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AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSION PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examines talent management strategies and organizational effectiveness in tertiary institutions of south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The objectives were to: assess the effect of leadership development on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South; assess the effect of potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage of tertiary institutions in South-South; and examine the effect of potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South. The study adopted the the Godden (2004) formula to determine the sample size of 582 out of a population of 18,924 (with a response rate of 96%) in ten universities in South-south of Nigeria, and the accepting sample was 558. The questionnaire was structured in a rating scale of 5 point Likert. Simple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The study finds that there is a significant effect of leadership developments on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South; Communication and collaboration improve organizational effectiveness, accountability and responsibility enhance organizational effectiveness, influence and negotiation improve organizational effectiveness, change management improves organizational effectiveness, self-awareness and emotional intelligence improve organizational effectiveness, coaching and mentoring improve organizational effectiveness and continuous learning culture improve organizational effectiveness and leadership development programs are crucial in fostering positive work environments and enhancing work productivity. Accordingly, among others, the study recommends that the institutions should: develop and apply standardized criteria for evaluating potential candidates based on key competencies such as problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, and leadership ability; deploy integrated talent identification software to track performance, competencies, career progression, training history, and leadership potential of employees.

Keywords: effectiveness, succession, competitive advantage, talent, management

INTRODUCTION

Organizations that fail to prioritize talent management and succession planning do so at their own peril. The ability to attract, develop, and retain top talent is no longer a luxury but a strategic necessity for achieving sustained success. Effective talent management and succession planning not only ensure a seamless leadership transition but also contribute to a more engaged, productive, and high-performing workforce. Talent management strategies are crucial for organizational productivity through succession planning, which involves proactively identifying, developing, and preparing high-potential employees to fill key positions. Key

strategies include identifying critical roles, assessing current talent, investing in employee development through training and mentoring, and establishing a formal, continuously reviewed plan that aligns with business objectives (Bhudia, 2024).

Every organization, irrespective of size or sector, has a need for a plan for the future. Tertiary institutions are not exempt. Succession planning calls for a proactive strategy to identify and nurture high-potential employees to fill critical roles when current leaders move to another role, leave the institution, are fired, retire or die. The institution in question can ensure a smooth transition and maintain stability during leadership changes by preparing a talent pipeline of successors (Verduyn, 2025).

Poor succession planning can be very expensive. According to Harvard Business Review, badly managed CEO transitions can wipe out nearly \$1 trillion in market value each year for S&P 1500 companies. No senior leader lasts forever. But with a rock-solid succession planning strategy, the organization can ensure a smooth transition of leadership, minimizing disruption and maintaining stability. Providing clear pathways for career advancement encourages employee engagement and loyalty, and enables the organization to build a bench of highly skilled people ready to take over the reins – all fuelling long-term growth and innovation (Verduyn, 2025).

Talent management is a many-sided discipline that covers a series of interconnected strategies and processes designed to optimize an organization's human capital. It goes beyond traditional recruitment and selection, involving performance management, learning and development, career development, and succession planning (Verduyn, 2025).

The process of talent management towards succession planning begins with identifying critical positions essential for continuity and growth, assessing the talent pool to pinpoint potential successors, and implementing targeted development programs to equip these individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge. The result is a seamless transition that minimizes disruption and maintains operational stability. Also, a commitment to people development increases loyalty and retention among high-potential staff. Yet, many organizations still face challenges in implementing effective succession planning strategies, underscoring the need for continuous focus and adaptation to evolving business and workforce dynamics.

Succession planning focuses on identifying and growing talent to fill leadership and business-critical positions in the future (CIPD, 2024). It is a business strategy that companies use to pass leadership roles down to another employee or group of employees in order to assure employee succession (Matagi, 2023). Succession planning ensures that businesses continue to run smoothly and without interruption, after important people move on to new opportunities, retire, or pass away. It is a good way for companies to ensure that businesses are fully prepared to promote and advance all employees—not just those who are at the management or executive levels.

Among the world's leading organizations, succession management is performed through the process of 'talent management' (Cannon and McGee, 2011 cited in CIPD, 2024). Accordingly, organizations have turned their attention inward by adopting the succession strategies which are focused on developing their current talents (Caligiuri and Tarique, 2012).

