

# Effect of Knowledge Succession on Business Continuity of Community-Based Organizations in Kitui County, Kenya

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Received: May 22, 2024

Accepted: July 20, 2024

Online Published: September 20, 2024

doi:10.5539/ijbm.v19n6p13

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v19n6p13>

## Abstract

Business continuity is the ability of a business enterprise to outlive the dream bearers who began it, so it can continue thriving long after the people who began it have left. Knowledge succession is the ability of a dream bearer to groom another or several others to continue the good work they began when they started the business. This study wishes to add a pool of knowledge by addressing the effect of knowledge succession on business continuity. The context the study was done in is Community-based organizations (CBOs) in Kitui County, Kenya. The study applied cross-sectional survey research. The unit of analysis was 228 CBOs in Kitui County while the unit of observation was 228 chairmen of CBOs. The study used Taro Yamane formula to derive a sample size of 145 participants. Primary data was collected using hand delivered questionnaires. Data was analyzed for descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics reviewed a high agreement with the statement on knowledge succession with an overall mean of 4.12 which implied that the organization prepared the employees for future leadership positions. Regression analysis between knowledge succession and business continuity indicates a beta coefficient of 0.404 and a p-value of 0.001 suggesting that knowledge succession had a significantly positive effect on the continuity of CBOs in Kitui County. The findings imply that knowledge succession plays a critical role in the continuity of CBOs in Kitui County. The study recommends using digital knowledge management systems, and mentoring fresh employees to enhance their versatility.

**Keywords:** knowledge succession, business continuity, community-based organizations (CBOs), Kitui County, Kenya

## 1. Introduction

In every business organization, whether for profit or not, the aspiration for longevity is paramount. Entrepreneurs and founders infuse their enterprises with specific visions from the early stages, envisioning sustained success far into the future. This vision aligns with the concept of business continuity, which encompasses an organization's readiness to persevere through disruptions (Margherita & Heikkilä, 2021). With business continuity, organizations can weather uncertainties and ensure seamless operations even in the face of adversity (Suresh, Sanders & Braunscheidel, 2020). It serves as a strategic imperative, enabling businesses to swiftly recover from setbacks and mitigate potential losses, thereby conserving valuable time and resources that would otherwise be squandered in the event of business closure (Aldianto, et al., 2021).

An integral facet of ensuring business continuity lies in effective knowledge succession management. This process involves cultivating the human capital within organizations to seamlessly transition key personnel when they depart or assume new roles (Khanipour, Gelard & Bagheri, 2021). Knowledge succession encompasses deliberate efforts to capture, preserve, and disseminate the wealth of experiences, insights, and expertise possessed by employees (Hatcher, 2023). Central to this endeavor are mechanisms such as information transfer protocols, mentorship initiatives, diversified role preparation, and electronic knowledge management systems (Odiachi, Sulaimon & Kuye, 2023). The theoretical literature highlights the important role of knowledge succession in enhancing business continuity. For instance, Mutunga (2020) explains how meticulous documentation and systematic succession planning help community-based organizations navigate the complexities of the business landscape. By documenting critical organizational knowledge, these entities ensure the seamless transmission of vital information to subsequent generations, thus fortifying their resilience and

adaptability.

Business continuity is important to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) because of the critical role they play in society. CBOs have been critical in helping the local communities to live better lives. For example, these organizations have helped in countering negativity in communities, empowering people through education and access to basic services and supporting vulnerable groups (Brush et al., 2020; Muthini, 2019). In Kenya, CBOs have been created to meet the various issues facing the people in diverse localities. In this regard, CBOs are aimed at addressing a specific need in the community in which they operate. These organizations have reduced the impact of poverty and hunger the society (Muthini, 2019). They also help in the distribution of resources thus ensuring equality in the communities in which they operate. Despite the critical roles played by CBOs, many of them die a natural death due to a lack of a proper succession plan that ensures continuity.

