

THE CONTRIBUTION OF MANAGERIAL SUCCESSION PLANNING AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN RWANDA: A CASE STUDY OF RDD PROJECT

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Abstract: This research intended to assess the contribution of managerial succession planning on project performance and was carried out in RDDP projects located in Kacyiru sector- Gasabo district with the following objectives; to assess the contribution of professional development on performance of RDD project, to examine the influence of replacement planning on project performance in RDD project and to assess the effect of succession planning on the performance of RDDP project. The researcher reviewed literature related to managerial succession planning and project performance, both theoretical and empirical literature was reviewed, a critical review of existing literature was done to find the gap that needs to be filled by the research as well as the conceptual framework showing the relationship between the two variables. The research design used was descriptive and analytical while the population was 85 employees of RDDP project while the sample size was 70 respondents from the total population selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection tools were questionnaires and interviews. The collected data was presented using tables and analyzed based on percentages and frequencies. The researcher found out that RDDP project carries out managerial succession planning through professional development that is contribution to performance of the project. Therefore there is no doubt that RDDP project is performing as a result of managerial succession planning. The researcher concluded that with no doubt project performance is related to managerial succession planning due the benefits that accrue from the project being prepared to replace employees when they go through replacement planning in the project. RDDP project is performing as indicated by availability of resources; project reputation, satisfied beneficiaries, project sustainability and committed staff. Managerial succession planning has had an impact on project performance through facilitating attainment of project objectives, it equipped staff with managerial skills, increase in satisfaction of employees, it improves project sustainability. The researcher recommended that the government of the Republic of Rwanda should help projects by providing them with trainings on the benefits of managerial succession planning in projects.

Keywords: Project, Planning, Succession planning, Managerial succession planning & Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study:

The failure of project performance has been as a result of poor project management and managerial succession planning. Managers in most projects consciously do not have strong project management skills and poor leadership skills, inadequately-trained managers, lack of skilled labor, also inadequate definitions of talent as a guide in the project performance. The improper managerial succession planning would equally hinder the proper allocation of the project scarce resources, this leads to the failure of project performance. It should also be noted that over time it has been shown that project managerial succession planning and project performance are necessarily directly related (Abdullah, 2009).

Succession planning is not a new phenomenon. Companies have been wrestling with ways to identify, develop, and retain their talent for decades. Today's projects are facing higher demands in a global market with the retirement of the Baby Boomers and the widening talent gap. The home-grown and paper-based succession planning that companies relied on in the past are no longer meeting the needs of today's workforce. In order to achieve results, companies need to start with the basics, create a strong process and then invest in the tools and technology to instill a talent development mindset in their organization (Babbie and Morton, 2010).

Succession planning involves a process whereby projects ensure that employees are recruited and developed to fill each key role within the project. Through succession planning process, a project recruits superior employees, develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and prepare them for advancement or promotion into ever more challenging roles. Actively pursuing succession planning ensures that employees are constantly developed to fill each needed role. As the project expands, loses key employees, provides promotional opportunities, and increases sales, succession planning guarantees that employees on hand ready and waiting to fill new roles (Tahrawi, 2010).

Succession planning encourages staff development and sends a message to employees that the project is serious about developing people. It may also persuade talented employees to remain with the company rather than looking elsewhere for growth opportunities. Grooming a successor from within the company can save the time and expense of hiring a new leader from outside. It also aids in continuity, as an insider might be more likely to follow through with current plans and strategies (Gupta & Snyder, 2009).

The key to management succession planning is preparing a written succession plan. It details the changes that will take place as leadership is transferred from one generation to the next. In the case of small businesses, succession plans are often known as continuity plans, since without them the businesses may cease to exist. Succession plans can provide a number of important benefits for companies that develop them. For example, a succession plan may help a business retain key employees, reduce its tax burden, and maintain the value of its stock and assets during a management or ownership transition. Succession plans may also prove valuable in allowing a business owner to retire in comfort and continue to provide for family members who may be involved with the company (Hills, 2009).

