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FAMILY BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY: DOES CULTURE AFFECT FAMILY BUSINESS SUCCESSION?

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Abstract: This study examined the effect of family culture and family business succession on family business sustainability among family-owned businesses in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research approach using a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 210 employees drawn from 10 registered family businesses operating in Cross River State. Data were collected the use of questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the aid of SPSS and AMOS software. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted to establish the validity and reliability of the measurement model. The findings revealed that family culture has a significant positive effect on family business sustainability. The study also found that family business succession has a significant positive effect on family business sustainability. The results indicate that family businesses characterized by strong shared values, trust, commitment, family cohesion, and effective succession planning are more likely to achieve continuity and sustainability across generations. The study concludes that family culture and succession planning are critical determinants of family business sustainability. The study recommends that family business owners strengthen positive cultural values and institutionalize formal succession planning processes to ensure successful leadership transitions and long-term business continuity.

Keywords: *Culture, family-owned businesses, founding generation, succession, sustainability.*

1.0 Introduction

Family businesses constitute a significant component of the global economy and contribute substantially to employment generation, wealth creation, innovation, and economic development. Across both developed and developing economies, family-owned enterprises account for a large proportion of private-sector businesses and play a critical role in ensuring economic stability and continuity. Despite their importance, many family businesses struggle to survive beyond the founding generation due to challenges associated with leadership transition and succession. Family business succession refers to the process through which ownership, management responsibilities, and leadership control are transferred from one

generation to another. Successful succession is widely recognized as one of the most important determinants of long-term family business sustainability (Chua *et al.,* 2022).
Family business sustainability focuses on the ability of a family-owned enterprise to maintain its operations, preserve its competitive advantage, achieve continuity, and remain viable across multiple generations. Sustaining a family business requires effective governance structures, strategic planning, leadership development, and a carefully managed succession process. Research has shown that the inability to transfer leadership successfully from one generation to another remains one of the primary reasons many family businesses fail to survive beyond the second or third generation (Calabrò *et al.,* 2021). Although succession planning has received considerable attention in family business literature, the role of culture in shaping succession outcomes continues to attract increasing scholarly interest. Culture represents the shared values, beliefs, traditions, norms, attitudes, and behavioral expectations that influence decision-making within families and organizations. In family businesses, culture often determines how leadership authority is perceived, how successors are selected, and how family members participate in managerial responsibilities. Cultural values shape expectations regarding inheritance, family hierarchy, gender roles, respect for elders, collective responsibility, and leadership legitimacy. These cultural characteristics may either facilitate or hinder the succession process depending on how they influence the preparedness and acceptance of successors (Maseda *et al.,* 2022).

The importance of culture in family business succession has become increasingly evident in recent years. Family firms often operate within unique cultural environments where business decisions are influenced not only by economic considerations but also by deeply rooted family traditions and social expectations. In many societies, succession decisions are based on cultural beliefs regarding lineage, seniority, birth order, or family status rather than managerial competence and leadership capability. Such practices may affect the effectiveness of succession processes and ultimately influence the sustainability of family businesses. Effective succession requires the identification, preparation, and acceptance of competent successors who can preserve family values while ensuring business continuity and growth (De Massis *et al.,* 2021).

However, the sustainability of family businesses remains a major concern worldwide. Several family enterprises fail during generational transitions due to succession conflicts, lack of successor readiness, inadequate planning, resistance to change, and disagreements among family members. Cultural expectations may further complicate succession decisions when founders prioritize family traditions over strategic business needs. Situations where leadership positions are allocated based solely on family relationships rather than competence can create management inefficiencies and threaten business continuity. Similarly, cultural resistance to involving female family members in leadership positions may limit the pool of qualified successors and weaken long-term sustainability (Campopiano et *al.,* 2020).

In many developing economies, family businesses face additional challenges arising from strong traditional values and informal governance structures. Founders often maintain centralized control over decision-making and may delay succession planning because of cultural beliefs regarding authority and leadership. Potential successors may receive limited opportunities to acquire managerial experience before assuming leadership responsibilities. These challenges increase uncertainty during transitions and may negatively affect organizational performance and survival. Although family businesses contribute significantly to economic development, many fail to institutionalize succession processes capable of ensuring sustainability across generations (Miller *et al.,* 2023).

