2021

# Succession Planning as a Strategy to Reduce Attrition in Advertising Agencies in Nigeria

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College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

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by

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MBA, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, 2001

MCAM, CAM Foundation, 1984

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

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Abstract

An advertising agency is a professional service organization where workers create advertisements for the media on behalf of clients. The general problem was that leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria were challenged with a high attrition rate, which was 43% in 2017, up from 40% in 2015. Attrition leads to the premature promotion of ill-prepared managers. The specific problem was that leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria seem to lack strategies for succession planning. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning in terms of whether plans succeeded or not. The 3-phase leader-member exchange model was the theoretical lens for this study. The focus of the research question was to explore lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding the phenomenon of interest. Data were collected via semi-structured audio-taped face-to-face interviews and field notes from a homogeneous purposive sample of 22 participants. Data collected were analyzed using the modified van Kaam model. Findings revealed that participants were aware of and used a good work environment, open management culture, talent management strategies such as succession planning, career development programs, compensation, equity, mentoring, and non-monetary perks to retain employees because they provide emotional and economic satisfaction. Findings may contribute to social change by influencing the improvement of people management, thereby boosting morale, retention, productivity, and continuity.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to God, my wife, Victoria O. Akinde, and my family

who gave me their unwavering support towards the attainment of this dream. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Despite extensive literature on the benefits and implications of succession planning for organizational continuity and sustainability, the phenomenon has remained an under-researched area in advertising practice. The advertising industry consists of three autonomous but interdependent sectors: advertising agencies, advertisers (who are the clients), and media houses (Fletcher, 1999). Knowledge workers in an advertising agency, which is a professional service organization, perform specialized functions such as the creation of advertising materials targeted at consumers through placement in the media on behalf of their clients (Arens & Bovee, 1994). Advertising contributed $3.4 trillion to the U.S. GDP in 2014, directly and indirectly, promoted $7.4 trillion in U.S. economic activities in 2019, contributed nearly 20% to the US GDP, and supported more than 23 million U.S. jobs in 2019, according to Association of National Advertisers (ANA, 2020). In Nigeria, it provided $465 billion in 2011, or 1% of the GDP. Advertising in Nigeria is estimated to exceed $1 trillion or more than 2% of her GDP, inclusive of other promotional items (Chawla, 2015). However, the agency sector of the advertising industry is faced with instability and uncertainty due to attrition challenges.

Leaders in advertising agencies have focused on other pressing issues such as growth and drive for a share of the $584 billion revenue market (Statista, 2019). This is at the expense of succession planning to develop and retain employees for long-term organizational sustainability (Kay, 2010; McLellan, 2015). Given the pivotal role of employees in the growth of organizations, attrition or employee turnover challenges in the sector, and the importance of succession planning for continuity and sustainability, it

is imperative to explore lived experiences of leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning.

This chapter contains the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of study, research questions, conceptual framework, and nature of the study. It also contains definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, the significance of the study, and implications for social change. I conclude the chapter with a summary and transition to Chapter 2.

## Background

Advertising is a profession in Nigeria (Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria [APCON], 2004). In Nigeria, advertising is as old as the nation. The practice commenced with hawking and open announcement of products and services in private and public domains. The practice has grown into a multi-billion Naira industry (Olatunji, 2018). The total advertising budget for 2019 in Nigeria was valued at $450 million (N162 billion). This excludes branding, marketing, and promotions (Myburgh & Stuart, 2019). Advertising contributes immensely to the GDP of a country. It is 20% in the U.S., 15% in major G20 economies, and 12% in Nigeria (Association of Advertising Agencies in Nigeria [AAAN], 2020; Association of National Advertisers [ANA], 2020; Chawla, 2015).

The first formal advertising practice in Nigeria was set up as an in-house advertising agency of the United African Company (UAC). It was called West African Publicity Limited and was incorporated in 1928. It was later renamed Lever International Advertising Services (LINTAS). By early 2020, there were 88 registered advertising

agencies in Nigeria (AAAN, 2020). A common feature with advertising agencies worldwide is their preference to be formally named and registered with acronyms for convenience. Few Nigerian advertising agencies are affiliated with four of the global traditional full-service advertising and marketing services groups. Ogilvy Nigeria, and LTC Nigeria are owned by WPP Group which owns Ogilvy, VMLY&R, Wunderman, J. Walter Thompson, and Grey, and some media independent networks. TBWA Nigeria, BBDO, and DDB is part of OmniComm group which owns the media network OMD. Insight Communication, S, O, & U are in Publicis Groupe which now owns Saatchi & Saatchi, Leo Burnett, BBH, and some digital marketing outfits. STB McCanns and Interpublic owns McCann Worldgroup which includes FCB and a group of creative boutiques, public relations, and digital agencies. Noah's Ark is with Dentsu.

The attrition rate in the Nigerian advertising agency is high, causing early mortality and weakening of most agencies in the sector. The global average agency turnover in 2015 was 30% (Duggan, 2015). In South Africa, the annual attrition of knowledge workers is 17.75%, while in Nigeria, it was 43% in 2017, up from 40% in 2015 (AAAN, 2019; Bussin & Brigman, 2019). High attrition rates were caused by a sudden group of employees' exit called breakaways and individual employee exits that left most organizations without succession planning and in unstable and uncertain situations (Dyck & Starke, 1999; Falaye, 2019). Prabhakar and Gowthami (2013) said 70% of all succession planning was not successful. However, organizational leaders should apply succession planning to solve issues involving attrition, workers' turnover, and abrupt loss of employees caused by death, retirement, resignation, deployment, and

promotion. This can be achieved by ensuring that suitable employees, including new graduates, move into vacant positions (Ali & Mehreen, 2019; Jones et al., 2017).

Flourentzou (2014) said due to the conventional linear process of talent development recruitment, deployment, development, and retention strategies, succession planning should be informed and driven by organizational needs. Most family businesses' approach to succession planning focused on "the job titles of their organization charts" (Flourentzou, 2014, p. 44), instead of competence and long-term development of organizations. Creta and Gross (2020) said succession planning could be used to solve the problem of vacant positions caused by employee exit or promotion. This involves using succession planning activities to support nurses during presentations of case studies, knowledge sharing orientation, and continuing education to develop in-depth disease-specific treatment and symptom management knowledge. Schoonover (2015) said any successful succession planning program must have three elements: high-level organizational support from leadership to bottom, staff commitment and competencies, and a high level of decentralized supports, tools, training, and technology. Hence, a succession planning program in an organization should not be standardized, but tailored to organizational needs (Rosenthal et al., 2019).

For over a century, advertising has been a subject of interest for formal investigation for researchers (Llewllyn,2019). Much has been written regarding advertising, its origins, ownership, structure, content of advertisements, creativity, campaign planning, media or vehicles of advertising, and jobs in the advertising agency. There is a shortage of validated studies written directly on succession planning and

employee retention in the agency sector of the advertising industry. Thus, a gap in literature exists in this field. It is imperative to explore lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies regarding succession planning with the intent of decreasing challenges of continuous high attrition or turnover intentions of knowledge workers in the sector.

## Problem Statement

Insensitivity to succession creates uncertainty about the future of the sector. This leads to turnover and ineffective succession decisions such as promotion of employees who are ill-prepared for upper ranks (Faleye, 2019; Lee, 2016; Vongani & Clever, 2016). The general problem is that despite the global advertising budget of over $584 billion as of 2017, the lack of deliberate commitment to succession planning by leaders in most advertising agencies is affecting the stability and growth of the sector, thereby creating uncertainty in that sector.

The specific problem is that leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria seem to lack strategies for succession planning. In Nigeria, the attrition rate was 43% in 2017, up from 40% in 2015 (AAAN, 2019). Understanding what motivates employees to stay in an organization is crucial to keeping a people-first culture in an advertising agency, as well as a pathway towards the process of transforming the sector's pattern of managerial behavior towards talent management in Nigeria. This is a specific knowledge gap among leadership of advertising agencies in Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not. Adopting this approach will help in ascribing meaning to lived experiences of participants regarding employee retention through the application of succession planning. This study was to capture participants' lived experiences regarding outcomes of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition.

**Research Question**

Patton (2015) said to achieve the purpose of a specific qualitative study, such as this transcendental phenomenological study, the researcher must ask appropriate research questions. The overarching research question for this study is: What are the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition? I used the basic qualitative research approach to explore the lived experiences and meanings ascribed to succession planning by participants.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study was Scandura and Pellegrini's three-phased leader-member exchange (LMX) model. The approach involves leader and employee relations within the context of an organization via three phases. The first phase, which is the stranger phase, is when the leader and member play independent organizational roles, referred to as "cash and carry economic exchange", with little or no loyalty. This phase is characterized by low-quality or level leader-member-

exchange(LMX) due to a lack of caring and commitment. The next phase is the

acquaintance phase where the leader and member share information at personal and work

levels in their workplaces. However, if the partnership or closer relationship fails to

develop, it reverts to the stranger phase with possibly low job satisfaction and higher

turnover intentions. The next phase is the maturity stage or mature partnership where the

relationship between the leader and member becomes emotional with demands for

loyalty, mutual trust, and support. A breach by either side creates trends in attrition such

as resignation or involuntary turnover of employees including employee layoffs (Duggan,

2015; Fisher, 1916; Lee, 2016). Advertising agencies need to be energized via employee

support, career investments, mentoring (Patwardhan et al., 2018), focusing resources on

employee retention, and talent management (Lee, 2016; Pandita & Sampurna, 2018)

because agencies that lack succession planning strategies would be weaker in human

resources (Faleye, 2019). During the maturity or partnership stage of the leader-member

relationship, the relationship between the leader and member develops emotionally.

There is leader support, member's trust in the relationship or partnership grows. A breach

of trust by either the leader or member leads voluntary or involuntary exit of the member.

## Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was qualitative. The qualitative research method is ideal

for exploring the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding

succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition, which is the focus of this study. The

qualitative approach is suitable because it is a method for gathering data that can reveal

lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria. A descriptive

phenomenological approach was used by me to generate an understanding of firsthand lived experiences of the phenomenon under study. I used the descriptive phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria on succession planning.

The quantitative research method was not recommended because of its incompatibility with the requirements of this study. This study is not about collecting numerical data for analysis using mathematically based methods such as statistics. Mujis (2011) said, "to be able to use mathematically based methods our data have to be in numerical form. This is not the case for qualitative research. Qualitative data are not necessarily numerical, and therefore cannot be analyzed using statistics" (p. 2). The population for this study consisted of chief executive officers, managing directors, client service and creative directors, senior managers, and nonserving directors in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The individuals in the target population shared the same characteristics and were managers who had experience involving the implementation of succession planning strategies to reduce attrition, whether they succeeded or not, in advertising agencies in Nigeria.

Although Daniel (2012) suggested between six and 10 participants for a phenomenological study of this nature where the nonprobability sampling technique is applied, I considered the sample size recommendation as too low to achieve saturation for this kind of study. Therefore, I opted for the application of the ad hoc convention to determine the sample size and proposed a sample of 18 participants. Walden University's policy for sample size for qualitative phenomenological studies was 20 or until saturation

occurs. Hence, the sample size for this study was 20 or until saturation occurred. A sample of 22 participants was selected via a purposeful sampling strategy through a homogeneous selection of participants within the study population of 88 registered advertising agencies in Nigeria. I applied the homogeneity rule, which holds that the more homogeneous the population in terms of the study of interest, the fewer the elements required to represent the population to determine the sampling strategy

I used semi-structured audio-taped face-to-face interviews for this study. I collected interview data through audio recordings and field notes to achieve data triangulation and data saturation. Data were gathered from a homogeneous purposive sample of chief executives, managing directors, client service and creative directors, senior managers, and nonserving directors of advertising agencies in Nigeria via face-to-face interviews that ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted with questions that focused on meaning in terms of what was experienced in a relaxed setting. This was to guarantee the most appropriate and articulate contributions. This homogeneous sample informed me of their lived experiences regarding the implementation and outcomes of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria.

In this study, I applied the rich and thick principle which was to achieve a balance between quantity and quality of data. During data collection, after 20 participants, I achieved data saturation when I realized that the data collected contained answers to all research questions. Usher and Jackson (2017) created the data saturation plus two conventions to reconfirm data saturation and ensure that no further insights emerged

regarding the phenomenon under study. Therefore, I ceased further data collection because saturation was reached.

I carried out verbatim transcriptions of audio-taped interviews initially using Otter, and had to combine this with manual transcriptions because of textual concerns. I sent verbatim transcripts to all 22 participants through individual emails for member checking. This was to be sure that verbatim transcripts agreed with interpretation of their expressions and meanings conveyed in interviews before commencing data analysis. 21 participants validated their verbatim transcripts with little or no corrections, but one participant had an issue attaching his transcripts to the email, and after many days of failed trials, data analysis was commenced for only 21 validated verbatim transcripts.

The method of data analysis in this study was the modified Van Kaam method of analysis for phenomenological data. This involves the process of preliminary coding, grouping relevant quotes, reduction and elimination of irrelevant quotes, and exploring and grouping of quotes with themes that are examined against the dataset to ensure representation of participants' experiences (Adams & van Manen, 2012; Usher & Jackson, 2017). Having experienced challenges using NVivo, a brand of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (QDA-NVivo), I opted for manual data analysis because of the limitations of QDA software. Evers (2011) said, "the interpretation of qualitative data cannot be done by deductively organized automated tools but needs the human eye and interpretive act using an inductive and maybe even abductive approach" (p. 41). The modified Van Kaam method for phenomenological data analysis in this study was rigorous with structured processes. These processes involved observation of epoche

protocol (bracketing) to avoid bias, manual organization, and analysis of transcribed data to develop individual textual and structural descriptions.

## Definition of Terms

*Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN)*: A voluntary association that is responsible for the self-regulation of the agency sector of the advertising industry in Nigeria, according to the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON, 2012).

*Account:* A client of an advertising agency that solicits professional services (Arens & Bovee, 1994).

*Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN):* A voluntary association of all profit and nonprofit organizations whose products and services are aimed at all types of consumers (ADVAN, 2020).

*Advertiser:* A person or organization who causes an advertisement to be produced and is the sponsor and beneficiary of such advertisements (APCON, 2012).

*Advertising*: A form of communication via the media involving products, services, and ideas paid for by an identified sponsor (APCON, 2012).

*Advertising agency:* A service organization with creative and business people who provide clients with specialized services such as commissioning research, creating and producing advertisements, planning and developing media schedules, booking of media space and media spots, and providing marketing services consultancy (Arens & Bovee, 1994; Vos, 2013).

*Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON):* APCON is mandated with the following responsibilities: (a) determine who is an advertising practitioner, (b) set standards of knowledge required of such practitioners, (c) compile and maintain a register of practitioners, (d) regulate and control the practice of advertising, (e) conduct examinations in the profession, and (f) other functions (APCON, 2004).

*Bench strength:* A group of employees in readiness for deployment to replace key personnel through vertical or lateral moves (Schoonover, 2015).

*Billings:* The total value of business handled by an advertising agency in a given period. It is also called gross turnover (Arens & Bovee, 1994).

*Breakaway:* The sudden mass resignation of employees, usually a group of employees from an advertising agency to establish another adverting agency (Dyck & Starke, 1999).

*Campaign:* A nonlinear organized cause of action, systematically planned to achieve predefined objectives (Fletcher, 1999).

*Copywriter:* A specialist who writes briefs and scripts for advertising campaigns for press and other promotional material. Copywriters are usually employed by an advertising agency and work in the creative department (Arens & Bovee, 1994).

*Media commission:* Traditional income of 15% earned on spaces and spots purchased for clients. The advertiser pays the agency the total cost of the media space and spots while the advertising agency pays the media house cost minus the commission of 15% (Arens & Bovee, 1994).

*Pitch:* Competitive agencies' presentation to a client or potential client (Onuorah, 2010).

*Poaching:* The discreet headhunting of talent in the advertising industry (AAAN, 2019).

*Replacement hiring:* A category of succession planning that is used to identify one or two potential candidates for top-level leadership positions. It is usually a reactive approach to filling a leadership position (Schoonover, 2015).

*Service fee:* Predetermined professional charge made by an advertising agency or public relations firm and for clients (Onuorah, 2010).

### Assumptions

The following assumptions are critical to the study. First, I expected participants had unrestricted access to detailed information regarding the implementation and outcomes of succession planning in their respective advertising agencies in Nigeria, due to their status. Secondly, I assumed that the selected sample of the leaders in advertising agencies provided honest answers to interview questions.

Finally, I assumed that leaders of the advertising agencies relived their lived experiences regarding the phenomenon without bias. I was focusing on the leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria with regards to their lived experiences regarding the phenomenon of interest.

**Scope and Delimitations**

The specific focus for this study was exploring outcomes of lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition. The focus of this study was not gender. The goal was to identify their level of understanding and any existing knowledge gaps regarding succession planning as a strategy for employee retention in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The sample for the study was drawn from the population which comprises chief executive officers, managing directors, client service and creative directors, senior managers, and nonserving directors in advertising agencies in Nigeria. All participants made decisions regarding organizational policies and had experience with succession planning to reduce attrition, whether they succeeded or not in advertising agencies in Nigeria. This study did not include non-decision makers in advertising agencies or media-independents agencies, creative boutiques, and brand consultants.

The conceptual foundation was Scandura and Pellgrini's three-phased LMX model. The first phase is the early or stranger stage, where leaders and members play an independent organizational role with little or no loyalty and socializing, and the second or acquaintance stage is where information is shared at personal and work levels in their workplaces. The reason for this study was to learn how to bring improvement to the agency sector of the advertising industry in Nigeria. Dick (2014) said, "Whenever some learning has taken place, it can be argued that some form of generalization or transferability has been achieved" (p. 786-787). Therefore, the findings of this study have the potential for transferability.

**Limitations**

Potential limitations of the design and methodological weaknesses of this transcendental phenomenological study in terms of trustworthiness of processes were addressed by applying the epoche principle, my openness, and transparent presentation of all methodological processes. Further, I applied the epoche process to bracket all preconceived ideas and biases about the phenomenon of interest. Due to the human nature of the study, I also maintained a seamless audit trail to the point of additionally documenting the research processes to my faculty, and the trustworthiness of this study can be tracked, reviewed, and replicated with the possibility of similar outcomes. This study had three potential limitations.

The first was a potential challenge is COVID-19 protocols restriction in Nigeria which may affect the state of mind of the participants because of the "new normal" caused by the pandemic crisis.COVID-19 protocols such as wearing face masks, using hand sanitizers, and social distancing were observed. The second limitation was that the criteria used in selecting the homogenous sample did not include gender, educational qualifications, and years of working experience which are likely to influence the nature of data collection on the phenomenon of interest. Future researchers should consider the inclusion of demographic indicators which have the potential of influencing the nature of collected data. The third limitation is that findings cannot be generalized as a reflection of leaders of advertising agencies universally because observations and events that occur in the study are defined by specific contexts.

**Significance**

This study was imperative because it addressed two important areas with

significant benefits to the field. The first was succession planning as a strategy for

reducing attrition in a typical advertising agency. Secondly, the study is a response to the

continuous call for more qualitative studies in succession research as revealed in the

management literature (Gianbatista et al, 2005; Kesna & Sebora,1994). The use of the

rigorous Moustakas' modified Van Kaam method of data analysis in this

phenomenological study has the potential of achieving the field's methodological and

theoretical expectations.

**Significance to Practice**

Although employees expect encouragement and career investments from their

leaders, there was evidence as revealed by the attrition rates that the leaders do not fully

understand the nature of people management investment in advertising agencies in

Nigeria (Faleye, 2019; Scandura & Pellgrini, 2008). The significance of this study to

practice is that it may lead to an understanding of the importance of strategies such as

succession planning that leaders in advertising agencies need to lessen the attrition

problems they are experiencing. Leaders may use findings in the study as a tool to

address challenges involving employee retention. Advertising agency leaders may use

findings of this study for better retention of employees through the application of

appropriate succession planning strategies.

Advertising practice in Nigeria has undergone major developments since its

inception to meet the demands of a changing global business community. There has been

little or no development in advertising management practice with regards to succession culture involving succession planning as a strategy for employee retention in the agency sector of the advertising industry. An antecedent study of this nature has the potential of significantly contributing to the sector( Neil & Scchauster,2018; Wang et al., 2016).

As an advertising practitioner, I benefit from this study because of my involvement in ongoing advertising reform in the advertising industry in Nigeria, which involves improving advertising management practices.

**Significance to Theory**

Current literature on succession planning did not include the topic of a new framework for succession planning in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The study may be significant to theory because it has the potential of addressing valuable in-depth data regarding lived experiences of a sample of leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria. Findings may reveal useful information that will contribute to organizational development of advertising agencies in Nigeria. Findings may also offer the potential for further research among management scholars and researchers in institutions of highr learning. Qualitative data from this study has the potential of being useful in terms of future research on succession planning in advertising agencies. Data from this study has the potential of explicitly addressing and advancing who, what, where, why, and how questions in this study.

**Significance to Social Change**

Since organizations within the agency sector of the advertising industry are responsible for providing specialized functions for advertisers and advertising revenue for media sectors, their instability, failure, or collapse will negatively affect the incomes of families who depend on the income for economic survival. Affected employees will not be able to provide basic needs such as food, accommodation, medical care, and education for their families. Effective application of qualitative data from the study has the potential of influencing organizational stability and growth in the advertising industry. Findings from this study have the potential of being used for reducing attrition in advertising agencies, thus fostering organizational stability, cultures of empathy, improvement of organizational vision, and adoption of strategic change initiatives. This has the potential for controlling the failure or collapse of organizations within the advertising agency sector, reducing unemployment, preventing possible executive burnout, ill health, and suicide.

**Summary and Transition**

Chapter 1 contains the introduction to the study, background of the study, problem statement, purpose of study, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and implications for social change. It also addresses succession planning among advertising agencies in Nigeria which is an under-researched area in management literature. Globally, since 1951,  succession research has been dominated by archival data sources and quantitative analysis techniques (Kesna & Sebora,1994). It is then imperative

to conduct a study to explore lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning.

