INFLUENCE OF THE PRIMOGENITURE RULE ON THE DYNAMIC CAPABILITY OF FAMILY-OWNED SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Family-owned schools are set up to transfer the business's management and ownership to family members. This process is however fraught with challenges posed by cultural practices such as the primogeniture rule which have contributed to the poor survival rate of family-owned businesses. Thus, the study examined the influence of the primogeniture rule on the dynamic capability of family-owned schools in Nigeria. The study utilized the quantitative approach. 500 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among 9 family-owned schools, and 357 responses were collected and ranked. Partial Least Squares were used to test the impact of the primogeniture rule on the dynamic capability of family-owned schools. The study revealed that there is a positive correlation between primogeniture rule and the dynamic capability of family-owned schools. The study recommends applying the primogeniture rule in family businesses, only if the first child possesses the necessary experience, interest and competence to manage the business.

Keywords: Dynamic capability, Family-Owned Schools, Primogeniture, Succession Planning.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Family-owned schools are established to transfer business management and ownership to family members. To sustain the business legacy, the founders bring the right candidates as successors in the business through the process of succession planning. Succession, particularly in family-owned schools, is a challenge all over the world (Haile 2020). According to Agbim (2019), succession planning is crucial for the longevity of a family-owned business (FOB). Despite the robust contribution of family-owned businesses to the global economy, several studies have revealed that 70% of FOBs die after the retirement or death of their first-generation owners and 90% do not make it to the third generation (West 2019). In Nigeria, the situation is not different as over 70% of family SMEs (including family-owned schools) die before their founders and most of them fail to transit generations (Otika, Okocha & Ejiofor 2019). The study examined challenges related to inheritance culture, succession planning, and the survival of family-owned schools. One key objective of family-owned schools is retaining ownership and management within the family for continuity. It is believed that the successor needs to possess the competence and capacity to influence the dynamic capabilities of the enterprise (Okoh, Worlu, Oyewunmi, & Falola, 2021). This process necessitates the use of the successor's managerial expertise. Despite the vast literature on succession in family-owned businesses (Nnabuife & Okoli, 2017), many founders still adhere to the primogeniture principle when choosing their successors. The culture of primogeniture inheritance rules or norms varies from a strict application of the rule, where the firstborn (eldest son) inherits everything, to equal sharing rules among all

the sons of the father or founder (Chikodili, 2012). This practice is broadly followed with little or no consideration for the influence of primogeniture on the dynamic capabilities of FOBs. This is probably because research on the succession process in FOBs has ignored this dimension of inheritance culture. This research explores how the primogeniture rule affects dynamic capability in family-owned schools, and includes sections on literature review, methodology, findings, and conclusion.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Primogeniture Rule

Primogeniture is an inheritance practice that assigns the entire family estate to the first child, most often the first son (Bertocch 2017). In the past, the term referred to the practice of giving priority to male heirs over female heirs, as argued by Chikodili (2012. However, there are two main types of primogeniture: patrilineal primogeniture and matrilineal primogeniture. The patrilineal type of primogeniture occurs when the first child of the family is a male, and due to the cultural preference for male over female, this has become the dominant form of primogeniture. Matrilineal primogeniture, on the other hand, occurs when the first child of the family is a female. Unfortunately, due to gender restrictions, this form of primogeniture is often overlooked. Although the practice and application of the primogeniture rule might appear rigid, this rule has however been modified in most societies, particularly African societies, to suit their current realities. The rule, in such societies, is applied only as customary law and it is subject to the discretion of the family unit to decide whether to follow the rule in the estate distribution or follow applicable Administration of Estate Laws (Adegbola 2018).

2.2 Dynamic Capability

Dynamic capabilities refer to "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal competencies to address, or in some cases to bring about, changes in the business environment" (Khan, Daddi, & Iraldo, 2020). According to (Eksi, Soyer, & Onar, 2012), dynamic capability implies an enterprise's capacity to renew itself in changing environments by changing its set of resources. To survive in a rapidly changing environment, organizations must have dynamic capabilities. With dynamic capabilities, organisations can utilise their assets to create a competitive advantage. A company's competitive advantage depends on its ability to adapt and change over time and compete successfully in a complex environment (Appelbaum, Calla, Desautels, & Hasan, 2017).