Existing literature has emphasized various determinants of family business sustainability, including governance mechanisms, entrepreneurial orientation, innovation, strategic management, and succession planning (Campopiano *et al.,* 2020). Similarly, several studies have examined succession processes and successor development in family firms. Nevertheless, the influence of culture on family business succession remains insufficiently explored, particularly within developing economies where cultural values strongly shape family relationships and business decisions (Miller *et al.,* 2023, Calabrò *et al.,* 2021). Most recent studies have focused on succession planning effectiveness, leadership transition strategies, and governance practices without providing adequate empirical evidence regarding the extent to which cultural factors influence succession outcomes and long-term business sustainability (Rondi *et al.,* 2021; Eze *et al.,* 2024).

Furthermore, available studies have largely concentrated on family businesses in Western economies where institutional structures and cultural values differ considerably from those found in many developing countries. Consequently, findings from previous studies may not be directly applicable to environments characterized by strong family traditions, communal values, and culturally influenced leadership practices. Limited empirical attention has been given to examining culture as a determinant of family business succession and its implications for sustainability in such settings.

Therefore, a significant gap exists in understanding how cultural values, beliefs, traditions, and norms influence family business succession and how succession outcomes contribute to the sustainability of family-owned enterprises. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effect of culture on family business succession and determining how culturally influenced succession practices affect the sustainability of family businesses. The findings are expected to contribute to family business literature and provide practical insights for family business owners, successors, policymakers, and scholars seeking to promote successful intergenerational transitions and long-term business sustainability.

2.0 Theory and Literature Review

2.1 Stewardship Theory

Donaldson and Davis (1991) posit that managers and organizational leaders are motivated to act as stewards whose interests are aligned with the long-term interest of the organization rather than personal gain. The theory assumes that individuals derive greater satisfaction from achieving organizational success, preserving collective wealth, and ensuring continuity than from pursuing self-serving goals. Within family businesses, stewardship behavior is often expressed in the commitment members of the family to protect the firm's legacy, reputation, values, and continuity across generations.

Stewardship theory offers a strong foundation for appreciating the relationship between culture and succession in family business. Family businesses are characterized by shared values, traditions, beliefs, and norms that influence decision-making processes and influence the attitudes of family members toward leadership transition. A culture that emphasizes trust, commitment, collective responsibility, and long-term orientation encourages potential successors to view themselves as custodians of the family enterprise rather than mere beneficiaries. Such cultural attributes foster cooperation among family members and facilitate effective succession planning, leadership transfer, and business continuity (Calabrò *et al.,* 2021).

The Theory further suggests that sustainability of family business is enhanced when successors embrace stewardship values that prioritize the welfare of the business over individual interests. Strong family cultures promote loyalty, knowledge transfer, intergenerational commitment, and the conservation of cherished shared organizational values, these cumulatively contribute to better succession outcomes as well as long-term sustainability (Madison *et al.,* 2022). Cultural practices that encourage mentorship, shared vision, and family cohesion also strengthen the willingness of successors to assume leadership responsibilities and sustain the business across generations.

The relevance of stewardship theory to this study in hinged on its ability to explains how culture can influence family business succession and subsequently affect family business sustainability. Stewardship-oriented cultures create an environment where successors are prepared to continue the family legacy, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful succession and sustained organizational performance. Consequently, Stewardship Theory offers a suitable theoretical basis for examining whether culture affects family business succession and sustainability.

2.2 Family Business Sustainability

Family business sustainability is the ability of a family-owned enterprise to maintain its economic viability, competitive advantage, social responsibility, and continuity across generations. Sustainability extends beyond financial performance and encompasses the preservation of family values, organizational identity, stakeholder relationships, and long-term strategic objectives. Sustainable family businesses demonstrate the capacity to adapt to changing market conditions while maintaining the continuity of ownership and leadership within the family. The concept has gained increasing attention because a significant proportion of family firms fail to survive beyond the second or third generation due to succession-related challenges and governance weaknesses (Ratten *et al.,* 2022).

Family business sustainability is influenced by several factors, including effective governance systems, strategic planning, innovation capability, family cohesion, and succession preparedness. Sustainable family firms often balance economic objectives with socioemotional wealth considerations, emphasizing both business performance and family legacy preservation (De Massis *et al.,* 2021). This balance enables family businesses to pursue long-term growth strategies while protecting family interests and maintaining stakeholder confidence. Evidence suggests that firms with clear governance structures and well-defined succession plans are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability than those that rely solely on informal management practices (Mazzola *et al.,* 2023).