Consequently, succession planning involves cross-training employees to help them develop skills, knowledge, and an understanding of the business. Succession plans can be long-term, which are meant to account for future changes or for emergencies whenever anything unexpected arises (Kenton, 2024). A larger business may train mid-level employees to

eventually take over higher-level positions. For small businesses and family-owned companies, succession planning often means training the next generation to take over the business. In the case of a tertiary institution, succession planning is aimed at organizational productivity.

Succession planning enhances organizational productivity in tertiary institutions by ensuring leadership continuity and building a pipeline of future leaders through a structured process. It involves identifying key roles, evaluating current talent, and providing development plans to prepare employees for advancement, which boosts motivation and retention. This proactive approach minimizes disruption, maintains consistent talent, and aligns the institution's future needs with its goals, improving overall effectiveness and performance.

The Problem

A tertiary institution is a unique organization, whose main purpose is the provision of higher education services to students and to the community. Its purpose is not profit as for business institutions. Given the critical role of higher education institutions in developing human capital, their leadership talent replacement is an important aspect, because poor succession planning can undermine the quality of the institutions. Hence, according to Clark (2015), "There can be no success to the mission if there are no successors to the mission."

Managing talent is very important for higher education institutions. Competition between these institutions is up, and they need to map the talents of their existing workforces along with addressing future leadership talent issues. There is also the challenge of recruiting and retaining talented people as well as managing their shortages or utilizing their talents fully. And the changes in demographics and external labor markets cannot be underemphasized (Talent Management Institute, 2021).

Inasmuch as higher education institutions in South-South Nigeria need to facilitate good talent management practices, they need organizational support provided by the Advisory Board or the Governing Council. And inasmuch as senior officers serving as advocates, mentors, and program facilitators are essential, so also is a strong link between strategic plans and the need to manage talent. Developing talents at all levels must be done holistically at all levels of the institution because coaching and other growth opportunities at work serve as a motivator to these endeavors. Talent management practices must take note of the fact that Human Resource managers at tertiary institutions deal with more "segments" – administrators, faculty, and operations staff – each of which has its own practices for employee recruitment, compensation, and evaluation (Talent Management Institute, 2021).

Universally, human capital is considered to be the driver of successful organizations. Although this may generally be acknowledged, yet only a few higher education institutions have established formal programming to support existing talent. Also, most institutions perform well in developing their students, but fall short of assisting their managerial staff in their own skill development (Lynch, 2007). Succession planning is aimed at enhancing organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in South-south of Nigeria by ensuring leadership continuity, retaining talented staff through career development, and motivating employees for long-term commitment. Effective succession planning in tertiary institutions in South-south of Nigeria

would lead to a more stable, productive, and resilient institution, with studies showing a strong positive correlation between succession planning, talent retention, and organizational growth.

According to Riccio,(2010), currently talent management activity is lacking in higher education in Nebraska. The author wonders why the higher education institutions that prides themselves on continuous learning and forward thinking tend to spend very little time and effort identifying their future leaders. The case is equally applicable to higher institutions in South-south of Nigeria. In the view of Clunies (2007), higher education has historically been slow to adopt many corporate management processes. The pertinent question that agitates the mind is "if shareholders are demanding that presidents and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of private corporations implement formal talent development strategies to help ensure a prosperous future through succession planning, why is this line of thinking not directed at the leaders in higher education from their Governing Council or Advisory Board?

In order to guarantee effective succession planning through good talent management practices, it has to be in line with institutional growth in order to assure higher productivity, better alignment, incentives for exceptional performance, effective recruitment, and adequate resources. Also to be factored in is the need to connect with new departmental or institutional projects, all of which require a plan for employees to ensure their success. The right recruitment plan and keeping all staff members focused on the goals boost the chances of success. Additionally, good talent management practices must key into institutional efficiency and innovations through quality hires and knowing innovation changes institutional practices and its success depends on how employees can cope (Talent Management Institute, 2021).

According to Ali and Mehreen (2019), leadership succession planning is a vital component of human resource management, and there is no justifiable criticism to support condemning the practice. Even though many scholars have attempted to define leadership succession planning, there are gaps in framework and models, and no universally acceptable definition. Thus, this study attempts to address the identified gaps and variations to ensure that leadership succession planning is implemented effectively and efficiently in the multinational companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Thus, the aim of the study was to analyze succession planning and organizational effectiveness in tertiary institutions of south-south geopolitical zone. The objectives of the study were to: (1) assess the effect of leadership development on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South; (2) assess the effect of potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage of tertiary institutions in South-South; (3) examine the effect of potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South.