Enterprise capabilities that are difficult to replicate and can adapt to changing customers and technology are known as dynamic capabilities. Enterprise performance relies on the development and application of dynamic capabilities. Teece (2007) proposed the dynamic capabilities framework to help managers understand how to maintain a competitive advantage for their enterprise over time. According to Winter (2003), having strong dynamic capabilities can create a solid basis for achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Interestingly, dynamic capabilities do not include every aspect of the enterprise-level response to market opportunities and threats. For example, the ability to solve problems on the spot may not be a necessary skill. Likewise, the adoption of business best practices may not amount to dynamic capabilities. This is because the implementation of business best practices does not have the ability on its own to assist the enterprise in generating more than its cost of capital or performing better than its competitors (Winter 2003).

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Relay Succession Planning Model

Several models can be used to address the subject of family business survival. However, the study is anchored on the Relay Succession Planning Model. Santora (2004) proposed before taking on leadership roles. As a result, they are better equipped to handle the "Relay Succession Planning Model" as the first model for succession planning. According to Santora (2004), it is imperative for the CEO of an organization to gradually transition their role to a successor. The author argued that the organisations that adopted the

relay succession planning model outperformed the organisations that did not implement the model. This is because potential successors are allowed to gain experience and exposure to corporate challenges during the transition period. The practice requires the incumbent CEO to pass the baton and allow the successor to test what it takes to be at the helm of affairs in the company while simultaneously receiving training. It is imperative to adopt the relay succession model to achieve optimal post-succession performance. Santora (2004) found that companies using the relay succession model have higher long-term returns on investment. The relay succession planning model has received valuable contributions from other scholars. For example, (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004) analysed data on 204 CEO succession from US manufacturing firms. Through their research, they discovered that the transfer of leadership responsibilities resulted in improved company performance. This was particularly evident in cases where the company had a lower level of performance before the transfer and faced a higher degree of unpredictability in the industry's specific factors after the transfer. A study conducted by Behn, Riley, and Yang in 2005 analysed the number of deaths associated with 168 CEOs and found that companies with experience in relays had better market responses than those without. Tao and Zhao conducted a more comprehensive study on the relay succession approach. This approach involves training the incoming CEO as an heir apparent before taking over as the successor. Their research revealed that companies with a reliable succession plan perform better after succession. Several scholars have found the relay succession planning model to be a useful foundation for their work (Olatunji, Kehinde, & Nwachukwu, 2017; Osibanjo, Abiodun, & Obamiro, 2011).

The incumbent must utilize this model to guarantee the selection of the appropriate successor. This involves the pre-succession phase whereby the successor is chosen and groomed to become capable of running the firm after the incumbent has gone. During the pre-succession phase, the successor is trained to handle corporate challenges and prepare for post-succession challenges in managing the family business. The post-succession phase involves ensuring the firm's survival after the incumbent passes the baton to the successor. As discussed earlier, organisations, including family businesses, that implement a relay succession planning model experience better returns on investment in the long run. In the same vein, the relay succession planning model leads to better post-succession firm performance, especially at higher levels of post-succession strategic and industry instability—this includes the level of unpredictability of changes in industry-specific factors. These changes could occur at the level of capabilities, adaptability, finance and innovation. Thus, the successor needs to possess the competence to manage these factors for the post-succession survival of the family business.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Primogeniture and Dynamic Capability

Ahn (2018) examined the influence of founders' legacies on the long-term survival of 64 paired Korean exchange-listed companies that were delisted. The study found that businesses with longer founder tenure and a succession plan for an heir are more likely to survive in similar environmental situations during the founding stage. The author attributed primogeniture to the Korean culture, where the eldest son is considered the heir apparent to the family business. Ozdemir and Harris (2019) used a series of interviews to examine daughters' succession in family-owned businesses in Turkey. The study revealed that primogeniture remains a dominant practice in family-owned businesses whereby the sons are more favoured to succeed the incumbents in a family business. The authors argued that primogeniture is an accepted approach to family business succession where daughters are considered only if all descendants are female or if the daughter is the firstborn. Similarly, Calabrò et al., (2018) examined the consequence of primogeniture vis-à-vis second or subsequent-born selection in family firm successions from the perspective of socioemotional wealth (SEW) logic. The study used a dataset from secondary sources collected from the Italian Chamber of Commerce and found that the primogeniture rule is more likely where the family has a high level of socio-emotional wealth endowment (SEW). The authors suggest that family-

owned businesses that abandon the primogeniture rule and choose their successors more carefully tend to perform better after the succession. The culture of primogeniture in Nigeria has reduced the incidences of sibling rivalry in the family (Ogbechie and Anetor 2015).