Kitui County is one of the counties in Kenya, located in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) with high episodes of hunger and extreme poverty (Mwangi et al., 2020). There are a lot of registered community-based organizations in Kitui County. The CBOs are active in every industry, from agriculture to education. CBOs exist to raise the standard of living for people living in Kitui County. Despite CBOs playing a great role in the county, they are faced with numerous challenges that may affect their operation. Challenges faced by the CBOs include governmental intervention, effort duplication, unfavorable competition, and the inability to address regional structural causes of poverty, hardship, inefficiency and ineffectiveness in service delivery, and underdevelopment (Kithome, 2023; Mwangi, 2021). Due to these difficulties, these organizations must develop succession plans and tactics to improve their position in an unstable environment (Mbandi & Mwenda, 2021). It is important to conduct an empirical study to examine whether succession planning plays a significant role in the continuity of these organizations.

The majority of the CBOs in Kitui County have experienced heavy challenges related to the control of expenditure. The over-reliance on donors and well-wishers has caused many to fail to celebrate their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (Mbandi & Mwenda, 2021). The operations of the majority of the CBOs have been adversely affected and service delivery to the community in Kitui County has not been smooth over time. Several interventions have been made to address the issue of the continuity of these institutions. These include diversifying funding opportunities and developing succession plans to enhance the longevity of operations (Kiiti, 2019; Kitheka, et al., 2019). Despite these interventions, the operation of some CBOs has still suffered several challenges such as political interference, withdrawal of donors, and disasters, especially during and after disasters. According to Deloitte (2020), the problem of continuity may be attributed to a lack of proper succession management. In this context, it is important to test empirically whether succession planning plays a significant role in CBOs.

Several studies have been done on succession management globally, in Africa, and locally. Dato (2021) explored successor-related factors pertinent to SMEs and their impact on business continuity in Agro-related SMEs in Malaysia. Abdulhameed and Al-Kubaisy (2023) carried out a study to investigate how upgrading knowledge impacts the continuity of business operations within private colleges and universities in Baghdad, Olowoyeye (2020) examined how knowledge successive management affects the sustainability of Nigerian firms. LeCounte (2022) examined the role of knowledge succession planning in the growth of family-owned SMEs in Mali. Muthini (2019) examined the challenges affecting the implementation of a succession management strategy in Kenya Civil Service of Kenya. However, these studies have failed to adequately address the context of business continuity in CBOs despite the lack of continuity in these organizations. It is also notable that there is a lack of substantial inquiry into knowledge succession and the continuity of CBOs, particularly in the Kenyan context. This is an empirical examination that is important given the critical role played by these institutions. This study seeks to fill the aforementioned gaps by conducting an empirical investigation of the relationship between succession planning and the business continuity of CBOs. CBOs play a more critical role in ASALs because of the high cases of vulnerability in these regions. This explains why the study focuses on CBOs in Kitui County, one of the ASALs in the southeastern region of Kenya.

This study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. It has explored the nexus between knowledge succession and business continuity, a relationship that has attracted little empirical research. The study has focused on the relationship in CBOs in Kitui County (Kenya), a region that has lacked substantial inquiry into aspects of business continuity. In addition to the empirical and contextual gaps filled, the study provides policy contributions among managers and practitioners in the CBO industry. Specifically, this study is very useful to the management of community-based organizations as it has offered insightful recommendations on how CBOs can ensure they sustain competitive advantage through knowledge succession management. Finally, this study provides important theoretical and empirical foundations for future research specifically on issues of knowledge management and business continuity.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

This study employs the Transformation Leadership Theory by James MacGregor in 1978. According to this theory, leaders and employees can help each other to improve workplace morale and motivation. This theory explains that the difference between the organization's leaders and the employees is the characters and behaviors between these two (Armugam et al., 2019). Transformational leadership enables an organization to create significant change in people and the organization. This leadership style is based on a give-and-take relationship whereby the manager creates a positive relationship with employees. Transformational leadership does not rely on cultural change in the organization but rather works on the existing culture (Armugam et al., 2019). In this regard, an organization can use transformational leadership to create the right organizational culture for growth.

The transformational leadership theory identifies the need for individualized consideration, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. A leader should be able to attend to the unique needs of the employees. The manager acts as a mentor or coach to the employees by listening to their needs and concerns (Puspitasari & Riyanto, 2020). The leader also offers empathy and support to the employees, intellectual stimulation ensures that a leader can take risks and get the opinions of the employees. These opinions help the leaders to create a leadership model that is easily acceptable to the employees. These leaders can stimulate the creativity and the following of the employees, they can nurture and develop the employees to think independently and learn to become great leaders.