Succession planning has been used as a formalized method for dealing with changes in leadership for over fifty years. Originally used to anticipate smooth transitions at the top level in projects and organizations, it has evolved into a process that many organizations and projects view as critical for key positions across functions and levels. While operational definitions vary, the core meaning has remained the same throughout the decades as the process of succession planning has evolved (Khalumba, 2012).

In Rwandan projects, managerial succession planning is done in projects that are taking long in order to ensure that they don't face challenges managerial challenges that may end up affecting the way the projects performance. Performance of projects mainly depend on the way employees are managed in terms of turnover and management. Managerial succession planning is considered vital in ensuring that when employees leave or are fired projects don't waste resources looking for replacements.

Rwanda Dairy Development project in Rwanda is a project that is working with small scale farmers in improving the agricultural methods used, improvements in the use of milking equipments and well as improvising the way of making, maintaining and keeping cattle feeds to help in the periods of drought. The project management asserts that they have been able to improve the way the project performs and management attributes this performance to managerial succession planning. However, the researcher felt it necessary to carry out this research on the contribution of managerial succession planning on project performance in order to ascertain this.

1.2 Problem statement:

Even though a number of key issues play important roles in the success or failure of any project's survival and long-term prosperity, leadership stands as a fundamental factor in this regard. The failure of leaders and seniors managers can be a horrifying incident and lead to major consequences within and outside the project. The importance of succession planning to a project is one of the key issues (Khalumba, 2012). A project that doesn't attain its performance as a primary goal should have to re-think. The transition of leadership is a critical point in a project's existence and many changes come from succession that not only effect the management directions of the project but often will change the ownership of the project and also achieve on performance. Planning for succession has been credited for minimizing the impacts that come from leadership transition in projects. However, in some projects managerial succession planning is not given much consideration and have continued to perform poorly as a result of managerial challenges resulting from poor managerial succession planning. This is resulting from limited understanding on how managerial succession planning contributes to

project performance. it is against that background that the researcher intends to carry out this research with reference to RDDP as the case study.

1.3 Objectives of the study:

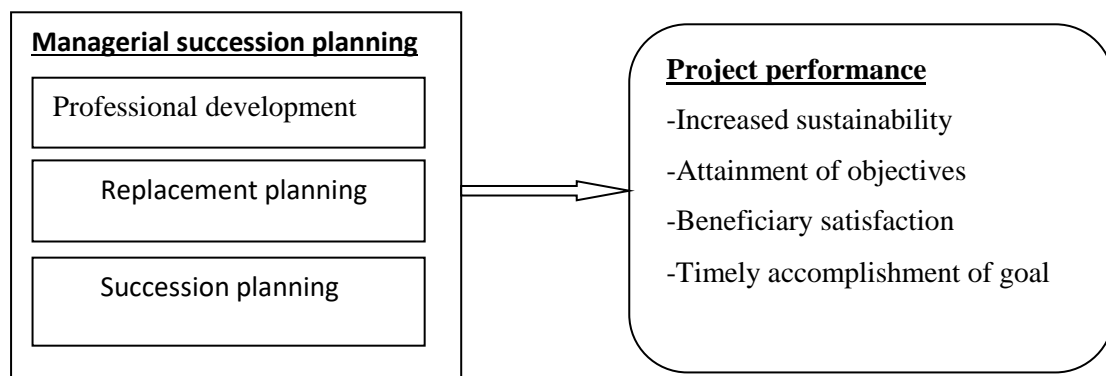
The general objective of this research is to assess the contribution of managerial succession planning on performance of projects in Rwanda and the specific objectives include; i) to assess the contribution of professional development on performance of RDD project, ii) to examine the influence of replacement planning on project performance in RDD project and iii) to assess the effect of succession planning on the performance of RDDP project.

1.3.1 Research questions:

The research questions were based on the study objectives and will include the following;

- i. What is the contribution of professional development on performance of RDD project?
- ii. What is the influence of replacement planning on project performance in RDD project?
- iii. What is the effect of succession planning on the performance of RDDP project?

