisational preparedness but also vested power interests. The CP1 case, where semi-structured timelines existed, suggests that succession can be formalised when organisations are supported by external actors (e.g., donors), which reduces internal resistance and creates legitimacy for change. Therefore, timelines contribute to continuity, but their implementation requires a broader institutional and political alignment.

➢ *Successor Identification Mechanisms and Continuity Implications*

The findings show that most organisations selected successors based on trust, loyalty, political influence, or kinship rather than leadership competence. This contradicts competency-oriented literature (OECD, 2018; CIPD, 2020) that frames merit-based selection as a universal best practice. However, in volatile environments, relational legitimacy becomes a protective asset. The emphasis on loyalty and networks in M1, C1, L1, and E1 aligns with Granovetter's relational embeddedness theory (1985), which shows that organisational decisions are anchored in social ties. In fragile markets, leadership legitimacy may be contingent not on technical merit alone but on the ability to secure political, ethnic, or commercial support.

These findings also support Kiggundu's (2002) argument that African business management operates within relational and political systems, where economic survival depends on protecting organisational interests through influence networks. Accordingly, in South Sudan, trust-based successor selection may serve as a strategy for defending critical contracts, licenses, or political protection.

However, this relational logic carries long-term risks. Leaders who lack competency struggle to maintain strategic direction, reduce employee confidence, and weaken sustainability. Wasserman (2008) similarly warns that successors chosen based on personal ties rather than leadership capability often fail to sustain organisational performance. CP1's competency-based selection approach, combined with leadership development support, demonstrates that continuity is strengthened when competency and relational legitimacy are balanced rather than treated as opposites.

Thus, the study adds nuance to existing theory: in fragile markets, relational legitimacy is a continuity enabler in the short-term, but only competency sustains it in the long-term. The challenge is therefore not to replace relational selection with merit alone, but to hybridise the two.

➢ *Company Agreements and Governance as Predictors of Continuity*

Chapter Four showed that even where governance documents existed, succession clauses were either unclear, non-enforceable, or bypassed by shareholder and board influence. This illustrates Meyer and Rowan's (1977) concept of institutional decoupling, where organisations adopt formal structures for legitimacy but decouple them from practice. In cases such as B1, formal governance manuals existed, yet were overridden by political or shareholder discretion. This reflects a divergence from governance models in stable markets, where adherence to documented succession policy is typically enforceable (OECD, 2018).

Moreover, the national regulatory vacuum in South Sudan exacerbates this decoupling. Without binding state-level corporate succession policies, organisations exercise wide discretion in how leadership transitions occur. North, Wallis, and Weingast (2009) explain that in fragile states, power is concentrated in limited-access orders, where elites control economic and political privileges. Succession becomes part of these privileges rather than a neutral administrative process. As seen in E1 and C1, shareholder and family dominance shape outcomes more than corporate law or HR standards.

The CP1 exception demonstrates that external institutional pressure can formalize governance practices. Donor requirements pushed CP1 to adopt enforceable succession clauses within HR policy, echoing DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) argument on institutional isomorphism, where organisations mimic global norms due to external pressure rather than internal will.

Thus, this study broadens governance theory: in fragile economies, formal succession policy becomes effective only when enforced by external legitimacy sources (donors, regulators, investors), not solely by corporate will.

- *Continuity Outcomes: Restoration, Survival, and Sustainability*

The findings revealed a clear progression: succession planning practices influence continuity through three linked outcomes- restoration period, survival period, and sustainability trajectory. Organisations that lacked timelines, used relational selection without competence, and failed to enforce governance experienced delayed restoration, short survival in crisis, and weak sustainability. These results support continuity scholarship, which argues that leadership preparedness and institutional memory are core determinants of resilience (Übius & Alas, 2009; Rothwell, 2015).

However, the study also revealed a complexity overlooked in mainstream literature: relational capital may temporarily sustain organisations in weak institutional environments. In C1 and E1, leaders relied on political and ethnic networks to preserve access to markets and financing, enabling a short-term continuity buffer. Yet, this strategy negatively affected sustainability, particularly when leadership transitions disrupted those relationships.