However, the primogeniture rule severely limits the founders' ability to select the most talented child as a successor to the family business. If the oldest son is not properly groomed and talented, the long-term survival of the family business may be jeopardised (Otika et al. 2019). This is supported by (Austin, 2018), who posited that a successor must possess the capability to lead, manage, communicate, and commit to taking over the business. This capability may be needed by the successor to take advantage of the dynamic capability of the family business.

Akani (2015 used a structured questionnaire to examine the effect of management succession planning dimensions (management development, mentoring and retention effort) on corporate survival variables such as dynamic capability and adaptability in the banking sector in Rivers State, Nigeria. Akani (2015) found evidence of a highly positive link between dynamic capability and management succession planning dimensions. This indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between management succession planning and corporate survival.

Hence, in choosing a successor for a family business, there may be a need to ensure that such a successor possesses the ability to manage the dynamic capabilities of the firm. Although the culture of primogeniture has been widely used in the past, (Ungerer & Mienie, 2018) however, advocates for the courage to jettison the exclusive practice of favouritism towards the firstborn and toward the best-qualified family candidate. From the previous theoretical and empirical evidence, we, therefore, put forth the following hypothesis:

H_0: Primogeniture rule does not influence the dynamic capability of family-owned schools in South-West, Nigeria

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Data for the study was collected through a survey administered between September 2020 and March 2021. Nine family-owned schools were selected from Lagos State (four schools) and Ogun State (5 schools). The survey was randomly distributed to staff members of the nine family-owned schools, with a total of 500 employees. as a result, the entire population was sampled. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, 357 of which were collected and ranked based on the responses provided.

3.1 Measures

Operationally, the primogeniture rule was defined as an inheritance practice that assigns the entire family estate to the first child, most often the first son (Bertocch 2017). The items used in measuring primogeniture rule were adopted from Chikodili (2012), The dynamic capability was described as the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal competencies to address, or in some cases bring about, changes in the business environment (Khan, Daddi & Iraldo, 2020). The items used in measuring dynamic capability were adapted from (Teece *et al*., 1997). Both measures were rated on a 5-point Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree.

4.0 ANALYSIS

4.1 Test of Hypothesis

H_0: Primogeniture rule does not influence the dynamic capability of family-owned schools in South-West, Nigeria.

The study examined the effectiveness of the primogeniture rule on the dynamic capability of family-owned schools using Partia1 Least Square/Structura1 Equation Modelling analysis. The study utilized various

metrics, including path coefficients, t-statistics, R-square values, and p-values, to evaluate the relationship between the two variables. The path coefficient value was used to determine the degree of relationship between the primogeniture rule and the dynamic capability of family-owned schools.

Table 1.1: Construct Validity and Reliability for the Hypothesis

	Loading	**Outer Weights**	**VIF**	**t-statistics**	**P Value**	**AVE**	**Composite Reliability**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Constructs	**≥ 0.7**		**<3.0**	**>1.96**	**<.05**	**≥0.5**	**≥ 0.8**	**> 0.7**
Primogeniture Rule (PR)						**0.695**	**0.901**	**0.854**
PR1	0.815	0.314	1.787	14.927	0.000			
PR2	0.871	0.322	2.281	22.682	0.000			
PR3	0.855	0.317	2.201	17.936	0.000			
PR4	0.791	0.233	1.840	8.552	0.000			
Dynamic Capability (DC)						**0.776**	**0.932**	**0.903**
DC1	0.899	0.290	2.987	22.057	0.000			
DC2	0.908	0.292	2.658	23.437	0.000			
DC3	0.900	0.282	2.310	29.730	0.000			
DC4	0.812	0.271	1.895	12.917	0.000			

Table 1.1 shows the factor loadings and outer weights of all the items used to measure the primogeniture rule and dynamic capability of family-owned schools, as presented in the research instrument. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, we utilized the composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE) estimate, and Cronbach Alpha. We are pleased to report that the recommended statistical values for factor loading, composite reliability, AVE, and Cronbach Alpha were all met.

In this study, construct validity was determined using convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was used to establish the correlation between the primogeniture rule and the dynamic capability of family-owned schools. It was also noted that all the measurement items had factor loadings above the recommended thresholds, indicating a high percentage of common variance. Discriminant validity was evaluated by equating the average variance extracted (AVE) with the squared correlation for each construct. The Average Variance Extracted by the latent variable is higher than the squared correlations with the dormant variable and constructs in the model.

4.2 Common Method Bias

The common method bias was also tested using collinearity statistics for the hypothesis. If the frequency of a VIF is greater than 3.3, as stated in the literature, it is an indicator that common method bias affects the model. If all factor-level VIFs resulting from a complete collinearity test are 3.3 or less, the model is free of common system bias. Consequently, all the VIF values of each of the measurement items and constructs for the primogeniture rule and dynamic capability of family-owned schools are less than 3.3. This means that the model is deemed to be free of common method bias.