Literature Review and Conceptual Clarification

Talent Management and the Organizational Culture

Gay and Sims (2006) has defined talent management as "facilitating the development and career progress of highly talented and skilled individuals in the organization, using formalized procedures, resources, policies, and processes". The talent management process focuses on developing employees and leaders for the future of the organization. According to Mackey (2008), an aging workforce and a lack of employees with high potential are generating an increased competition for leadership talent across all sectors of the economy. Consequently,

due to the importance of continuing effective leadership, it is needful for talent management to be recognized as extremely vital for an organizational (Heuer, 2003).

According to Maya & Thamilselvan (2013), there is a beneficial relationship between talent management and organizational performance. The authors affirm that firms that show interest in talent management perform better financially when compared to other organizations in the same industry. The same principle applies to tertiary institutions. In the view of Edwards (2008), a talent management approach must be customized to satisfy the needs of the institution. Regardless of the best intentions of administrators of talent management programs, the culture must be receptive to the concept and how it will help to advance the mission of the institution.

Effective talent management in tertiary institutions involves strategic approaches to talent acquisition, development, and retention, which are strongly linked to organizational effectiveness. Key strategies include developing clear talent management policies, aligning employee and institutional goals, offering robust career development and training, and implementing competitive reward and recognition systems to improve performance and retain talent. These practices are essential for institutions to achieve their goals and stay competitive in a dynamic environment (Tamunomiebi & Worgu, 2020).

Riccio (2010) observes that while many institutions appear to be failing to invest in their talent through formal methods, the business world continues to appreciate the value that colleges and universities provide to the workforces of the business sector. This implies that, institutions are doing well to serve outside organizations in their training and development needs while prevent such benefits from reaching their internal personnel.

The organizational culture of grooming successors through talent management was demonstrated through the visionary leadership qualities of Jack Welch (former CEO of General Electric) who embraced the value of talent management in his role. According to Charan (2008), this passion for coaching and mentoring facilitated the creation of a culture that made General Electric one of the most renowned organizations in the world.

Organizational Effectiveness

There are arguments that what constitutes effectiveness in one organization may not necessarily constitute effectiveness in another (Tamunomiebi & Worgu, 2020). While highlighting goal accomplishment, resource acquisition, internal processes, and strategic constituency satisfaction as measures of organizational effectiveness as identified by some scholars, Okolocha and Anugwu (2022) focus on goal accomplishment and internal processes as measures of organizational effectiveness. It is organizational performance and effectiveness that culminates in organizational competitiveness. Accordingly, Okolocha and Anugwu (2022) affirm that it is employee values (knowledge), investment in leadership or management development, alignment of performance management to strategy, effective performance and career management, employee training and development, alignment of incentives to strategy and other factors that contribute to organizational competitiveness.

Okolocha and Anugwu (2022) further opine that organizational performance and effectiveness can be measured based on financial viability using metrics such as: investment in human resources, demand for human resources services, Human Resource turnover rate and market share. Overall, Bernardin (2010) cited in Okolocha and Anugwu (2022) emphasizes the

importance of management satisfaction, employee engagement, and human resource involvement, in strategic succession planning process, as drivers of organizational effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework

Leadership development and Organizational effectiveness in Tertiary Institutions

Leadership development and organizational effectiveness are deeply intertwined; developing leaders' capabilities through strategic training and fostering the right culture directly improves an organization's ability to achieve its goals. This is achieved by enhancing collective leadership capacity, aligning leadership with strategic objectives, and building a more adaptable and efficient work forces through specific skills like transformational and adaptive leadership. Ultimately, effective leadership is essential for guiding the organization succession planning, talent identification, motivating teams, and navigating complex challenges to ensure long-term success. Leadership development program developed by tertiary institutions has been found to influence organizational level outcomes which are crucial to making internal impact, external impact, skill development, capacity and overall impact on organizational effectiveness. Connections to human capital, social capital and collective leadership were also found as outcomes of the leadership development program contributing to organizational effectiveness in tertiary institutions (Douglas, Merrit, Roberts & Watkin, 2022).

Tracking potential candidates and Organizational competitive advantage in Tertiary Institutions

Tracking potential candidates by way of talent identification is crucial for organizational competitiveness because it helps attract, develop, and retain employees who provide a unique and inimitable advantage. By aligning talent with organizational needs, companies can improve performance, innovate more effectively, and ensure long-term success in a competitive landscape. This strategic focus on human capital is more critical than ever for maintaining a competitive edge (Rozman, Tominc & Strukelj, 2023).