CP1's approach to competency development, preparation, and mentorship demonstrated a more sustainable trajectory. This confirms Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) view that knowledge transfer and tacit learning through mentoring enhance long-term organisational competence. In contrast, firms lacking formal leadership memory transfer repeated past mistakes and failed to institutionalise resilience.

Thus, continuity outcomes in fragile markets are shaped by how organisations balance relational strategy with institutional capability. Continuity is strongest when relational legitimacy supports, rather than replaces, competence and institutional memory.

- *Revised Conceptual Understanding*

The findings extend the succession–continuity literature by demonstrating that in fragile political economies, succession is shaped by a hybrid logic where competency, relational legitimacy, and contextual pressures interact. Unlike succession frameworks developed in stable markets, the findings show that:

Succession planning combines technical and political aspects. Relational ties are assets, not just distortions, but must be balanced with leadership competence. Governance effectiveness depends on external enforcement (donor, regulatory, investor pressure) in contexts with weak institutions. Business continuity is a continuous process of restoration, survival, and sustainability, rather than a single event. The study, therefore, introduces a contextualized succession–continuity perspective that recognizes political embeddedness, relational legitimacy, and institutional capability as simultaneous factors influencing continuity.

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CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Introduction

This chapter presents recommendations derived from the findings of the study, aimed at strengthening succession planning and improving business continuity in corporate organisations operating in fragile markets such as South Sudan. The chapter translates the conceptual insights and empirical results into practical strategies for organisations, boards, HR departments, regulators, and development partners. The primary focus is to propose realistic solutions that fit the political and institutional environment of fragile economies.

B. Summary of Key Conclusions

Succession planning is simultaneously a technical, political, and relational governance system. The study found that in fragile economies, succession decisions are not determined by competence alone, but by relational and political legitimacy. This contrasts with succession models from stable markets that assume rational, merit-driven processes.

Business continuity depends on the preparedness of the successor, not the appointment alone. Continuity is mediated by restoration speed, successor readiness, and transfer of institutional memory. Unprepared successors lead to operational paralysis, reduced survival, and weak sustainability.

External institutional pressures (donors, investors, regulators) can formalize succession governance. In weak regulatory environments, organisational governance improves not because firms voluntarily adopt best practices, but because external actors enforce them. This expands institutional theory by showing that governance effectiveness is contingent on external legitimacy where state regulation is weak.

C. Recommendations of the Study

➢ *Recommendations for Dissemination of Findings*

The findings of this dissertation should be disseminated to relevant institutions and stakeholders who play a strategic role in national governance, human resource development, and corporate leadership. Dissemination will ensure that the insights generated by this study inform policy, organisational practice, and future academic research.

It is recommended that this dissertation be uploaded to the Selinus University academic repository. Making it accessible to faculty members, researchers, and students will support future scholarship in the areas of succession planning, corporate governance, and business continuity, especially in fragile political and economic contexts. This will also contribute to the University’s growing knowledge base and support its mission of promoting scientific and applied research.

Each of the six anonymised corporate organisations (M1, B1, C1, L1, E1, CP1) should be provided with a full soft copy and, where possible, a hard copy of the dissertation. Sharing the research findings will:

- Offer practical guidance for strengthening internal succession planning mechanisms.
- Enhance leadership continuity strategies.
- Promote evidence-informed decision-making at board and management levels.

A copy of this dissertation will be submitted to the Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource Development. The ministry is responsible for national HR policies, leadership development, and public-sector performance. The research findings may contribute to:

- Developing national succession planning standards,
- Enhancing civil service leadership development frameworks,
- Creating continuity management guidelines for government agencies.

As a major private-sector stakeholder and employer, Sudd Investment and General Trading should receive a copy of the dissertation to inform:

- Corporate governance practices,
- Internal leadership development strategies,
- Organisational continuity frameworks.

Given the role of the National Communication Authority in regulating strategic communication, ICT infrastructure, and corporate compliance, the findings of this study may support:

- Development of sector-wide governance recommendations,
- Standardisation of leadership continuity guidelines for telecommunications and ICT firms,
- Integration of risk management and continuity indicators into compliance frameworks.