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Primary Source: Researcher (2018)

Figure 1

According to the above conceptual framework, managerial succession planning through professional development, replacement planning and succession planning leads to improvements in project performance indicated by increased project sustainability, attainment of objectives, beneficiary satisfaction and timely attainment of goals

2.1 Empirical literature:

Succession management has become an important talent management initiative in projects around the world. For some projects, succession management is a strategic process that minimizes leadership gaps for critical positions and provides opportunities for top talent to develop the skills necessary for future roles. With other projects and companies, succession management is a constant struggle, viewed as an administrative exercise rather than as a competitive advantage. In strong economic times, it is easier to ignore deficiencies in the succession management process (Solomon, 2009).

Succession management enables companies to react quickly to change and endure difficult times. At its best, succession management allows a company to seamlessly merge its employees' capabilities and career aspirations with the company's business strategy and talent needs. There is a great deal of variation across business firms in the process of succession planning. A plan may be very simple, providing only for the development of backups and potential successors to the most senior level of management or it may be very formal, with documented rules and procedures for managerial succession at all levels of the organization (Galagan, 2010).

The project owners develop specific objectives and goals for the next generation of management, including a detailed job description for the successor. Then a candidate can be chosen who best meets the qualifications. This strategy helps remove the emotional aspect from the selection process and also may help the business owners feel more comfortable with their selection. The decision about when to announce the successor and the schedule for succession depends upon the business, but an early announcement can help reassure employees and customers and enable other key employees to make alternative career plans as needed (Hills, 2009).

Once a potential successor has been selected, the hotel then enters the training phase. Ideally, a program is developed through which the successor can meet goals and gradually increase his or her level of responsibility. The training phase also provides the business owner or board of directors with an opportunity to evaluate the successor's decision-making processes, leadership.

2.2 Critical review/ Research gap:

According to Abdullah (2009), succession planning has the potential to be one of the major business issues of the coming decade. The demographic reality is that organizations will have a shrinking pool of labor from which to draw on, which will impact operations at all levels, from the receptionist to the CEO. It is this reality that has pushed succession planning – an important issue in normal times to the forefront. Nothing much was highlighted or indicated on how best managerial succession planning contributes to project performance hence leading to improvements in project performance. It is this gap that this research strives to close by showing the contribution of managerial succession planning on project performance.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design:

A research design is a systematic plan to study a scientific problem. The design of a study defines the study type (descriptive, co relational, semi-experimental, experimental, review, meta-analytic) and sub-type, research question, hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, experimental design, and, if applicable, data collection methods and a statistical analysis plan. In designing the research, the researcher considered both descriptive and analytical research designs. The researcher did this in order to describe and analyze issues related to managerial succession planning and performance of projects. The research was based on numerical and non-numerical data.

3.2 Population of the study and the sample size:

A population study was 85 employees of RDDP project and the sample size was 70 respondents and it was determined by use the formula as stated by Kothari (2014) which is stipulated below;

$$\text{Formula } n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \text{ where } n \text{ was the sample size, } N \text{ the total population and } e \text{ was sampling error (0.05) } n = \frac{85}{1+85(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{85}{1+85(0.0025)} n = \frac{85}{1+0.2125} n = \frac{85}{1.2125}, n = 70.$$

The researcher also opted using the data collection instruments as follows;

Questionnaire, Documentary review, interview guide for senior managers at RDDP project.

3.3 Data analysis:

Data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data. The basic steps in the analytic process consist of identifying issues, determining the availability of suitable data, deciding on which methods are appropriate for answering the questions of interest, applying the methods and evaluating, summarizing and communicating the results. The collected data was presented using tables and figures while interpretation and analysis was done based on percentages and frequencies of respondents views.