Talent identification and organizational innovativeness in Tertiary Institutions

Talent identification is a **critical driver of organizational innovativeness in tertiary institutions**, providing the essential human capital, skills, and creative potential needed to generate and implement new ideas, products, and processes. The strategic management of identified talent in tertiary institutions directly impacts the organization's ability to innovate and maintain a competitive advantage. The primary purpose of talent management is to promote the staff members (lecturers and non-teaching staff) to illustrate high capabilities and performance, and match these with strategic direction of organization in order to sustain and expand the institution (Chen, Tansley & Chou, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory was proposed by Schultz in 1961 and Becker further developed the theory in 1964 (Oderinde et al. 2023). According to the theory, training and development of employees in the organization raises the overall productivity appreciably as it introduces new skills and knowledge in the firm. Succession planning assures a guaranteed successful corporate future. By investing in human capital through the instrumentality of succession planning improves organizational adaptability and agility. This ability to be flexible and respond promptly contributes to organizational resilience and competitiveness (Wuttaphan, 2017). It is this sense that the Human Capital Theory bears relevance to the study.

Empirical Review

In a study that determines the effect of succession planning on organizational effectiveness in Nigerian tertiary institutions, Okolocha and Anugwu (2022), adopts a survey research design with a sample of 384 staff from a population of 9793 using Taro Yamane formula. The authors found that succession planning has a positive significant effect on effectiveness of tertiary institutions in Enugu State. Based on their findings, the study recommends among others that to motivate and retain skilled and talented personnel, universities should implement a proactive performance management system to create a more transparent and dynamic institutional culture.

Zhang, Lee, and Zhao (2023) carried out a study in China, conducted a comprehensive search across academic databases, including journals and conference proceedings. Through empirical studies, they affirm that succession planning positively affects organizational effectiveness in tertiary institutions by ensuring leadership continuity, reducing disruption, and fostering a more stable and resilient environment. The authors observe that succession planning improves employee motivation and retention through development and career pathways, enhances institutional knowledge transfer, and aligns talent with strategic goals. This leads to a more engaged workforce and can improve overall institutional performance and success. The study emphasize that successful succession planning involves more than just identifying a successor; it requires robust talent management practices. Integrating talent identification, development, and retention into succession planning strategies is essential for realizing the positive impact on firm performance.

Gap in Literature

Even though succession planning is often referred to as talent development for organizational stability and success, and in spite of the increasing impact of certain operational variables of succession planning on organizational productivity, there is still paucity of literature on succession planning as it applies to tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Ofori & Aryeetey 2011). The existing studies such as Ali, Z., & Mehreen, A. (2019); Chen, G.K.W., Tansley, C. & Chou, Clunies, J. P. (2007); Douglas, S., Merrit, D., Roberts, R. & Watkin, D. (2022); Maya, M., & Thamilselvan, R. (2013) amongst others have taken a general focus on performance thereby creating a gap on issues related to productivity. Also, related studies in developing countries have failed to consider the succession planning on organizational productivity in Nigeria. The gap in literature is that there is no existing literature that examines succession planning and organizational productivity in tertiary institutions South-South of Nigeria from the perspectives of enhancing organizational effectiveness, competitiveness and innovativeness.

METHODOLOGY

Survey design involving questionnaires was used to collect the data which enabled the researcher to describe the findings. Primary data was collected from one federal university and one state-owned university from each of the state in South-south. A total of eighteen thousand nine hundred and twenty four (18,924) constituted the population of study. The Godden (2004) formula was used in determining the sample size of 582. 10 universities were selected for the study and simple random sampling was used to select the sample of 582. The questionnaire was structured in a rating scale of 5 point Likert. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software aided in data analysis. Thus, to test hypotheses, simple regression analysis was employed.