The Ministry of National Security Services plays a central role in national stability and protection of critical institutions. Disseminating this dissertation to the ministry will help:

- Inform leadership continuity strategies in security-related public institutions,
- Strengthen governance and risk mitigation frameworks,
- Enhance resilience within ministries and agencies responsible for national safety.

➢ *For Corporate Boards and Shareholders*

In addition to the Recommendations for Dissemination of Findings, below are recommendations for corporate boards and shareholders.

- *Establish Independent Succession Committees*

✓ Include external professionals, that is, legal, HR consultants
✓ Reduce family/kinship or political bias in decision-making

- *Approve Documented Succession Timelines*

✓ Develop 3–5 year transition cycles for senior roles
✓ Require annual review of "leadership depth" and readiness reports

- *Enforce Competency Thresholds before Appointments*

✓ Mandate basic competency standards (finance, governance, compliance)
✓ Require leadership training certificates before assuming executive roles

Boards must shift from "control of leadership" to "stewardship of continuity." These mechanisms limit opportunistic appointments and shorten restoration periods.

➢ *For Human Resource Departments*

- *Implement Leadership Pipeline Monitoring*

Table 8 Annual Pipeline Tool

Level	Possible Successors	Readiness Rating	Training Needs
CEO	2 candidates	60–80%	Strategy, governance
Directors	3–4 candidates	40–70%	Financial leadership
Managers	5–7 candidates	30–60%	People management

- *Establish Mentorship and Tacit Knowledge Transfer*

✓ Pair potential successors with top executives for shadowing
✓ Conduct quarterly strategy-learning sessions for candidates

- *Maintain Emergency Delegation Protocols*

✓ Create a written "Acting Leader" policy
✓ Include signatory rights, decision limits, and delegation scope

Prepared successors reduce survival risk and improve sustainability by preserving institutional memory.

➢ *For Company Legal Departments and Policy Units*

- *Insert Succession Clauses into Governance Documents*

✓ Add clauses into HR policies, board charters, shareholder agreements

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- ✓ Specify selection criteria, timelines, and minimum qualifications

- *Codify Family Governance where Relevant (for E1-type firms)*

- ✓ Develop Family Constitutions that separate ownership from management
- ✓ Define when family members can or cannot occupy leadership roles

- *Ensure Enforcement Tools Exist*

- ✓ Identify grievance and appeal mechanisms for contested succession
- ✓ Mandate documentation of all succession deliberations

Succession governance must be enforceable, not symbolic.

- ➢ *For National Regulators (Ministry of Labour, Corporate Registry)*

- *Require Succession Preparedness Reporting*

- ✓ For large companies like the Top 200 taxpayers
- ✓ As part of annual compliance filings

- *Adopt Minimum Competency Standards for Executives*

- ✓ Leadership certification in governance & compliance
- ✓ Could be delivered via business schools and training institutes

- *Encourage Corporate Governance Rating Systems*

- ✓ Incentivize firms through recognition, not punishment
- ✓ Link ratings to licensing advantages or investor incentives

Regulation should not merely enforce but also encourage strategic continuity.

- ➢ *For Donors, Investors, and Development Partners*

- *Make Succession Readiness a Funding Condition*

- ✓ Require documented succession plans and competency-based pipelines
- ✓ Similar to CP1's donor-driven improvements

- *Support Executive Leadership Training*

- ✓ Target senior management and potential successors
- ✓ Subsidies governance training in fragile market contexts

- *Fund Sector-Wide Governance Toolkits*

- ✓ Provide templates for succession policies, pipelines, and delegations
- ✓ Share best practices across manufacturing, logistics, energy, and finance

External actors can legally and financially incentivise better governance in contexts where local enforcement is weak.

D. Practical Implementation Model

Table 9 Continuity Implementation Toolkit (SCIT)

Phase	Tool	Expected Outcome
1. Identification	Annual Leadership Pipeline Matrix	Candidate list + readiness score
2. Preparation	Mentorship + Competency Training Plan	Competent successors
3. Documentation	Succession Clauses + Family/Board Charter	Enforceable governance
4. Continuity Assurance	Emergency Delegation Policy	Faster restoration
5. Review	Yearly Leadership Depth Report	Continuous improvement

E. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

- *Methodological Scope*

This study used a qualitative multiple-case approach in one country. Future research could apply mixed methods or longitudinal analysis to track continuity after actual leadership transitions.