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

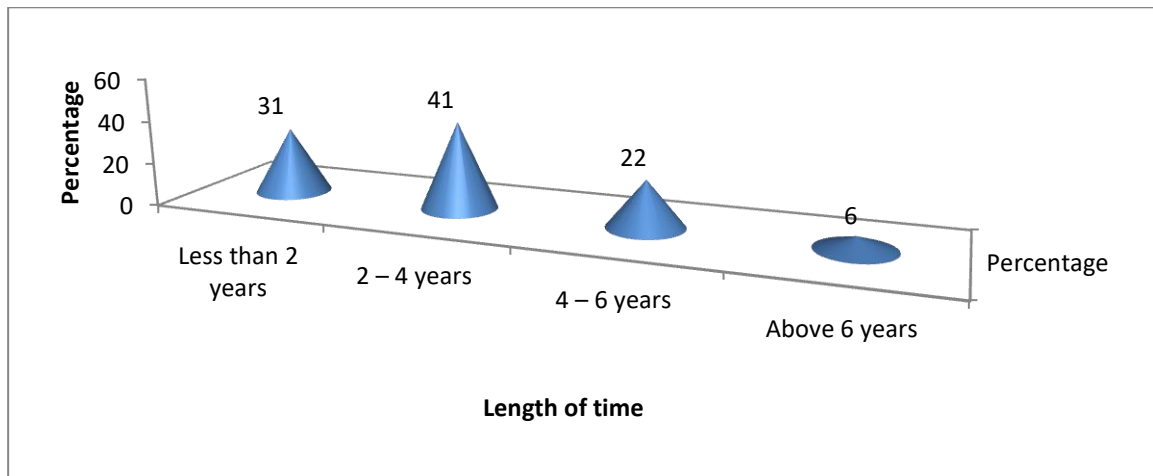
The researcher presented data using tables and figures while for analysis and interpretation frequencies and percentages of respondents' views were used.

1: Presentation of the findings

Level of education	Frequency	percentage
Certificate	7	10
Diploma	22	32
Bachelors degree	35	49
Masters degree and above	6	9
Total	70	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 1, respondents interviewed were considered because they are important for decision making since they were from knowledgeable people.



Source: Primary data, 2018

Figure 1: Length of time respondents have worked with the project

According to figure 2, respondents contacted were more reliable since they were out of understanding and experience.

4.1 The contribution of professional development on performance of RDD project:

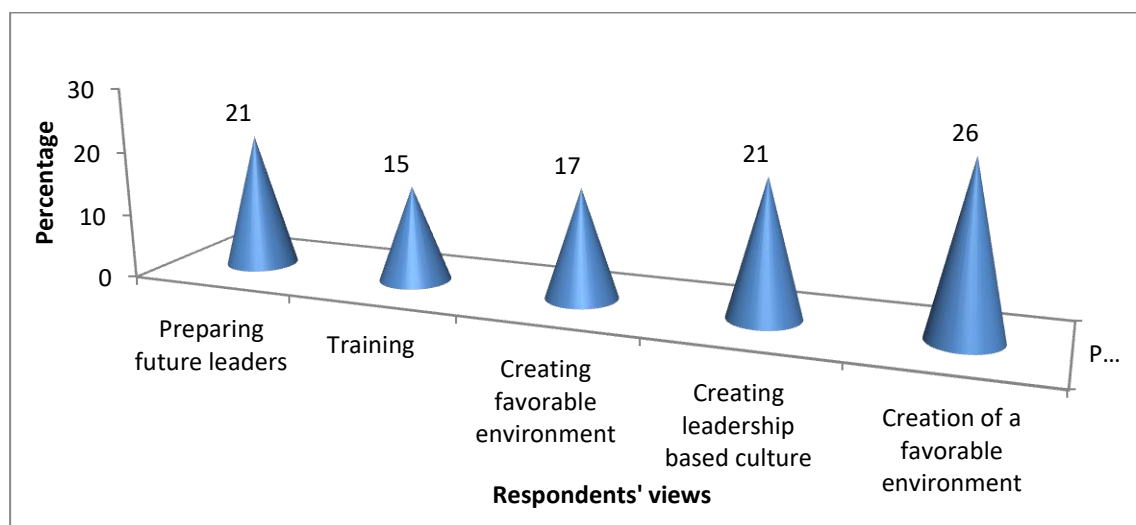
In this section, the researcher presented, analyzed and interpreted the views of respondents in relation to the contribution of professional planning on project performance in RDDP project in order to permit making of relevant conclusions.