Sample Size Determination

The researcher adopted the Godden (2004) formula in determining the sample size, which formula is given as:

$$SS = Z^2 \times (P) \times (1-P) \dots \dots \dots \text{Infinite (eq1)}$$

C²

Where;

SS= Sample size

Z = Z-value expressed (1.96 for a 95% confidence level)

P = Percentage of population picking a choice expressed as decimal^β

C = Confidence interval expressed (.04 = +/- 4% points)

New SS = SS Finite (eq2)

$$(1 + \frac{(SS-1)}{POP})$$

Where;

SS= Godden sample size

POP= Study population

$$SS = Z^2 \times (P) \times (1-P) \dots \dots \dots \text{Infinite (eq1)}$$

C²

$$SS = \underline{1.96^2 (0.5) \times (1-0.5)}$$

.04²

$$SS = \underline{3.8416 (0.5) \times (0.5)}$$

0.0016

$$SS = \underline{3.8416 \times 0.25}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & 0.0016 \\
 \text{SS} & = \underline{0.9604} \\
 & 0.0016 \\
 \text{SS} & = \underline{0.9604} \\
 & 0.0016 = 600 \\
 \text{New SS} & = \underline{\text{SS}} \dots \text{Finite (eq2)} \\
 & (1 + \frac{(SS-1)}{POP})
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{New SS} & = \underline{600} \\
 & (1 + \frac{(600-1)}{18,924}) \\
 \text{New SS} & = \underline{600} \\
 & (1 + \frac{(599)}{18,924}) \\
 \text{New SS} & = \underline{600} \\
 & (1 + 0.0316)
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{New SS} & = \underline{600} \\
 & 1.0316 \\
 \text{New SS} & = 581.6
 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the sample size of the study was five hundred and eighty-two (582).

Table 1: Sample Size from Each University

States	Universities	Population	Sample
Rivers State	1. University of Port Harcourt Choba 2. Rivers State University	2110 1750	65 54
Akwa Ibom	3. University of Uyo 4. Akwa Ibom State University	1672 1500	51 46
Cross Rivers	5. University of Calabar 6. University of Cross River	2421 2001	74 62

Delta State	7. Delta State University Abraka 8. Federal University of Petroleum Resources	1987 1410	61 43
Edo State	9. University of Benin 10. Ambrose Alli University	2571 1502	79 47
Total		18,924	582

Source: Field Survey, 2025

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Summary of Questionnaire Distributed

The questionnaire distributed and the number of copies retrieved is presented in Table 2.

Table 3: Copies of Questionnaire Administered

Table 2: Questionnaire Administered

Number of copies of Questionnaire Distributed	Number of copies of Questionnaire Retrieved	Registrar of Copies of Questionnaire Retrieved
582	558	96

Source: Field survey (2025)

A total of 582 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to major stakeholders in the maritime transport sector. 558 copies were returned to represent 96% response rate as shown in the Table above.

Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

In terms of gender, Table 3 shows that 241 (43.2%) male 317 (43.2%) while female were working in the tertiary institutions selected.

In terms of the marital status of the respondents, 163 (29.2%) were single, while (395) 70.8% were married employees in the institutions.

The Table 3 shows the age of the respondents, 11.6% were 20-30 years of age, 18.8% 31-40years, 29.1% 41-50 years, 27.8% 51-60 years, while 12.7% were above 60 years of age.

The table 4 shows the years of experience of the respondents, 18.8% were 1-5years of experience, 22.4% 6-10years, 28.7% 11-15 years, 16.1% 16-20 years, while 14.0% were above 20 years of experience.

The Table 3 shows the qualification of the respondents, 8.6% had SSCE qualification, 11.6% ND, 42.8% B.Sc./HND, 23.4% M.Sc., while 13.4% acquired Ph.D.

Table 3: Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	(%)
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Gender								
Male	241						43.2	
Female	317						56.8	
Total	558						100	
Marital status								
Single	163						29.2	
Married	395						70.8	
Total	558						100	
Age (Years)								
20-30	65						11.6	
31-40	105						18.8	
41-50	162						29.1	
51-60	155						27.8	
Above 60	71						12.7	
Total	302						100	
Qualification								
SSCE	48						8.6	
ND	65						11.6	
B.Sc/HND	239						42.8	
M.Sc	131						23.4	
Ph.D	75						13.4	
Total	302						100	
Years of Experience								
1-5	105						18.8	
6-10	125						22.4	
11-15	160						28.7	
16-20	90						16.1	
Above 20	78						14.0	
Total	558						100	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Discussion of Results

Tables 4 to 7 show the responses to fifteen 4-point Likert Scale questions based on research objectives 1 to 5.

Table 4: Assess the effect of leadership development on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South.