- *Sectorial Breadth*

Future studies could examine succession in state-owned enterprises or family conglomerates to compare public–private dynamics in fragile markets.

- *Gender and Power Dynamics*

Female HR practitioners frequently played advisory roles without decision-making power. Future research can examine how gendered authority shapes succession and governance in post-conflict economies.

- *Impact of Regulatory Reform*

Future studies should evaluate how new corporate governance reforms, if introduced, affect continuity outcomes over time.

F. Final Concluding Statement

This research shows that succession planning is not only a human resource activity but a strategic governance system profoundly shaped by political economy, institutional weaknesses, and relational networks. Business continuity in fragile markets requires hybrid approaches that combine competency development, relational legitimacy, enforceable governance, and external oversight. The study, therefore, offers a contextualized conceptual and empirical foundation for understanding how leadership continuity can be safeguarded within volatile environments such as South Sudan.

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APPENDICES

SUCCESSION PLANNING & BUSINESS CONTINUITY (SOUTH SUDAN)

Participant information & consent form

Title

Succession Planning and Business Continuity in the Corporate Sector of South Sudan Participant Information & Consent

Principal investigator

Mayor Luk Lueth Dueny

Affiliation

Silenus University Department of Leadership & Governance

- *Purpose*
  To explore how succession planning practices influence business continuity in South Sudan's corporate sector.

- *What Participation Involves*
  An interview of 45–60 minutes (face-to-face or online), access to relevant organisation documents (if available), and permission to audio-record the interview for transcription. Optional questionnaire (20 minutes).

- *Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal*
  Participation is voluntary. You may decline or withdraw at any time without providing a reason. Withdrawal will not affect your employment.

- *Confidentiality*
  Responses will be anonymised. Organisational documents will be used only for research and stored securely. No individual or company names will appear in reports without explicit written permission.

- *Risks & Benefits*
  There are no expected physical risks. Benefits include contributing to knowledge that may improve corporate continuity practices.

- *Storage & Use Of Data*
  Audio files and transcripts will be stored securely on password-protected devices for 5 years and then destroyed. Only the researcher and supervisors will access the raw data.

Contact: …………………………………………

- *Consent Statement (Tick & Sign)*
  I have read the information. I consent to participate and for the interview to be audio-recorded.

Name: ____________

Role: ____________

Organisation: ____________

Signature: ____________

Date: ____________

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INTERVIEW GUIDE (CEOS / MANAGING DIRECTORS / BOARD REPRESENTATIVES)

➢ *Purpose*

Explore strategic-level succession planning, company agreements, and perceived effects on business continuity.

- Duration (45–60 minutes)
- Format (Semi-structured; audio-record with consent)

➢ *Opening (5 Minutes)*

- Thank the participant, explain the purpose, and confirm consent & recording, confidentiality.
- Short warm-up: "Please tell me briefly about your role and how long you've been in this organisation."

➢ *Section A-Background & Organisational Context (5–8 min)*

- Can you describe the organisation's history and main lines of business? (Probe: size, years in operation, ownership structure.)
- How would you describe the current leadership structure (board, CEO, senior team)?

➢ *Section B-Succession Planning (15–20 min)*

- Does the organisation have a formal succession plan or policy? (If yes: When was it adopted? Who developed it?)
- Probe: formal document, board-approved, HR-owned, linked to strategy.
- How is the succession timeline determined for key positions (CEO, technical leads)?
- Probe: planned retirement dates, emergency succession, staged transitions.
- How are potential successors identified?
- Probe: performance metrics, talent reviews, assessments, external hiring, family selection, merit criteria.
- What formal company agreements (contracts, charters, MOUs) exist to govern succession?
- Probe: clauses in employment contracts, shareholders' agreements, board rules, contingency clauses.
- Describe any recent leadership transition(s) in your organisation. What worked and what did not?
- Probe: timeline followed, communication with stakeholders, legal/board involvement.