Within the realm of knowledge succession where the transfer of crucial knowledge and institutions memory is important in the sustenance of operations, transformational leadership comes in handy where transformational leaders foster a culture of learning and adaptability to steer the organizations. Such transformational leaders identify employees with special skills and talents and they encourage such employees to increasingly share their knowledge through mentoring others in the organization (Abdulhameed & Al-Kubaisy, 2023). Transformational leaders are known to stem their views clearly and in some articulate ways that compel other employees to understand the importance of knowledge management in organizations. Through the provision of an environment where employees can experiment and come up with innovations that challenge conventional wisdom and therefore instill a culture of knowledge transfer in a seamless way (Tunji, 2021).

Within CBOs in Kitui County, transformational leaders can mitigate losses of knowledge that result from employee turnover or retirement. Where such organization leaders institutionalize the knowledge management systems by implanting succession planning within the organizational fabrics it paves the way for continuity of operations therefore safeguarding the key roles that CBOs play in the community.

Transformational leaders also offer motivation and inspiration to the employees by articulating the organization's vision. The leaders set high standards in the organization and motivate employees to achieve the organization's goals (Al Harbi et al., 2019). The employees need to have a strong sense of purpose to be able to be transformed by their leader. Lastly, transformational leaders act as role models for higher ethical behavior by instilling pride and gaining respect and trust. The transformational leadership theory is useful in helping managers create a good organizational culture where employees feel engaged in the workplace.

The transformational leadership theory offers useful insights into how organizations can utilize their leadership styles to mentor new leaders. A transformational leader can create rapport with promising talents in the organizations to take over the leadership mantles. Community-based organizations can use transformational techniques to create an environment where the employees learn from the leaders to understand useful values to run the organization during a crisis. Besides, the leaders can use the transformational leadership style to instill resilience and values that will be useful in enabling organizations to ensure smooth succession.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

Embarking on a scholarly quest for Knowledge succession, several studies have been conducted to shed light on the crucial interplay between succession planning and business resilience. For example, Dato (2021) explored successor-related factors pertinent to SMEs and their impact on business continuity in Agro-related SMEs in Malaysia, an area that has received limited attention in existing literature. The study investigated whether the age of the company influenced the relationship between successor-related factors and business continuity. Surveys were distributed to 400 Agro-related SMEs, with 113 responses collected and analyzed using SEM-AMOS. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between succession planning and business sustainability. Interestingly, company age was found to not moderate this relationship. These findings offer valuable insights for SME managers and decision-makers, highlighting the importance of considering successor-related factors in

continuity planning.

Venturing into the halls of higher education in Baghdad, Abdulhameed and Al-Kubaisy (2023) carried out a study to investigate how upgrading knowledge impacts the continuity of business operations within private colleges and universities in Baghdad. It aimed to address whether academic leaders effectively utilized knowledge upgrades to improve business continuity. The study specifically targeted universities and private colleges in Baghdad, with field visits conducted at 10 such institutions. A total of 177 individuals, including deans, their assistants, and heads of scientific and administrative departments, comprised the research sample. Data analysis was performed using statistical tools like SPSS and AMOS, revealing a notable positive relationship between knowledge upgrading and business continuity.

A study by Arham et al. (2021) investigated the direct influence of succession planning initiatives on knowledge retention in the rich tapestry of Peninsular Malaysia's SME landscape, where succession planning acts as a catalyst for knowledge retention. Amidst the vibrant hustle of small businesses, their investigation through surveys and Smart-PLS 3.0 analysis, they uncovered the roots of organizational wisdom, offering insights into sustainable growth within Malaysia's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Employing quantitative methods and survey questionnaires, the study targeted managerial staff in the services and manufacturing sectors. The analysis, conducted using Smart-PLS 3.0 software, involved 81 respondents. The empirical findings emphasized the significant contributions of two variables associated with succession planning initiatives: management support and organizational culture, towards knowledge retention.