Kammerlander *et al.* (2020) reveal that sustainability is strengthened when family members share a common vision regarding the future of the enterprise. Strong family relationships, trust, and commitment support strategic continuity and facilitate leadership transitions during generational changes (Baù *et al.,* 2022). Furthermore, sustainable family businesses invest in successor development, innovation, and organizational learning to remain competitive in dynamic business environments. The integration of family values with professional management practices enhances resilience and business continuity. Consequently, family business sustainability depends on the successful alignment of family objectives, organizational strategies, and succession processes. Effective sustainability practices ensure that family firms remain productive, competitive, and capable of transferring ownership and leadership responsibilities across generations without compromising business performance or family harmony.

2.2.1 Family Culture

Family culture is the shared values, beliefs, traditions, norms, and behavioral expectations that guide interactions among family members and influence decision-making processes within a family business (Chua *et al.,* 2022). In family-owned firms, culture serves as a fundamental mechanism through which knowledge, values, and leadership philosophies are transmitted from one generation to another. Family culture shapes attitudes toward ownership, management participation, succession planning, conflict resolution, and long-term business continuity. A strong family culture promotes trust, commitment, cohesion, and cooperation among family members, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of governance structures and strategic decisions (Erdogan *et al.,* 2020).

Calabrò *et al.* (2021) indicated that family culture significantly influences the strategic direction of family businesses. Shared family values often encourage stewardship behavior, whereby family members prioritize the long-term welfare of the business over short-term personal gains. Such cultural orientations support business continuity, preserve organizational identity, and facilitate the transfer of tacit knowledge across generations (Calabrò *et al.,* 2021). Family culture also affects the willingness of successors to participate in the business and accept leadership responsibilities. Families that promote open communication, mutual respect, and collective decision-making tend to experience smoother succession processes and reduced intergenerational conflicts (Kammerlander *et al.,* 2020).

Cultural attributes such as commitment to legacy, family unity, and shared vision create an environment that supports effective leadership transfer and strategic continuity (Miroshnychenko *et al.,* 2021). Conversely, cultures characterized by excessive control, favoritism, or resistance to change may hinder succession outcomes and threaten business survival. Strong family cultures are therefore essential for sustaining family enterprises across generations because they provide the social foundation required for succession planning, leadership development, and organizational stability. Family culture remains a critical determinant of family business sustainability and succession success in contemporary business environments.

H01: Culture does not have significant effect on sustainability of family business

2.2.2 Family Business Succession

Family business succession refers to the planned transfer of ownership, management responsibilities, leadership authority, and decision-making power from one generation of a family business to the next. Succession is widely regarded as one of the most critical stages in the life cycle of a family enterprise because it determines whether the business will continue to operate successfully after the departure of the incumbent leader. Effective succession involves identifying suitable successors, preparing them for leadership roles, and establishing formal processes that ensure continuity and organizational stability (Nordqvist *et al.,* 2021).
Succession planning is a strategic process that requires early preparation and active involvement of both incumbents and potential successors. Research has demonstrated that successful succession depends on factors such as leadership development, family relationships, communication quality, governance structures, and cultural alignment within the family business (Porfírio *et al.,* 2022). Families that encourage knowledge sharing, mentorship, and participation in business activities often develop successors who possess the competence and confidence required to assume leadership responsibilities. Structured succession planning reduces uncertainty, minimizes conflicts, and enhances stakeholder confidence during leadership transitions (Chua *et al.,* 2022).

Miroshnychenko *et al.* (2021) indicates that family culture plays a significant role in shaping succession outcomes. Cultural values influence successor selection, leadership expectations, decision-making processes, and the willingness of family members to support the transition process (Miroshnychenko *et al.,* 2021). Positive cultural attributes such as trust, commitment, and shared vision facilitate smooth transitions, whereas cultural rigidity and family conflicts may hinder succession effectiveness. Successful succession contributes directly to family business sustainability by ensuring continuity of leadership, preservation of organizational knowledge, and maintenance of strategic direction. Consequently, succession should not be viewed as a single event but as a continuous process that prepares future leaders while preserving the values and objectives of the family enterprise. Well-managed succession enhances business survival and increases the likelihood of sustaining the family business across multiple generations.