Chapter 2 contains a discussion of literature review strategies, including strategies adopted for the literature search. Also included are the conceptual framework upon which the study was built and a review of relevant literature. I examine available literature on succession planning, attrition and turnovers, and retention, and provided insight into Nigeria, the country, its people, economy, and the advertising industry. Finally, I describe the gap in the literature and conclude the chapter with a summary and conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

## Introduction

The specific problem is that leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria seem to lack strategies for succession planning. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning. Employee retention has become critical for management, and advertising agencies in Nigeria are experiencing attrition challenges. Organizations need to invest on employee support, career investments, commitment to employee retention, and talent management, because advertising agencies that lack succession planning strategies would be weakened. The semi-autonomous but interdependent relationship between advertisers, media owners, and advertising agencies urgently requires understanding unconventional strategies such as succession planning for employee retention (Fletcher,1999)

Succession planning enhances knowledge development and retention, builds employee morale, and discourages intentions to quit (Ali & Mehreen, 2019; Durst & Wilhelm, 2012; Hillman, 2018). A search through the literature on management, succession management, and succession plans, did not lead to valid concepts or models that targeted employee retention through succession planning in the advertising industry.

This chapter contains four sections. The first section includes the background of the study. The second section contains the strategy which I adopted for the literature search. I discussed the conceptual framework for the study within the context of a typical

advertising agency in the third section. Finally, I reviewed literature on succession planning.

## Literature Review Strategy

The systematic approach was the strategy that I used for the literature review(Cronin et al., 2008; Hek & Langton,2000). The intent is to generate an outcome that will be beneficial to the advertising practice as well as ensure its reliability and validity in terms of bias. I searched top peer-reviewed academic and business management journals and trade publication articles, seminal articles, and books. For journals, trade publications, and quality newspapers and magazines, searches were restricted to articles published from 2014 to 2021. Keywords used in databases were: *succession planning*, *succession planning in advertising agencies*, *job satisfaction in advertising agencies*, *employee retention*, *attrition rates*, and *trends in advertising agencies*. Some keywords were combined using Boolean operators.

Databases searched included ProQuest Central, EBSCO e-books, and Thoreau multi-databases. I also used the Walden University online library, Google scholar, Pan Atlantic University Library in Nigeria, four business and management databases: Communications and Mass Media Complete, Business Source Complete, Emerald Insight, and SAGE Journals. The literature search included key trade publications, business, management, and academic journals. Journals searched were specifically covered in the publication of *Financial Times*' top fifty (FT50) journals. Due to the scope of the topic, all 261 identified sources were appraised critically for accuracy, relevance, and credibility.

**Conceptual Framework**

The framework of this study was Scandura and Pellegrini's three-phased LMX model. The approach is used to address leader and employee relations within the context of an organization in three phases. The last phase is the maturity or partnership stage where the relationship between the leader and member becomes emotional with demands for loyalty, mutual trust, and support, but a breach on either side creates turnover intentions (Duggan, 2015; Lee, 2016). This stage has been so much of a challenge for leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria.

Exiting of employees from advertising agencies can be involuntary via dismissal, termination, or replacement or voluntary via group or individual resignation. Although the involuntary exit of employees is often associated with nonperformance and noncompliance with organizational codes of conduct, there is a paucity of literature involving reasons for experiencing employee turnover or attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria. Smith (2018) identified five behaviors that keep talent in the team: inclusion which involves a combination of one-on-one task orientations and open discussions, treating employees' opinions with respect, offering transformational rewards, support, and modeling self-respect. Leaders and subordinates should be supportive of each other and guided by Scandura and Pellegrini's LMX model.

Several scholars and practitioners are now advocating for management to point out the reasons for employee instability in their organizations (McConnell & Schaninger, 2019; Khan & Choudhary, 2020). Recent explanatory research on major factors for attrition i.e. "job insecurity" was conducted by Khan and Chaoudhary (2020) with a

sample size of 350, and the response was 258. It revealed a cumulative of 72.5% agreed

that job security was most important for their employees, and could influence turnover.

Faleye (2019) in citing industry observers, said: "Analysts believe that with the level of

job insecurity in the agency today, it is very difficult for employees to show commitment

and work tirelessly for the growth of the business" (p. 5).  It can then be advocated, that

organization that values continuity, sustainability, and success should embrace Henry

Fayol's (1841-1925) management principle of stability of tenure of personnel which

translates to job security, employees' contentment, and non-turnover intention (Essays,

UK 2018). Further, Rothwell (2005) argued that succession planning is the process that

can aid the stability of tenure of workers, and if the principle is ignored, Fayol (1841-

1925) was convinced that critical positions would be filled by ill-prepared workers.

In practical terms, employee satisfaction is a fundamental reason to continue to

stay in an organization, and it is based on current experiences and future expectations

from the organization, especially in terms of job embeddedness and career advancement.

Job embeddedness involves two perspectives: top-down and bottom-up (Ampofo et al.,

2017). However, since the introduction of the job-embedded theory by Mitchell et al.,

(2001), several scholars have called for more empirical studies to determine its process to

improve the LMX relationship. One of the responses to the calls was a study of

professional accountants in one of the largest corporations, and its numerous subsidiaries

and international joint ventures in Thailand, by Dechawatanapaisal (2017). The study was

conducted to investigate employees' perception of the relationship between human

resources practices such as reward, career development, job embeddedness, and job

satisfaction on quit intentions. The author used a convenience sampling approach to distribute 1300 electronically administered questionnaires. There was a 79% response rate. 72% of respondents were female and 28% male. 42.1% of the respondents were 30 year old and below, 26.5% were between 31 and 40 year old, 31.4% were 41 years old and above, 25% had worked in the organization for less than 3 years, 10.4% worked for 3 to 5 years, 48.1%, and worked for 10 years.

Dechawatanapaisal (2017) said 57.9% of who were 31 and above are most likely to be seeking involvement in seeking involvement in information sharing for job embeddedness with the intent to stay. These were some of the expectations of employees in the partnership or maturity phase of the LMX model. Younger inexperienced workers with higher educational qualifications tend to have a low level of satisfaction about jobs and less commitment to organizations and tend to quit jobs (Ma et al., 2003, as cited in Al Mamum & Hasan, 2017). Also, in practice, skilled or knowledgeable workers in critical positions who learned key techniques or confidential propriety information could lead a breakaway to set up new organizations or get poached by competition, as this is the tradition in advertising agencies.

Group exits are referred to as breakaways and individual employee exits continue in advertising agencies in Nigeria. it is imperative to conduct a study that explored the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria who applied succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in terms of whether they succeeded or not.

**Literature Review**

The objective of this literature review is to understand existing knowledge and

possibly identify gaps in the literature that are relevant to this study. Key sections in this literature cover succession planning, its definition, purpose, origin, and approaches, employee retention, succession planning as a retention strategy, and gaps in the literature that relate to the problem statement. Also, the section contains insight regarding Nigeria, its people, economy, and the advertising industry.

**Origin of Advertising Agencies**

Although commercial advertising was well established in ancient Greece, the first formal advertisement was produced in Britain in 1477. The Industrial Revolution brought mass production of goods, urbanization, mass circulation of the press, and the need to institutionalize the process of creating desires through mass-market advertising. Emerging economic conditions and changes in the market environment influenced the establishment of the first advertising agency by Volney B. Palmer in the USA in 1842 to service growing complex business transactions and identify effective media to publish advertisements, negotiate rates, supervise printers, confirm insertions, and collect and make payments between advertisers and media organizations. Agencies earn their income through commissions from media space sales to advertisers (Fletcher,1999).

As the business grew, the advertising sector grew, and globalization further influenced cross-border advertising practices in the industry. The advertising industry consists of three autonomous interdependent sectors: advertisers who are the clients, media houses, and advertising agencies. An advertising agency is a professional service organization where knowledge workers perform specialized functions such as creating advertising materials that are targeted at consumers through placement in the media on

behalf of clients (Arens & Bovee, 1994). Arens and Bovee (1994) referred to two categories of advertising agencies as full-service advertising agencies and smaller but specialized service agency-type groups called creative boutiques and media-independent companies, which are not within the scope of this study.

In these agencies, a wide scope of both advertising and non-advertising services that covers integrated marketing communications are offered to clients. Advertising services such as branding, account planning, creating and producing ads, conducting research, media selection, planning, and buying. Non-advertising services include public relations, sales promotion, and trade promotions, trade shows, and exhibitions. A full-service agency may be a general consumer agency where a wide variety of accounts such as consumer products, financial services, and industrial products are managed. Examples of global full-service advertising agencies are J.Walter Thompson, Bartle Bogle Hegarty, Saatchi and Saachi, and FCB, while Nigeria has Lintas, STBMcCanns, Prima Garnet Africa, TBWA, and BatesCosse among others. The Main form of remuneration is the traditional commission and Fee or retainership.

Globally, advertising agencies are either private or public liability companies. Some of the privately-owned agencies operate in partnerships. In Nigeria, of the 78 Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) all are privately owned, with 10 affiliated with multinational advertising agencies (Olatunji et al., 2016). The job functions and employees in the agencies under study are:

**Creative Concepts-**This function covers Copy and design development carried out in the creative Department which is comprised of art directors, graphic designers, and

production artists. The staff who develop copy and scripts that make up the message are called copywriters while print illustrations, layouts, and storyboards are developed by graphic artists.

**Advertising Production:** Print and Broadcast-The production executives work closely with the creative team. In reality, the production executive is part of the Creative function. Auxiliary services such as print, radio, and film production, sourcing of models, and props are carried in the production department through suppliers.

Administration-As in any business, the agency's administrative, accounting, financial analysis, data processing, personnel, and purchasing functions are carried out in the administrative department.

**Media Planning and Buying-**Specialists media planners and buyers work in the media department. The department staff develops a media plan and buys media spaces and spots for the clients' campaign and also monitors the media organizations' appropriate implementation of the media purchase order instructions.

**Account Planning-**Account planning is a hybrid discipline that enhances the collective output of account management, research, and creative departments on advertising and non-advertising briefs. The account planning team with members called account planners, provide consumers' insight on habit and attitudes on the client's brief through pre and post advertising research, and product testing using instruments such as interviews, phone survey, focus groups. The planners assist the creative team to translate the research findings into imaginative and campaign-able themes and concepts.

**Account Management/Client Service-**The account management team with members

called account executives (AEs), is a critical part of the agency's business and works in

the client service department. The AEs liaise between the agency and client, take

advertising briefs from the clients, responsible for the day-to-day management of the

accounts including representing the client's point of view to the agency, and develop an

advertising plan. AEs are expected to be honest, possess communication skills,

knowledgeable, persuasive, courageous, and always on time for meetings. AEs are

usually many in medium and large agencies, reporting to Supervisors who report to the

account director, who reports to the client service director, or the head of the department

who reports to the managing director/CEO. The AEs, through diligence on advertising

briefs and effective agency pitches, attract new business and advertising awards for

themselves, the agencies, and clients (CampaignUS Editorial, 2020). The AEs literarily

constitute a pool for poaching and are vulnerable to employee turnover intentions if not

well managed (Arens & Bovee, 1994; Scandura & Pellgrini, 2008). McLellan (2015)

observed that, in his almost three decades of experience in the advertising industry as the

CEO of Agency Management Institute (AMI) which offers advisory services to about 150

privately-owned profitable advertising agencies, most have not considered the succession

planning tool seriously which aligns with the problem of this study.

In the sector, employee turnover is as old as the first advertising agency-Volney

B. Palmer-which was set up in 1842. In 1848, S.M. Pettengill, a senior executive

withVolney B. Palmer was cited to leave his employer to establish his firm "…first to

take all he had learned, not to mention the contract forms that Palmer had created, and

strike out on his own(pp.468-469). S.R Niles would eventually replace Pettengill in the Boston office…" (Vos, 2013). Subsequent successful advertising agencies of the late 1800s had their lineage traced to Volney B. Palmer. J. Walter Thompson which was established in Britain in 1899, and turned limited liability company in 1933 had a major breakaway in 1937 when two talented senior staff left with some directors, 20 members of staff and poached some of their employer's accounts to set up an advertising agency (West, 1987). Even, amid the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic crisis, code-named COVID-19, Stein (2020) reported a breakout by the US-based FCB Chief Creative Officer (CCO) Ari Halper. In Nigeria, Odigbo (2020), hinted that the post-COVID-19 crisis will be a watershed for the sector because almost all the advertising agencies have gone virtual, working in groups with clients, and suppliers, but this could foster employee breakaways and exits. The perceived inability of leaders to effectively 'read' situations in their organizations, influenced many scholars and leaders of advertising agencies to have expressed concerns on senior-level and group exits, with calls for neatness of exits and enduring remedies such as succession planning to address likely future sudden exists, and instability (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Danielle,2017; Hirschman,1994; Lublin & Banjo, 2012). Although the reason for exists, could be similar, employee turnover in the advertising agencies sector of the advertising industry falls into three categories known as breakaways, individual voluntary, and involuntary turnovers:

**Breakaway-** Dyck, and Starke (1999) opined that a breakaway occurs when a group of members of an organization exit their present organization to set up a new organization due to frustration caused by lack of trust, support, and their inability to express

themselves or implement what they consider as essential organizational changes. That is quite common in advertising agencies. Scholars and publishers cited instances with concerns of many advertising agencies that experienced group exits when their top executives left with several executives to form new agencies (Dyck & Starke, 1999; Marketing Week, 2000). In Nigeria, a top executive and some executives left Media Perspectives, a member of Troika Group that owns InshgtGrey to set up Media Fuse, while another group broke out with several executives from QuadrantMSL to form Precise (Faleye, 2019). Not many advertising agencies can survive breakaways without a strong succession plan in place because of its suddenness, huge vacancies and instability it usually creates within the organizations, and the perception of uncertainty by clients, and accounts' moves intentions (Faleye, 2019; Vos, 2013). These experiences often influenced the leadership of such organizations to take hasty and ineffective succession decisions such as the promotion of employees who are ill-prepared for upper ranks to assure clients and other stakeholders (Lee, 2016; Vongani & Clever, 2016; West, 1987).

**Individual Voluntary Turnover-**In advertising agencies, individuals often exited for different reasons that range from talent poaching, lack of trust, job insecurity due to changes in leadership, lack of organizational support, to job dissatisfaction. Agho (2009) referred to this category of employees as effective followers because they are responsible, self-conscious, self-motivated, and "can succeed without a strong leader" (p.160). Irrespective of exit reasons, voluntary employee turnover creates instability and erodes the firm's profits due to high costs of replacement (Marsden, 2016; Patwardhan et al., 2018; Ng, Huang & Young, 2019).

**Involuntary Turnover-**This is usually initiated by the advertising agencies through termination, retrenchment, dismissal due to non-performance or inefficiency, plan to improve the organizational performance, intransigence against organizational rules, and regulations (Fisher,1916). Often, involuntary turnover has resulted in litigation, dampened the employees' morale, lead to the voluntary exit of other employees, unfavorable media exposure, and create negative images for the organization (Sherwood, 2019).

**Succession Planning**

There is a spate of definitional confusion on the concept of succession planning among scholars and practitioners which has adversely affected and still affecting its application and implementation in the management field thereby causing unusually high failure rates, loss of interest, and discreet discussions in the C-suites. This observation was evidenced in a survey report of 836 top executives worldwide conducted by Egon Zehnder International, which revealed that 70% of all succession planning programs were not successful, and one-third of their companies had succession plans (Prabhakar & Gowthami, 2013). For some scholars and practitioners, succession planning was argued to be a process of carefully planning, identifying, and developing suitably selected employees to replace or fill vacant leadership/chief executive positions or roles (Berns & Klarner, 2017; Cvijanovic et al., 2019; Grusky, 1960). The critics of this perspective hinged their concerns on the narrowness of the approach because it focused only on the short time or hasty replacement of the departing executives or CEOs who are often outsiders. An example is the sudden April 2020, departure announcement of the current

global Chief Executive John Seifert who has been with the multinational WPP agency for

41 years and will step down from his role when "a successor is appointed and a

leadership transition is completed sometime in 2021" (Stein, 2020).

The protagonists of another perspective reasoned that succession planning was not

only for CEOs, but a process of identifying and developing employees for the continuity

of all critical positions, not one size fit all and must be aligned with the strategic plan and

goals of the organization (Armstrong, 2012 as cited in Dagogo & Amina, 2019; Baldwin,

2000; Coonan, 2005). From this perspective, Atwood (2020), explained that succession

planning was a term loosely used by organizations whose leadership must replace their

chief executives or people in critical positions within a short time and that is considered a

restrictive reactive process, or replacement plan to fill the immediate organizational

needs, whereas succession planning is a proactive, long term oriented and flexible

process, or workforce planning which involves layers of the organization and

encompasses more key positions than the traditional succession planning which focuses

on leadership and chief executive positions (see Hirsh, 2000; Rothwell, 2005). With the

aforementioned, and for this study, I defined succession planning as a systematic

procedure of developing a plan to identify and develop talented employees for bigger, but

future responsibilities to ensure the stability of key positions that align with the

organizational strategic plan and goals. The purpose of succession planning is twofold; to

enable the leadership of organizations to effectively address future challenges, and

opportunities that may be encountered with changes in crucial positions, and to

encourage retention; challenge, motivate boost employees 'morale, because of clear

career advancement path (Fulmer & Conger, 2004; Mazurkiewicz, 2017; Schoonover, 2015).

Succession planning is as old as the practice of management; it was a popular term associated with the last wishes of the founders of family-owned businesses, and the scope was broadened to include organizations that planned to replace their CEOs or executives. That approach is considered a reactive process of filling the immediate organizational needs whereas succession planning is a proactive process to address organizational needs before it exists. The recognition for the organizational need for succession planning can be traced to Henry Fayol's (1841-1925) twentieth-century classic fourteen principles of management; organizational leaders have the responsibility to ensure the "stability of tenure of personnel" (p.78), and if unaccomplished through the process of succession planning, ill-prepared subordinates, colleagues or 'hastily' recruited replacement may fill the key positions which are often frothed with internal and external challenges (Brabandt, 2016; Garces, 2013; Haveman, 1993). A study of the world's 2500 largest public companies revealed that organizations that hastily find replacements for departing chief executives lost an average of $1.8billion in shareholder value, while estimates suggested about 40% of newly hired chief executives performed below expectations within their first 18months (Harell,2016). Most of the early adopters who provided the crucial foundation for the Fayol's century-old succession planning advocacy misconceived the concept, for "replacement hiring" (p.14) of chief executive officers/ executive, which often causes staff conflicts, low morale, and organizational instability associated with external stakeholders (Atwood, 2020; Giambatista et al.,

2005). It could also be "…disruptive to organization because it sets the conditions for the development of new policies, disturbs the traditional norms of the organizations, and promotes changes in the formal and informal relationships among members of the system" (p.105) due to their conflicting processes (Grusky,1960; Kesner & Sebora,1994; see Rothwell, 2005).

The implication is that scholars and practitioners are no longer recognizing succession planning as a process to replace CEOs, but a part of workforce planning which is an indispensable tool for leadership at all levels of the organization to compete for, and retain the best talents. Workforce planning involves the process of systematic development of a plan within the corporate plan for identifying, developing, deploying and, or replacing employees in all layers, to promote the continuous performance of a division, department, and workgroup, towards the attainment of the organizational strategic plan and goals, rather than the traditional succession planning approach that focuses only on leadership and chief executive's (see Hirsh, 2000). With the changing economic dynamics and growing theoretical perspectives (see Giambatista et al., 2005), in-depth knowledge of succession planning categories could enhance leadership efforts at developing a culture of a strong corporate talent pool to achieve organizational goals. The age-old advocacy of Henry Fayol (1842-1925) on his theoretical paradigm of achieving stability of tenure of personnel, allows for different approaches and processes for the implementation of succession planning, varying elements (Rothwell,2005; Tripathi & Reddy, 2006). In 2018, Barton for Talent Win's research report which was reviewed by Forbes revealed that two-thirds of companies had no formal succession plans in place.

However, a recent survey of 1300 organizations worldwide, members of the Top

Employers Institute has shown a shift: "99% of senior leaders participated in succession

planning meetings while 95% took part in regular reviews" (Welsh, 2019, p.2). The

turning point is that some of the leaders focus their succession planning efforts on

leadership positions/chief executives' and deploy or source for candidates, while others

leaned on the talent pool's potential for key and leadership positions (Welsh, 2019).

**Succession Planning Models**

Having identified the vacant key roles, potential talent's traits should be matched

with the characteristics of defined succession planning categories or models for an

effective outcome. Succession planning models have varying labels and nomenclature

with the same objects but leading scholars and practitioners agreed on the typical

succession planning categories or models and their characteristics (Benson-Oke, 2017;

Bills et al., 2017; Church, 2014):

**Ready to Place/Replacement-** Involves the immediate identification, deployment, or

recruitment of the potential executive with the competency and experience to occupy the

vacant position. This short-term replacement exercise usually has far-reaching internal

and external social, and political effects or challenges due to the critical organizational

need to be fulfilled in the case of a vacant chief executive position (Behr & Fehre, 2018;

Schoonover, 2015).

**Back-up-**This approach involves identifying and, or recruiting an executive or talent that

will not be assigned a new role, but ready to occupy a new position with little or no

preparation. A backup is a strategic approach for immediate response to the challenge of

sudden employee departures such as demise, dismissal, voluntary retirement, and resignation (Mukherjee & Nguyen, 2017; Schoonover, 2015).

**Bench Strength-**This is a term that means the stability of tenure of personnel which is to assure job security, future-proofing the pipeline, and career progression of employees (Taylor & Youngs, 2017). The approach involves identifying a group of potential executives or talent that can be developed and vertically or laterally deployed to key positions. This is based on Henry Fayol's (1841-1925) administrative principle of securing the tenure of personnel, with the rationale that an unsecured employee tenure and high turnovers will have adverse effects on the organization.

**Pipeline-** Involves the identification and development of a diverse and in-depth pool of talent at all layers of the organization. The approach relies on the potentials of individuals passing through different managerial hierarchies before the higher leadership positions. The leadership of the organization determines a set of leadership and organizational competencies guide.This involves the selection of fast-learning talent that is assisted through mentoring, special supports, and interventions for accelerated career growth and leadership development (Schoonover, 2015). The focus is more on providing opportunities for the development of the candidate's potential through the non-conventional junior-senior mentoring model; reverse mentoring and progressive or serial models. This guarantees a two-way knowledge development and transfer for the senior employee, the mentor, and employability for the junior employee, the mentee, than on-going performance. The progressive or serial mentoring model occurs where the mentee receives continuous learning and upgrading of knowledge of professional skills, and the

reverse mentoring model involves the mentor shares the administrative and managerial

skills. In contrast, the mentee shares their technological experiences (Aruna & Anitha,

2015). The reverse mentoring model enhances the development of a harmonious

relationship between the older and younger generations in the workplace (Koster, 2013 as

cited in Aruna & Anitha, 2015). This category of succession planning exercise is usually

scheduled for a medium to long term period.

