EFFECT OF BENCH STRENGTH MANAGEMENT PRACTICE ON CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY OF QUOTED CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study explores the effect of Bench Strength Management practice- specifically talent pool, leadership pipeline and replacement planning on Corporate Sustainability of quoted Construction Firms in Abuja, Nigeria. Utilizing a structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, data was collected from a sample of 236 employees, achieving a 90.25% response rate with 213 completed surveys. The analysis, conducted using linear regression analysis revealed significant positive relationship between bench strength management practice and Corporate Sustainability of quoted Construction Firms in Abuja, and concluded that in the event of an employee sudden departure, or any other unforeseen circumstances, effective bench strength minimizes project disruptions and maintain stability. The study recommends that construction firms maintain robust talent pool in order to minimize project disruptions in the event of sudden workforce changes. The study suggests the establishment of strong leadership pipeline through structured programs, to not only address talent shortages and leadership gaps, but also to encourage effective leadership behaviors for continuity, as well as implement effective replacement plan compactible with construction environment to mitigate risks associated with sudden vacancies in key positions, to meet immediate and strategic objectives.
Keywords: *Bench Strength Management, Corporate Sustainability, Talent Pool, Leadership Pipeline, Replacement Planning, and Construction Firms.*

INTRODUCTION

The construction industry plays critical role in Nigeria's economic development, particularly in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory Nigeria, where infrastructural development is paramount. However, survival in this sector remains a challenge due to incessant employee turnover, talent shortages, an aging workforce and inadequate succession management (Gonzalez & Cruz 2019). When sudden departure of employee occurs without immediate replacement, organizational operations are destabilized due to the industry's project-based nature, and the need for specific technical skills. A robust succession bench strength management involving talent pool and leadership pipeline facilitates seamless replacement, operational continuity and long-term sustainability. Construction firms often face challenges of aging workforce, and the constant need to replace or backfill positions quickly due to the cyclical nature of projects (Femi 2014). These challenges can be compounded in Nigeria, where the talent pool is further constrained by educational and training gaps, economic pressures, and the outmigration of skilled professionals (Olaniyan & Okemakinde 2008). Creating a pipeline of skilled workers, engineers, project managers, and other critical personnel who are prepared to step into key roles when needed, mitigate risks associated with sudden departures, promotions, or other changes that could otherwise destabilize project execution and the overall strategic direction of the firm is necessary (Dainty et al., 2007).

The sustainability and survival of construction firms, particularly in Abuja, Nigeria, are increasingly threatened by challenges related to human resource management, such as talent shortages, leadership gaps, and ineffective succession planning (Hillebranndt 2000). The volatile nature of the construction industry, characterized by high employee turnover, project-specific demands, and a shortage of skilled professionals, makes bench strength management a critical factor in organizational success (Kumar & Singh 2017).

Despite the importance of having ready and capable workforce, many construction firms in Abuja, Nigeria have not fully integrated bench strength management into their strategic planning. The absence of systematic approach to building and maintaining talent pool, developing future leaders, and preparing

for role replacements hampers their ability to respond promptly to staffing challenges. This problem underscores the need for an in-depth investigation into how bench strength management practices can enhance corporate sustainability by ensuring that construction firms have the right people, in the right roles, at the right time.

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of bench strength management on corporate sustainability of quoted construction firms in Abuja, Nigeria. The study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the effect of Talent Pool on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja Nigeria.
2. To evaluate the effect of Leadership Pipeline on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja,
3. To analyze the effect of Replacement Plan on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja,

Based on the research objectives and research questions this study formulates three hypotheses which are in their null form.

$H0_1$: Talent Pool has no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja

$H0_2$: Leadership Pipeline has no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja

$H0_3$ Replacement Plan has no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Corporate Sustainability

According to Dyllick and Muff (2016) corporate sustainability refers to the practice of managing a firm in ways that ensure its long-term viability by balancing economic, environmental, and social performance. Schaltegger e'tal (2016) maintained that corporate sustainability integrates environmental, social, and economic goals into business strategies for long-term stakeholder value." Lozno (2018) believes that corporate sustainability is about creating and maintaining conditions under which a company can continue to operate profitably over the long term, while safeguarding social equity and ecological health. Eccles e'tal (2014) stated that corporate sustainability is the company's capacity to create economic value in ways that also produce value for society by addressing its environmental and social impacts. Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos (2014) argued that corporate sustainability is an approach to business that creates long-term consumer and employee value by embracing the opportunities and managing the risks derived from economic, environmental, and social developments. Having strong succession bench strength ensures that future leaders are groomed to uphold sustainability principles, ensuring consistent strategies aligned with long-term environmental and social goals.

Concept of Bench Strength Management

Rothwell (2022) referred Bench Strength Management as strategic practice of developing a robust talent pool within an organization to ensure a ready leadership pipeline for critical roles. It involves establishing a replacement plan that minimizes disruptions during leadership transitions by preparing successors in advance. Groves, (2017) stated that Bench Strength Management is the continuous development of a talent pool to feed the leadership pipeline, ensuring that organizations are prepared for leadership transitions with a solid replacement plan. This process helps organizations manage risks related to leadership gaps (Groves, 2017). Conger and Riggio, (2019) believe that Bench Strength Management involves the identification and preparation of internal candidates from the talent pool to fill leadership roles in the leadership pipeline. The focus is on having a replacement plan in place to ensure smooth succession in key roles (Conger & Riggio, 2019). Doverspike (2016), stated that succession bench strength represents the pool of talented individuals who are capable of filling critical leadership positions in the future. It is seen as the depth and readiness of potential successors within an organization to assume key leadership roles.