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	TOTAL	MEAN	STD
Communication, and collaboration improves organizational effectiveness	277	201	12	41	27	2334	4.2	.987
Accountability and responsibility enhances organizational effectiveness	312	189	11	32	14	2307	4.2	.884

Influence and negotiation improves organizational effectiveness	335	170	2	23	28	2435	4.4	.879
Change management improves organizational effectiveness	352	174	5	11	16	2509	4.5	.784
Self-Awareness and emotional Intelligence improves organizational effectiveness	267	212	24	27	28	2337	4.2	1.25
Coaching and mentoring improves organizational effectiveness	256	221	7	40	34	2299	4.1	1.35
Continuous learning culture improves organizational effectiveness	298	202	11	33	14	2411	4.3	.908

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The Table above shows the effect of leadership development on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South. Majority of the respondents with the highest mean scores of 4.5, 4.3, 4.4, 4.2, 4.2 and 4.1 strongly agreed that communication, and collaboration improves organizational effectiveness, accountability and responsibility enhances organizational effectiveness, influence and negotiation improves organizational effectiveness, change management improves organizational effectiveness, self-awareness and emotional intelligence improves organizational effectiveness, coaching and mentoring improves organizational effectiveness and continuous learning culture improves organizational effectiveness.

Table 5: Assess the effect of potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage of tertiary institutions in South-South.

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	TOTAL	MEAN	STD
Time-to-hire improves competitive advantage	256	221	7	40	34	2299	4.1	1.35
Interview-to-offer ratio boost competitive advantage	298	202	11	33	14	2366	4.2	.908
First-year attrition increase competitive advantage	225	272	18	23	20	2337	4.2	1.08
Candidate drop-off rate competitive advantage	302	187	15	25	29	2382	4.3	1.11
Offer acceptance rate increases competitive advantage	209	270	24	27	28	2279	4.1	1.36
Net promoter score improves competitive advantage	228	272	18	20	20	2342	4.2	1.08
Quality of hire increases competitive advantage	295	202	18	23	20	2403	4.3	1.08

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The result from the table indicated the effect of potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage of tertiary institutions in South-South. Majority of the highest mean scores of 4.3, 4.3, 4.2, 4.2, 4.1 and 4.1 strongly agreed that time-to-hire improves competitive advantage, interview-to-offer ratio boost competitive advantage, first-year attrition increase competitive advantage, candidate drop-off rate competitive advantage, offer acceptance rate increases competitive advantage, net promoter score improves competitive advantage, quality of hire increases competitive advantage.

Table 6: Examine the effect of potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South.

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	TOTAL	MEAN	STD
Talent acquisition (recruitment & selection) improve innovativeness	256	221	7	40	34	2299	4.1	1.35
Career pathway and succession planning promotes innovativeness	298	200	11	35	14	2407	4.3	.908
On-boarding & orientation increase innovativeness	275	222	18	23	20	2383	4.3	1.08
Learning & development (L&D) boost innovativeness	382	107	15	25	29	2462	4.4	1.11
Retention & employee experience improve innovativeness	299	180	24	27	28	2324	4.2	1.36
HR analytics and metrics improve innovativeness	278	212	18	30	20	2372	4.3	1.08
Compensation and benefits boost innovativeness	362	139	11	32	14	2477	4.4	.884

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above showed the effect of potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South. Majority of the respondents with the highest means of 4.4, 4.4, 4.3, 4.3, 4.3, 4.2 and 4.1 strongly agreed that talent acquisition (recruitment & selection) improve innovativeness, career pathway and succession planning promotes innovativeness, on-boarding & orientation increase innovativeness, learning & development (L&D) boost innovativeness, retention & employee experience improve innovativeness, HR analytics and metrics improve innovativeness and compensation and benefits boost innovativeness.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: *There is no significant effect between leadership developments on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South.*

Table 7: Regression analysis on leadership roles development on effectiveness

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	t – value	Sig
Constant	β_0	0.058	0.057	1.017	.000

LRD (X ₁)	β_1	0.082	0.072	1.139**	.015
R-Square		0.690			
Adjusted R – Square		0.546			
F – statistics		7.125***			

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table above shows the coefficients of leadership roles development on effectiveness. The coefficient of multiple determination (R²) was 0.690 which implies that 69.0% of the variations in dependents variables were explained by changes in the independent variable while 31.0% were unexplained by the stochastic variable indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level.