      Irrespective of the category of succession planning, leading authorities inclusive

of Beck and Conchie, (2012), Larkin, (2020), and Rosenthal et al.(2019), stressed that,

for a successful succession planning event to be achieved, selected category or model

shares a set of common core elements. These elements, including specified steps, should

serve as a basic framework for all organizational types and sizes, and can be enhanced

with individual specific needs based on the current assessment of the corporate goals:

Application of these specified planning process steps includes the design that contains the

integration of the employee value proposition (EVP), the definition of scope and roles,

assessment of all potential candidates, and activities without bias. The review process is

by structuring and matching responsibility to tasks such as HR reviews with candidates,

implement by defining a process for all selected categories of succession planning events,

and evaluate.

The readiness of the board and management of the organization is essential for

organizational involvement in the development and implementation of the plan (Harrell,

2016).

The usage of a centered approach, where the succession plan must be conceptualized from the C-Suite; the chief executive, chief financial officer, and chief human resources officer (Rosenthal, Routch, Monahan, and Doherty, 2018). This is also applicable for all organizations including the founder, and family-based private companies regardless of their sizes, types, and nature of business: the chief executive and the heads of finance and administration. In this approach, the old culture of involving the leader is maintained, along with the newness of people managing the processes. It makes decision-making seamless with less bias, and a positive posture to address future challenges and opportunities. The model allows for easy establishment of accountability and is amenable to advocacy to all stakeholders' levels.

It should feature a two-fold succession planning role: associated with the organizational goal, and employee tenure stability. This assures employee job security, creates motivation, discourages turnover intentions, and enhances continuity of the organization. Application of corporate resource pool tool commonly called talent pool integrated with the employee value proposition (EVP). It is a systematic method of mass or specialized recruitment for competitive advantage. Followed by evaluation to identify early, the employees with potential leadership capabilities, mentor and expose them to a wide variety of key roles, to develop skills that can be shared and put to productive use in the organization. The developmental program should be ongoing in line with Fayol's (1841-1925) principle of management: esprit de corps. This is aimed at boosting the morale of talented employees, the transfer of knowledge, encouraging keenness, teambuilding competitiveness without triggering an internal conflict that disturbs harmonious

relationships, and successfully implementing competitive strategies (Yoo, Lemak, & Choi, 2006).

Sensitive to the integration and coordination of the succession planning exercise with the organizational strategic plan to implement Fayol's principle of management: a unity of direction. Engagement incorporates activities with unified objectives and a single global plan, leaning on general systems theory as advocated by Kast and Rosenzweig, (1981) to inspire employees at all levels including leadership to harmoniously focus and work towards the global goal.

Adoption of two-way open communication channels between followership and leadership to create succession planning awareness at all organizational levels. Clear two-way communication of succession planning to all levels connotes transparency and the simplicity required to arouse interests, believability, and trust in the process and organization. Transparent information dissemination about organizational activities and feedback with harmonious relationships during coaching are cited in studies as being able to influence employees' attitudes positively, and more important for knowledge workers or professionals' turnover intentions (Llewellyn, 2019).

**Employee Attrition in Advertising Agencies**

Attrition is the exit of employees from the organization when the latter was sometimes unprepared; it could either be voluntary through resignation or retirement or involuntary through termination. Attrition is such an important issue for organizational leaders because it depletes numerical strength, prompting work pressure for other specialists left behind, and sometimes creates a negative impression on prospective

employees (Khan & Choudhary, 2020). Since its inception, employee retention has been critical to the survival and growth of advertising agencies due to the people-centric nature of the business. It has been estimated that the cost of hiring, training, and replacing a departing worker in a typical organization was about 50% of the worker's salary excluding other hiding costs (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Though Cascio (2006) argued that it exceeds 100%, Schlechter et al., (2015) added that associated costs such as the impact on the on-going clients' programs or services incurred for losing and replacing employees range between 1.5 and 2.5 times the annual salary for the position being filled.

For over a century, the attrition of knowledge workers has been of concern and interest for organizational leaders, practitioners, scholars, and academics. A survey on attrition conducted by Statista between 2013 and 2019 among 513 respondents from professional services such as accounting, advertising and marketing, architectural, management consulting, engineering, IT, legal, and research services organizations worldwide revealed an increased attrition rate of 13.2% in 2018 from 11.6% in 2017 (Mazareanu, 2020). Over time, researchers who conducted studies on employee turnover found that turnover is a serious issue that results in replacement cost and work disruption (Sharda et al., 2017), affects work quality, and loss of organizational memory (Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017; Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). Other implications were financial losses for organizations, depressing impacts on the workforce (Gottfried, 2018), impact negatively on organizational investments (Wise & Rojas-Mendizabal, 2018), hasty appointments of ill-prepared employees (Kachel, 2018), and it was an undesirable event (Fisher, 1916). Other scholars led by Eberle (1919) believed it was less expensive to cope with turnover

than prevention, more desirable within the context of "…the man and the job" (p.79), and reduces stagnation (Abelson & Baysinger, 1986; Hancock et al., 2011). This position was supported by Dalton and Todor (1979), who argued; "…turnover increases, not decreases organizational effectiveness… Mobility has been cited by many as a force by which innovation is moved from firm to firm" (p.226), and a managerial misconception that turnover is dysfunctional (see Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010; Schneider et al., 1995).

Irrespective of the perspectives, over a century of several studies, have shown that employees left their organizations for varying reasons. Globally, several scholars adduced reasons for employees' turnovers to range from dismissal, age, marriage, inequalities in pay system, non-conducive intricate interpersonal relationship, and overall corporate culture in the workplace (Llewellyn, 2019). Other reasons were negative co-workers' intentions, lack of trust in the management, and for managerial level, knowledge workers, and professionals, personal-organizational-goal conflict, economic reasons such as seeking higher emoluments, unclear career development path, the dearth of communication about organizational activities, and goals (Boonluksiri et al., 2018; Eisenhardt, 1989; Haque et al., 2017). A 2007-2017 study on employee attrition of 120 samples from seven institutions in public and private sectors by Kantek & Gibba (2019) revealed eight main reasons for attritions in private and public sectors. These are lack of career growth advancement, insufficient payment/ remuneration, expectations of the job, lack of proper compensation, low-quality management relations, job insecurity, and mismatch of job profile, and poor workplace environment.

With globalization and changing environment, advertising agencies have realized that the ability to retain employees will determine survival and success in today's market where employees' turnover is inevitable because of the critical nature of the psychological contracts in the employment relationship with knowledge workers. Robinson, (1996) opined, "Psychological contracts refer to employees' perceptions of what they owe to their employers and what their employers owe to them "(p.574). The challenge of the Nigerian advertising agencies leaders is their ability to address the effect of not meeting its perceived part of the psychological contract as explained in Scandura and Pellegrini's (2008) partnership stage of the LMX model. The relationship becomes emotional with a demand for loyalty, mutual trust, and support. Still a breach on either side resulted in the turnover trends reported in the problem statement of this study.

Leading scholars and practitioners advised on the importance of planning for employees to assume the backup role of key positions for the continuity or sustainability of the relationship between the organizations and its various stakeholders such as the employees, clients, shareholders, and the society (Grau Sr., 2018; see Rothwell, 2005). Application of backup plans such as succession planning for key positions on an ad-hoc or permanent basis should be carefully planned, and not be a one-size-fits-all due to the varying nature of operations, size, and or organizational goals. The Morgan Stanley Financial Advisor Lead, Jesse Giordano, accentuated this position by advising advertising agency owners to start succession planning early: "10,000 baby boomers attain retirement age per day and more than half of businesses across the United States of America are owned by them according to 2007 US Census" (Lewis,2014). Grau (2018) further

enunciated to leaders of professional organizations that the development of next-generation talent is mandatory for building a sustainable business.

**Succession Planning and Attrition**

The increase in sudden turnovers of well-trained and talented employees in crucial positions constituted a grievous concern that the phenomenon could jeopardize long-term strategic organizational plans and goals. Thus, many scholars and practitioners agreed on the need for corporate leaders to apply succession planning to solve the issues of attrition, and workers' turnover. Succession planning is also needed for abrupt loss of employees caused by death, retirement, dismissal, resignation, deployment, and promotion, in ensuring that suitable employees including new graduates move into the vacant positions (Ali & Mehreen, 2019; Jones et al., 2017). Two decades ago, Abbasi and Hollman (2000) had reasoned that turnovers or attrition, which is the mobility of employees within the labor market; between firms, industries, and the states of employment and unemployment was greatly influenced by the organizational downsizing and restructuring. This dampened both the concept of loyalty in employees forever and the interest in turnover as the subject of academic inquiry.

With an increase in globalization accentuated by technological disruption, demand for knowledge workers will increase and the organizational ability to attract and retain will be challenged. The organization that will be able to retain talent must operate beyond the regular competition for wages as employees' remunerations. Many authors and practitioners (Manisha, 2015; Tatoglu et al., 2016) agreed that the retention of knowledgeable employees is critical to the growth and sustainability of contemporary

organizations. These authors' position was supported by Pobst, (2014) who argued that due to the rising attrition rates, organizations should ensure that the retention of "high-demand high-skill positions referred to as gold-collar or elite-expertise workers…" (p.63), should be made a priority through a re-recruitment policy. Re-recruitment is a mentoring tactic that includes systematic regular engagement and knowledge transfer sessions between highly-skilled older workers and top-performing employees on their value, prospects in the organizations, to discourage turnover intentions or attrition. This tactic was supported in a recent study from the Center for Creative Leadership which revealed: "…mentoring programs increased retention in 77% of the company surveyed" (p.63), and about one-third of non-mentored employees left for other employment within one year (Pobst, 2014).

There was an alignment of thoughts on the long term benefits of succession planning with regards to organizational sustainability and continuity among several scholars, academics, and practitioners who conducted studies on banking, public, educational, and service sectors (Lai et al., 2018; Payne et al., 2018; Peter-Hawkins et al., 2018; Phillips et al., 2018). They argued that attrition or employee turnover might cost an organization loss of memory of critical knowledge, hasty, and expensive replacement. In contrast, succession planning through mentoring allows for learning, relearning, and teaching from superiors, positive leader team member relationships, seamless transitions, and transfer of knowledge from successors to predecessors. Channing (2020) added to this paradigm that teaching and learning of leadership through mentorship programs and leadership experiences could strengthen employees for key positions. The author cited the

report of the K-12 university study conducted to understand how leadership is taught and learned. The report revealed responses from 132 of the 486 e-mailed faculty, staff, or administrators in a survey questionnaire via SurveyMonkey: 74.54% of the participants claimed to have prepared for leadership positions, while 86.36% believed that leadership could be taught. The study further revealed that leaders needed improvement in emotional intelligence, supervision, leadership skills, and the creation of a positive workplace environment. Barriere et al., (2018) added that organizational leaders must through succession planning link their firms' business with their employees' priorities, and be able to define those critical functions with clarity to ensure skilled knowledge workers fill the roles.

It is believed that the under management of the skilled and knowledgeable workers that necessitated increasing attrition needs urgent attention. A recent Mckinsey study among global executives on skills and talent supply revealed: about 800million global job displacement by 2030 with demand for about 375million who will likely switch occupations and learn new skills. Sixty percent of the global executives believe that half of their workforce will need retraining or replacement within the next five years (McConnell & Schaninger, 2019). The data imply that despite fewer positions to be filled, there would be demand for skilled, knowledgeable workers and professionals across industries especially service sectors, and there will be an increase in turnover intentions or attritions. Hence the need for practical and enduring retention and attraction policies for the skilled and knowledge workers or professionals.

Researchers have cautioned that the conventional retention strategies through increasing employees' wages, provision of lunch, job rotation, development of employees, positive workplace, and intra-team effectiveness are not enough today to retain the millennial or Generation Y and knowledge workers or professionals (Cassell, 2017; Veldsman & Pauw, 2018; Wallop, 2014). They advised that agile organizational leaders' emphasis, is now on a unique approach aimed at enhancing employee experience or psychological attachment to the work through an attractive, and realistic employee value proposition (EVP), in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment. Conceptually, EVP is a set of employee-centered offerings provided by an organization in exchange for an employee's knowledge or skill capabilities (Browne, 2012). EVP was built on the concept of marketing practice and recruitment value proposition that attracts potential employees to a choice organization whose acknowledged stakeholders include customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers (Freeman et al., 2004; Frow & Payne,2011). EVP's framework has five components:

**Compensation-**The salary, incentives for the work

**Benefits-**Perquisites that includes welfare packages

**Work content-**The psychological satisfaction and attachment including security derived by employees includes:

**Career-**Long term career development opportunities for advancement path.

**Affiliation-**Employees' sense and feelings of attachment to the organization

Further study by Sibson Consulting's "rewards of work" study (p.33) on the importance of age groups to the five components based on responses from 1059 respondents revealed

(a) Employees aged 30year and under, rated benefit fourth for driving performance while those within ages 51-60 ranked third, (b)Work content appeals to all age groups.(c)Career elements such as title, and status decline in value among older employees but were rated second (81%) among 30years and under, ranked third for ages 31-50, and fifth (41%) for 51years. (d)Compensation was ranked third by 30year and younger, while it declines to fourth among 61year and older.(e)Affiliation ranked topmost among the older generation.

In using the EVP framework, it should not be handled as standardization for all organizations. Leaders should rather, consider organizational needs. The understanding of how a cross-section of the workforce perceives each element of EVP will be an advantage for effectiveness and market lead. Study of organizations with formalized EVPs in a research article "Attracting and Retaining Critical Segments, building a Competitive Employment Value Proposition, Corporate Leadership Council, Corporate Executive Board, 2006" revealed: it improves attraction of potential employees by 60% to organizations with effective EVPs, 30%-40% of the workforce is committed to the organizations, while such organizations spend 10% less on base pay (Browne, 2012). Notwithstanding the novelty of the EVP's flexible practical guidelines that were linked to previous scholars and practitioners' studies for attracting and retaining employees, the work was critiqued as practitioners' focused, though a significant contribution to the practice (Axelrod et al., 2001; Browne, 2012; Chambers et al.,1998). Llewellyn, (2019) argued that the content of EVP lacked theoretical discussion that contributed to the discipline.

**The Nigerian Context**

Before the COVID-19, Nigeria was a major economic player in the African

continent but an emerging market. The system of governance is the democratic capitalist

system. The World Bank Group estimated Nigeria's population as of 2018 to be

195,874,740, while it was claimed to have risen to 205,472,159 as of 18th May 2020

(Worldometer, 2020). Nigeria is 2.64% of the total world's population and ranked the 7th

most populous Nation as of 2018. The country has the highest GDP in Africa, estimated

at 397.27billion dollars, and a growth rate of 1.9% as of 2018 (World Bank, 2020). The

United Nations projected that by 2050 Nigeria would surpass the United States to be

ranked as the 3rd most populous Nation in the world (Salaudeen, 2019). Nigeria manages

a quasi-mono economy with a reliance on oil and gas exports, cocoa, tobacco, but has a

significant decrease in revenue because of the global COVID-19 crisis. Nigeria has an

inflation rate of 8.7%, and an unemployment total (percent of the total labor force) rate of

6.025% (World Bank, 2020). New business density as of 2018 was 0.825 and the

domestic credit to the private sector by Banks was 10.908% (% of GDP).

**Business Community: An Overview of the Advertising Industry**

The advertising industry is statutorily regulated by the Advertising Practitioners

Council of Nigeria (APCON). APCON controls the practice of advertising in Nigeria. All

under-listed sectorial bodies are represented on the governing council of APCON. The

business community can be segmented into the manufacturing, financial services sectors,

and non-financial services sectors such as accounting, advertising, media, engineering,

hospitality, tourism, and other professional services. In the financial sector are banks,

insurances, and many finance and discount houses. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statutorily supervises the operations of the banks. There are 27 Banks with commercial, merchant, and non-interest banking licenses (CBN, n.d.). There are 57 insurance companies in Nigeria: operating14 life and 43 non-life insurance businesses, several agents, and insurance brokerage companies (Businessday, 2020). The sector is statutorily supervised by the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM). All the businesses mentioned above are categorized as the advertisers' sector in the advertising industry because they represent the clientele base of advertising agencies. The Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) is the overall body for all organizations that engage the services of advertising agencies, brands, media independents, and marketing consultants in Nigeria. According to the association's sites, it is the only association in Nigeria which represents the collective interests of all corporate organizations that practice marketing in Nigeria. ADVAN is a member of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), a body of global brands and marketing associations in over 60 countries, worldwide (ADVAN, 2020). ADVAN has a membership of over 80 of the biggest organizations in Nigeria that represents over 200 brands with over an N200billion as annual marketing spend (ADVAN, 2020).

As explained earlier, the advertising industry is made up of three semi-autonomous interdependent sectors: the advertiser, media, and advertising agencies. The media sector of the advertising industry is one of the biggest in Africa with the radio segment having 538 channels comprising of AM, FM, internet, online, international broadcasters, and web. There are about 145 terrestrial government and privately owned television stations

as well as cable and satellite platforms in Nigeria. All the broadcast media stations are members of the Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON). The operations of the broadcast media are statutorily regulated by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). The outdoor advertising segment of the media sector operates at the regional and national levels. The Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) has 106 financial members (OAAN, 2020). The Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), is the professional self-regulation body for the practice of journalism in Nigeria. There are 51 communities, local, state, regional, and national newspapers and magazines, and 95 online-only news publications in Nigeria as of 2020 (Nigerian Finder, 2020). MIPAN is an acronym for Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria, an association of registered media advertising agencies. The association is to ensure its members develop and improve media advertising function in Nigeria. There are 88 registered advertising agencies in Nigeria (AAAN, 2020). Some of the advertising agencies are affiliated with the four of the global traditional full-service advertising and marketing services groups: WPP which owns Ogilvy, VMLY&R, Wunderman, J. Walter Thompson, and Grey, as well as media independents networks Mindshare and Mediacom; OmniComm group which owns BBDO, DDB, TBWA, each with a reputation for creative excellence and a media network OMD; Publicis Groupe which now owns Saatchi & Saatchi, Leo Burnett, BBH, and a group of digital specialists outfits including Digitas, Razorfish and Sapient, and owns Starcom MediaVest and Zenith Optimedia; Interpublic which owns McCann Worldgroup, one of the original pioneers in global marketing, FCB, and a group of creative boutique, public relations and digital

agencies-Mullen Lowe and Deutsch, PR giant Weber Shandwick and digital

specialist R/GA. Interpublic owns Media networks include UM and Initiative (Adbrands,

2017).

Nigeria's entertainment and media industry is expected to rise from $4.46 billion

in 2018 to $10.5 billion by the end of 2023: with total local advertising revenue of

$450million in 2019 and 38% projected to increase by 2023 (Odutola, 2019), the

advertising agency sector of the advertising industry is in for serious competition from

within and outside the sector. The competition will be between the new challengers from

non-traditional agencies now providing agency-like consulting services-Deloitte,

Accenture among others along with the traditional global and local agencies (Adbrands,

2017; Duggan, 2015). Account moves and aggressive competition for growth in the

advertising agencies sector are some of the factors responsible for attrition, and an

increase in revenue due to new briefs will create pressure on the employee. More than

before the advertising agencies that will withstand the future competition as projected as

well as the post-COVID-19 must "re-recruit" (Pobst, 2014) and ensure the retention of its

employees in key positions. Faleye (2019), opined that advertising agencies' leaders in

Nigeria have failed to focus resources on "key employee retention" (p.5). With the

problem of this study, some researchers acknowledged the benefits of succession

planning for the continuity, growth, and sustainability of organizations (Ali & Mehren,

2019; Welsh, 2019), it is therefore imperative to fully explore the lived experience of the

leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria.

## Gap in Literature

This literature review on succession planning covers the studies of several scholars, researchers, and practitioners in different sectors such as banking, education, consulting, family business, public health, nursing, corporate, and theoretical foundations. Throughout the review, no direct research article or study was found on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition or turnover intentions in advertising agencies. Also, published research articles that were direct on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies could not be found in the top five advertising journals: Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, and Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising, International Journal of Advertising and Journal of Interactive Advertising (Wang et al., 2016). These are select elite groups of titles widely perceived in business research as the primary knowledge repository within and outside the academic and management fields due to their quality grade measures, editorial policies, citations, readership profile, and prestigious perception (Tuselmann et al., 2016).

Besides, globally for about seven decades, succession research has been dominated by archival data sources and quantitative analysis techniques (Giambatista et al., 2005; Kesner & Sebora, 1994). These authors did not only recommend more attention to "qualitative and longitudinal perspectives" (p.965) to buttress lots of vast archival data sources and quantitative studies, they noted that most antecedent studies such as this study lacked theoretical and methodological rigor, and advocated for a high level of robustness in this area.

In Nigeria, the literature has focused on campaigns, jobs, advertising typology, audience, ethics, media, and advertising production development, and issues in advertising. Notwithstanding, Faleye (2019) counseled on the need for agencies to learn about succession planning and focus resources on critical employee retention, which is an under-researched area in the advertising management literature (Neill & Schauster, 2018). In response to the above authors (Faleye, 2019; Giambatista et al., 2005; Kesner & Sebora, 1994), I applied the qualitative transcendental phenomenological research along with the inductive modified van Kaam model to fully explore and analyzed the lived experience of the leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria on succession planning to fill these gaps in the literature. From the details in the result section, the findings revealed that investment in succession planning promotes employee's clearer understanding of career development and progression which influences loyalty and intention to stay, increases productivity, sustainability, and continuity of the ad agencies. Also, findings in this study revealed first-hand qualitative transcendental phenomenological data that aligned with the theoretical lens that I used in the conceptual framework thereby advancing knowledge in organizational studies. Finally, the antecedent qualitative study expanded the existing literature because it revealed a more successful outcome for a succession planning program with gender sensitivity to address retention and continuity challenges in the agencies.

### Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 of this study examined the resources with regards to the concepts in this study which are succession planning, attrition, employee retention, and the relationship

between succession planning and attrition in the advertising agency. The studies and theories that were reviewed examined succession planning from different perspectives from organizational type, size and sectorial operations, replacement hiring, attrition, retention, continuity, and sustainability of leadership and key positions, and organizational performance. There was proof from the literature reviewed and the outcome of this study that when succession planning was well implemented, it had a varying influence on employee performance, commitment, workplace behavior, non-turnover intentions, sustainability, and continuity of the business. The conceptual framework was based on Scandura and Pellegrini's (2008) three-phased leader-member exchange (LMX) model. The key components of the LMX models are the development of leader-follower or superior-junior relationships, mentoring, loyalty, mutual trust, and organizational support for talents.