➢ *Section C-Business Continuity and Outcomes (10–12 min)*

- In your view, how has succession planning (or lack of it) affected the company's ability to restore operations after disruption?
- Probe: examples, speed of recovery, decision-making continuity.
- How has succession planning influenced the company's survival period during crises?
- Probe: ability to survive months/years after leadership change, liquidity implications.
- How does succession planning contribute to long-term sustainability (growth, investor confidence, reputation)?
- Probe: staff retention, customer continuity, strategic projects.

➢ *Section D-Enablers, Barriers, and Recommendations (8–10 min)*

- What are the main internal enablers that support effective succession planning here? (e.g., HR policy, training budget)
- What are the major barriers (cultural, political, financial, governance) you face?
- What practical measures would you recommend to improve succession planning and business continuity in South Sudanese firms?

➢ *Closing (2–3 min)*

- Anything else you want to add?
- Ask if participant can recommend other knowledgeable persons (snowballing).
- Thank and confirm follow-up for member-checking.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE: HR MANAGERS / TALENT & OD LEADS

➢ *Purpose:*
Get operational detail on talent pipelines, training, policies, and documentation.

- Duration (45–60 minutes)

➢ *Key Sections & Sample Questions*

- Background & role: “Describe your HR function and its role in leadership development.”
- Succession policy & timeline: “Do you maintain succession plans? How is the timeline implemented & updated?”
- Successor identification: “What tools do you use to identify talent? (Performance appraisals, assessments, competency frameworks).” Probe for specifics: assessment centres, psychometrics, 9-box grids.
- Development practices: “Describe your training, coaching, mentoring, and delegation programs targeted at potential successors.” (Probe for frequency, budgets, evaluation.)
- Company agreements & governance: “Are succession clauses in employment contracts or shareholder agreements? How does the board oversee succession?”
- Document evidence: “Can you provide copies of succession policy, talent matrices, and board minutes relating to succession (confidential handling)?”
- Impact on continuity: “How have these HR practices influenced restoration, survival, and sustainability?” Ask for examples and indicators.
- Barriers & needs: “What resources/training/tools would help HR better support succession planning?”
- Closing & referrals.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE: MIDDLE MANAGERS / DEPARTMENT HEADS

- *Purpose:*

Capture operational experiences of delegated leadership, mentoring, and preparedness.

- Duration (35–45 minutes)

- *Key Questions*

- Describe your career path and exposure to leadership tasks. Have you been delegated responsibilities to prepare you for higher roles?
- Have you been part of any mentorship, coaching, or job rotation programs? How effective were they?
- How clearly were you informed about succession timelines and criteria? Did you receive feedback on readiness?
- During recent leadership changes, how did day-to-day operations continue? Who filled the gaps?
- What would improve your readiness to step into senior roles? (Training, clearer communication, shadowing)
- How does the organisational culture affect openness about succession and internal promotions?

- *Document Analysis Checklist/Extraction Template*

Use this template to extract evidence from organisational documents. Record the document name, date, author, and relevant excerpts.

- *Document Extraction Table (Example Columns)*

- Document title
- Type (policy / contract / minute / strategic plan / annual report)
- Date issued / last updated
- Author/issuer (HR / Board / Legal)
- Evidence of succession policy? (Y/N) & short excerpt (quote ≤25 words)
- Presence of succession timeline? (Y/N) & excerpt
- Successor identification procedures? (Y/N) & excerpt
- Company agreement clauses related to succession? (Y/N) & excerpt (e.g., shareholders' agreement clause)
- Evidence linking succession to continuity planning? (Y/N) & excerpt
- Notes on credibility (original copy / redacted / summary), confidentiality level

- Guidance: Always photocopy/scan documents or note page numbers. If organisations won't share full documents, ask for redacted excerpts or allow you to copy only governance clauses.

- *Data Collection Protocol & Practical Notes*

- *Pilot Test*

Pilot all instruments with 1 CEO, 1 HR manager, and 1 middle manager from a local firm (not a study case). Revise wording, timing, and sensitive questions.