Table 1.2 Path Coefficients for Primogeniture Rule (PR) and Dynamic Capability (DC)

	Path Coefficient	R-Square	Std. Dev	T-statistics	P-value
PR ➡ DC	0.796	0.634	0.036	11.358	0.000

Table 1.2 depicts the smart partial least squared statistical results of the hypothesis which focused on the relationship between the primogeniture rule and dynamic capability. The study indicates that the rule of primogeniture significantly impacts the dynamic capability of schools owned by families. Specifically, the results showed that the rule of primogeniture has a major effect on the dynamic capability of family-owned schools at (β= 0.796, R^2 = 0.634, t-statistics= 11.358> 1.96, P-value= 0.000 <0.05). The Path coefficient of 0.796 implies a strong and positive correlation between primogeniture and the dynamic capability of family-owned schools. The R^2 value of 0.634 indicates that a 63.4% variance in the dynamic capability of family-owned schools can be explained by the primogeniture rule.

Table 1.3: Discriminant Validity for the Hypothesis

	Dynamic Capability	Primogeniture Rule
Dynamic Capability	0.881	
Primogeniture Rule	0.796	0.834

The correlation matrix (Table 1.3) shows that all constructs had a stronger association with themselves than with other constructs.

5 DISCUSSION

Family-owned businesses have a long history as one of the oldest forms of business in the world. In Nigeria, these businesses, particularly in the education sector, are highly valued for their potential to drive progress and foster the next generation of entrepreneurs. However, the continuous existence of this form of business has been affected by inheritance practices.

The study aimed to investigate the impact of primogeniture on the dynamic capability of family-owned schools located in South-West Nigeria. The hypothesis stated that the rule of primogeniture plays a role in shaping the dynamic capability of such schools. As presented in Table 1.1, all the items of measurement of the primogeniture rule and dynamic capability of family-owned schools as presented in the research instrument are significant at a p-value of <0.05. The findings indicate that the rule of primogeniture has a notable impact on the dynamic capabilities of schools owned by families. This implies that the null hypothesis (H_o) which indicates that primogeniture does not influence the dynamic capability of family-owned schools is rejected. Above all, the results indicated that primogeniture is a significant predictor of the dynamic capability of family-owned schools.

However, the result of this hypothesis is contrary to the study by (Olayinka, Agbaeze, & Eluka, 2018) that suggested that founders of vibrant and viable enterprises should not pass the reins to a member of families, especially the eldest child who may not be qualified, interested or knowledgeable enough to know their left from the right due to sentiment. This was corroborated by Calabrò et al. (2018) that FOBs that dare to jettison the primogeniture rule and select more wisely the family successor are the same that experience better post-succession performance.

The researcher further sought to know if proprietors of family schools preferred first sons to first daughters in family business succession through item three (PR3) in the questionnaire. The result revealed that the proprietors prefer to hand over their businesses to their first sons even if daughters are firstborns because of culture. This cultural practice, which is also known as patrilineal primogeniture, is premised on the belief

that when a daughter is married, she passes her share of inheritance to her husband who is not seen to be a member of the family. This finding is supported by (Ip & Jacobs, 2006) who noted that male children are preferred to their female counterparts when it comes to the selection of a family business successor. This result of item four indicated that the organisation will not hand over the family business to the first son without considering the competence of the younger children.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study found that the primogeniture rule significantly affects the dynamic capability of family-owned schools. However, the study suggested that the rule should be modified to consider the business interest, experience and competence of the candidate. This study provided insight into how to address the challenges (such as conflicts among siblings and the wrong selection of an incompetent successor due to the primogeniture rule) associated with inheritance cultural practices for the survival of the family-owned business. The study recommends applying the primogeniture rule in family businesses if the first child is capable of managing it. The research argues that the potential successor's interest and competence should be prioritised over the primogeniture rule for the survival of the family business.

7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The researcher had difficulty in securing the approval of some family-owned schools to be included in this study probably for fear of having their ownership and managerial structure being subjected to public scrutiny. Some family-owned businesses prefer to keep their internal structure top secret. The researcher, however, overcame the challenge by giving assurance to treat any information provided with the utmost confidentiality.

Future researchers can engage in comparative studies of family-owned businesses in the education sector and other sectors of the economy.

AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

Conceptualisation and conduct of the study: Okoh E. E; General supervision of the study, Worlu E. R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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