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## Issues, Challenges and Key Factors for Implementation Succession Planning in Malaysian Education Ministry

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### Abstract

This study aimed to explore the issues and challenges of implementing succession planning in the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Besides that, this concept paper is also intended to look at factors that contribute to the implementation of an effective succession planning. The sample of this study is focused on the Education Service Officers, Ministry of Education Malaysia. The succession planning is seen as an important factor for the well-being of an organization. Transformational leadership, transactional leadership and organizational culture are seen as contributing factors to the implementation of effective succession planning. Thus the focus of this concept paper is to discuss in depth the research problem and the needs of succession planning implementation related to the contributing factors.

**Keywords:** Succession Planning, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Organizational Culture, Human Resource Management

### Introduction

Succession planning is a continuous, systematic effort to ensure continuity of leadership, protection, intellectual capital development and knowledge for the future of the organization and to promote individual development (Soltani & Moghadam, 2016). Additionally according to Rothwell (2010) an organization's succession planning involves two things: preparation of future leaders and career development. A closer look at succession planning can help achieve organizational goals through leadership development programs. Although there are numerous previous studies that have shown success in succession planning, recent researchers have given less attention to succession planning studies (Ahmad, 2016; Gulzar & Durrani, 2014). This is in line with the views of Banerji and Banerjee, (2015) who state that although initiatives on succession planning are practiced in some companies in India, studies on succession planning are still lacking (Banerji & Banerjee, 2015).

### Issues and Challenges for Implementation Succession Planning

The Ministry of Education (MoE) Malaysia has been found not to implement a comprehensive succession planning (Ahmad, 2016). Additionally based on preliminary findings conducted by researchers with the Human Resource Management Division (HRMD), MoE found that implementation of the succession planning at the MoE was unsuccessful. HRMD, MoE is leading succession planning programme for MoE Divisions. Based on HRMD, the failure to implement a comprehensive succession planning at MoE is one of the factors that has led to the vacancy of leadership positions in certain Division in MoE for a long time and the process of filling up the position has taken some time. Table 1.2 shows the status of data collection for the public sector obtained from the Public Services Department (PSD) Database and Information Management Division. According to the Schedule the Occupation for the Integrated Services Scheme Group is 458,348 jobs and the filling is only 438,757. There were 19,591 job vacancies. For the Management and Professional group, the total number of jobs was 1,463 and only 1,268. There is a difference of 195 job vacancies.

**Table 1. Data filling of Job Vacancy and Vacancies at Ministry of Education Malaysia for 2018 (Data as of December 31, 2018. Source: Taken from the Data Management Sector, Strategic Information Development & Management Division, Public Services Department, Malaysia)**

Employment by Actual Position			
Service Group	Actual position	Filling	The difference
Integrated Services Scheme Group	458,348	438,757	19,591
Management and Professional Group	1,463	1,268	195
Implementing Group	91,899	81,393	10,506
No Service Groups	102	54	48
Total	551,812	521,472	30,340

According to preliminary investigations with the Public Service Department (PSD) Malaysia, many of these vacancies are among Grade 48 and above officers who are in leadership positions. The PSD states that some Grades 48 and above have been vacant for a very long time because there is no substitute for the job. According to the PSD, the Divisions involved do not have the training of internal leaders who have been trained to fill these positions. As such, the Division will depend on the HRMD and the top management of the MOE for the vacancy. HRMD also supported this view by stating that the failure to implement a comprehensive replacement plan was a major cause of the vacancy issue. HRMD also stated that the implications of the problem caused the delivery of services by the MoE to be ineffective or inefficient. In this regard, HRMD is very welcome if there is any study on the replacement plan to determine what factors can make the program successful in the MoE.

In addition, the failure of the public sector in implementing a comprehensive succession planning has also led to problems in the process of career development in the public sector (Ahmad, 2016). Not only that, the failure to implement succession planning has resulted in brain drain among professionals in the Malaysian public sector (Ahmad, 2016; Ibarra, 2016). In addition, although succession planning are found to be crucial to the success and sustainability

of an organization, in-depth studies of succession planning in the education sector are still lacking (Parfitt, 2017).

### Key Factors

Recognizing the importance of succession planning many previous studies have been conducted to look at succession planning using a variety of variables such as demographic factors, educational qualifications, positions, talent management, performance management, mentoring, employee engagement, training, tenure, work experience, leader development and promotion. In addition to the variables mentioned on leadership factors (Hendrik, Moch, Madhakomala & Adji, 2018; Ahmad, 2016; Ahmad, Mohamad & Manaf, 2015; Abdulla, Djebarni & Mellahi, 2011; and organizational culture (Sinaga, Asmawi, Madhakomala & Suratman, 2018; Parfitt, 2017; Shabankareh, Madani, & Shiralizadeh, 2015; Abzari, Teymouri & Delouji, 2008; Yadav & Shankar, 2017) were also found to contribute to succession planning.

In fact, although leadership factor (Ahmad, 2016; Ahmad, Mohamad & Manaf, 2015; Abdulla, Djebarni & Mellahi, 2011) and organizational culture factor (Parfitt, 2017; Ahmad, 2016; Shabankareh, Madani, & Shiralizadeh, 2015; Abzari, Teymouri & Delouji, 2008) contributes to the success of succession planning but studies exploring the relationship of these two factors with succession planning are still limited. This is evidenced by the statements of Ahmad, Mohamad and Manaf (2015) who state that studies looking at the relationship of transformational leadership factors to succession plans are limited and suggest that future succession planning studies should explore the relationship of transactional leadership and organizational culture factors with succession planning.

In addition, according to Hendrik, Moch, Madhakomala and Adji (2018); Alzgool (2019); Umrani & Memon (2015); Zin, & Ibrahim, (2020) leadership and organizational cultural factors strongly influence the implementation of succession planning. However, studies exploring the relationship of these two factors with succession planning in the public sector, especially in the education sector, are still lacking (Ahmad, 2016; Pila, Schultz & Leigh-Anne, 2016). Looking at the aspects of the research conducted in Malaysia, there are only a few studies that have been conducted in Malaysia on succession planning. For example, Ahmad (2016) study, "Influence of transformational leadership characteristics on succession planning in the public sector in Malaysia", "Review of Management Plans and organizational commitment by Administrative Officers" (Ghaffar, 2006), "Relationship between succession planning and career development", (Julia, 2009), "Effective succession planning: Case Studies in SMEs", (Shahidan, 2012) and "Conceptual model of succession planning for Institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia" (Bano, 2017). As a result, researcher can conclude that most studies abroad and in the country related to succession planning focus on the manufacturing industry, the health sector and the higher education sector alone. On the other hand, studies related to succession planning in the public sector especially in the MoE are very limited. Therefore, to fill this gap, the study aims to explore the influence of transformational, transactional and organizational culture on the succession planning among the Education Service Officers at the MoE.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that succession planning gives a lot of importance to an organization. The succession planning not only maintains organizational performance and effectiveness but also through the implementation of an effective succession planning the organization also develops internal talent. It can therefore be concluded that a succession planning that includes the preparation of future leaders and career development is a strategy for maintaining the effectiveness and sustainability of an organization. Indeed, in strengthening the planning and administration of human resources succession planning is the most appropriate way of preparing the future leaders of the organization (Ahmad, Mohamad & Manaf, 2015; Khalid, Islam & Ahmed, 2019) . Therefore, organizations need to pay attention to the succession planning for the sustainability of an organization and performance.

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