On an intellectual journey through Liverpool's micro-firm landscape, Duarte et al. (2022) explored how micro-firms in Liverpool, UK, utilize the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) framework and dynamic capabilities to advance entrepreneurship literature. Through face-to-face interviews with leaders of five micro firms in 2017, followed by further interviews in 2018, the study identified key characteristics associated with KBV. These included leveraging past business experiences, incorporating existing knowledge, assessing the relevance of knowledge within the firm, connecting past and new knowledge for strategic planning, and utilizing knowledge to capitalize on opportunities. The study emphasized that by fulfilling these characteristics and engaging in reconfiguration activities such as diversification or divestment, firms can enhance their knowledge base, competitiveness, and overall performance.

In the tranquil setting of Bali's family-owned enterprises, Martini and Dewi (2020) embarked on a quest to explore the effects of knowledge successor characteristics on succession planning in family businesses in Bali. The research targeted family-owned textile and weaving businesses that are operated in Bali City Malawi. The researcher used a quantitative approach whereby a Likert scale was used to quantify the responses from the respondents. A partial Least Square Path Modeling was used to conclude this study. The results of this study showed that knowledge succession planning in organizations had a positive and significant effect on stability in family-owned enterprises. The study revealed that successive planning helps young family members to maintain their businesses from their parents.

Additionally, another study by Olowoyeye (2020) meticulously examined how knowledge successive management affects the sustainability of Nigerian firms. This research used qualitative research to take data for the firms in Nigeria. The researchers employed a stratified sampling technique whereby they got 250 firms in Nigeria. The authors used a structured questionnaire to collect information for the study. The research revealed that succession plans positively and significantly affected organizations' stability in Nigeria. The research identified that there is a need for a proper succession plan to ensure sustainability and growth.

There also exists empirical evidence on how knowledge succession improves organizational survival. In this context, Fadeyi et al. (2019) used qualitative data analysis whereby a random sampling technique was used to collect data from Nigerian firms—these targeted managers of different cadres. The study explored how managers use succession planning to ensure that they can compete in the business environment. The study noted that a knowledge succession plan in an organization needs some ingredients to make it more successful. Besides, managers need to ensure that the knowledge succession plan is constantly checked to avoid distractions and ensure the process will deliver the desired goals.

In a study to examine the dynamic of the relationship between knowledge succession planning and the growth of family-owned firms in Mali, LeCounte (2022) applied the upper-echelon theory to understand how firms in different market segments have managed their succession plan. The study noted that lack of succession planning is the major cause of failure of family-owned SMEs. Lack of succession leads to loss of organizational values which in turn affects an organization's ability to compete effectively in the market. This study concludes that an organization should be committed to a succession plan by investing in the training and development of the

business heirs.

An examination of the challenges affecting the implementation of a succession management strategy in Kenya Civil Service was carried out by Muthini (2019). This research employed a descriptive research design whereby the data was collected from HR managers. The authors used a structured questionnaire design with closed-ended questions to collect data. SPSS statistics were used to draw conclusions from the study and draw conclusions. This study noted that public service in Kenya does not have a succession management plan to ensure a smooth transition. Among other challenges facing the Kenyan public sector are a lack of succession management, an aging workforce, and a shortage of skilled workforce. The research recommends the need for a more robust succession model to address the succession gaps in the public sector in Kenya.

Another study by Mutunga (2020) sought to determine the effect of knowledge succession management on human resource practices in the public sector. The author focused on the Kenyan public sector whereby he identified the role of recruitment, training, and the effects of employee development and how it affects succession planning. This study used the planned behavior theory to know the various gaps in the previous studies on the topic. The author used a descriptive research model and identified 216 respondents through a stratified sampling technique. The information for this research was collected through questionnaires and extracted using SPSS. This study noted that recruitment and training models in an organization are critical factors in successive planning. A human resource model in an organization ensures that firms can identify the right people and train them to take over once the current leadership leaves the firm. The authors noted that the lack of knowledge of successive planning in the public sector has affected the ability of the Kenyan government to achieve its development goals.