Table 2: Respondents views on whether professional development planning is implemented in RDDP project

Respondents' views	Frequency	Percentage
Professional development planning is done	58	83
Not sure	12	17
Total	70	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 2, respondents contacted revealed that professional development planning is done in RDDP. Therefore there is no doubt that RDDP project is successful as a result of managerial succession planning.



Source: Primary data, 2018

Figure 2: Contents of managerial succession planning

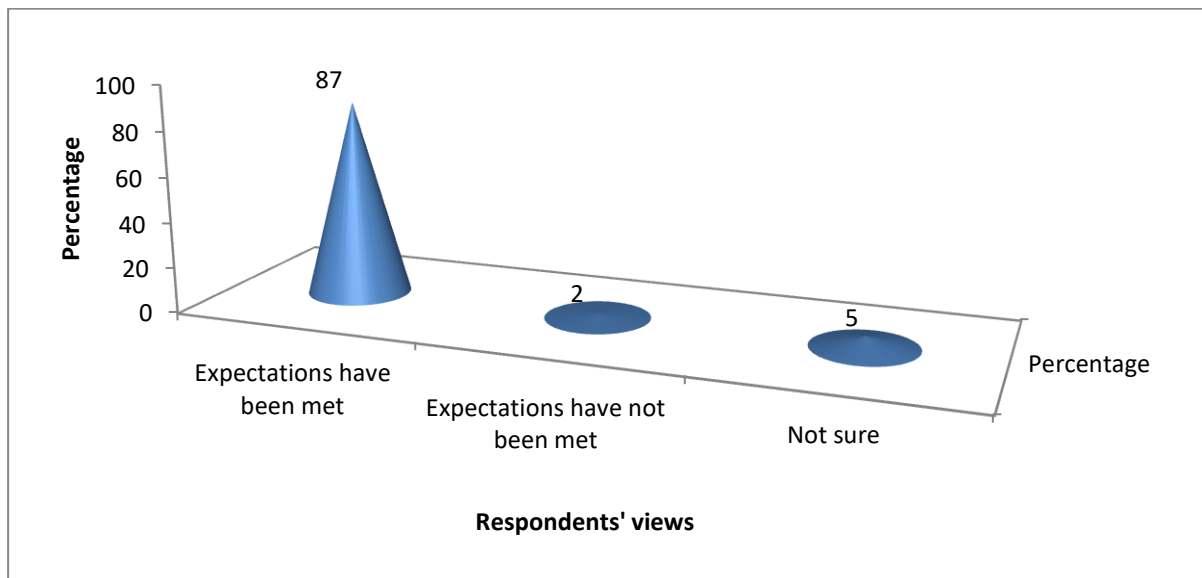
According to figure 3, respondents contacted revealed that the contents of managerial succession planning in RDDP project are preparing future project leaders This made the researcher come to the understanding that the contents of managerial succession planning in projects are all geared towards ensuring that an environment conducive for the performance of the project are in place. Therefore managerial succession planning and project performance are related.

Table 3: Views on whether professional development planning is relevant in project performance

Respondents views	Frequency	Percentage
Professional development planning is relevant	61	87
Professional development planning is not relevant	2	3
Not sure	7	10
Total	70	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 3, respondents contacted revealed that professional development planning is relevant in the success of projects and the organization is in position to withstand all managerial challenges that may occur and any given time (47%) while 33% of respondents said managerial succession planning helps the project to equip their leaders with the required skills to run the project performance fully and smoothly. 22% of respondents said the project has achieved most of its objectives as a result of the skills that employees possess and 18% of respondents said managerial succession planning in projects has contributed to project performance by setting things in order and on track.