Going by the Nigerian context, there exists a dearth of empirical studies with regards to the relationship between succession planning and attrition, turnover intentions, or retention in advertising agencies. Of all the factors associated with attrition or turnovers, succession planning is the most critical factor that impacts positively on the continuity and sustainability of an organization since it promotes employee retention and morale (Coonan, 2005) because of clarity of career advancement path, and provision of backups for key positions since employee turnover is inevitable (Dagogo, & Amina, 2019; Hassan & Siddiqui, 2020). Considering the higher turnover or attrition in the agencies in Nigeria, it can be concluded that the leaders of advertising agencies have failed to realize that "lack of succession planning strategies has continued to weaken

many agencies" (p.5) due to less focus on "key employee retention" (p.5) in the sector (Adbrands, 2017; Faleye, 2019).

In Chapter 3, I described the justification for a qualitative phenomenological method for this study, which was influenced by the gap in the literature, including the dearth of "qualitative and longitudinal perspectives" (p. 965) with sound "theoretical and methodological rigor" (p. 967), as it relates to antecedent studies (Giambatista, et al., 2005). In the chapter, I present the adopted qualitative method for the exploration of the lived experiences of the leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition whether they succeeded or not. I also address the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedure for recruitment, participation and data collection, data analysis plan, and the issue of trustworthiness. I conclude with a summary and transition to Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Research Method

**Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenology research study was to explore the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not. The lack of deliberate commitment to succession planning by leaders of advertising agencies is affecting the stability and growth of the sector, thereby creating uncertainty with a growing attrition rate of 43% in 2017 compared to 40% in 2015 (AAAN, 2019; Faleye, 2019).

This chapter contains the research design and rationale for its appropriateness, research questions, approach, the role of the researcher, issues of bias, and how it was addressed. I present the methodology, including strategies for participant selection, instrumentation, sample size, and saturation. I described recruitment and participation procedures, including data collection and the data analysis plan, familiarization, and type of coding procedures. I explained how these procedures aligned with steps that were taken to address issues of trustworthiness, such as internal and external validity, dependability, and conformability. Ethical procedures that ensured the protection and confidentiality of study participants were also mentioned. Finally, the chapter concluded with a summary and transition to Chapter 4.

**Research Design and Rationale**

This study involved the exploration of lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding outcomes of succession planning as a strategy to reduce

attrition and whether they succeeded or not. This qualitative transcendental phenomenological study involved using semi-structured audiotaped face-to-face interviews with an option of video conferencing tools or telephone interviews due to COVID-19. Interview data were collected through audio recordings and field notes from a homogeneous purposive sample of 22 leaders of AAAN-registered advertising agencies in Nigeria.

**Research Question**

The overarching research question for this study is: What are the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding outcomes of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition?

**Research Approach**

I used the qualitative research method for this study. This method is ideal for exploring lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition, which is the focus of this study. The quantitative research method is incompatible with the requirements of this study. This study is not about collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods such as statistics as required for quantitative studies.

The qualitative approach is suitable because it is a method for gathering data that involves lived experiences of respondents. The nature of the study usually influences the appropriate framework for any qualitative research. Some qualitative research approaches include case study, ethnography, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, systems theory, and phenomenology (Patton, 2015). Generally, the phenomenological

approach involves exploring lived experiences of human beings, and the focus is usually on sense-making and meaning of experiences involving the world which is the purpose of this study.

The qualitative phenomenological semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interview approach was suited for this study because it allowed participants to share their problems and what they personally experienced. The advantage of this approach is that participants were inspired to share their experiences with me regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not, as well as other related experiences. The adoption of the phenomenological method for this design enabled me to pay attention to the way participants explained their lived experiences. P1 said:

> From my personal experience, I was talking to one of the ex-staff that I thought was going to lead my agency to the next level yesterday, I say how open do you want me to be, throughout the time you were with me, by the time you were a Director, you fixed your salary and I never said no when you say this is what you will like to earn next year. All I ask you was are you sure of where the money is coming from. When I wrote my will I made you one of them… trustee to my will.

The value of the approach is its strength in providing opportunities for understanding during data collection and analysis regarding how leaders in ad agencies individually experienced succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not.

The case study approach was inappropriate because it cannot fulfill requirement of the research purpose of this study as buttressed by Bloor and Wood (2011) "the purpose of case study is to gain a detailed understanding of the processes involved within a setting, but this can involve studying single or multiple cases and numerous levels of analysis" (p. 28). The grounded theory method (GTM) was equally not suitable to address the purpose of the study because this study is exploratory. Charmaz and Henwood (2011) said the GTM is a method of data analysis to build a theory and encourages researchers to first develop ideas before comparing them with prior theories and studies.

**Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, researchers are expected to define and explain their roles. Qualitative research requires that whenever instruments are involved, a human must be an integral part of the process (Sanjari et al., 2014). Since the researcher is the primary instrument of inquiry, in qualitative studies, this can influence through bias the research process. However, the personality of a researcher should not affect relationships with participants before, during, or after a study (Ravtch & Carl, 2016). Maxwell (2013) advocated for the enforcement of respect and ethical considerations in the research process, which I observed through IRB approval, data collection and handling of the participants during member checking of the data.

I was fully involved in this study as a conduit for data collection in my role as a student researcher and advertising practitioner conducting this study. This portends a potential bias that may affect outcomes of the study. To avoid this, I applied the epoche

protocol which compelled me to bracket off or dismiss preconceived ideas or suppositions, biases, in order to understand first person or participants' reports of lived experiences involving the phenomenon under study. I also assured participants their identities would be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. The benefits of participation and social change potential on the agency sector of the advertising industry was emphasized to participants. Further, I complied with Ortlipp's recommendation to researchers and kept a self-reflective journal for critical self-appraisal and guidance regarding professional judgment without bias, assumptions, and preconceived beliefs during the research process. This demonstrates my commitment to transparency and fairness during the process of data gathering, analysis, and writing of this study.

As chairman of the Advertising Standards Panel (ASP) that regulates advertising practice in Nigeria and a Fellow of APCON, I am an insider researcher. My views regarding advertising practice and agency management were suppressed to not impact views of respondents. During data collection, I listened instead of agreeing or proffering solutions to identified problems. I avoided the urge to ask leading questions, as participants may have been influenced.

Being an insider researcher allowed me easy access to the proposed sample and encouraged their cooperation in the study. Data were collected from leaders in ad agencies in Nigeria. Participants were a homogeneous sample of chief executive officers, managing directors, client service and creative directors, senior managers, and nonserving directors who have implemented succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition. I considered all ethical issues that may be related to the study in terms of

confidentiality and anonymity. All participants were duly informed of the study, and

consent forms were signed according to Walden University research protocols. I applied

to conduct the study and got the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB;

reference approval number 11-12-20-0742439) with validity until November 11, 2021

before commencement of the study.

## Methodology

A transcendental phenomenology approach was adopted to address the purpose

and research questions of this study. Transcendental phenomenology involves detailed

explanations of a phenomenon, where consciousness is treated simultaneously as seeing

and intuitively experiencing. A transcendental phenomenological approach was applied

to generate understanding of firsthand lived experiences involving the phenomenon under

study. Data were bracketed, analyzed, and compared to determine the essence of the

phenomenon under study.

### Participant Selection Logic

The study sample was drawn from a list of 88 leaders of AAAN registered ad

agencies in Nigeria. The population includes chief executive officers, managing directors,

client service and creative directors, and nonserving directors in advertising agencies in

Nigeria. All participants made decisions regarding organizational policies and operations

and had experience in terms of implementation and outcomes of succession planning as a

strategy to reduce attrition.

The selected participants were solely or jointly responsible for the day-to-day

decision-making and operations of their respective agencies. The population of the study

was divided into two equal sampling frames: big agencies and medium-sized agencies. All participants had experienced succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition.

I opted for the application of the ad hoc convention to determine a proposed sample size of 18 participants. I later realized Walden University's policy for sample size of qualitative phenomenological studies was 20 or until saturation occurs. Therefore, the proposed sample size for this study was 20 or until saturation occurred.

I relied on the homogeneity rule to determine the sampling strategy. The rule means that the more homogeneous the population in terms of the study of interest, the fewer the characteristics required to represent the population (Daniel, 2012). I focused on a homogeneous purposive sample frame of leaders in medium and big advertising agencies to select participants. This includes chief executives, directors, and senior managers with experience in succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition.

Number of employees was used to determine the size of the advertising agencies in Nigeria. Therefore, big agencies in this study were defined to have about 75 employees or more and tagged Type A, while medium-sized agencies have 50 to 75 employees and were tagged Type B. A prerecruitment data bank of comprehensive lists of participants and relevant data were developed to construct sampling frames. This data included lists of all registered AAAN ad agencies in Nigeria, with contact details of principals, including names of directors. The list was used to recruit the study's 22 participants with equal numbers from Type A and B ad agencies.

**Saturation and Sample Size**

There has been some controversy over what it means to achieve saturation; some even called it speculative. However, saturation is the stage in data collection or gathering when no relevant information emerges or obtained data contains all the information necessary to answer the research questions, and additional collection of data will have no interpretive value (Sandelowski, 2012). In qualitative studies, the achievement of data saturation is usually decided by the researcher during data collection and analysis. Some practitioners believe that a sample of 15-20 is appropriate for saturation (Sandelowski, 2012; Saumure & Given, 2012).

However, Waldenu (2017) advised a minimum of 20 participants for qualitative phenomenological studies or until saturation. I also aligned with the counsel of Saumure and Given (2012) on strategies for achieving saturation, that the sample must be cohesive or compatible such as all the participants of a particular group as in this study, and caution against the usage of random sample technique. During the data collection, at 20 participants, I noticed common themes across all responses, and I knew I have reached a saturation point. But in this study, I applied the rich and thick principle which was to achieve a balance between the quantity(thick) and quality(rich) of data, rather than sample size to reach saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015, p. 1409). Given the above, I relied on the advice of Usher and Jackson (2017) to adopt the "data saturation plus two" convention to reconfirm the data saturation and ensure that no further irrelevant information to the study emerged (pp.188-189).

**Instrumentation**

The main instruments for collecting data in this study were interview protocols, audiotapes, and field notes. The use of semi-structured interviews for a study of this nature allows the interviewer to explore the interviewee's free, vivid and spontaneous response more widely with follow-up questions (Dialsingh, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used a semi-structured open-ended interview format to collect the data for this qualitative study. The three basic approaches for qualitative data collection through open-ended interviews are the informal conversational interview, the standardized open-ended interview, and the interview guide (Patton, 2015). I utilized the interview guide approach for this transcendental phenomenological study. As previously explained, the interview guide approach enables the interviewer the opportunity of gathering information that relates to the participants' views, lived experiences, and elicit a sequence talk on the subject of the study (Turner, III, 2010; Wang & Yan, 2014). It also allows the researcher to develop a framework within which interview questions could be developed, sequencing of those questions, follow-ups or probing on information without going outside the covered area of the guide, though new topics of importance may emerge and be responded to during the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

In developing the interview guide (see Appendix B), I considered the problem, purpose, and the main research question backed with the guidelines of the interview guide worksheet and reviewed Scandura and Pellegrini's three-phased LMX model, and my social location as an advertising practitioner. The concept that I explored with the interview guide approach was the lived experiences of the leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria on the implementation and outcome of succession planning as a strategy to

reduce attrition whether they succeeded or not. The information was innate in the

'knowledgeable' participants and was shared through the in-depth reliving of personal

experiences, feelings, fears, thoughts, and aspirations of a better-managed organization

(Patton, 2015; Ravitch and Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview guide

contains two sections. The first section of the interview guide contains the mini-bio data

of the participants, while the second section contains seven pre-determined questions that

cover areas of study which were directed at the interviewee.

The interview guide approach is one of the most effective ways of conducting an

in-depth qualitative interview because it affords the interviewer the opportunity of

gathering information that relates to the participants' views, beliefs, and experiences on

the subject of the study (Turner, III, 2010). It allows the researcher to develop a

framework within which interview questions, follow-ups, or probes on information is

pursued in greater depth without going outside the covered area of the guide, though new

topics of importance may emerge and be responded to during the interview time (Patton,

2015; Rubin & Rubin,2012). During the process of collecting data from the participants, I

backed the audiotaped face-to-face interview with field notes.

**Content Validity**

To fulfill the IRB's requirement of validating the interview protocol, the interview

guide was presented to two independent subject experts within and outside the Walden

University Faculty for a content validity check. The validity check is a process of

critically analyzing, that the content effectively addresses the purpose of the study, gets

"the phenomenological nod" (p.187), and respects the participants' interests (Sandoval,

2018; Usher & Jackson, 2017). The feedback from the independent subject experts was used to fine-tune the interview guide accordingly.

## Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

As the researcher, I applied three months earlier for ethical clearance to conduct this study and received the IRB approval referenced number 11-12-20-0742439 on November13,2021. I commenced the procedure for recruitment immediately and completed the interviews, verbatim transcription, and member checking by 30th January 2021 as recorded in the sample recruitment and data collection log (Appendix C). Due to the nature of the study and the status of the targeted participants who are leaders of ad agencies in Nigeria, recruitment, and participation were ethically and carefully planned with these considerations in mind. A pre-recruitment set of data that contains the list of all the AAAN registered ad agencies, contact details of their principals, including names of directors in Nigeria was collected from the membership directory of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria at their Secretariat. I used the list to identify and shortlist the participants. The directory contains the list of the 88 financial members (Appendix D) who constitute the official population of the advertising agencies in Nigeria (AAAN, 2020). The procedures for the recruitment and data collection for the study is as presented hereunder:

**Participant Recruitment and Participation**

I shortlisted potential participants based on the earlier mentioned selection criteria from the AAAN membership directory. The sampling frame criteria included AAAN member agencies' chief executives, directors, and or senior managers working in medium

and big advertising agencies. 30 potential participants were shortlisted. I made the initial

telephone contact with each of the shortlisted potential participants to discuss the

background of the study, purpose, and benefits of the study, what it entails, confirmed

individual experience on the implementation and outcome of succession planning as a

strategy to reduce attrition in their advertising agencies whether they succeeded or not,

and sought their unconditional voluntary willingness to participate. They were also

individually told that the interview will be face-to-face with an option of the telephone

interview and that the process would be anonymized as pseudo names would be used in

the study, 60minutes -90minutes length of the interview was mentioned, unconditional

right of withdrawal from participating at any stage was mentioned, and an individually

signed formal consent form was the condition for participation. I finally told them that a

letter of invitation with a copy of the research question and consent form will be

individually emailed if they seek to know more.

About 28 of the potential participants met all the selection criteria and showed

interest to know more. I then sent a formal letter of invitation to participate in the study

through individual e-mail to them (Appendix E). The letter contains background

information, the purpose of the study, benefits to the practice, risks involved, the

interview to be audio-recorded, a serene venue for privacy to be agreed upon,

confidentiality assurance, advance interview guide questions, and consent form. I

received 25 responses with signed IRB "I Consent" from the potential participants. I was

able to achieve the goals of attracting the interest of 20 participants, and an additional two

out of the extra five potential participants as a fallback, towards confirming saturation. I

then responded with a letter of confirmation to participate to the 20 participants through

individual email (Appendix F). I engaged all the recruited participants in telephone

discussions to confirm interview appointments, venue, and timing with a 24hour

reminder through SMS as recorded in the Activity Time Plan (ATP) (Appendix G).

**Procedures for Data Collection**

I planned interviews with participants' busy schedules and the COVID-19

protocols or restrictions in mind. I was quite flexible, patient, and accommodated

participants because of the project and the general mood of the society. I had planned an

average of two interviews per day based on planned completion within 2 weeks but as

identified earlier the participants' busy schedules, accentuated by the global pandemic

crisis stretched the interviews for about four weeks as recorded in ATP (Appendix G). I

developed an activity time plan which contained the coded listing of the 20 participants

plus 5, the scheduled interview dates and time, and a remark column for the status of the

daily event per participant (filled with "Held" or "Not Held). Participants were reminded

within 24hours of the interview. I was always at the interview location on each day by

about 15-30 minutes earlier.

Before each interview, I expressed appreciation to participants for their

willingness to participate in the study. I reminded each of the interviewees of the contents

of the informed consent. I equally recapped the background and purpose of the study, the

60-90 minutes' duration, the recording of the interview, confidentiality, right of

withdrawal at any stage of the research process, and reconfirm the opportunity to review

the verbatim transcription and interpretation before analysis. Before the commencement

of the interview, after expressing courtesies to participants, I always tried to create a relaxed mood or atmosphere on each occasion.

I was the only researcher who conducted the interview, handled the audio recording, and took notes in all the face-to-face audiotaped interviews' sessions which were projected to last between 60-90 minutes per participant. I used the interview guide to aim for an in-depth interview and took notes (textual data). As a backup, interview data were collected through an audio recording on a phone device for data security. During all the interviews, I applied the epoche principles to bracket off all biases and allow participants to express their first-hand experiences which makes the phenomenological study of this type valid (Moustakas,1994). The introductory interview question was deliberately drafted to set the tone for the phenomenon of interest, and encourage the participants to travel the memory lane for reflection and comparison on "what constitutes employee satisfaction in participant's early life in the industry and now." At each interview session when I experienced that obtained data contains all the information necessary to answer the research questions, and additional collection of data will have no interpretive value, I then cut the interview exercise because saturation has been achieved.

I always expressed appreciation at the end of each interview session to the participants, debriefed, and give assurance of confidentiality of identity and information shared. I equally ensure that participants were reminded of "member checking" which enabled them the opportunity to review the verbatim transcribed audiotaped interview data and interpretation, before the data analysis and publication of the report. Participants

were individually informed to respond with edits or, and comments on the verbatim

transcripts through email. The confidentiality of the identity of participants and the

information shared was always reassured. And always close the interview with" thank

you for being a participant". These concluding procedures were carried out before each

participant's exit.

**Member Checking**

I carried out the verbatim transcription of the audio-taped interviews, initially

using Otter.ai's automated facility, but had to combine the outcome with manual

transcription because of huge textural concerns. I sent the verbatim transcripts to all the

22 participants through individual email for member checking, as promised during the

processes of recruitment, and interview. This is to ensure that the transcripts were

accurate with the interpretation of their expressions, and meanings conveyed in the

interviews before commencing data analysis (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). 21

participants validated their verbatim transcripts with little or no edits, but a participant

had an issue attaching his transcripts to his response, and after many days of failed trials,

data analysis was commenced for only 21 validated verbatim transcripts.

**Data Storage**

The raw data, copies of ATP, field notes, interview guide, copies of the recorded

audiotaped interviews, copies of the verbatim transcription, analyzed data, and

summation reports of this study were digitally encrypted as a protective measure for all

stored data in a dedicated external drive and kept in a fire-proof combination-lock safe in

my private study at home. Also, all individual participant's emails sent and received

during the recruitment process were moved from my inbox, arranged in MS Word document in a coded folder, moved into a coded folder in my personal computer stored with all study data in the dedicated external drive, and kept in a combination-lock safe in my private study at home. Accessibility to the safe is restricted and the password is with me. Data analysis which was done in Excel and MS Word formats and digitally encrypted were moved into a coded folder on my personal computer. On getting the CAO approval for the dissertation, I will move all the data and documents with a copy of my dissertation to a privately owned public vault, and store it for at 5years after the publication of my dissertation.

## Data Analysis Plan

Although there are many available qualitative data analysis approaches, many scholars argued there is no single best way to analyze qualitative data (Patton, 2015; Strauss, 1987). However, I relied on the recommendations of Caulfield (2019), and Moustakas (1994) to adopt the inductive modified van Kaam method for organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing the data that was collected from the participants of this phenomenological study. The inductive modified van Kaam method is the most appropriate data analysis plan for transcendental phenomenological studies because it allows for the presentation of an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences using their exact wordings. As a phenomenological researcher, van Kaam's method of analysis enabled me to fully explore the participants' lived experiences and to understand the essence of the phenomenon under study.

To effectively engage the collected interview data from the participants, the inductive modified van Kaam method for data analysis was applied in this transcendental phenomenological study to provide understanding and meaning to the lived experiences of the leaders of ad agencies on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in Nigeria. The key steps in this procedure are: Horizontalization which is the first step, involves the continuous process of preliminary coding and grouping of quotes that are valuable to the experiences and phenomenon under study. This approach is continuous and leads to the discovery of more quotes. Step 2 involved the reduction of participants' quotes. This process entails reviewing the coded quotes from participants to its latent meaning before elimination from the list. Thematization is step 3. The shortlisted quotes from the first two steps will be explored and grouped based on related patterns into themes. In essence, the groupings form the themes that relay the lived experience of each participant.

Step 4 involved the checking of the themes against data. The generated themes were examined against the collected data to be sure of alignment with the participant's lived experience, as revealed during the interview. Step 5 involved the creation of individual textural descriptions. Textual descriptions were created from the transcript data of individual's verbatim transcription and quotes. This literarily means pattern or context of tone or delivery of the participants experiences. Steps 6 involves the creation of individual structural descriptions. I created individual participant's "structural description" through a critical review and interpretation of the emotional, social, and cultural with regards to the data-expressions of the participants.

Step 7 involved the creation of composite textural descriptions. This step involves the tabulation of all participants' themes at a glance. Common, reoccurring, or prominent themes across participants were revealed through the composite table. Step 8, involved the creation of composite structural descriptions. The process involves an across-board review and descriptions of the common elements of participants' experiences. The emotional, social, and cultural context across all the participants' experiences were examined at a glance.

Step 9 involved the creation of composite structural-textural descriptions. This process is referred to as synthesis. It is where both the structural and textural data were merged for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Moustakas (1994) summed this as the lived experience of the phenomenon.

However, the successful administration of the inductive modified van Kaam method of analysis could only be achieved, on the condition of observing the following rules, (a) qualitative researcher should apply "bracketing," and imaginative variation which is to seek meaning for data review; (b) above steps, should be applied to individual participant's interview as a data set; and (c) maintenance of the integrity of the participants' voices in the dataset (Moustakas, 1994).