H02: Succession planning does not have significant effect on sustainability family businesses.

2.3 Empirical Review

Recent empirical studies have examined the role of culture in shaping succession processes and the long-term sustainability of family businesses. Culture influences leadership transfer, successor acceptance, continuity planning, and the preservation of family values across generations. Evidence suggests that strong cultural foundations contribute significantly to successful succession outcomes and business continuity. A study by Miroshnychenko et al. (2021) investigated family business succession and found that family values, traditions, and shared beliefs significantly influence succession decisions and successor commitment. The study concluded that businesses with strong cultural alignment between incumbents and successors experienced smoother leadership transitions and greater continuity. Research conducted by Calabrò *et al.* (2021) examined the relationship between socioemotional wealth and succession outcomes in family firms. The findings revealed that family culture strengthens succession effectiveness through the preservation of family identity and commitment to transgenerational continuity. Firms that emphasized cultural continuity reported higher succession success rates.

Similarly, Erdogan *et al.* (2022) found that cultural values embedded within family firms positively influenced successor preparedness and leadership acceptance. The study established that successors who were socialized into the family's business culture demonstrated stronger leadership capabilities and commitment to organizational sustainability. A study by Porfírio *et al.* (2022) reported that organizational culture significantly affects strategic succession planning in family enterprises. The findings indicated that businesses with clearly defined family values and traditions were more likely to implement formal succession plans that enhanced long-term sustainability. Furthermore, Razzak *et al.* (2023) examined family firms across multiple countries and found that cultural cohesion positively influenced succession readiness and business survival. Strong family cultures promoted trust, reduced succession conflicts, and enhanced intergenerational knowledge transfer.

More recently, Santos *et al.* (2024) found that family culture contributes significantly to business sustainability through its influence on succession planning and leadership continuity. The study concluded that firms that preserved family values while adapting to changing business environments were more likely to sustain operations across generations. The reviewed studies demonstrate that culture plays a significant role in family business

succession and sustainability. Existing evidence consistently indicates that strong family values, traditions, and shared beliefs facilitate effective succession processes, strengthen successor commitment, and promote the long-term continuity of family businesses.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach using a descriptive survey design to examine whether culture affects family business succession and sustainability among family-owned businesses in Cross River State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it facilitates the collection of data from a relatively large population and enables the examination of relationships among study variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The population of the study comprised 210 employees drawn from 10 registered family businesses operating across different sectors in Cross River State, Nigeria. Employees were selected because they possess adequate knowledge of the cultural practices, succession processes, and sustainability strategies implemented within their respective family businesses. A structured questionnaire was developed and utilized as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of items measuring family culture, family business succession, and family business sustainability. The instrument was designed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Content and construct validity of the instrument were established through expert evaluation and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). CFA was conducted to assess the adequacy of the measurement model and determine whether the observed variables adequately represented the latent constructs of family culture, family business succession, and family business sustainability (Hair et al., 2022). Internal consistency reliability of the measurement scales was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and Composite Reliability (CR). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was employed to assess convergent validity.

Data screening procedures were performed prior to analysis. Missing values were examined and treated appropriately. Assumptions of multivariate analysis, including normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, were assessed to ensure the suitability of the data for further statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and responses.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the structural relationships among family culture, family business succession, and family business sustainability. SEM was considered appropriate because it enables the simultaneous assessment of measurement and structural models and provides robust estimates of direct relationships among latent variables (Kline, 2023). Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and AMOS software packages, while all hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

4.0 Results

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to determine whether the measurement items adequately represented the latent constructs of family culture (FC), family business succession (FBS), and family business sustainability (FBSU). Items with factor loadings below 0.50 were removed from the measurement model. One item from family culture and one item from family business succession were deleted due to low factor loadings. The model fit statistics revealed that the measurement model achieved acceptable goodness-of-fit indices. The chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was 2.184, Root Mean Square Error

of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.069, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.942, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.061. These values satisfied the recommended thresholds for acceptable model fit (Hair *et al.,* 2022; Kline, 2023). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.801 to 0.886, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.817 to 0.892, while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.529 to 0.674. These values exceeded the recommended thresholds of 0.70 for CR and 0.50 for AVE.