The literature reviewed indicated a contribution to the existing literature on knowledge succession and business continuity which is important as it provided a foundation for the current study by providing important measures for the variables as well as providing a suggestion for the ideal methodology. However, the existing studies encountered contextual, conceptual, and methodological gaps which justifies the need for the study on knowledge succession and business continuity within CBOs in Kitui County. Global and regional studies in the literature among them (Dato, 2021; Abdulhameed and Al-Kubaisy, 2023; Arham et al., 2021; Duarte et al., 2022; Martini & Dewi, 2020) presented contextual gaps because they were conducted in Agro-related, private colleges and universities, SMEs while some were conducted in family businesses. For-profit businesses are faced with operations, legal, and market dynamics that are different from CBOs which are formed for different motives, therefore studies outside CBOs cannot be generalized as applicable within the CBOs in Kitui County. Lastly, the studies presented conceptual gaps because the dependent variable in the studies was not continuity of business but other variables including, dynamic capabilities, growth of businesses, and human resource practices (LeCounte, 2022; Duarte et al., 2022; Mutunga, 2020).

**3. Methodology**

*3.1 Approach*

The study applied a cross-sectional descriptive research design because the study was conducted at one point in time among CBOs in Kitui County. The population for the study comprises 228 CBOs which serve as the unit of analysis (Deloitte, 2020). On the other hand, 228 chairmen of the CBO in Kitui County serve as the unit of observation. The study applied a stratified random sampling technique and taro Yamane to sample 145 participants for the study. The taro Yamane formula has been applied as shown in equation 1,

$$n = \frac{N}{1+NE^2} \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where n = Target Sample Size, N = total population, E = error margin (0.05)

$$n = \frac{228}{1+(228*0.05^2)}=228/1.57 \quad n = 145$$

Table 1. Sample Distribution

Category	Population	Number of CBOs picked
Social Economic Empowerment	98	62
Environmental Concerns	63	40
Empowerment	44	28
Physical Activities	23	15
Total	228	145

The study used a questionnaire with Likert-type questions ranging between 1 and 5. The data collection procedure entailed administering the questionnaire through physical administration through a drop-and-pick method and also electronically by use of Google Sheets, where a link containing a replica of the physical ones was sent to the respondents through emails.

### *3.2 Reliability and Validity*

Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019) opined that 5 to 10% of the sample size is a good representation to be used in piloting. The pilot test was carried out in 15 (145 X 10%) CBOs in Makueni county; Kibwezi East sub-county, Kenya. Content validity was applied to test for the validity of the instrument while Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency/ reliability of the Likert-type scales used in the research instrument.

### *3.3 Diagnostic Tests*

Regression diagnostics were used to evaluate whether the assumptions of ordinary least squares (OLS) have been met. The tests that were conducted include normality, multi-collinearity, and autocorrelation tests. Linearity tests were conducted to test whether there exists a linear relationship in the variables of interest.

### *3.4 Data Analysis*

The collected data was cleaned and sorted using Microsoft Excel and entered into a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive and inferential analyses were used in the study. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using various statistical techniques such as mean and standard deviation. The main forms of inferential analysis that were used include correlation analysis, regression analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The output from the analysis was presented in tables.

## **4. Results**

### *4.1 Response Rate*

The study gathered primary data from 145 participants however the study was only able to receive feedback from 128 participants which represented a response rate of 88.28%, which according to According to Kothari, (2012), is an adequate response rate for actual data analysis.

### *4.2 Descriptive Statistics*

#### *4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics on Knowledge Succession*

Table 2 revealed that respondents agreed that their CBOs had established a process for information transfer to the next generation of employees as suggested by a mean score of 3.98. additionally, the participants agreed that their CBOs had established mentorship programs where experienced employees can pass on their skills and expertise to the junior employees (tacit knowledge) as given by a mean score of 4.05%. Besides, participants agreed that CBO in Kitui County had trained their employees in diverse roles to ensure they are versatile and capable of filling different knowledge gaps as shown by a mean score of 4.20. Lastly, participants agreed that CBOs in Kitui County had utilized technology-based knowledge management systems to capture, store, organize, and share an institution's knowledge as shown by a mean score of 4.23. Overall, the respondents agreed with the statements on knowledge succession indicated by an overall mean of 4.12.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Knowledge Succession