In this study, on receipt of the member-checked verbatim transcripts, each participant's transcript was reviewed readily for analysis. I followed the advice of Moustakas (1994), and thoroughly applied each step of the inductive modified van Kaam method of analysis, epoche, and imaginative variation principles to individual participant

data. The inductive modified van Kaam method for transcendental phenomenological data analysis has lengthy and arduous processes. This inductive process involves the preliminary coding, identifying and exploring common quotes such as patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly and grouping them into themes, by reducing and eliminating irrelevant quotes. Themes were examined against the dataset to ensure the representation of the participant's lived experience (Adams & van Manen, 2012; Usher & Jackson, 2017).

**Software**

Sturkey (2015) cautioned researchers to note that qualitative software programs help to organize data, "…but it does not code it"(p.8). In this study, although I planned to use QDA-Nvivo, and later used Otter.ai automated facility for transcription, I had to combine this effort with manual transcription because of textural concerns. However, I manually hand-coded and analyzed the data collected in this study, because automated tools could miss some subtle meanings, intonation, the pace of speech, or similar words. Some scholars believed that qualitative software applications do not offer speeding up of data analysis, and "richness" in meaning advantages, hence emphatic on the inability to interpret qualitative data by automated tools (Evers, 2011; Sturkey, 2015). And as such requires the human eye and interpretive act using the inductive approach (Evers,2011).

**Coding**

I manually coded the data in this study through the application of the 9-step inductive modified van Kaam method (Moustakas,1994) for all the 21 participants' transcripts. I created a 13-column MS Excel worksheet to organize the data, and the

generated file was quite large. The coding of the 21 interview transcripts was commenced by reviewing the individual participant transcript as per van Kaam's method of data analysis (Moustakas,1994). This method of analysis allowed me to identify themes from the data, and describe the essence and meaning of how the leaders of ad agencies described their lived experience of the phenomenon of interest without losing the participants' voices and tone (Moustakas, 1994).

**Discrepant Cases**

Considering my professional background, my role as the researcher in this transcendental phenomenological study is to ensure the credibility of the research process from participants' recruitment, participation, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the data, reporting of the findings to the storage of the research materials. Therefore, I embraced the epoche and imaginative variation principles to bracket off preconceived ideas, biases all through the research process. In the discrepant conversation, Roberts et al. (2007) identified four alternative methods of classifying discrepant reports of the phenomenon of interest from two data sets during analysis. These are:(a) perfect agreement where reports are consistent on the occurrences of the phenomenon of interest, (b) imperfect agreement occurs where a data set reports a type of phenomenon and the other reported all types, only the common type should be accepted, (c) under-reporting is where one data set reports the phenomenon of interest and the other did not, then the phenomenon of interest report should be accepted, or (d) when conflicting reports occur on the type of the phenomenon of interest, where the type of the phenomenon is reported in a data set, and another type is reported in the other(conflicting). The phenomenon of

interest should be accepted during its analysis or vice visa.Given the above, during the process of data analysis, few cases or findings that were conflicting or not aligned were codified as alternative findings which were treated accordingly.

## Issues of Trustworthiness

Issues of judging the quality of a qualitative study have been a subject of concern among scholars and practitioners. The conventional (positivist) criteria of rigor in a research study are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, but are inappropriate for phenomenological inquiry (Schwandt, 2011). Leading authors in phenomenology (constructivist) have replaced the conventional domains with four qualitative terms tagged trustworthiness criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Given & Saumure, 2012; Lincoln, 2011). The trustworthiness criteria are considered more responsive and appropriate to the requirements of phenomenological studies. So, I described how trustworthiness criteria were procedurally established all through this study as advised by Schwandt (2011) to validate the integrity of the findings.

### Credibility

For this study, I triangulated data collection through the use of the audiotaped interview protocol-interview guide, and field notes. The data was collected from the homogeneous participants through audiotaped face-to-face interviews using the interview guide, and my notations of the participants' non-verbal communication and response to the interview. I member-checked the data collected from these multiple research instruments with the participants on completing the verbatim transcription of the audiotaped interview, and the narrative of the field notation's interpretation before data

analysis. The essence of member-checking in this study was to validate the accuracy of the interpretation of the expressions of the participants' lived experiences and the meaning conveyed during the interview. Member checking was applied to exhibit transparency and fairness to the participants while researcher bias was eliminated. With the "member-checking" process, the credibility of the data was assured because of the assurance that I accurately captured the participants' expressions (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Smith & McGannon, 2018). I established and develop early familiarity and a stronger participant-researcher relationship all through the research process. I will continuously evaluate commentaries through the reflective journal, as well as subject the elements and components of the study to two independent subject experts within and outside the Walden University faculty.

**Transferability**

It is a truism that action research adds value to society by improving the social situation. Some scholars, however, expressed concern about the ability of qualitative researchers to convincingly demonstrate that the findings of a study can be applied to a larger population or other situations. The other perspective argued that findings should be viewed as an example of a broader group provided the composition of the sample of the population, and sufficient contextual information is available in the study to enable transfer (Herr & Anderson, 2012). Hence, the idea of generalization or transferability in qualitative studies should not be rejected (Stake, 1994). Given the above, I carefully carried out a purposeful selection of the homogeneous sample of the leaders of ad agencies in Nigeria, who were representative of the larger population of the 88-member

AAAN in this study to enhance transferability (Dick, 2014). In a qualitative study,

transferability is achieved through the applicability of the study to other contexts. Also,

the fact that the findings of this study have the potential of being applied in any situation

such as modeling future research after this study or published, in books or journals for

scholars and practitioners' use and others, confirms the transferability value of the study.

**Dependability**

Dependability simply refers to the extent that the research process can be tracked,

reviewed, replicated, and findings reproducible using the same contexts and procedure

(Andres, 2020). Shenton (2004), advised that for any study to be adjudged as dependable,

all the processes such as research design, its implementation, data collection, and analysis

procedures within the study should be properly documented. This process enables the

reader to appreciate the compliance level of research practices by the author.

In this study, I have been transparent in providing a thick description of the

phenomenon with full details of the study and contexts such that the research questions

were answered, to the point that the research process can be reviewed and replicated with

the possibility of having a similar outcome (Mathison, 2011). For quality control and

audit purposes, I ensured the safekeeping and storage of the raw data, interview tapes,

verbatim transcribed manuscripts, field notes, and documentation such as copies of

correspondences including interview guides, and signed copy of the informed consent,

and MS Excel Worksheet used for data management and analysis for confidentiality and

security reasons. I also ensured that all data management processes including data

collection and analysis were outlined for ease of verification and tracking to its source, as

the key to achieving dependability being the nucleus of trustworthiness. Among strategies

open for use to confirm the dependability of this study are audit trail, stepwise

replication, triangulation, and code-recode strategy (Anney, 2014; Schwandt & Halpern,

2011).

**Confirmability**

As a researcher, I have a strong conviction on the need for researchers to strive to

be objective for the public good in the research process. Scholars, practitioners, and

academics are unanimous on the concept of confirmability as being the extent to which

the findings are based on the purpose of the study and not the researcher's bias, or the

findings and processes could be authenticated by other researchers (Butler-Kisber, 2017;

Jensen, 2012). During this study, as advised by Mertens and McLaughlin, (2011), I kept a

reflexive journal that contained a record of field events and personal reflections and

perceptions with regards to the study that other researchers can access to establish the

conformability of the study. I applied triangulation, and the epoche principle, as advised

by Moustakas (1994) for a transcendental phenomenological study of this nature, and

took a contextual data-oriented approach for the reporting and provision of a detailed

conceptual and methodological description of my research work, including a reflexive

journal. The triangulation metaphor in this study involved using many data sources

to confirm the data collected (Rothbauer, 2012; Thurmond, 2001). My approach was

geared towards ensuring that the findings of this study will be a response to its purpose

rather than my personal opinions. This will enable the reader to follow through, and

determine the level of its acceptability through an audit trail.

**Ethical Procedures**

It is the sole responsibility of the researcher to ensure that human subjects or research participants in qualitative studies are protected from the study risks hence the need to observe ethical protocols all through the research process as directed by Walden University. Being conscious of ethical protocols in this study aided me in ensuring that the rights and proper ethical conduct for the research process were observed to reduce the likely apprehension that may come with sharing personal experiences with a 'stranger. As the researcher, I carried out the following ethical procedures:

- I applied and got approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this study on duly following the university's research and ethical standards.

- Participants were contacted directly and privately through telephone and individual email, not group emails during the recruitment process till the end of the interview process.

- All participants were fully briefed on the background, purpose, and details of the study including the length of time of the interview. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and unconditional as they are free to decline participation or withdraw at any stage of the interview.

- Before the commencement of the study, enough time was given to the participants to study the informed consent form, seek clarifications, and voluntarily consent to be part of the study.

- Validation of the verbatim transcribed interview data and interpretation was done through "member-checking" to eliminate participants' potential apprehension of

being misquoted or having revealed personal information that was unrelated to the

phenomenon of interest.

- Data collected all through the research process were treated as confidential. I used

  pseudonyms for individual participants.

- The raw data, field notes, interview guide, copies of the recorded audiotaped

  interview, copies of the verbatim transcribed text, and summative reports of this

  study were stored in a combination-lock safe in my private study at the home

  office. On getting the CAO approval, a copy of the data, and my dissertation

  would be moved to a privately owned public vault.

**Other Ethical Issues**

I am currently on quasi-sabbatical leave for this doctoral program. Therefore, the

dissertation program and my official responsibility are not in conflict. For ethical reasons,

I have refrained from the use of official properties, moveable, fixed assets, and members

of staff for purposes related to this project unjustifiably. Since the registration for this

program, and in all my official engagements, I have deliberately avoided making

decisions or tasks that will lead to a conflict of interest for either Walden University or

my employers.

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**Summary**

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In Chapter 3, I presented the introduction, the research approach, and the

methodology adopted for conducting this qualitative transcendental phenomenological

study. I explained the rationale for the appropriateness of the qualitative tradition against

the quantitative research tradition for the phenomenon under study. The study involved

the exploration of the lived experiences of leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria on

succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition whether they succeeded or not in the

sector.

A detailed explanation and rationale were provided for the choice of

transcendental phenomenological approach over other qualitative approaches such as

case study, ethnomethodology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and

systems theory to address the problems and research questions for this study. The role of

the researcher as a primary instrument was also explained. There was a detailed

description of the research methodology, which includes the identification and

justification for adopting the homogeneous sampling strategy, determination of sample

size, the logic of identifying, selecting, procedures for recruiting the participants, and data

collection. The instrumentation which includes the choice of semi-structured interview

questions for the interview protocol-interview guide, field notes, audiotapes, journal,

were detailed. The data analysis plan was inclusive of type and coding procedure and

steps, and strategies to address the credibility, transferability, dependability, and

conformability of the research process to ensure the trustworthiness of this study were

explained. The ethical procedures such as IRB were described in detail in the chapter. In

Chapter 4, I presented the result of the study, inclusive of the research setting,

participants' characteristics, data collection, and data analysis, evidence of

trustworthiness, study results, and summary.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenology research study was to explore lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not. Patton (2015) said that to achieve the purpose of a specific qualitative study, the researcher must ask appropriate research questions. The overarching research question for this study is: What are the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition?

I applied a qualitative transcendental phenomenological research design in this study from a homogeneously selected sample of leaders in AAAN ad agencies regarding their lived experiences regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not. An inductive modified van Kaam method of data analysis was appropriately used in this transcendental phenomenological study to noematically express lived experiences of participants regarding the phenomenon of interest. I manually followed and applied Moustakas' modified van Kaam method to analyze the collected data in this study. The van Kaam method involved these key steps: horizontalization, reduction, and elimination, thematization and clustering, checking themes against data (validation), individual textural descriptions, individual structural descriptions, composite textural descriptions, composite structural descriptions, and examining composite structural-textural descriptions. This step is referred to as synthesis, where both structural and textural data are merged for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Researchers must ensure the maintenance of the integrity of participants' voices. The research results that I presented in this chapter involve firsthand personal, business, and management experiences of leaders of ad agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition, which until now had not been documented in scholarly and advertising management literature. I also explained the research setting and described research participants, demographic data, data collection analysis processes, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and a transition to Chapter 5.

## Research Setting

I used semi-structured face-to-face interviews and field notes to collect data in this transcendental phenomenological study from 22 leaders of ad agencies in Nigeria. Although during the recruitment stage I offered the option of video or phone conferencing in the consent form, 22 participants voluntarily opted for and were available for face-to-face interviews. On receipt of their consent, I engaged all participants to schedule and got confirmation for dates, time, and venues of interviews. I scheduled and confirmed interviews within 4.5 weeks, while interviews were conducted between the 23rd of November and 15th December 2021. I reminded each participant of their appointment via SMS within 24 hours of the agreed date.

I ensured that locations were quiet, serene, private, and conducive for interview sessions. All interviews were conducted at a time that was convenient for participants. I reminded each participant that interviews were audio-recorded and their rights to withdraw from participating in the study at any stage. I also reminded participants that

pseudonyms would be used during my data analysis and review and validation before analysis.

During each interview, I informed participants when I started and ended recordings. Each interview lasted an average of 90 minutes, and all were recorded on my iPad Voice Memos app and backed up using my iPhone. During interview sessions, participants were relaxed, comfortable, and freely expressed themselves during interviews as they shared their lived experiences regarding the phenomenon of interest. I concluded each interview with an oral message of thanks.

**Demographics**

Participants were a homogeneous purposive sample frame of leaders in AAAN-registered ad agencies. The population was comprised of chief executive officers, managing directors, and nonserving directors in advertising agencies in Nigeria. Participants made decisions regarding their organizational policies, operations, and experiences regarding the phenomenon of interest.

The population of the study was participants working in big and medium-sized agencies in the advertising sector in Nigeria. All 22 participants met criteria to participate in this study. Demographic data collected included age, position in the office, employment status, and agency type (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Participants' Demographics and Characteristics*

| Participant S/N | Age | Position | Employment Status | Trade Grp. | Agency Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KA 1 | 50+ | Exec. Chair | Founder/Manager | AAAN | A |
| VE 2 | 50+ | CEO | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| KO 3 | 50+ | CEO | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| TA 4 | 50+ | CEO | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| CA 5 | 50+ | Chair | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| LA 6 | 50+ | GMD | Founder/Manager | AAAN | A |
| KE 7 | 50+ | CEO | Owner/Manager | AAAN | B |
| AO 8 | 50+ | HR Director | Employee Mgr. | AAAN | A |
| IOA 9 | 50+ | MD | Employee Mgr. | AAAN | A |
| AL 10 | 50+ | Lead Consultant (CEO) | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| CO 11 | 50+ | CEO | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| GT 12 | 50+ | Chairman/Director | Founder | AAAN | A |
| TT 13 | 50+ | CEO | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| LO 14 | 50+ | COO | Employee Magr. | AAAN | A |
| BN 15 | 50+ | MD | Employee Magr | AAAN | B |
| SA 16 | 50+ | CEO/Chair | Founder/Manager | AAAN | A |

| UU 17 | 50+ | Chairman | Founder/Manager | AAAN | A |
| IO 18 | 50+ | GMD | Part-Owner | AAAN | A |
| MN 19 | 50+ | CEO | Founder/Manager | AAAN | B |
| SO 20 | 50+ | Chair | Founder/Mgr. | AAAN | A |
| SB 22 | 50+ | CEO | Founder/Manager | AAAN | A |

## Data Collection

I commenced data collection for this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study on November 13, 2020 after receiving Walden University IRB approval (#11-12-20-0742439). I used a purposive sampling strategy to recruit a homogenous sample of 22 participants for this study. The sample was selected from 88 AAAN registered ad agencies in Nigeria.

### AAAN Membership Directory

The first phase commenced with the participants' selection and recruitment process. It involved prerecruitment sourcing of participant lists from the AAAN secretariat, shortlisting, and selection based on positions of leaders, agency size, and experiences involving implementation and outcomes of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not. The number of employees in employment was used to determine the sizes of agencies, which advertising agencies in Nigeria do not disclose. Big agencies in this study were defined to have 75 employees or more and tagged Type A, while medium-sized agencies had 50 to 75 employees and were tagged Type B. A prerecruitment data bank of comprehensive lists of participants and

relevant data was developed to construct the sample. This data included lists of all registered AAAN ad agencies in Nigeria, with contact details of their principals and directors. The list was used to recruit the study's 22 participants equally from Type A and B ad agencies.

**Semi-Structured Face-to-Face Interviews**

The second phase of data collection in this study involved interviews with 22 participants. Interviews were conducted between 23rd November and 15th December 2021, with an average of two participants per day. Each interview took an average of 90 minutes. All interviews were recorded on my iPad Voice Memos app and backed up with recordings on my iPhone to forestall loss of data.

I was actively involved in conducting this study as a conduit for data collection in my roles as researcher and advertising practitioner. This portends a potential bias that may affect the outcomes of the study. To avoid this, I applied the epoche protocol which compelled me as the researcher to bracket off or dismiss preconceived ideas and biases in order to understand participants' reports involving lived experiences regarding the phenomenon under study. I also assured participants of confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms.  Further, I kept a self-reflective journal for self-appraisal and guidance regarding professional judgment without bias and preconceived beliefs during this study. This demonstrates my commitment to transparency and fairness during processes of data gathering, analysis, and writing this study.

As previously discussed, being chairman of the ASP that regulates advertising practice in Nigeria and a fellow of APCON, I am an insider researcher. Being an insider

researcher allowed me easy access to the proposed sample. My worldviews regarding advertising practice and agency management were suppressed in order to not impact views of respondents. During data collection, I listened instead of agreeing or proffering solutions to identified problems. I avoided the urge to ask leading questions as participants may have been influenced.

During the data collection, after 20 interviews, I noticed common themes across all responses, and I knew I reached a saturation point. In this study, I applied the rich and thick principle rather than sample size to reach saturation. I used the data saturation plus two convention to reconfirm saturation and ensure that no further relevant information emerged . On completion of each interview, each audio recording was uploaded into Otter.ai  for verbatim transcription and later manually completed due to some huge textual concerns I encountered.

**Member Checking**

I sent verbatim transcripts to all 22 participants through individual emails for member checking, as promised during recruitment. This was to ensure that transcripts were accurate in terms of interpretation of their expressions and meanings conveyed in interviews before commencing data analysis. Verbatim transcripts were validated by 21 participants with little or no edits, but one participant had an issue attaching transcripts to his response, and after many days of failed trials, data analysis was commenced for only 21 validated verbatim transcripts. Although participants were asked to promptly respond to me, most participants responded late in January 2021 because of the Christmas break. I concluded the data collection process on January 30, 2021. All interview and recruitment

data as well as data collection logswere digitally stored in Microsoft Word. As detailed in

Chapter 3, I applied the inductive modified van Kaam method of data analysis. Processes

for data analysis are addressed in the next section.

## Data Analysis

### Horizontalization or Preliminary Coding

Data collected were manually analyzed using Moustakas' van Kaam method.

Most of the data collected were rich and valuable in terms of producing themes. The first

step during analysis was to identify relevant quotes from participants that were associated

with the phenomenon of interest in this study. It was during this step that I identified

significant statements from participant transcripts that are relevant to the research

question. The next step of Moustakas' inductive modified van Kaam method of data

analysis is the phenomenological reduction and elimination process.

### Phenomenological Reduction and Elimination

At this stage, I identified relevant data and eliminated participants' statements that

were not specific or important. I did a comprehensive review of participants' quotes

before eliminating those that did not answer the question. Units of data included words or

expressions participants used to describe phenomena or experiences. This ensured that

participants' statements that were relevant to lived experiences or responded to the

research question were separated from redundant data.

### Theme Formation

The next stage of the modified van Kaam method of data analysis after the

phenomenological reduction was the emergence of the formed themes that expressed the

lived experience of each participant on the phenomenon of interest in this study.

Accordingly, I took cognizance of the author's advice on the epoche principle in

phenomenology study and eliminated everything that represented prejudgment and biases

for the first-person experience of the phenomenon of interest. The formation of those

themes hinged on the first-hand description of each participant's experience of the

phenomenon of interest in this study, and my understanding of their meanings and

essences which are products of my intuitive learning. This aligns with the transcendental

phenomenological conceptual framework (Moustakas, 1994).

In all, the nine themes that emerged from the reduction and elimination process

are work environment/great workplace, increasing openness and transparency of

leadership and management culture, drop in quality of practice, succession planning for

retention and continuity, talent management for career development, and progression,

painful staff exit and unsteady attitude, industry-high attrition heavy in the low cadre,

non-monetary incentives, gender sensitivity, equity for retention, and mitigating attrition

effects with succession planning. In line with the inductive modified van Kaam method

of data analysis, the themes were examined against the data set to ensure alignment with

the participants' experiences as expressed during the interview. An overview of the

individual themes at glance is as displayed in Table 2 in the composite section

**Individual Textural Descriptions**

The inductive modified van Kaam method of data analysis describes a textural

description as a verbatim account of the participant's experience of the phenomenon of

interest in this study. In the individual textural descriptions stage, I utilized each

participant's verbatim quotes from the transcripts to describe their experiences. The

textural description helped to make sense of what the participant meant or did in their

own words (Maxwel,2013).

**Composite Textural Description**

The composite textural description is a table outlining all themes from the

individual participant. On completing the individual textural descriptions of all the

participants, I outlined all the themes from the participants' quotes in response to the

interview questions on a table ensuring that the meaning of the former matches the latter

which is the dataset. Recurring themes from all the participants to interview questions are

outlined per individual participant's responses in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Composite Themes from Participants' Responses*

| Participants | Themes |
|---|---|
| Participant 1 | Environment, the openness of leadership, talent(pipeline)mgt, succession planning, replacement plan, high attrition: cultural, equity/gender sensitivity, solid human/material resources. |
| Participant 2 | Environment, succession planning, staff exit: pain. |
| Participant 3 | Work environment, the openness of leadership, staff exit: pain. |
| Participant 4 | Work environment, open management culture/cascaded, talent management, succession, deceitful talent: exit, high attrition: talent management, compensation: retention, talent management. |
| Participant 5 | Quasi-open information management, drop in quality of practice, talent management, succession. |

*Composite Themes from Participants' Responses(Cont'd)*

Participant 6    Open management culture, talent management, succession planning, employee unsteady attitude, high attrition: poor pay, shares: part-ownership, re-orientation: succession planning.

Participant 7    Environment, more transparent leadership, succession planning, staff exit, high attrition, talent retention.

Participant 8    Environment, openness of leadership, lower quality of service, talent mgt-traineeship, succession planning, proliferation: high attrition, talent retention.

Participant 9    Environment: great workplace, increasing openness: communication, the decline in quality of practice, succession planning, staff exit: talent mgt. millennials: attrition, non-monetary incentives, succession planning:(keyman risk).