Source: Primary data, 2018

Figure 3: Respondents views on whether their expectations from managerial succession planning have been achieved

According to figure 4, respondents contacted revealed that expectations of the project from managerial succession planning has been met (87%) while 2% of respondents said expectations have not been met and 5% said they were not sure whether expectations have not been met. This led the researcher to the understanding that RDDP project group has been able to meet its expectations from managerial succession planning as a result through attainment of the benefits that justify the cost of implementing the strategy.

Table 4: respondent's description of managerial succession planning in RDDP project

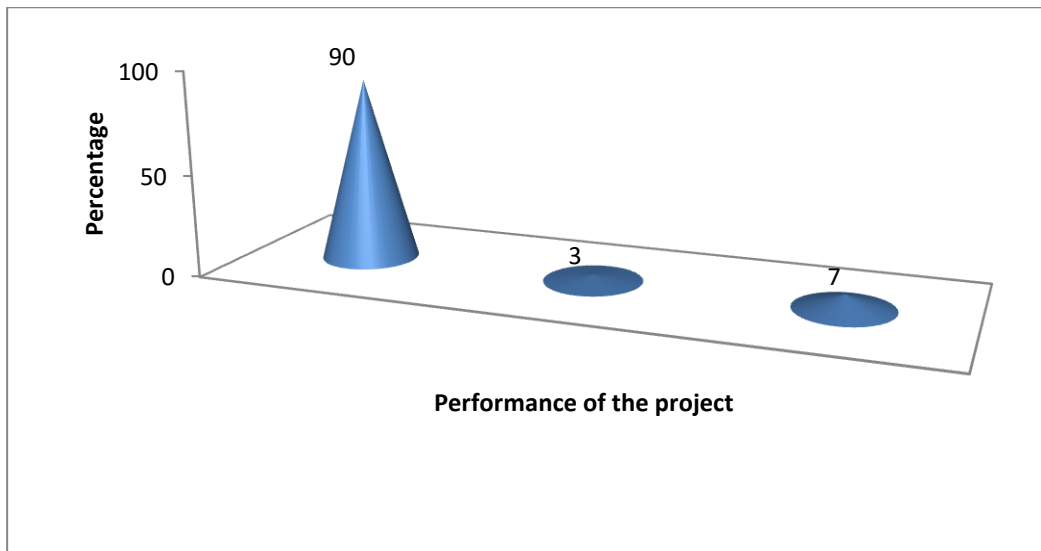
Respondents' views	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied.	46	66
Satisfied.	12	17
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.	12	17
Total	70	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 4, respondents contacted revealed that they were very satisfied with managerial succession planning in the project (66%) while 17% of respondents said they were satisfied and 17% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. None of the contacted respondents said they were neither dissatisfied nor very dissatisfied. This led the researcher to the understanding that respondents were satisfied with managerial succession planning because of the benefits it has had on the project. The practice of managerial succession planning helped the project to attain most of its set objectives.

4.2 The influence of replacement planning on project performance in RDD project:

In this section, the researcher presented, analyzed and interpreted the views of respondents in relation to the influence of replacement planning on project performance so that necessary and relevant conclusions can be made.



Source: Primary data, 2018

Figure 4: Respondents views on whether they consider RDDP project to be performing so far