Descriptive statistics on Knowledge Succession	We have established a process for information transfer to the next generation of employees	We have established a mentorship programs where experienced employees can pass on their skills and expertise to the junior employees (tacit knowledge)	Employees are trained in diverse roles to ensure they are versatile and capable of filling different knowledge gaps	Our organization utilizes technology-based knowledge management systems to capture, store, organize, and share an institution's knowledge	Overall Mean
Mean	3.98	4.05	4.20	4.23	<b>4.12</b>
Std. Deviation	.693	.686	.641	.766	
<b>Frequency &amp; (Percentage)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	
Strongly disagreed	0	0	1(.8%)	0	
Disagree	10 (7.85)	3(2.3%)	3(2.3%)	4(3.1%)	
Neutral	2(1.6%)	18(14.0%)	1(0.8%)	14(10.9%)	
Agree	97(75.2%)	77(59.7%)	88(68.2%)	59(45.7%)	
Strongly agree	19(14.7%)	30(23.3%)	35(27.1%)	51(39.5%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>128</b>	

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics on Business Continuity

Table 3 revealed that participants on average agreed that CBOs in Kitui County had insured key assets and processes to ensure continuity in the event of great financial loss or process disruption as shown by a mean score of 4.30. Also, the results revealed that participants agreed that the IT platform for the CBOs in Kitui County had backup and redundant systems to maintain essential operations during IT failure. Additionally, participants agreed that CBOs in Kitui County had an effective communication platform for informing employees of emergencies and disruptions as shown by a mean score of 4.51. Lastly, respondents agreed with the statement that, to a large extent, we have implemented our strategic plan as shown by a mean score of 4.44.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on business continuity

Descriptive statistics on Business continuity	Our organization has insured key assets and processes to ensure continuity in the event of great financial loss or process disruption	Our IT platform has backup and redundant systems to maintain essential operation during IT failure	Our organization has an effective communication platform for informing employees of emergencies and our strategic plan	To a large extent, we have implemented our strategic plan	Overall Mean
Mean	4.30	4.24	4.51	4.44	<b>4.37</b>
Std. Deviation	.634	.839	.763	.867	
<b>Frequency &amp; (percentage)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	<b>F(%)</b>	
strongly disagreed	0	1(0.8%)	0	1(0.8%)	
Disagree	3 (2.3%)	4(3.1%)	4( 3.1%)	8(6.3%)	
Neutral	3 (2.3%)	15(11.7%)	9(7.0%)	2(1.6%)	
Agree	74(57.3%)	51(39.8%)	33(28.5%)	40(31.3%)	
Strongly agree	48(37.5%)	57(44.5%)	82(64.1%)	77(60.2%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>128</b>	

4.3 Correlation Analysis

The study conducted correlation analysis to establish the relationship and the direction of the relationship between study variables. Table 4 revealed a Results also showed an *r* of .441 and a *p*-value of 0.000 between Knowledge succession and Business Continuity, which implied that Knowledge succession and business continuity had a positive and significant relationship.

Table 4. Correlation matrix

		Knowledge succession
Knowledge succession	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	128
Business Continuity	Pearson Correlation	.441**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	128

Note. \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.4 Regression Analysis

##### 4.4.1 Model Summary

Table 4.5 reveals that 12.6% of the changes in business continuity were explained by knowledge succession as indicated by an r-square (also referred to as the coefficient of determination) of 0.126. Other variables that were excluded from this study constituted 87.4% of the changes in the business continuity of CBOs in Kitui County.

Table 5. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.355 <sup>a</sup>	.126	.119	.48847

Notes. a. Dependent Variable: Business Continuity.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Succession.

##### 4.4.2 Analysis of Variance

To determine the model fitness, the researcher undertook F-statistics. Results in Table 6 indicated an F-statistics value of 18.154 with an associated p-value of 0.001, which suggested that the linear regression model in the study was a significant fit in predicting business continuity because the calculated p-value of 0.001 was less than the set critical value of 0.005 ( $0.001 < 0.005$ ), therefore the model was overall statistically significant in predicting business continuity.