Table 1: Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Constructs	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Family Culture (FC)	FC1	0.82	0.886	0.892	0.674
	FC2	0.85			
	FC3	0.79			
	FC4	Deleted			
	FC5	0.81			
Family Business Succession (FBS)	FBS1	0.77	0.801	0.817	0.529
	FBS2	0.74			
	FBS3	Deleted			
	FBS4	0.76			
	FBS5	0.71			
Family Business Sustainability (FBSU)	FBSU1	0.83	0.857	0.874	0.635
	FBSU2	0.80			
	FBSU3	0.79			
	FBSU4	0.81			
	FBSU5	0.78			

$\chi^2/df = 2.184$; RMSEA = 0.069; CFI = 0.942; SRMR = 0.061

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the characteristics of the study variables. The analysis revealed that all constructs recorded relatively high mean scores, indicating positive perceptions among employees regarding family culture, succession practices, and sustainability within family businesses.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Constructs	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Family Culture	210	1	5	4.281	0.724	0.524
Family Business Succession	210	1	5	4.143	0.781	0.610
Family Business Sustainability	210	1	5	4.356	0.697	0.486
Valid N (listwise)	210					

4.3 Normality Test

Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Shapiro-Wilk test, skewness, and kurtosis statistics. The significance values obtained from both tests were greater than 0.05. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable ranges of ±1 and ±2 respectively, indicating normal distribution of the data.

Table 3: Summary of Normality Test Results

Constructs	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Sig.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Family Culture	0.081	0.094	-0.124	-0.211
Family Business Succession	0.073	0.087	-0.097	-0.184
Family Business Sustainability	0.066	0.079	-0.115	-0.236

The results confirmed that the data were normally distributed and suitable for further analysis.

4.4 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity was assessed using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The tolerance values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.20, while the VIF values were below 5.00, indicating the absence of multicollinearity among the predictor variables.

Table 4: Summary of Multicollinearity Test Results

Constructs	Tolerance	VIF
Family Culture	0.612	1.634
Family Business Succession	0.612	1.634

The findings indicated that the independent variables were sufficiently distinct and suitable for inclusion in the structural model.

4.5 Heteroscedasticity Test

The Glejser test was performed to determine the presence of heteroscedasticity. The significance values obtained for the independent variables were greater than 0.05, indicating homoscedasticity.

Table 5: Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variables	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Constant	-2.841	1.092	-2.602	0.106
Family Culture	0.163	0.228	0.715	0.192
Family Business Succession	0.117	0.206	0.568	0.241

The results confirmed that heteroscedasticity was not a concern in the data set.

4.6 Structural Modelling

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the effect of family culture and family business succession on family business sustainability. SEM was considered appropriate because it enables the simultaneous estimation of relationships among latent constructs while accounting for measurement errors (Hair *et al.,* 2022; Kline, 2023). Path analysis was conducted to examine the direct influence of family culture (FC) and family business succession (FBS) on family business sustainability (FBSU). The standardized regression weights revealed that family culture contributed 42% to family business sustainability, while family business succession contributed 58% to family business sustainability. The results suggest that both constructs play important roles in promoting the continuity and long-term survival of family-owned businesses in Cross River State, Nigeria.

The path model indicated that positive cultural values, shared beliefs, family cohesion, and commitment to family legacy enhance sustainability outcomes. Similarly, effective

succession planning, successor preparation, and structured leadership transition contribute significantly to sustaining family businesses across generations.

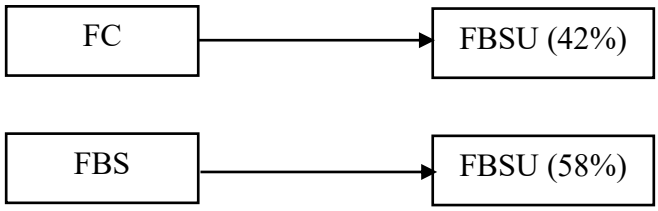


Figure 1

Path diagram showing standardized regression weights estimates of the relationship between Family Culture (FC), Family Business Succession (FBS), and Family Business Sustainability (FBSU).