Participant 10    Environment: great workplace, increased leadership openness, manpower dev,(talent mgt), succession-continuity, staff exit:(pain)talent mgt, high attrition:(talent magt), attraction & retention: talent mgt(succession).

Participant 11    Open communication, succession planning, attrition, succession planning.

Participant 12    Environment, increased openness/new business model, less rigor: low quality of practice, succession: CEO replacement, high attrition: proliferation, management support: talent management.

Participant 13    Environment: great workplace, lower quality of practice, career progression: reduce attrition, succession planning: failures & successes, heavy attrition, industry intervention: succession planning.

Participant 14    Environment:great workplace, increased open mgt. culture, strategic thinking(low quality),  talent mgt/career prog., succession planning, staff exit:talent management, attrition(millenials):talent mgt, succession planning.

Participant 15    Work environment, increased openness, drop in quality of practice, succession planning, staff exit: painful/hurt, high attrition.

Participant 16    Engagement: good environment, increase in openness, the decline in overall quality, talent management, succession planning, high attrition, compensation: job title, back-up: replacement/duplicate.

*Composite Themes from Participants' Responses(Cont'd)*

| Participant 17 | Workplace well-being, transparent leadership, career development/ progression. succession planning, attrition: restructuring talent management, unconventional compensation, succession planning: regeneration. |
| --- | --- |
| Participant 18 | The decline in quality of practice, org. dev.:re-engineering, continuity: succession, high attrition: low cadre, compensation-non-monetary, succession planning. |
| Participant 19 | A great workplace, succession planning, staff exit: painful, heavy attrition, equity, backup-team mates. |
| Participant 20 | The decline in quality of practice, talent management, losses (staff/clients): back up, high attrition |
| Participant 21 | Member checked data not submitted |
| Participant 22 | A great workplace, drop in quality of practice, talent management, succession planning, high attrition, succession planning. |

## Individual Structural Descriptions

I used the themes to construct individual structural descriptions of each

participant's experience inclusive of its emotional and social connections. I eliminated all

the individual participants' quotes that were irrelevant to the phenomenon of interest to

construct the structural descriptions of the individual participant's experiences. The

intention is for me as the researcher, to achieve a combined 'noematic and noesis' view

of participants' first-hand experiences of succession planning as a strategy to reduce

attrition in the advertising agencies in Nigeria. Through imaginative variation which is

varying of perspectives, I was able to reveal the emotional and social connections

between the expressions of the participants regarding the individual experiences of the

phenomenon.

**Composite Structural Description**

For this final stage of the data analysis, I used the imaginative variation principle to derive a composite structural description from all the participants' structural descriptions (Moustakas,1994) of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The common elements of their experiences are constructed from individual structural descriptions into a composite structural description to represent the global or common meaning of the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria on the phenomenon of interest. During the data analysis, I identified the emotional, socioeconomic and demographic background, and official status of the participant as an advertising agency leader who experienced succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The composite textural-structural description which I constructed provided the universal meanings and essences which are representative of all the participants' lived experience of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria(Moustakas,2011).

**Synthesis of Textural and Structural Descriptions**

In this study, the participants are the leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria. Contextually in this analysis, a leader in the advertising agency in Nigeria means the Founder or owner-manager, Managing Director, Head of Human Resources who managed or was actively involved in the application and or implementation of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria. They are advertising and management professionals committed to the profession and the industry. These leaders are involved in the day-to-day decision-making and operational procedure

or processes and are committed to the growth of the ad agencies. They recruit and

manage talents or employees who handle the clients or accounts of the ad agencies. They

identify, monitor, develop, and emotionally connected to mentoring, and grooming

willing talents in their areas of strength and weaknesses for the continuity of the agencies.

Although the leaders are challenged by the unpredictable high mobility

characteristics of the talents, they continued running their agencies. The participants'

global view is that attrition is high, inevitable, universal, and cannot be stopped. They are

aware that attrition is higher within the lower cadre and younger generation of employees

than other ranks. As revealed in the responses of participants 1, 2,3,4,7, 8, 9,10,12, 13,

14, 15,16, 17, 19, and 22 are not unaware that a good environment, career development,

open management culture, clear understanding of career progression, good remuneration,

attractive non-monetary compensation, and gender sensitivity are factors that foster

satisfaction and intention to stay. They also realized over time that non-pecuniary

benefits that address the talents' emotional and social expectations such as archetypes in

the workplace in terms of age, ideas, and philosophy, free flow of information, and

transparent leadership, membership of high performing teams, learning are influencers of

job satisfaction and intention to stay.

Despite the provision of good compensation and non-monetary benefits, leaders

kept experiencing devastating losses of talent who exited to set up competing agencies or

crossed over to competing firms as stated in participants'1, 2,3,4,6,7,9,10,14,15,19, 20,

and 22 responses. The leaders expect the team leads or line managers to be more

skillfully patient in managing and grooming talents whilst the latter are expected to

exercise more tolerance of the organizational efforts toward talent management and sustainability of the business. Not all managers in ad agencies are knowledgeable or groomed at the functional leadership level. An in-depth understanding of the requirement of leadership at the functional level of managing is an industry lacuna because most ad agencies were not built to outlast their founders. Many ad agencies and their founders-CEOs who are managing them with the mindset of 'I will always be here' subconsciously created glass ceilings in talents' career progression with an option of exit. They recognized that whilst intention to stay is talent's, non-monetary compensation such as shares, stocks, appointment into the board with permissive interaction with internal and external directors can be fulfilling.

Although the loss of talent is high in the low cadre and of keymen, the situation became much of a concern to the leaders and a threat to their retirements and continuity of ad agencies in the industry, they persisted in managing the ad agencies with backup or replacement plans. They observed that frequent turnovers often affect the outcome of succession planning programs because of the unsteady nature of the younger generation's habit of not working for a long period. They implement talent management programs for career development and career progression using succession planning as a tool to create a conducive atmosphere for employee retention and continuity of the ad agencies. Succession planning was seen as a paramount strategy to reduce attrition and for continuity of the business in achieving the emotional and social objectives of building a legacy through the agency as confirmed in the responses of participants 1,3,4,5,6,7,9,13,14,16,17,18,20. They are aware that having succession policies and plans

in place also required deliberate efforts to ensure that its implementation takes cognizance of employee capability assessment models.

They also noticed that over the years the quality of agency leadership, creativity, and strategic thinking offerings to Clients has diminished. The low quality is due to the proliferation of one-man shop ad agencies, undercutting by new entrants, impatience of the clients on delivery timelines, increase in star-employee turnovers which made the agencies hurriedly recruited and filled vacant positions with ill-prepared and inexperienced managers. They advocated for regulatory intervention that's focused on manpower development and professional practice. They see succession planning as being critical for mitigating the effects of attrition, inclusive of loss of organization memory.

## Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is used to express the 'truth value' of a study (Andres, 2020). Quoting the author, I provided evidence of trustworthiness to validate rigor in this transcendental phenomenological study "…to the extent that it (1) produces information that answers the research questions by the researcher, (2) accurately describes the sample or population at hand, and, if appropriate, (3) can be extended to individuals beyond the participants of the study", and to support the results. As stated earlier, leading authors in phenomenology(constructivist) have replaced the conventional domains with four qualitative terms called trustworthiness criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Given & Saumure, 2012; Lincoln, 2011). Therefore, I established the criteria procedures in the study as explained in this section.

**Credibility**

All through, I ensured the integrity and credibility of the research process. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited by Andres (2020), the research participants must be unambiguously identified and described. In line with the advice, I identified the participants out of the population of the study from the membership directory of member agencies of AAAN (AAAN, 2020), and recruited them through personalized email exchanges. I ensured a pleasant appearance, and conduct during the interview process to achieve "face validity" (p.117). I collected data from the homogeneous participants through audiotaped face-to-face interviews using the interview guide, and my notations of the participants' non-verbal communication and responses.

In this study, data collection was triangulated through the use of audiotaped interview protocol-interview guide, and field notes. To further establish credibility, the data collected were transcribed verbatim. I then, conducted member checking before data analysis by sending their verbatim transcript and my interpretations to individual participants for accuracy check-review, or revision, and validation of the expressed lived experiences. Some of the transcripts were corrected, but all were validated by all the participants. With the "member-checking" process, the credibility of the data was assured (Halcomb & Davidson,2006) and I proceeded to the data analysis stage. I applied the inductive modified van Kaam method of data analysis steps, as the most appropriate process for analyzing and presenting an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences using their exact wordings, in a transcendental phenomenology study.

**Transferability**

Transferability is external validity, and Andres (2020) posited that "Good research always engages in some form of transferability"(p122). Therefore, I carefully carried out a purposeful selection of the homogeneous sample of the leaders of ad agencies in Nigeria, who were representative of the larger population of the 88-member AAAN in this study to enhance transferability (Dick, 2014). This aligned with Andres'(2020) "tenets of ecological validity" which posits that generalizability is logically attainable when it is "delimited" (p.120) to certain contexts, such as a group of population or those who resemble the participants. Also, the fact that I gathered rich and thick (Fusch & Ness,2015) descriptions of the lived experiences of a credible representative of the population of this study, the data can be applied in many situations such as modeling future research after this study or published, in books or journals for scholars and practitioners' use and others. The foregoing confirmed the transferability value of this study.

**Dependability**

Dependability simply refers to the extent that the research process can be tracked, reviewed, replicated, and findings reproducible using the same contexts and procedure (Andres, 2020). However specific unrelated events to the study could alter or adversely impact the results. A way to avert or control such unrelated events is to collect the data in a very short time. I complied with the counsel of practitioners to attain the dependability of this study by ensuring that all the processes such as research design, its implementation, data collection, and analysis procedures within the study are properly

documented. I used a short research instrument and spent a short time on data collection

to avoid the possibility of the "effect of maturation" (Andres, 2020, pp.123-124) which

means a change in the intra-individual characteristics of participants as in tiredness or bo

Every week, I documented in detail all steps taken in the research processes to my

dissertation committee chair Dr Kenneth Levitt who closely examined, monitors, and

strengthen the integrity, and trustworthiness of this study. This process will enable the

reader to appreciate the compliance level of research practices by the author. I have been

transparent in providing a thick description of the phenomenon with full details of the

study and contexts such that the research questions were answered, to the point that the

research processes can be reviewed, and replicated with the possibility of having a similar

outcome (Mathison, 2011). A seamless audit trail of all the processes within the study

could be conducted. This is because, I ensured that the activity time plan sheet,

participant-researcher conversation, sample recruitment, and data collection log, raw

data, field notes, interview guides, copies of the recorded audiotaped interview, verbatim

transcripts, data management processes including data collection and analysis

worksheets, are accessible as the key to ascertaining the dependability of this study. I

triangulated the data collection process by use of audiotaped recording and field notation

of the participants' responses to develop comprehensive interpretations of the data

(Morgan & Ravith, 2018).

**Confirmability**

Practitioners are unanimous on the concept of confirmability as being an accurate

means of verifying "two basic goals" of a qualitative study, which are to elicit the

participant's perspective of the phenomenon of interest and not adjusted due to the researcher's bias, or the findings, and processes could be authenticated by other researchers (Butler-Kisber, 2017; Jensen, 2012). I fulfilled the IRB's requirement of validating the interview protocol which was presented to two independent subject experts within and outside the Walden University Faculty for a content validity check. The validity check is a process of critically analyzing, that the content effectively addresses the purpose of the study, gets "the phenomenological nod" (p.187), and respects the participants' interests (Sandoval, 2018; Usher & Jackson, 2017). The feedback from the independent subject experts was used to fine-tune the interview guide questions accordingly.

I adopted the principle of epoche to bracket off any knowledge or preconceived idea of the phenomenon of interest for the first-person reports of the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas,1994; Moustakas, 2011). I transparently linked the findings and discussions to the data in my report. On the advice of Mertens and McLaughlin (2011), I kept a reflexive journal containing a record of personal reflections and perceptions of field events, thoughts, and observations shared by the participants, of their lived experiences on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria. My approach was geared towards ensuring that the findings will be a response to the purpose of this study rather than my personal opinions.

## Study Results

The use of numbers and percentages in study results in qualitative studies has been a subject of years of debate among practitioners. Maxwell (2010) opined that

dispute had been politicalized, because "…qualitative works are evaluated in terms of the scientific frame that sees numbers as a key indicator of valid and generalizable research…" and it is not uncommon for some journal reviewers to insist on the inclusion of numerical result in papers. The author emphasized that the purpose of 'quantitizing' in qualitative data is to allow analysts to discern peculiarities that are not obvious. Given the above, I sparingly used percentages and figures to illustrate arguments in the study result.

The research question for this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was based on the concept of a basic qualitative research approach (Palys,2012), the purpose of the study, and the research problem. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenology research study was to explore the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition, whether they succeeded or not. I have organized this section by the research question. The overarching research question for this phenomenological study is: What are the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition? From the overarching research question, a set of seven interview questions were developed for use during data collection, data analysis and reporting. Themes were formed from the participants' quotes/responses. This chapter is organized by research interview guide questions. Findings relative to the research interview questions are displayed in Tables 2-3 and reported in this section.

**Table 3**

*Themes Formed Relative to Participants' Responses to Interview Questions*

| Interview Questions | Themes Formed |
| --- | --- |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Based on your observations from your early life in the advertising industry, can you describe what constitutes employee job satisfaction in an advertising agency? | Good work environment; great workplaces; workplace well-being |
| 2. In your experience, how will you describe your observation in the practice of advertising then and now? | Open management culture; transparent leadership; increasing openness in communication; The decline in quality of practice; drop in quality of practice; lower quality of practice; |
| 3. What are your observations of your organization's plan towards the continuity of the business? | Talent management; manpower development; career progression; career development; organizational development: re-engineering; Succession planning; succession; |
| 4. What disappointing management experiences did you observe in the advertising agency(s) as a leader? | Staff losses/exit; deceitful talent; employee unsteady attitude; unethical practices; low ethical conduct; unethical professional conduct; misconduct: self-preservation. |
| | *Theme Formed Relative to Participants' Responses to Research Interview Questions(Cont'd)* |
| 5. What have you noticed about the high attrition rate in the advertising industry today? | High attrition: low cadre; high attrition (millennials);high attrition: agency proliferation; high attrition: poor pay; high attrition: cultural; heavy attrition ;high attrition: entrepreneurship, |
| 6. With your experience in this sector, describe how talented professionals can be, and are retained? | Equity; gender sensitivity; compensation: retention; part ownership; non-monetary incentives; partnership; compensation: job titles. |
| 7. With your observation in this industry how will you describe what can be done to mitigate the effects of attrition in advertising agencies? | Solid human and material resources; succession planning; back-up teammates; succession planning regeneration; back up replacement/duplicate; re-orientation succession planning; talent management; succession planning:"keyman-risk; industry intervention; |

### Research Interview Question Outcomes

Findings from research question one revealed that 76% (16) of the total sample

(participants) described their lived experiences on what constitutes employee job

satisfaction in their early lives in the advertising industry as mostly non-monetary.

Participants 1, 2,3,4,7, 8, 9,10,12, 13, 14, 15,16, 17, 19, and 22 described job satisfaction

as non-monetary, a learning environment, where one expects to see or experience

archetypes, job embedment, career development, career progression, high performing

teams, good pay and great workplace among others. One participant stated, "I was always

very eager and excited to want to go back to work the next day, a very good

environment", which motivated his loyalty to want to continue going to work and even

fosters the intention to stay.

Findings in research interview question two showed that 71% (15) of the total

sample (participants) described lived experience of their observation of the operations of

the practice on openness and transparency of leadership and management as conservative,

discreet, and opaque then but more open now due to technological disruption, cultural

evolution, and the emergence of sets of younger generation workforce. Non-openness of

leadership or management can lead to heavy turnover. Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,

10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17 shared their lived experience of the practice then and now

as different.

Further, 57% (12) of the total sample (participants) described their observation of

the practice with regards to service offerings as declining due to attrition, poaching of

quality talents by clients, fragmentation of the offerings, the proliferation of agencies, and

attrition compared with the past. Participants 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, and 22

described their lived experience of the practice then as having more rigor in areas of

creativity and strategic thinking than now, despite the technological development that

enhances operational efficiencies. "One participant stated, "...technology has impacted

the way agencies operate in terms of speed… nevertheless, it does appear, that the level of creativity and strategic thinking behind the creativity…have diminished.

The findings from research interview question three showed that investment in talent management, manpower development, organizational development: re-engineering, clear career progression, and succession planning programs were observed to be integral for employee retention and continuity of the ad agencies. 67% (14) of the total sample made up of participants 1,3,4,5,6,7,9,13,14,16,17,18,20 and observed through their lived experience that their ad agencies recognized the need for investment in talent management, manpower development, and career progression are important for people management for the sustainability and continuity of the agencies. A participant stated, "…I used to bring in 20 interns every year and trained them, and out of the 20 interns, I retained maybe 10 sometimes five and… they were sufficient for what we needed as our feeder…" Additionally, 90% (19) of the total sample, made up of participants 1,2, 4,5, 6,7,8,9,10,11, 12, 13,14,15,16, 17, 18,19, and 22 unanimously described their lived experiences on their organizations' plan towards continuity as being built around succession planning programs and involvement of talents with illustrations of its implementation and outcome. A participant who is a founding CEO shared a lived experience "Succession planning for us is at several levels. I told you about three heads of departments left, and they were replaced." Participant 11 who is an owner-manager was empathic with his experience "…using myself as an example I was sent to South Africa by the agency I was working for and after I came back, I think I just did a few months and I resigned...the same thing hasn't changed…people do have this personal

ambition. ...succession planning is really about the person that is involved, even though you may have your idea as CEO." The experience of a founding manager(participant 16) on talent management in the bid to implement succession planning revealed a process built on critical capability assessment of talents. It involves the use of a model "RN, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5", where the R stands for ready, N stands for now, while numbers stand for the number of years on the state of readiness of the talent which reveals exactly where intervention and supports are required.

Findings in research interview question four on disappointing management experiences in ad agencies as leaders revealed that 62% (13) of the total sample made up of participants 1, 2,3,4,6,7,9,10,14,15,19, 20, and 22, themes were formed. Participants described their lived experiences on disappointing management as loss of staff, the hostility of ex-staff towards the agency, deceitful talent, employee unsteady attitude, unethical practices, low ethical conduct, ignorance on succession planning, and self-preservation of founders than their businesses. A participant was concerned about the self –preservation of the founders against the continuity of the business"…the big industry challenge that I see, has to do with the functional understanding of functional leadership (assertive tone). ...founder CEOs 've stayed a long time… they may not have thought necessarily as long term as to say, the continuity vision of this business (assertive tone) … were CEOs for 10,15,20 years…when you are CEO for 20 years…So, already many of the people see a glass ceiling…".

Findings from research interview question five revealed that 86% (18) of the total sample made up of participants 1,4,6, 7,8, 9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20, and 22

unanimously noticed that the high attrition rate in the industry today was heavy, quite

common among low cadre especially the millennials, often influenced by poor pay, and

the proliferation of ad agencies. There was a perception that due to the low-paying

structure of the industry and talented employees, other high-paying sectors such as

banking and consulting firms find the ad agency sector attractive to poach talents.  A

participant described his observation of the state of attrition as "…there is high attrition

rate in the industry because unfortunately, the industry did not start well, as a high paying

industry. The industry was operating like the old indigenous accounting firms."  Another

participant with an HR background stated "… high attrition rates in the industry today

has to do with the demographic characteristics of the agencies…honestly, there are too

many of them and they are substandard (angered tone). One of our deputy creative

directors left with one of our accounts to start an agency. A participant also noted "…the

archetype of the new millennial. Their perspective of work is different from ours. …if we

don't see how those interests can be accommodated they easily feel stifled (turnover

intention).,.and exit without giving much thought to job security. And their passions are

both hobbies and also sources of income"

The findings from research interview question six on how talents are retained and

can be retained, revealed that 95% (20) of the total sample made up of participants

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,15,16,17,18,19,20, and 22 described monetary and

monetary benefits such as good remuneration, and non-monetary which includes share

and aligning of talents and corporate visions, job titles, pension, education grant,

partnership, equity are used to retain talents. Clear career development, career

progression, mentoring, succession planning, and inclusiveness are seen by participants as a strong talent management mix that can be used to retain talents. A participant stated "...In my experience, to retain talented people in the industry... What I have seen that works is when you identify talents, maybe at a stage where they are not yet restless, and you can align their vision with the corporate vision. Whenever you find a correlation between those two, it leads to retention 90% of the time…"

The findings from research interview question seven showed that 81%(17) of the total sample made up of participants 4, 6,7, 8, 9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19, 20, and 22 described succession planning, management of talents: provision of backup replacement/duplication of organization memory, avoidance of keyman-risk, solid human and materials resources as strategies that should be in place to mitigate the effect of attrition in ad agencies. Some participants also advocated for intervention from industry regulators. A participant who is an employee-manager cautioned von the hazardous implication of the "Keyman Risk". The keyman risk is when talent is considered indispensable or irreplaceable in an organization. A participant with an HR background stated that strategic effort being done to mitigate the effect of attrition is the strengthening of the succession plan. The participant shared the agency's approach to sustainability and continuity, as focusing on the following four pillars, one, people management development of the strategy for managing the people, two, strategy for managing the business, three, strategies for managing the operations the quality of the service, and four, finance through prudent financial engineering. Participant 6, who is an industry senior called for regulatory intervention because of undercapitalization, citing use low capital

base"… I also think it was one of the reforms in APCON that Agencies need to be recapitalized, you cannot be doing a billion, 300, 400, 500 million billings with a capital base or 20 million, it is under trading. "

**Discrepant Cases**

At the data collection stage, a participant though acknowledged the attrition rate but his description which was claimed to be a welcome idea was contrary to other participants' position of threat to the continuity of the business. He stated "As for the attrition rate that people dangle up…honestly, as a person, I want more entrepreneurship to spread… " Although other participants and this participant agreed on the state of attrition, their meanings and essences differ. Hence the phenomenon of interest was accepted since the quality of the discrepant was perfect (Robert et al, 2007),

<div align="center">

**Summary**

</div>

Of the total sample, 16 (76%) described employee job satisfaction in the advertising agencies as non-monetary such as a learning environment, and a great workplace. Also, 71% (15) of the total sample described the operations of the practice as more open now due to cultural evolution, and technological disruption. Further, 67% (14) of the total sample observed and recognized investment in talent management, manpower development, and career progression as critical for the continuity of the business, while 90% (19) of the total sample described their organizations' plan towards continuity as being built around succession planning programs. The study revealed 62% (13) of the total sample's disappointing management lived experience includes the loss of staff,

deceitful talent, employee unsteady attitude, unethical practices, low ethical conduct, and self-preservation of founders than their businesses.