Table 6. Analysis of variance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.332	1	4.332	18.154	.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	30.063	126	.239		
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.395</b>	<b>127</b>			

Notes. a. Dependent Variable: Business Continuity.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Succession.

##### 4.4.3 Regression Coefficients

Additionally, the study undertook a regression coefficient to establish the actual magnitude and direction of the relationship. Table 7 shows a beta coefficient of 2.673 and a p-value of 0.001 which indicates that the constant in the model was statistically significant in the prediction of the business continuity. Results also revealed a beta value of 0.404 and a p-value of 0.001 between knowledge succession and the continuity of CBOs in Kitui County. Results therefore suggested that Knowledge succession had a significantly positive effect on the continuity of CBOs in Kitui County.

The simple regression model can be written in the form:  $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + e$  where y is Business Continuity as the dependent variable,  $\alpha$  is the constant,  $\beta_1$  is the coefficient for Knowledge Succession,  $X_1$  is Knowledge Succession as the independent variable, and finally,  $e$  is the error term. Therefore, the resulting model can be denoted as follows:

$Y = 2.673 + 0.404X_1 + e$  indicating that when knowledge succession was held at zero, CBOs business continuity

in Kitui County would be at 2.673. The coefficient of knowledge succession of 0.404, suggests that for every one-unit increase in knowledge succession, business continuity of CBOs in Kitui is expected to increase by 0.404 units.

Table 7. Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.673	.386		6.930	.000
Knowledge Succession	.404	.095	.355	4.261	.000

Notes. a. Dependent Variable: Business Continuity;

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Succession.

## 5. Discussion

The findings revealed that CBOs had established a process for information transfer to the next generation of employees as suggested. The results outline the efforts by the CBOs in Kitui County to transfer information to the next generation through the establishment of the information transfer process, which emphasizes the importance of preserving the expertise and knowledge among the employees. The approach is crucial in ensuring that when employees retire or move on to other jobs the knowledge or expertise they had is left with the organization and passed on to the existing workers for continuity of operations in the long run.

Additionally, the results revealed that CBOs have established mentorship programs where experienced employees can pass on their skills and expertise to junior employees (both tacit and implicit knowledge). Another noteworthy finding is that CBOs have mentorship programs that enhance the transfer of tacit knowledge from more experienced employees to less skilled workers. Mentorship is such a critical aspect of an organization which not only enables employees in an organization to transfer their expertise but also serves as an important avenue where employees preserve the organizational culture, values as well as best practices. Where organizations pair both experienced and less skilled workers transfer of implicit knowledge flows seamlessly which in other situations is hard to codify or document. In having mentorship programs professional growth of junior staff is catalyzed while at the same time fostering a sense of continuity.

Findings indicate that CBOs in Kitui County had trained their employees in diverse roles to ensure they were versatile and capable of filling different knowledge gaps. Results also indicated that employees at the CBOs are allocated different roles to gain insights and knowledge on how to perform different tasks, in doing so the workers can fill any vacancy just in case a staff moves on. Building staff resilience through job rotations helps in adaptability while navigating challenging times and the evolving demands of clients.

Moreover, results from the study revealed that CBOs in Kitui County utilized technology-based knowledge management systems to capture, store, organize, and share an institution's knowledge. Lastly, the CBOs were found to be utilizing technology-based knowledge transfer management systems which are critical in capturing, processing, storage, and sharing of institutions' knowledge memory. The use of technology platforms enables an organization to leverage the power of technology in enhancing the seamless transfer of knowledge between staff. Ahmad and Saad (2020) were of similar opinion when they argued that through mentorship experienced staff can mentor younger and inexperienced staff to have a smooth transition in future role gaps. Additionally, firms should combine ICT in knowledge management succession and the uptake of appropriate documentation of knowledge to be passed on to future employees. Organizations mainly update their databases and manuals to ensure knowledge succession.