The coefficient of leadership roles development was statistically significant and positively related to effectiveness at 5 percent level (1.139**). With p-value =.015<.05% significance level. This implies that there is a significant effect between leadership roles development on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South.

H₀₂: There is no significant effect between potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage of tertiary institutions in South-South

Table 8: Regression analysis on potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	t – value	Sig
Constant	β_0	0.055	0.082	0.670	.005
PCT (X ₁)	β_1	0.105	0.057	1.842**	.009
R-Square		0.609			
Adjusted R – Square		0.530			
F – statistics		7.788***			

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table above shows the coefficients of potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage. The coefficient of multiple determination (R²) was 0.609 which implies that 60.9% of the variations in dependents variables were explained by changes in the independent variable while 29.1% were unexplained by the stochastic variable indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level.

The coefficient of potential candidates tracking was statistically significant and positively related to competitive advantage at 5 percent level (1.842**). With p-value=.009< .05% significance level. This implies that there is a significant effect between potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage of tertiary institutions in South-South.

H₀₃: There is no strong positive relationship between potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South.

Table 9: Correlations correlation potential talent identification on innovativeness

	Potential Talent Identification	Innovativeness

	Pearson Correlation	1	.832
Potential Talent Identification	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
	N	558	558
	Pearson Correlation	.832	1
Innovativeness	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	
	N	558	558

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above shows the relationship between potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South. The rho= .832 with p-value = .021<.05% significance level. We reject null hypotheses and accept the alternate. The result in table shows that there is a strong positive relationship between potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South.

Discussion of Results

The study examined the effect of succession planning on organizational productivity of tertiary institutions in South-South. It employed simple regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficient to test the hypotheses postulated. The result of hypothesis (i) tested states that “there is a significant effect between leadership developments on the effectiveness of tertiary institutions in South-South”. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that communication, and collaboration improve organizational effectiveness, accountability and responsibility enhance organizational effectiveness, influence and negotiation improve organizational effectiveness, change management improves organizational effectiveness, self-awareness and emotional intelligence improve organizational effectiveness, coaching and mentoring improve organizational effectiveness and continuous learning culture improve organizational effectiveness. The finding is in line with the findings of Soegiarto, Ainul Arifah, Rahmadhani, and Ilham (2024), which underscore the critical role of leadership development, mentorship, and employee empowerment in enhancing organizational outcomes. The result of Abdulaziz, Md. Som, Mahamood, and Nadarajah, (2023), revealed that leadership development interventions (LDI) significantly influenced organizational performance directly and indirectly through the mediating role of leadership effectiveness. In agreement with Atilano-Tang, and Hassan (2023), the study finds that effective leadership, through leadership development programs, positively impacts employee morale, productivity, work engagement, and human security. The study shows that leadership development programs are crucial in fostering positive work environments and enhancing work productivity.

The result of hypothesis (ii) states that “ there is a significant effect between potential candidates tracking on competitive advantage of tertiary institutions in South-South”. This finding is in line with the findings of Laumer, Maier, and Eckhardt, A. (2025). The results of the study of reveal that business process analysis; business process improvement and the usage of applicant tracking systems reduce recruiting process costs. The results reveal that several

components of the business process management in conjunction with a supporting applicant tracking system have differing impacts on recruiting process performance.

The result of hypothesis three stated that there is a strong positive relationship between potential talent identification on the innovativeness of tertiary institutions in South-South. The finding is in consonance with the findings of Abdulquddus (2024) Talent management's impact on employee engagement, retention, value addition, and enhanced organizational performance has been extensively researched. According to the findings, these variables have a favorable relationship. The study also confirms the findings of prior studies on the favorable effects of talent management. The association between employee outcomes and several areas of talent management was evident using a regression model in agreement with Karuri and Nahashon (2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, all the variables of succession planning captured, which include leadership roles development, potential candidates tracking, and potential talent identification have positive effect on the productivity of tertiary institutions in South-South. The introduction of succession planning must recognize the rule of meritocracy in potential candidates tracking and talents identification gives the employees a sense of belonging, with assurance that if they possess competence and capacity within the institution, it gives the guarantee of promotion and does not without justification exclude them from the circle of organizational activity, which in turn further motivates them and boost organizational performance. Consequently, the study concludes that succession planning in tertiary institutions in the South-South of Nigeria (with focus on effectiveness, competitiveness and innovativeness) towards organizational productivity would surely lead to successful institutions with a secured future.

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