Eighty-six percent (18) of the total sample recognized that the high attrition rate in the industry today was caused by poor pay, perceived glass ceilings in career progression, the proliferation of advertising agencies, and common among low cadre especially the millennials. Notwithstanding, 95% (20) of the total sample recognized monetary benefits, and non-monetary such as job titles, pension, partnership, equity, clear career development, career progression, mentoring succession planning, and inclusiveness as a talent management mix to retain talents. And 81% (17) of the total sample recognized succession planning, management of talents, duplication of organization memory, avoidance of keyman-risk, solid human and materials resources as strategies to mitigate the effect of attrition in ad agencies. Chapter 5 includes interpretations of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications of this study for social change, and my conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological research study was to explore lived experience of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition and whether they succeeded or not. The overarching research question is: What are the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition? As stated earlier seven interview guide questions were developed for interview protocols. The purpose of succession planning is twofold: to enable the leadership of organizations to effectively address future challenges and opportunities that may be encountered during changes in crucial positions and encourage retention, challenge, motivate and boost employees' morale (Fulmer & Conger, 2004; Mazurkiewicz, 2017; Schoonover, 2015). The study involves lived experiences of advertising agency leaders in Nigeria regarding succession planning.

By conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews and using a modified van Kaam method to analyze data, taking cognizance of principles of epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis as counseled by Moustakas, I was able to address the phenomenon of interest-based on participants' lived experiences. Participants described their lived experiences involving the phenomenon as they relate to work environment, management culture, quality of practice, loss of key staff, attrition, retention strategies, and mitigating the effects of attrition using succession planning. Nonmonetary incentives such as a great work environment, career development, career progression, and good pay promote employee job satisfaction,

loyalty, and intention to stay. Nonopenness of leadership and management culture often led to heavy attrition in advertising agencies. Opaqueness or non-transparency of advertising agencies' leaders during operations of the business resulted in employees' lack of understanding of the demands of operational and functional leadership responsibilities of the business. This knowledge gap led to mistrust, heavy turnover, and lack of practice quality.

Succession planning programs enhanced employee retention and continuity of the business. Talent management programs such as manpower development including training, career development, alignment of employees and corporate goals, and mentoring influenced employee retention, sustainability, and continuity of the business. Managers' lack of commitment to the long-term preservation of the advertising agencies' business by staying too long as chief executives without succession plans, thereby contributing to impediments to advancement and exit intentions of top talents. Heavy attrition is common among junior levels of employees. The 43% high attrition rate in the industry is partly driven by the generational quest for higher pay in the industry(AAAN, 2019).

Talents are retained via nonmonetary compensation such as equity, partnership, and job titles. Succession planning mitigates the effects of attrition. Succession planning strategies such as talent management, development of backup teammates, and resource regeneration were part of the fundamentals applied by leaders in advertising agencies to mitigate the effects of attrition.

**Interpretation of Findings**

Employee turnover in ad agencies includes three categories: breakaways and individual voluntary and involuntary exits. Faleye (2019) said that not many advertising agencies can survive breakaways without a strong succession plan in place because of suddenness, huge vacancies, and instability it usually creates within organizations. These experiences as noted by some scholars, often influence the leadership of such organizations to take hasty and ineffective succession decisions such as promotion of employees who are ill-prepared for upper ranks (Lee, 2016; Vongani & Clever, 2016; West, 1987). Findings in this study confirmed how succession planning was used to mitigate the effects of breakaways and voluntary exits in ad agencies.

The purpose of succession planning is twofold as agreed by Fulmer and Conger, 2004; Mazurkiewicz, 2017; Schoonover, 2015. First, it involves enabling leadership of organizations to effectively address future challenges and opportunities that may be encountered involving changes in crucial positions, encouraging retention, challenging, motivating, and boosting employees' morale. The findings of this study confirmed and extended knowledge in the discipline based on the lived experiences of some participants on succession planning outcomes through gender sensitivity to address leadership crisis and continuity challenges.

Llewllyn (2019) advocated a two-way open communication channel between followers and leadership to create succession planning awareness at all levels of employees in the organization. This connotes openness and transparent information dissemination and management in terms of organizational activities and discourages

turnover intentions. Some ad agency leaders who adopted open management culture approaches with their followers described their experiences as fulfilling because they promoted employees' trust and encouraged intentions to stay because everyone understood expectations, required contributions, and benefits. A survey of 1300 organizations worldwide, who are members of the Top Employers Institute has shown a that: "99% of senior leaders participated in succession planning meetings while 95% took part in regular reviews" (Welsh, 2019, p.2). The turning point is that some of the leaders focus their succession planning efforts on leadership positions/chief executives' and deploy or source for candidates, while others leaned on the talent pool's potential for key and leadership positions (Welsh, 2019). Findings revealed that participants confirmed the lack of formal succession plans in agencies.

Channing (2020) cited a report of K-12 university study report on how leadership is thought, and learned, which revealed that leaders needed improvement in emotional intelligence, supervision, leadership skills, and the creation of a positive workplace environment. The findings confirmed the knowledge in the discipline on the need for leadership and supervisory training in the sector as experienced by participants' observation of the interaction between bad bosses, supervisors, or line managers and their subordinates. In a Center for Creative leadership, study report on mentorship, Pobst (2014)stated, "mentoring programs increased retention in 77% of the company surveyed" (p. 63), and about one-third of non-mentored employees left for other employment within 1 year. This implies that the application of a mentoring program by leaders of advertising

agencies in Nigeria is a viable management tool in terms of increased loyalty and retention.

**Comparison of Findings to Conceptual Framework and Theories**

Priest (2002) said, "While the intention of phenomenological research is not to generate theory but to describe and understand the essence of a concept, there remains always the option to compare the findings with those achieved through alternative methods" (p. 61). A fit between the two should validate the van Kaam method of the analysis which I used in this study. Therefore, I compared the findings with the framework of this study which was based on Scandura and Pelleginne's (2008) three-phase leader-member exchange(LMX) model. The approach provides details on leader and employee relations within the context of an organization in three phases that can be encapsulated within the concepts of employee retention and succession planning.

The first phase is the stranger phase, when the leader and member play independent organizational roles, tagged cash, and carry economic exchange, with little or no loyalty, and characterized by low-quality LMX due to a lack of care and commitment. The next phase is where improved relationships move the dyad to an acquaintance phase, and they share information at personal and work levels. However, if the dyad fails to develop, it reverts to the stranger phase with the possibility of low job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The third phase is the maturity stage where the relationship becomes emotional with demands for loyalty, mutual trust, and support. A breach by either side creates the trends in attrition such as resignation or involuntary turnover of employees as in employee-lay-offs cited earlier (Duggan, 2015; Fisher, 1916;

Lee, 2016). In the maturity stage of the leader-member relationship, attrition, which has

been so much of a challenge for the leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria, was 43%

in 2017 (AAAN, 2019; Maxwell, 2013; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008).

Many scholars and practitioners agreed on the need for advertising agencies to be

energized through employee supports, career investments, mentoring (Patwardhan et al.,

2018). And to focus resources on employee retention, and talent management (Lee, 2016;

Pandita & Sampurna, 2018) because agencies that lack succession planning strategies

would be weaker (Faleye, 2019). Smith (2018) identified five behaviors that keep talents

in the team, and these are a combination of one-on-one task orientations and open

discussions, treating employees' opinions with respect, offer transformational rewards,

support, and modeling self-respect. The author added that the relationship between the

leader and subordinate should be supportive of each other, and guided by the LMX

principles. Could organizational leaders be directly responsible for employees' voluntary

exit? In conducting this transcendental phenomenological study which explored the lived

experiences of leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria, on succession planning as a

strategy to reduce attrition, themes and meanings discovered were foregoing.

Notwithstanding, the following are the themes and meanings that align with the concepts

and theories.

**Employee Retention**

Despite scholarly efforts in the past 110years to unravel why employees leave

their firms, there have not been specific universal conditions that pointed to this

phenomenon (Llewllyn, 2019). Contextually scholars and practitioners see retention

strategies as multifunctional, covering caring, positive working environment, involvement in management, compensation, peers, career development, open management culture inclusive of information sharing, and support (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008; Hussein et al., 2010) and its application can reduce attrition and promotes sustainability and continuity of the business. The findings of this study confirmed the knowledge in the discipline that retention strategies are multifunctional, covering a good work environment, involvement in management, compensation, peers, career development, career progression, open management culture, and mentoring. It can be concluded that participants' lived experiences (noema and noesis) of the phenomenon of interest in this study were not preconceived or imagined (Moustakas, 1994).

**Succession Planning**

Although Schoonover (2015) stressed that smaller organizations use succession planning for replacements for critical positions only some scholars expressed reservation on the position. The scholars based their concerns on the narrowness of the approach because it focused only on short time or hasty replacement of the departing occupants of the vacant positions (Armstrong, 2012 as cited in Dagogo & Amina, 2019; Baldwin, 2000; Coonan,2005). As I mentioned earlier, these scholars reasoned that succession planning was not only for key positions or CEOs but a process of identifying and developing employees for the continuity of all critical positions, not a one-size-fits-all, and must be aligned with the strategic plan and goals of the organization. Therefore, succession planning models and categories have varying labels and nomenclature but leading scholars agreed on typical categories and their characteristics (Benson-Oke,

2017; Bills et al., 2017; Church, 2014) as, replacement (Behr & Fehre, 2018; Schoonover, 2015), back-up (Mukherjee & Nguyen, 2017; Schoonover, 2015), bench strength (Taylor & Youngs, 2017), pipeline, and hi-potential candidate commonly referred to as "hi-po" (Schoonover, 2015). The findings of this study confirmed the knowledge in the discipline regarding the application of some of the cited models or combinations at different times by the participants.

Leading authorities inclusive of Larkin, (2020), and Rosenthal et al (2019), stressed that irrespective of the categories or models an expected successful succession planning event must share a set of common core elements that can be enhanced as a framework for individual organizational needs, types and sizes, and goals. One of such elements is the featuring of a two-fold succession planning role: associated with the organizational goal, and employee tenure stability which assures job security, discourages turnover intentions, and enhances continuity of the organization. This is underscored by Erickson (2019), who affirmed that often, leaders do not understand employees as the most critical and complex resource in the firm. This knowledge in the discipline confirmed that on the application of succession planning advertising agencies' leaders need to consider the beneficiary from inception and engage in goal sharing and alignment exercises to avoid disappointment as experienced by many participants in this study.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study had three potential limitations. The first was a potential challenge of having access to the participants but was miraculously made easy because of the relaxation of COVID-19 protocols restriction in Nigeria that allowed a category of people

to go to work. The COVID-19 protocol of wearing face masks, use of hand sanitizers, and social distancing of about a meter were observed. Hence the state of mind of the participants because of the "new normal "caused by the pandemic crisis may be threatened. The counsel of Jensen (2012), was also noted with regards to sensitivity to change and variation in methodology during a study, but there was no change during the data collection and I maintained a seamless audit trail of the process (Rodgers, 2011).

The second limitation was that the criteria used in selecting the homogenous sample did not include gender, educational qualifications, and years of working experience. Future researchers may consider the personal profiles of the leaders in advertising agencies as likely to influence the nature of data collection on the phenomenon of interest. This limitation could be addressed in a similar future study by including those demographic indicators in the participant selection criteria because of their potential on the findings. The third limitation is that the findings cannot be generalized as a reflection of the leaders of advertising agencies universally, because the observations and events that occur in the study are defined by specific contexts.

However, as an instrument of this study who is also an advertising practitioner, issues of limitations to trustworthiness such as bias that could occur because of similar characteristics with the participants were bracketed off. This was achieved through the application of the epoche principle (Moustakas,1994). Further, my openness and transparent presentation of all the relevant iterative methodological processes, and information was influenced by a disciplined process expected of a researcher using the transcendental phenomenological approach. Given that with my maintenance of a

seamless audit trail, all the processes within the study can be tracked, reviewed, replicated, and findings reproducible through the use of the same contexts and procedures (Andres, 2020; Mathison, 2011; Rodgers, 2011).

## Recommendations

I have used transcendental phenomenological research to explore the lived experiences of the leaders of advertising agencies in Nigeria regarding succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition whether they succeeded or not. The findings of this study provided immense opportunities for future research. Although all participants agreed on the state of attrition, participant 22, differed on its meanings and essences. The disagreeing participant saw attrition as promoting entrepreneurship. A longitudinal quantitative research study on this thinking may provide an insight into the benefit of the subject. This recommendation is supported by the participant's interpretation of attrition as a welcome development to the spirit of entrepreneurship than a threat to the continuity of business.

As earlier cited, an explanatory study by Khan and Chaoudhary (2020) on major factors for attrition i.e. "job insecurity" was conducted with a sample size of 350, and the response was 258. It revealed a cumulative of 72.5% agreed that job security was most important for their employees, and could influence turnover. The findings in this study confirmed that the sit-tight mindset of founder-CEOs creates a perception of glass ceilings for talents and influences attrition as revealed by most participants. Future research may explore what could be responsible for the non-voluntary retirement of advertising agencies' founders or owner-managers in Nigeria. The recommendation is

also supported by participants' observation of founder CEOs spending up to 20years on the same seat thereby stifling career progression, and leading to the exit of top talents and proliferation of agencies.

Future research may focus on talent management and succession planning as participants and scholars (Schoonover, 2015) kept using the two terms interchangeably and synonymously. The recommendation is supported by participants' use of talent management, succession planning, Future longitudinal quantitative or qualitative research should focus on the impact of gender sensitivity on the leadership of advertising agencies concerning the phenomenon of interest. This recommendation supports the participant's affirmative statement that succession planning turns out more successful with female managing directors and top executives because they are perceived to be more loyal, more resilient, and more stabl*e*.

## Implications

### Implications for Practice

Although there exists a valid theory that employees expect encouragement and career investments from their leaders, there was evidence that the leaders do not fully understand the nature of the investment in advertising agencies in Nigeria (Faleye, 2019; Scandura & Pellgrini, 2008). According to Callahan et al. (2012), my dissertation has the potential of being accessible to scholars and practitioners in the public domain thereby providing and deepening the voice of the leaders of advertising agencies whose lived experiences of the phenomenon are being shared. The implication of my study to practice is that leaders in advertising agencies now have access, and could apply the findings to

lessen the problem they are experiencing. The leaders may use the findings as a tool to address the challenge of employee retention. Advertising agency leaders may use the findings of this study for better retention of employees through the application of appropriate succession planning strategies, and models (Schoonover, 2015). The findings of this antecedent study will greatly contribute to the advertising agency sector where less development in advertising management practice with regards to succession culture such as usage of succession planning as a strategy for employee retention in the advertising agency sector of the advertising industry exists (Ayuba, 2018; Bardi, 2010; Neil & Schauster,2018).

Advertising practitioner's Council of Nigeria (APCON), may benefit from the findings of this study, being the statutory regulator with the mandate for formulating, implementing, and enforcing the statutory policies on practice for practitioners in the advertising industry. This study may provide the much-needed in-depth qualitative data on strategies such as succession planning, which leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria may need for stability and growth. As an advertising practitioner, I will benefit from this study because of my involvement in the ongoing advertising reform in the advertising industry in Nigeria which focused on improving advertising practice.

**Implications for Positive Social Change**

The findings from this study have the potential of being used for reducing attrition in advertising agencies, thus fostering organizational stability, the culture of empathy, improvement of organizational vision, and the adoption of strategic change initiatives (Bennis, 1999; Carlozzi et al., 2002; Stephan et al., 2016). Organizations within the

advertising agency sector of the advertising industry are responsible for providing

specialized functions for the advertisers, and advertising revenue for the media sectors,

effective application of the findings of my study have a strong "Humane Ethics

Dimension"(p.11) because of the potential of preventing the collapse of ad agencies

thereby saving the families and significant factors that depend on their employees for

economic survival (Arens & Bovee, 1994; Callahan et al. 2012; Hameroff, 1998). The

endangered employees will not have been able to provide basic needs such as food,

accommodation, medicare, and education for their families. Effective application of the

findings from this study may contribute to social change by influencing improvement in

people management in the advertising agency sector of the advertising industry, thereby

improving morale, productivity, retention, continuity of the business, and boosting the

economy of the country (Chawla, 2015). This change has the potential for controlling the

failure or collapse of the organizations within the advertising agency sector, reducing

unemployment, preventing possible executives' burnout, ill-health and suicide, and the

tendency to commit social crimes in the society (Levinson, 1996). Findings from this

study have the potential to further impact positive social change on leaders of advertising

agencies on the issues of positive work environment, involvement in management,

compensation, peers, career development, open management culture inclusive of

information sharing, and support (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008; Hussein et al., 2010).

**Implications for Theory**

Kesner & Sebora (1994) said succession research was dominated by archival data

sources and quantitative analysis techniques, most antecedent studies such as this study

lacked "theoretical and methodological rigor" (p.967), and advocated for a high level of robustness in this area (Giambatista et al., 2005). In Nigeria, the literature has focused on campaigns, jobs, advertising typology, audience, ethics, media, and advertising production development, and issues in advertising. Notwithstanding, Faleye (2019) counseled on the need for agencies to learn about succession planning and focus resources on critical employee retention, which is an under-researched area in the advertising management literature (Neill & Schauster, 2018). The findings in this study contributed first-hand qualitative transcendental phenomenological data that compared with the theory in the study's conceptual framework thereby advancing knowledge in organizational development studies, especially on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The findings of this study buttressed knowledge in the discipline on the concept of succession planning where, if skillfully applied succession planning could be used to reduce attrition. With the original qualitative data from this study, and these theoretical implications, the who? What? Where? Why? and How? questions in this study were addressed, thereby bringing the lived experiences of leaders in the advertising agencies' sector of the advertising industry in Nigeria into succession planning literature.'

**Implications for Institutions**

The first-hand data from this qualitative transcendental phenomenological research has contributed to the body of knowledge in organizational development studies especially on succession planning in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The findings reflected high scholarship because they revealed the causes of the problems of this study

and offered solutions for employee retention and continuity of the business (Callahan et al. 2012). The findings will provide appropriate information for further research in the academic community by management scholars and enthusiasts in the process and preparatory stage of future researches on succession planning in advertising agencies. Practitioners in the academic community would benefit from using the findings of this study to develop institutes and business school programs and curriculum for practitioners in the management and advertising fields. My findings in this study have the potential of influencing management scholars and researchers to carry out further research in the area of study. The implication of the findings of this study is the bridging of the knowledge gap and extension for the scholars, practitioners, and advertising management enthusiasts who will be exposed to the sufficiently contextual data and could apply it in situations such as teaching or publishing.

**Conclusions**

As earlier cited, for over seven decades, succession research has been dominated by archival data sources and quantitative studies, with un-yielded calls for "qualitative and longitudinal perspectives" (p.965), and "theoretical and methodological rigor" to buttress the vast archival data sources and quantitative studies (Giambatista et al., 2005; Kesner & Sebora, 1994). This study contributes to the plethora of literature on succession planning by extending knowledge on the field to include lived experiences of leaders of advertising agencies on the phenomenon. I used this study to address the gaps in succession literature and also provided the missing robust rigor" in the research segment.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenology research study was to explore the lived experiences of leaders in advertising agencies in Nigeria on the outcome of succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition, whether they succeeded or not. I applied the inductive modified van Kaam method (Moustakas, 1994) to identify the participants' meaning and essence of their lived experiences of the phenomenon of interest. Findings in this study showed that the participants were aware and employed a good work environment, non-monetary incentives, open management culture, career development to attract and retain employees because they provide emotional satisfaction. Leaders are faced with the challenge of attrition because the decision to stay is that of the employee. Ad agencies' leaders use talent management tools such as succession planning, manpower development, career development programs, compensation, equity, job titles, mentoring, and non-monetary perks as strategies for reducing attrition, retention, sustainability, and continuity of the ad agencies

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Appendix A: Typical Advertising Agency Structure
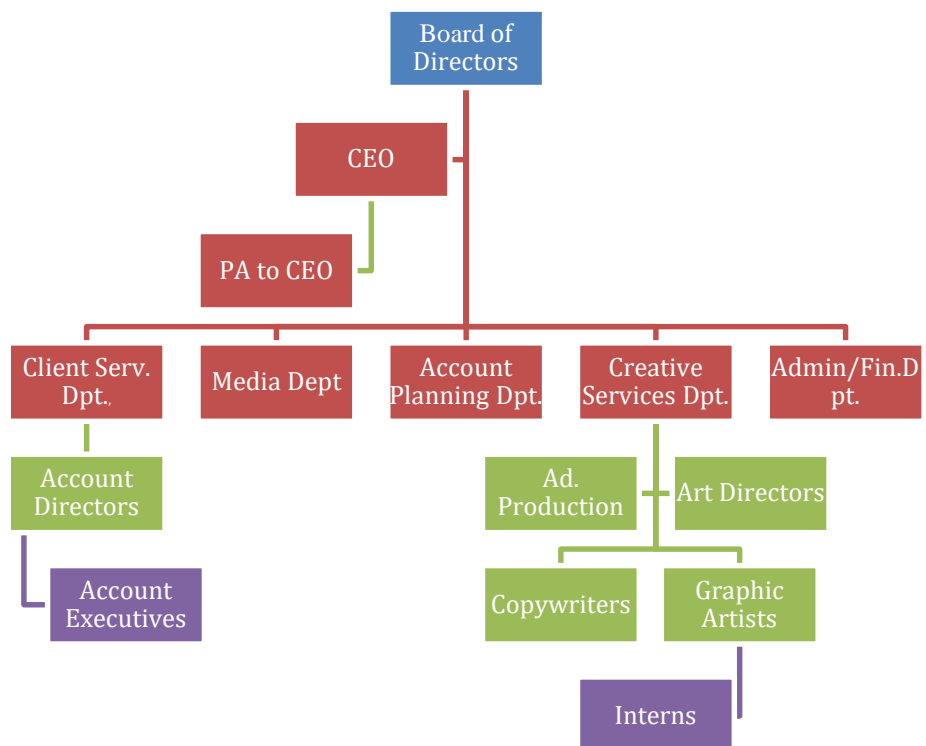
Appendix B: Interview Guide (The Protocol)

SECTION A

Position: ……………………………………………………………………

Staff Strength: ……………………………………………………………..