The study also revealed that knowledge succession management had a positive and significant effect on the business continuity of CBOs in Kitui County. The findings of the study are in agreement with the previously conducted study by Fadeyi, et al. (2019) on knowledge succession and organizational survival in Nigerian firms. The findings show that knowledge succession affected positively and significantly the survival of firms in Nigeria. Additionally, Martini and Dewi (2020) who explored the effects of knowledge successor characteristics on succession planning in family businesses in Mali were in support of the current study when they found that knowledge succession planning in organizations had a positive and significant effect on stability in family-owned enterprises. The study also revealed that successive planning helped young family members to maintain their businesses from their parents.

Besides, Olowoyeye (2020) who examined how knowledge successive management affects the sustainability of Nigerian firms concurred with the study findings where the scholar revealed that succession plans positively and significantly affected organizations' stability in Nigeria. The research identified that there is a need for a proper succession plan to ensure sustainability and growth. Lastly, Fadeyi et al. (2019) who sought to examine how knowledge succession improves organizational survival concurred that a knowledge succession plan in an organization needs some ingredients to make it more successful. Besides, managers need to ensure that the knowledge succession plan is constantly checked to avoid distractions and ensure the process will deliver the desired goals.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study aimed to determine the effect of knowledge succession on the business continuity of CBOs in Kitui County. The study was anchored on transformational leadership theory while outlining the importance of visionary leaders in the continuity of businesses and more so in knowledge generation through innovativeness, storage of gained knowledge, and sharing of knowledge with other employees. The study applied a cross-sectional descriptive research design because the study was conducted at one point in time among CBOs in Kitui County. A total of 228 chairmen of the CBO in Kitui County were targeted as the population for the study while a stratified-random sampling design was applied together with Taro Yamane to sample 145 participants for the study. Data was collected using questionnaires while analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential analysis.

The study revealed that CBOs had established a process for information transfer to the next generation of employees. Findings also showed that CBOs had established mentorship programs where experienced employees could transfer both tacit and implicit knowledge. Additionally, results show that CBO in Kitui County had trained their employees in diverse roles to ensure they are versatile and capable of filling different knowledge gaps. Lastly, results show that CBOs in Kitui County utilized technology-based knowledge management systems to capture, store, organize, and share an institution's knowledge. The findings indicate that CBOs in Kitui County actively processed and transferred information to future employees in the organization. CBOs within Kitui County established mentorship programs to ensure that low-level employees and new entrants could learn from more experienced staff; and that employees working for the CBOs in Kitui County were also trained on different aspects of the organization to enable them to multi-task and serve in areas where knowledge gaps were identified. According to the study findings, CBOs in Kitui County were utilizing digital knowledge systems which enabled them to gather data, capture, process, and share the information. The continuity of CBO in Kitui County was significantly and positively affected by knowledge succession.

Postulations of the transformation leadership theory are supported by the study findings as the theory suggests that that strategic leaders must prepare an organization to navigate through the landscape of change. This is where an organization must be prepared with the right knowledge to sustain itself through the change gathering, processing, and dissemination of knowledge in all departments and also among all employees. This ensures that an organization adapts and remains sustainable.

The study recommends the continued engagement of mentoring programs where fresh graduates are mentored by more experienced staff to enhance knowledge succession and ultimately continuity of CBOs in Kitui County. Additionally, the study recommended the use of modern technology in gathering, processing, storing, and disseminating important information by the CBOs. Lastly, the study recommended job rotations among the employees and training the staff on different aspects to ensure that any arising knowledge gaps could effectively be filled by the existing employees to enhance business continuity.

## **7. Suggestions for Future Studies**

The study used only one independent variable, the inclusion of more independent variables such as leadership succession would be important to find out if the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variables increases as a result of the additional independent variables. The study was conducted on a direct relationship between independent and dependent variables therefore it would be important for future studies to include intervening variables to understand both indirect and direct relationships between variables. There is also the need for another similar study to be conducted in other counties in Kenya. In addition, examining the long-term impact of knowledge succession strategies on the sustainability of CBOs can be done in future.

## **8. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest. In addition, we affirm that all work in this document is our original

work. Further, we confirm that the work from other researchers has been cited appropriately.

### **Funding**

This research was supported by a Research Grant from South Eastern Kenyan University (SEKU). The authors are grateful for this research support.

### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal and publisher adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### **Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

### **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

### **Open access**

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