- *Interview Logistics*

✓ Book interviews through formal letter/email from Silenus University or through company liaison.
✓ Begin with consent, explain confidentiality, and give estimated duration.
✓ Use two devices if possible (one for audio backup).
✓ Keep field notes immediately after each interview (observations, non-verbal signals, and themes).

- *Recording & Transcription*

✓ Audio-record (with consent).Transcribe verbatim. Note pauses, emotions if relevant.
✓ Time-stamp transcripts every 2–3 minutes for easy reference.
✓ Store raw audio + transcripts in encrypted folder; keep a coded master list separate (org code name).

- *Member Checking*

Share synthesized findings or theme summaries with participants for verification (one-page summary).

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- *Safety & Access*

For South Sudan contexts with security concerns, prefer secure online interviews or conduct interviews in safe neutral locations. Seek company permission letters to avoid access issues.

- *Confidentiality Reminders*

Reiterate that no identifying company or person will be published without explicit permission.

➢ *Pilot & Quality Assurance Plan*

- *Pilot Instruments*

Conduct 3 pilot interviews + 5 pilot questionnaires. Revise items for clarity and cultural appropriateness.

- *Inter-Coder Reliability Check*

After initial coding, have a peer code two transcripts independently; compute simple agreement and discuss differences to refine the codebook.

- *Audit Trail*

Keep versions of instruments, raw transcripts, memos, coding decisions, and thematic maps.

➢ *Initial Codebook (Starter; to be Refined During Analysis)*

Use the NVivo node structure starter. Each theme includes sample codes and indicative in-vivo codes.

- *Succession Planning (Parent)*

✓ A1 Succession Timeline — planned retirements; emergency succession; timeline clarity
✓ A2 Successor Identification — talent review; 9-box; merit vs. kin selection; external hires
✓ A3 Company Agreement — clauses; shareholder agreements; board resolutions

- *Leadership Development (Parent)*

✓ B1 Training programs — content, frequency, budget
✓ B2 Mentoring & Coaching — structures, mentors, outcomes
✓ B3 Delegation & Job rotation — examples; readiness building

- *Business Continuity (Parent)*

✓ C1 Restoration — speed of recovery; decision clarity after transition
✓ C2 Survival period — financial resilience; liquidity; market retention
✓ C3 Sustainability — long-term strategy; investor confidence; reputation

- *Governance & Context (Parent)*

✓ D1 Board oversight — role of the board in succession
✓ D2 Organisational culture — openness, secrecy, nepotism
✓ D3 External environment — political risk; regulatory constraints

- *Barriers & Enablers (Parent)*

✓ E1 Barriers — financial limits, politics, lack of policy, talent drain
✓ E2 Enablers — HR policy, donor support, training partnerships

➢ *Questionnaire's Guide*

- Succession Planning and Staff Preparedness: Target respondents
- Wider staff / HR personnel Mode: Paper or electronic
- Estimated completion time (15–20 minutes)

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- *Section A-Demographics*

✓ Role in organisation: ☐ CEO / MD ☐ senior manager ☐ Middle manager ☐ HR officer ☐ other (please specify): __________
✓ Years with organisation: ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–7 years ☐ 8 years or more
✓ Organisation size (number of staff): ☐ 50–100 ☐ 101–300 ☐ 301–500 ☐ 500+

- *Section B-Succession Planning*

✓ Does your organisation have a written succession policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ don't know
✓ How involved is HR in succession planning? ☐ Very involved ☐ somewhat involved ☐ Not involved ☐ don't know
✓ Rate the clarity of succession criteria in your organisation (1 = very unclear, 5 = very clear): 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

- Open-ended: Briefly describe one strength and one weakness of your organization's approach to succession planning: *Section C-Development & Preparedness*

✓ Have you participated in mentoring or coaching programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No
✓ Rate your personal readiness for a senior role (1 = low, 5 = high): 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
✓ What training, support, or resources would most help you prepare to become a successor?

- *Section D-Business Continuity Perception*

✓ In your view, how does succession planning affect your organization's ability to recover from disruptions? Please provide examples if possible. ____
✓ Any additional comments, suggestions, or observations regarding succession planning in your organisation?