SECTION B

Interview Guide Questions

1. Based on your observations from your early life in the advertising industry, can you describe what constitutes employee job satisfaction in an advertising agency?

    -Relationship with peers and supervisors?

    -Employee exit (turnover) intentions?

2.  In your experience, how will you describe your observation in the practice of advertising then and now?

    - The openness of the leadership?

    - Career development?

    -Poaching of employees?

3. What are your observations of your organization's plan towards the continuity of the business?

    -Manpower Development?

    -Career Progression?

    -Succession planning outcome?

4. What disappointing management experiences did you observe in advertising agency(s) as a leader?

-Loss of businesses (i.e. Clients)

-Loss of key employees

-What did you dislike?

5. What have you noticed about the high attrition rate in the advertising industry today?

-What do you observe about your key employees?

*Job satisfaction; Stability; Interpersonal relationship-Teaming

-How would you describe the employee-management interpersonal relationship in your office?

6. With your experience in this sector, describe how talented professionals can be, and are retained?

-Employee job security?

-Involvement in management?

7. With your observation in this industry how will you describe what can be done to mitigate the effects of attrition in advertising agencies?

Appendix C: Sample Recruitment and Data Collection Log .

<u>Succession Planning as a Strategy to Reduce Attrition in Advertising Agencies in Nigeria</u>

Research Design: Interviews

**13-11-20:**        Received IRB approval today.

**13-11-20:**        Review the Sample frame (i.e. Membership Directory of Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria) of the Population of study and shortlisted potential participants.

**14-11-20:**        Initial contact with potential participants through telephone.

**16/11-11/12-20:**   Sent individual mails to 20 identified potential participants.

**16/11- 11-12-20:**  Received responses from potential participants to know more.

**19/11- 11-12-20:**  Respond to potential participants with Consent Form/RQs

**19/11-11-12-20:**   Signing of Consent Form by participants

**20/11-12/12/20:**   Booking/Scheduling of Interview appointments with participants

**22/11-13/12/20:**   Sent emails/SMS to confirm interview appointments

**23-11-20:**      Interview 1-Participant KA (**Member-checked: 24-26-11-20)**

**24-11-20:**      Interview 2-Participant-VE (**Member-checked: 26-27-11-20)**

**24-11-20:**      Interview 3-Participant-KO (**Member-checked: 28-30-11-20)**

**25-11-20:**      Interview 4-Participant-TA (**Member-checked: 01-02-12-20)**

**27-11-20:**      Interview 5-Participant-CA (**Member-checked: 14-20-12-20)**

**27-11-20:**      Interview 6-Particpamt-LA (**Member-checked: 19-27-12-20)**

**30-11-20:**      Interview 7-Participant-KE (**Member-checked: 21-22-12-20)**

**30-11-20:**      Interview 8- Participant-AO (**Member-checked: 22-26-12-20)**

**01-12-20:**      Interview 9- Participant-IOA(**Member-checked:24-12-20/07-01-21)**

**02-12-20**       Interview10-Participant –AL(**Member-checked:28-12-20/17-01-21)**

**02-12-20**       Interview11-Participant-CO(**Memberchecked:21-1120/11-01-21)**

**04-12-20**       Interview12-Participant-GT(**Member-checked:04-10-01-21)**

**08-12-20**       **I**nterview13-Participant-TT(**Member-checked:06-11-01-21)**

**08-12-20**       Interview14-Participant-LO(**Member-checked:07-17-01-21)**

**09-12-20**       Interview15-Participant-BN(**Member-checked:16-27-12-21)**

**09-12-20**       Interview16-Participant-SA(**Member-checked:11-19-01-21)**

**11-12-20**       Interview17-Participant-UU(**Member-checked:12-23-01-21)**

**11-12-20**       Interview18-Participant-IO (**Member-checked:15-22-01-21)**

**12-12-20**       Interview19-Participant-MN(**Member-checked: 16-22-01-21)**

**14-12-20**       Interview 20-Participant-SO(**Member-checked:20-26-01-21)**

**14-12-20**       Interview 21-Participant-RL<span style="color:red">(Memberchecked:20-27/29-01- 21 Attachment, and follow-up didn't yield fruit.</span>

**15-12-20**       Interview 22-Participant-SB(**Member-checked:21-30-01-21)**

Appendix D: Association of Advertising Agencies(AAAN)Membership List

## AAAN MEMBERSHIP LIST

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1

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Magodo, Lagos
Email: info@interactivemedia.com.ng
Website: www.interactivemedia.com.ng
Tel: 08023143103, 08173143103

43. **Isobar Communications Limited**
Mr. Igwe Okeke
1, Remi Fani-Kayode Avenue,
G.R.A., Ikeja
Lagos.
Tel: 09064744592
Email: info.nigeria@isobar.com
Website: www.isobar.com/ng/en

44. **Javelin-Wunderman Communications Ltd,**
Mr. Dumebi Onwordi-Okonji
7, Oduduwa Crescent,
G.R.A., Ikeja,
Lagos.
Tel: +234-1-3426846, 08023025771
E-mail: enquiry@wundermannigeria.com
Website: www.wunderman.com

45. **Kurioucity Limited,**
Mr. Otono Azemhobo Lawrence,
1B, Awayewaserere Street,
Agidingbi, Ikeja,
Lagos.
Tel: 08023392473
E-mail: kurioucityltd@gmail.com

4

46. **Ladybird Limited,**
Mrs. Bunmi Oke,
4, Olufunmilola Okikiolu Street,
Off Toyin Street,
Ikeja,
Lagos.
Tel: 08098141001, 08035991323
E-mail: info@ladybirdadvertising.com

47. **Leo Burnett Limited**
Mr. Lekan Lawal
21, Oduduwa Street
G.R.A., Ikeja
Lagos
Tel: 08024444006,
Email: thethiinkshop.com
Website: www.thethiinkshop.com

48. **Le Zeneral Consulting Limited,**
Mr. Meka Niyi Olowola,
54, Udeco Medical Road,
Chevy View Estate,
Off Chevron Drive,
Lekki, Lagos.
Tel: 08099022173
Email: info@zenera.mx
Website: www.zenera.mx

49. **Livespot Media Limited**
Mr. Kelvin Ofocho Orifa,
5A, Remi Fani-Kayode Street,
GRA, Ikeja,
Tel: 09035000055, 09087226014
E-mail: info@livespotgroup.com
Website: www.livespotgroup.com

50. **Lowe Lintas Limited,**
Mr. Erhabor Emokpae,
6, Sylvia Crescent,
Anthony Village,
P.O. Box 551, Lagos.
Tel: 08034024402
Email: emokpae@aol.com

51. **LTC Advertising Limited**
Mrs. Bisi Afolabi
3, Ope Oredugba Close
Behind Etiebet House
Off Mobolaji Bank-Anthony Way
Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 08023070503
E-mail: ltc@ltc-jwtlagos.net
bafolabi@ltc-jwtlagos.net
Website: www.ltc-jwtlagos.net

52. **Marcoms Support Services Limited,**
Mr. Wale Akintunde,
5, Twins Obasa Street,
By Deeper Life Headquarters,
Gbagada,
Lagos.
Tel: 08060049555, 08072713165
E-mail: info@marcomss.com
Website: www.marcomss.com

53. **Maxedge Communications Limited,**
Mr. Edegbe Victor Osa,
7B, Imaria Street,
By New Castle Hotel,
Anthony Village,
Lagos, Nigeria.
Tel: 07046159446, 08033012103
E-mail: vedege@max-edge.com
Website: www.max-edge.com

54. **Niche Integrated Marketing Comms Ltd.,**
Mr. Olapade Awosemo
14a, Olatunji Close,
Continental Way,
Ikosi G.R.A. Phase IV
CMD Road, Magogo
Tel: 01-7620100, 08034456972
E-mail: info@nicheimc.com.ng
Website: www.nicheimc.com.ng

55. **Nitro 121 Limited,**
Mr. Lampe Omoyele,
3, Remi Fani Kayode Street,
G.R.A., Ikeja, Lagos.
E-mail: info@nitro121ng.com
E-mail: lomoyele@nitro121ng.com
Website: www. nitro121ng.com
Tel: +234-1-2790581, 08098141001

56. **Noah's Ark Communications Limited,**
Mr. Lanre Adisa
9, Sowemimo Street,
G.R.A., Ikeja.
Tel: 08034021275
Email: lanre@noahsark.com.ng
Website: www.noahsark.com.ng

57. **Ogilvy Nigeria Company Limited,**
Mr. Seni Adetu,
1683, Sanusi Fafunwa Street,
Victoria Island,
Lagos.
Tel: +234 9070289100
E-mail: contact@criterioncommunications.com
Website: www.criterioncommunications.com

58. **Onewildcard Limited,**
Mr. Olowu Olukayode,
32, Community Road,
Off Allen Avenue,
Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 08093444451, 08093444452
Email: hello@onewildcard.com
Website: www.onewildcard.com

59. **Outori Limited,**
Mr. Obinna Aniche,
302A, Titilayo Adedoyin Street,
Omole Phase 1,
Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 08035351391, 08022226852
E-mail: hello@outori.com
Website: www.outori.com

60. **Prima Garnet Africa Limited,**
Mr. Lolu Akinwunmi,
LEMIDA VILLA,
4ᵇ, Ayo Rosiji Crescent,
Off Oduduwa Crescent,
G.R.A. Ikeja, Lagos
Tel: 01-7730312 – 4, 08170411687, 08139523666
E-mail: lakinwunmi@primagarnetafrica.com
Website: www.primagarnetafrica.com

61. **Prize Communications Limited,**
Mr. Shaka Momodu,
12, Sunmola Street,
Mende, Maryland, Lagos
Tel: 01-8175727, 07029110926-30
Email: info@prizecommunicationsng.com
Website: www.prizecommunicationsng.com

62. **Pulsar Limited,**
Mr. Emiko Aruofor,
6, Market Street,
Off Abibu Oki,
Marina, Lagos.
Tel: 08055336666
Email: emiko_aruofor@pulsaradvert.com

63. **Reads & Mark Limited,**
1, Ogbaru Street, Independence Layout,
P.O. Box 1271, Enugu,
Tel: 08033097736
Email: readsmark@yahoo.com

64. **Rinet Limited,**
Mr. Fillius Osubor,
12, Bayo Ajayi Street,
Marwa Brooks Estate,
Central Business District
Agidingbi, Ikeja, Lagos
P.O. Box 15228, Ikeja.
Tel: 08033027870, 08026594694, 08091774884
Email: rinetltd@yahoo.com, fillius.o@gmail.com
Website: www.rinetng.com

65. **Rosabel Advertising Limited**
Rosabel Court,
31, Aromire Avenue, Ikeja
P.O. Box 12607, Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 234(01) 7406265 – 7, 08022241104
E-mail: info@rosabelleoburnett.com
Website: www.rosabelleoburnett.com

66. **Ruyi Communications Limited**,
Mr. Omoruyi Irabor
6, Akanni Bashorun Street,
Off Fola Osibo Street,
Off Grace Anjous Drive,
Off Admiralty Way,
Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.
Tel: 09091919191, 08055555500, 08028275311, 08037176808
E-mail: soni_irabor@live.com, otaborv14@gmail.com

67. **Seskay Marketing Communications Limited,**
Mr. Sanmi Omiata,
5A, Celestial Church Street,
Off Amara Olu,
CBD, Alausa,
Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 08055556551
E-mail: mail@seskay.com
Website: www.seskay.com

68. ✓ **Sodium Brand Solutions Limited,**
Mr. Abisoye Ayoyinka Fagade,
7B, Bola Ajibola Street,
Off Community Road,
Allen Avenue,
Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 01-7450324, 08036188700
E-mail: info@sodiumng.com
Website: www.sodiumng.com

69. **Solutions Communications Limited,**
Mr. Gabriel U.N. Abah,
7B, Oba Adetona Street,
Off Sura Mogaji Street,
Ilupeju, Lagos.
P.O. Box 5109, Surulere, Lagos
Tel: 234-1-8776346, 08060080568, 08072150256
E-mail: agun3@hotmail.com,
gabriel.abah@solutionsng.com
Website: www.solutionsng.com

70. **SO & U Limited**
Mr. Udeme Ufot, MFR
2, Oyetola Street,
Off Ajanaku Street, Opebi, Ikeja,
Tel: 01- 7741754, 7731547, 8153333
E-mail: info@sou.com.ng
udeme.ufot@sou.com.ng
Website: www.sou.com.ng

71. **Soulsight Nigeria Limited,**
Mr. Joko Okupe
7B Molade Okoya Thomas,
Off Adeniyi Jones Avenue,
Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 01-7943633
E-mail: info@soulsightnigeria.com
Website: www.soulsightnigeria.com

72. **SpaceTM Limited**
Mrs. Frances Eza
10, Ologun Agbaje Street,
Off Adeola Odeku,
Victoria Island,
Lagos.
Tel: 01-2806665,
Email: explore@space.tm

73. **STB-McCann Lagos,**
Mr. Paul Ugoagwu,
1, Oyetola Street,
Off Ajanaku Street, Opebi, Ikeja
P.O. Box 3633, Yaba, Lagos.
Tel: 234(01) 7742363, 7744311, 7305507,
7305509, 08034603460
E-mail: stbadmin@stbmccann.com
Email: ladipo.gbolagade@stbmccann.com
Website: www.stbmccann.com

74. **Strategic Outcomes Limited,**
Mr. Jenkins Alumona,
14, Adefolu Drive,
(New World Bus Stop)
Off Allen Avenue,
Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 234-(01) 09085022777, 08055222221
Email: jenkinsalumona@yahoo.co.uk
Email: info@strategicoutcomes.ng
Website: www.strategicoutcomes.ng

75. **Streams Media & Comms Network Ltd,**
Mr. Rotimi Bankole
17, Ololade Avenue,
Off Association Avenue,
Shangisha,
Lagos.
Tel: 01-2933182, 08095053642, 0808983602
E-mail: info@streamsng.com
Website: www.streamsng.com

76. **Street Toolz Limited,**
Mr. Oche Jerry Chris,
5c, Aderibigbe Shitta Street,
Maryland, Ikeja,
Lagos.
Tel: + 234 1 3424403, 08036600302
E-mail: info@streettoolz.com
Website: www.streettoolz.com

77. **Switcheroo Nigeria Limited**
Mr. Victor Obaika
1, Karimu Giwa Close,
Falomo,
South West, Ikoyi.
Tel: 01-4631646, 08055453876
E-mail: info@switcheroo.ng
Website: www.switcheroo.ng

78. **TBWA\Concept Limited,**
Mr. Kelechi Nwosu,
5, Harold Shodipo Crescent,
G.R.A., Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 01-8760554, 8179782, 08033157560
sknwosu@tbwaconcept.com
Website: www.tbwaconcept.com

79. **The Tall & Wide Company Limited,**
Mr. Toye Arulogun,
21, Adeboye Sholanke Street,
Off Allen Avenue, Ikeja
Tel: 8502002, 07092475502,
E-mail: toyearulogun@yahoo.com
Website: www.tallandwide.com

80. **Tie Communications Limited,**
Mr. Buchi Njere
26, Ajani Olujare Street,
Alaka Estate,
Surulere,
Lagos.
Tel: 08023185231

81. **Touchstone Limited,**
Mr. Babatunde Ojo,
33, Little Road,
Yaba, Lagos.
Tel: 08025999333
E-mail: tundeojo279@yahoo.com

82. **Up in the Sky Limited**
Mr. Oje Ojeaga
Suite 305 Zaeed Mall
209, Lawal Street
Oregun Road
Ikeja, Lagos
Tel: 08098060679
E-mail: oje@upintheskyng.com
Website: www.upintheskyng.com

83. **Verdant Zeal Marketing Communications Ltd**
Dr. Joshua Olatunji Olugbodi,
15B, Sowemimo Street,
G.R.A., Ikeja, Lagos.
Tel: 01-8990283, 8990284
Email: enquiries@verdantzeal.com
Website: www.verdantzeal.com

84. **Wetherheads Advertising Group Limited,**
Mr. Abiodun Aderawumi
62, Oduduwa Crescent,
G.R.A., Ikeja.
Lagos.
Tel: 01-8161846-7, 342 8997
E-mail: info@wetherheadsgroup.com
Website: www.wetherheadsgroup.com

85. **X3M Marketing Ideas Limited,**
Mr. Steve Babaeko,
23, Omodara Street,
Awuse Estate,
Opebi, Ikeja,
Lagos.
Tel: 01-74191881, 7419189
Email: info@x3mideas-ng.com
Website: www.x3mideas-ng.com

86. **Xstrata Consulting Limited**
Mr. Wale Olabiyi
10E/13C Olanrewaju Street
Off Kudirat Abiola Way
Oregun, Ikeja,
Lagos.
Tel: 08060065803
Email: info@xstrataconsulting.com,
saxoross@yahoo.com
Website: www.xstrataconsulting.com

87. **Yellow Brick Road (YBR),**
Mr. Olumide Olowole,
3, Bode Olajumoke Crescent,
Park View Estate,
Ikoyi, Lagos.
Tel: 08088088008
Email: info@yellowbrickroad.com.ng
Website: www.yellowbrickroad.com.ng

88. **Y & R Lagos**
Dr. Celey Okogun,
7, Oduduwa Crescent,
G.R.A. Ikeja,
Tel: 08023025771
E-mail: celey_okogun@novelpottayr.com
Website: www.novelpottayr.com

Appendix E: Letter of Invitation to Participate

Hello Sir,

Re: Invitation to Participate in a Study

I hope this note finds you well.

Further to our initial telephone discussion in respect of the above, this is to formally invite you to participate as an "interviewee" in my dissertation study. The study is focused on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in an advertising agency in Nigeria.

As you know, I am a Walden Ph.D. graduate student. As part of fulfilling the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management, I am to conduct qualitative research interviews for the approved dissertation topic. I'm seeking that you participate in the study. Would you be interested in assisting me?

The research process will include completing an Informed Consent statement and an advance copy of the interview questions. The whole process should take no more than 90 minutes of your time.

Please let me know if you would like to participate, within the next 24hours. The dissertation study has deadlines, so we'll need to begin the process by xxxxx and finish the interview as agreed.

You can contact me by phone 2348037001972 or e-mail adenrele.akinde@waldenu.edu if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully

Ade Akinde

Appendix F: Letter of Confirmation to Participate

Hello Sir,

Re: Confirmation to Participate in Study

I hope this note finds you well.

Further to our initial telephone discussion in respect of the above, this is to formally invite you to participate as an "interviewee" in my dissertation study. The study is focused on succession planning as a strategy to reduce attrition in an advertising agency in Nigeria.

As you know, I am a Walden Ph.D. graduate student. As part of fulfilling the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management, I am to conduct qualitative research interviews for the approved dissertation topic. I'm seeking that you participate in the study. Would you be interested in assisting me?

The research process will include completing an Informed Consent statement and an advance copy of the interview questions. The whole process should take no more than 90 minutes of your time.

Please find attached the Consent Form and the advance copy of the interview questions as I await your response.

You can contact me by phone at 2348037001972 or e-mail adenrele.akinde@waldenu.edu if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully

Ade Akinde

Appendix G: Activity Time Plan

**Qualitative Phenomenological Study By Ade Akinde**
**Title: Succession Planning as a Strategy to Reduce Attrition in Advertising Agencies in**
**Nigeria**

| Nos. | Name | Reqd.Info | Status | Phone Nos | Interview-date | Time | Site | Held/Not |
|------|------|-----------|--------|-----------|----------------|------|------|----------|
| 1. | KO | Yes | Recruited | 08053252595 | Tues-24/11/20 | 2-3 pm | Opebi | **Held** |
| 2. | RL | Yes | Recruited | 08034603460 | Mon-14/12/20 | 4 pm | Foreshore | **Held** |
| 3. | IAO | Yes | Recruited | 08034001700 | Tues-01/12/20 | 11 am | V..Island | **Held** |
| 4. | KE | Yes | Recruited | 08023143710 | Mon- 30/11/20 | 11 am | Maryland | **Held** |
| 5. | KA | Yes | Recruited | 08034040188 | Mon- 23/11/20 | 4 pm | Osborne | Held |
| 6. | IO | Yes | Recruited | 08034001705 | Fri - 11/12/20 | 3 pm | VGC | **Held** |
| 7. | TA | Yes | Recruited | 08050411111 | Wed-25/11/20 | 10.30 am | Opebi | **Held** |
| 8. | AO | Yes | Recruited | 08036787471 | Mon-30/11/20 | 2 pm | GRA Ikeja | **Held** |
| 9. | EE | Yes | Apologies on health ground | | | | | |
| 10. | VE | Yes | Recruited | 08033019446 | Tues-24/11/20 | 11 am | Anthony | **Held** |
| 11. | LO | Yes | Recruited | 08022222053 | Tues-08/12/20 | 7 pm | 4 Points | **Held** |
| 12. | AL | Yes | Recruited | 08034021275 | Wed 02/12/20 | 1 pm | GRA | **Held** |
| 13. | SA | Yes | Recruited | 09070289100 | Wed 09/12/20 | 5-6 pm | V/I | **Held** |
| 14. | LA | Yes | Recruited | 08022906994 | Fri- 27/11/20 | 4 pm | VGC | **Held** |
| 15. | UU | Yes | Recruited | 08034022537 | Fri 11/12/20 | 1 pm | VGC | **Held** |
| 16. | CA | Yes | Recruited | 07033401897 | Fri-27/11/20 | 11 am | Foreshore | **Held** |
| 17. | BN | Yes | Recruited | 08023185231 | Wed-09/12/20 | 11 am | Alaka | **Held** |
| 18. | BO | Yes | No Response | | | | | |
| 19. | SB | Yes | Recruited | 08187810448 | Tue-15/12/20 | 3 pm | Maryland | **Held** |
| 20. | CO | Yes | Recruited | 08023025771 | Wed-02/12/20 | 3 pm | GRA | **Held** |
| 21. | MN | Yes | Recruited | 08037111118 | Sat -12-12-20 | 11 am | Opebi | **Held** |
| 22. | AA | Yes | Recruited | 08034160001 | No Response | | | Ogudu |
| 23. | TT | Yes | Recruited | 08034330222 | Tues-08-11-20 | 11 am | Anthony | **Held** |
| 24. | GT | Yes | Recruited | 08099921388 | Fri-04-11-20 | 3 pm | Anthony | **Held** |
| 25. | SO | Yes | Recruited | 08039600327 | Mon-14-12-20 | 2 pm | Foreshore | **Held** |