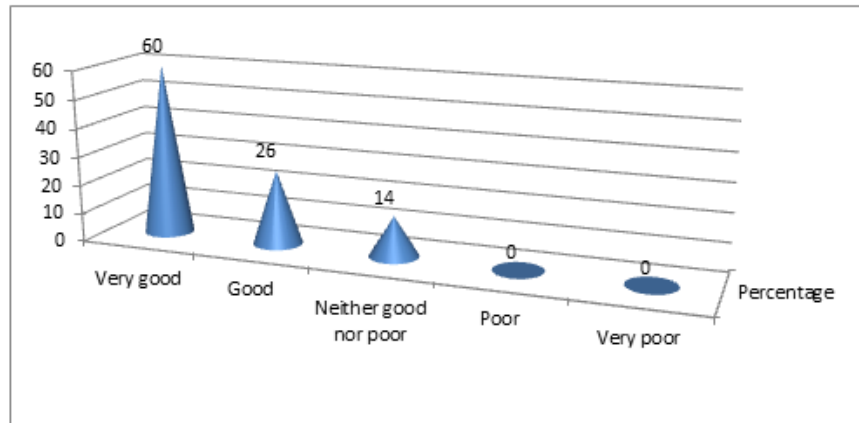
According to figure 5, respondents contacted revealed that RDDP project is performing; this led the researcher to the understanding that the project is performing considering the majority of respondents. The performance of the project was attributed to managerial succession planning carried out in the project. When respondents were asked to give reasons for their answers, they said the project had skilled employees and this confirms that the project activities move smoothly and 7% said the project has managed to satisfy its beneficiaries. This led the researcher to the understanding that with no doubt project performance is related to managerial succession planning. This was facilitated by replacement planning preparedness of the project

Table 5: Determinants of replacement planning in RDDP project

Determinants	Frequency	Percentage
Management skills	12	17
Availability of capital	20	29
Nature of beneficiaries	16	23
Working environment	14	20
Working partners	8	11
Total	70	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 5, respondents revealed that the factors for replacement planning are management skills and according to the researcher this means that the project is performing due the existing replacement planning that is a result of proper planning within the project including managerial succession planning.



Source: Primary data, 2018

Figure 5: Respondents rating of replacement planning in RDDP project

According to figure 6, respondent's contacted rated replacement planning of RDDP project is very good and this made the researcher confirm that RDDP project is successful due to proper policies implemented including managerial succession planning through replacement planning. Therefore this led the researcher to the understanding that replacement planning puts the project in a situation that best helps the project to perform.

Table 6: Indicators of performance in RDDP project

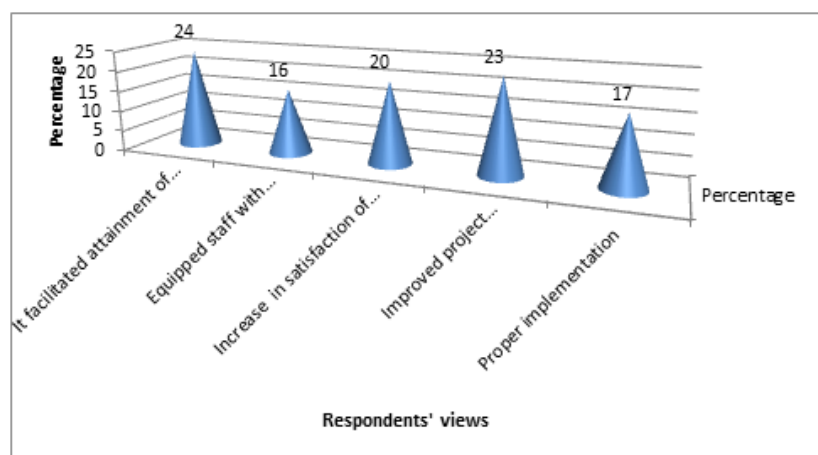
Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Committed staff	12	17
Availability of resources	20	29
Project reputation	16	23
Satisfied beneficiaries	14	20
Sustainability	8	11
Total	70	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 6, respondents revealed that the indicators of performance in RDDP project are availability of resources and this led the researcher to the understanding that the project performance is evidenced through factors like committed staff and project sustainability that are all a result of managerial succession planning.

4.3 Effect of succession planning on the performance of RDDP project:

This section presents analyses and interprets the views of respondents in relation to managerial succession planning and project performance. This is done to facilitate the making of necessary and relevant conclusions.