Table 6: Summary of Direct Influence of Family Culture and Family Business Succession on Family Business Sustainability

Hypotheses	Constructs	Path	Constructs	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Result
H_1	Family Business Sustainability	<---	Family Culture	0.482	0.051	9.451	0.000	Significant
H_2	Family Business Sustainability	<---	Family Business Succession	0.673	0.047	14.319	0.000	Significant

The result revealed that family culture has a significant positive effect on family business sustainability ($\beta = 0.482$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that a one-unit improvement in positive family cultural practices is associated with a 0.482-unit increase in family business sustainability. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that culture does not have a significant effect on family business sustainability was rejected. The analysis further showed that family business succession has a significant positive effect on family business sustainability ($\beta = 0.673$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that improvements in succession planning and leadership transition processes increase family business sustainability by 0.673 units. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that family business succession does not have a significant effect on family business sustainability was rejected. The findings demonstrate that both family culture and succession practices contribute significantly to sustaining family-owned businesses across generations.

Table 7: Summary of Goodness-of-Fit Indices of the Structural Model

Model	Chi-square/df	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	P-value
Direct Effect Model	2.317	0.072	0.951	0.944	0.932	0.000

The goodness-of-fit indices revealed that the structural model achieved an acceptable fit. The chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio ($\chi^2/df = 2.317$), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.072), Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.951), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI = 0.944), and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI = 0.932) satisfied the recommended thresholds for model adequacy (Hair *et al.,* 2022; Kline, 2023). The results confirm that the structural model adequately explains the relationships among family culture, family business succession, and family business sustainability.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

Family culture has a significant and positive effect on family business sustainability.

The results of the study showed that family culture has a significant positive effect on family business sustainability. The finding was supported by an estimated coefficient of 0.482 and p-value of 0.000, signifying statistical significance. The result suggests that family businesses characterized by strong shared values, trust, family cohesion, commitment, and collective responsibility are more likely to achieve continuity and sustainability across generations. Strong family cultures facilitate knowledge transfer, preserve organizational identity, and encourage stewardship behaviour among family members. Employees in family businesses where cultural values are clearly communicated tend to support organizational goals and contribute to long-term continuity. Positive family culture also enhances commitment to family legacy and strengthens cooperation amongst members of the family family during times of transition. This finding aligns with Maseda *et al.* (2022), who reported that family values and culture contribute significantly to transgenerational entrepreneurship and business continuity. Furthermore, Calabrò *et al.* (2021), observed that strong family values and commitment to family identity enhance resilience and continuity in family firms. Similarly, Miller *et al.* (2023) found that cultural cohesion remains a critical determinant of long-term sustainability in family-owned enterprises.

Family business succession has a significant positive effect on family business sustainability

The findings further revealed that family business succession has a significant positive effect on family business sustainability. The estimated coefficient of 0.673 and p-value of 0.000 indicate that succession planning contributes substantially to the sustainability of family businesses. Successful succession ensures continuity of leadership, preserves organizational knowledge, reduces uncertainty during leadership transitions, and promotes long-term strategic direction. Family businesses that identify and prepare competent successors are more likely to survive generational transitions and maintain operational stability. Effective succession planning also reduces conflicts among family members and improves stakeholder confidence in the future of the business. The finding aligns with Chua *et al.* (2022), who emphasized that succession planning remains one of the strongest determinants of family business continuity. The result is also consistent with De Massis et al. (2021), who found that effective succession enhances innovation, continuity, and sustainability in family enterprises. Furthermore, Porfírio et al. (2022) reported that structured succession planning strengthens organizational survival and long-term competitiveness in family-owned businesses.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined whether culture affects family business succession and sustainability among family-owned businesses in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that family culture significantly influences family business sustainability. The study also established that family business succession has a significant positive effect on sustainability. The results demonstrate that family businesses characterized by strong values, shared beliefs, family unity, trust, and commitment are more likely to achieve long-term continuity. Effective succession planning strengthens leadership transition processes, preserves organizational knowledge, and promotes sustainable business performance across generations. The study concludes that family culture and family business succession constitute important determinants of family business sustainability. Family businesses seeking long-term survival should strengthen positive cultural practices and implement formal succession strategies that prepare future leaders for successful leadership transitions.

Based on the foregoing, it was recommended among: family business owners should cultivate strong cultural values that promote trust, commitment, cooperation, shared vision, and family cohesion among family members. The recognition of the centrality of succession

as a critical success factor and institutionalization of succession planning processes at an early stage to ensure smooth leadership transitions and continuity. Furthermore, founders should provide potential successors with adequate managerial training, mentorship opportunities, and practical business experience before leadership transfer. Lastly, family firms should establish formal governance structures that support transparency, accountability, and effective decision-making during succession processes.

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