Source: Primary data, 2018

Figure 6: Benefits of Managerial succession planning in RDDP project performance

According to figure 7, respondents contacted revealed that RDDP project has benefited from managerial succession planning through facilitating attainment of project and this led the researcher to the understanding that managerial succession planning has been instrumental in success of RDDP project performance.

Table 7: Respondents' views on the relationship between managerial succession planning and project performance

Respondents' views	Frequency	Percentage
Managerial succession planning and project performance are related	49	70
Managerial succession planning and project are not related	8	11
Not sure	13	19
Total	70	100

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 7, respondents contacted revealed that managerial succession planning and project performance are related because of the benefits that accrue from the practice for example streaming activities due to the proper planning of managerial skills.

5. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the findings:

This part presents the summary of the research findings in view of the objectives of the research, the findings in relation to the contribution of professional development on performance of RDD project, the influence of replacement planning on project performance in RDD project and the effect of succession planning on the performance of RDDP project

5.1.1 The contribution of professional development on performance of RDD project:

In this section, the researcher presented, analyzed and interpreted the views of respondents in relation to the contribution of professional development on performance of RDDP project so as to form a basis for making relevant conclusions. The researcher found out that RDDP project carries out managerial succession planning through professional development that is contribution to performance of the project. Therefore there is no doubt that RDDP project is performing as a result of managerial succession planning.

5.1.2 The influence of replacement planning on project performance in RDD project:

In this section, the researcher presented, analyzed and interpreted the findings of the research in relation to the influence of replacement planning on project performance in RDD project so that relevant conclusions can be drawn. The researcher found out that with no doubt project performance is related to managerial succession planning due the benefits that accrue from the project being prepared to replace employees when they go through replacement planning in the project. The project is performing due the existing determinants of performance that is a result of proper planning within the project including managerial succession planning and RDDP project is performing due to proper policies implemented including managerial succession planning. Therefore this led the researcher to the understanding that managerial succession planning puts the project in a situation that best helps the project to succeed. The project performance is evidenced through factors like committed staff and project sustainability that are all a result of managerial succession planning.

5.1.3 Effect of succession planning on the performance of RDDP project:

The researcher found out that managerial succession planning has been instrumental in success of RDDP project, managerial succession planning and project performance are related because of the benefits that accrue from the practice for example streaming activities due to the proper planning of managerial skills and that respondents appreciate the contribution of managerial succession planning in success of sustainable health enterprise. The researcher also found out that managerial succession planning leads to effective and efficient running of the project activities and that managerial succession planning empowers the project with capacity to lead the project to success.

5.2 Conclusion of the study:

The researcher concluded that RDDP project carries out managerial succession planning that has contributed to the success of the project through preparing future project leaders, it involves training future leaders, creating favorable

environment, and creating leadership based culture and creating a favorable environment. The researcher found out that RDDP project carries out managerial succession planning through professional development that is contribution to performance of the project. Therefore there is no doubt that RDDP project is performing as a result of managerial succession planning.

The researcher found out that with no doubt project performance is related to managerial succession planning due the benefits that accrue from the project being prepared to replace employees when they go through replacement planning in the project. RDDP project is performing as indicated by availability of resources; project reputation, satisfied beneficiaries, project sustainability and committed staff.

Managerial succession planning has had an impact on project performance through facilitating attainment of project objectives, it equipped staff with managerial skills, increase in satisfaction of employees, it improves project sustainability

5.3 Recommendations:

The researcher made recommendation that should be put into consideration based on the findings and conclusion.

The researcher recommended that RDDP project should continue carrying out managerial succession planning because it is a major reason behind its success through provision of a conducive environment that can facilitate project performance.

The researcher recommended that the government of the Republic of Rwanda should help projects by providing them with trainings on the benefits of managerial succession planning in projects.

5.4 Areas for future research:

Researchers should also look into other benefits of managerial succession planning in projects other than projects success. This will make projects embrace the practice with different benefits of the managerial succession planning.

Future researchers should also look into various areas through which managerial succession planning should be done if it is to contribute to project performance. This will provide more information on how managerial succession planning should be done.

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