Concept of Talent Pool

According to Schweyer (2021), talent pool is a database of potential candidates, both internal and external, who have the skills, experience, and potential to fill key roles within an organization. Cappelli, and Keller (2022), referred to talent pool as a group of high-potential employees identified and developed to step into critical positions within an organization. Silzer and Church (2022), stated that a talent pool comprises individuals with the necessary skills and potentials identified for current and future roles within a company. Garavan et'al (2023), maintained that a talent pool is an organized group of potential candidates, cultivated through recruitment and development efforts, who are equipped to fill leadership roles and critical positions within an organization. The concepts focuses on retaining and nurturing a pipeline of talent that is strategically aligned with the organization's goals.

Concept of Leadership Pipeline

Charan et'al (2011), referred leadership pipeline as a structured framework that guides the development and progression of leaders within an organization, ensuring a continuous flow of talent ready to take on increasingly complex leadership roles. According to Groysberg and Slind (2012), leadership pipeline is a talent management model that emphasizes the importance of developing leaders internally through clearly defined career pathways, targeted training, and on-the-job experiences. Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), stated that a leadership pipeline is the mechanism through which organizations develop future leaders, ensuring that leadership capacity is continuously aligned with business needs through systematic development and succession planning. In same vein, Gurdjian et'al (2014), posited that leadership pipeline is a systematic approach to identifying, developing, and preparing individuals for key leadership roles within an organization. It focuses on building the competencies required at each leadership level. McCauley and McCall Jr. (2014), maintained that leadership pipeline is the organizational process of cultivating internal talent to fill leadership positions, focusing on equipping individuals with the skills, experiences, and mindsets required for each level of leadership.

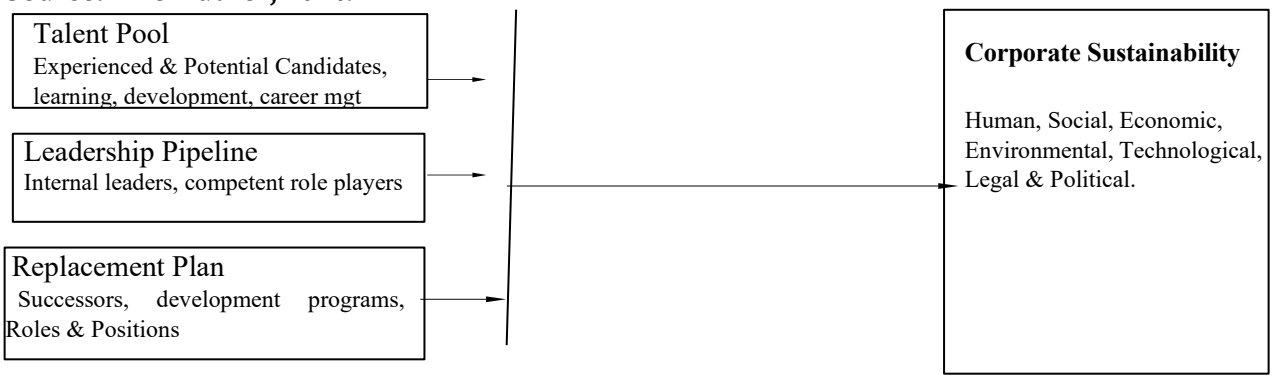
Concept of Replacement Plan

Looking at replacement plan, Rothwell (2020) posited that a replacement plan is a strategic approach to identify and prepare individuals within an organization to assume key positions in the event of a vacancy due to retirement, resignation, or other unforeseen circumstances. It focuses on ensuring that critical roles are always filled by qualified personnel. Gurdjian et'al (2021), maintained that a replacement plan is a component of succession planning that focuses specifically on ensuring that there are qualified individuals ready to fill key positions as they become available, thereby maintaining operational continuity and reducing the risk of leadership gaps. McCauley and Scull (2021) believed that a replacement plan is a proactive strategy aimed at identifying potential successors for key positions and preparing them through targeted development programs to ensure a seamless transition when those positions become vacant. Bersin (2022), also posited that replacement planning involves creating a systematic process to identify and develop internal candidates who can step into essential roles when needed, thereby minimizing the impact of sudden leadership changes on organizational performance. Ulrich and Dulebohn (2022) also maintained that replacement planning is the process of preparing and designating employees to assume critical positions within an organization in the event of a vacancy. It ensures that there are immediate and capable replacements to mitigate disruptions and maintain stability. Replacement plan as bench strength management strategy ensures that organizations maintain stability and growth in the phase of losing highly trained competent employee.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable **Dependent variable**

Source: The Author, 2024.



Empirical Review

Talent Pool and Corporate Sustainability

Khatri and Gupta (2021) examined The Impact of Talent Pools on Organizational Sustainability, and survey of 150 firms in India, using quantitative analysis to assess the relationship between talent pools and sustainability practices. The study found that Firms with well-defined talent pools exhibit higher levels of sustainability engagement and performance. Concluded that effective talent management is crucial for achieving corporate sustainability goals, and recommended that organizations should invest in developing comprehensive talent pool strategies that prioritize sustainability. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, and the regional focus limits generalizability to other contexts.

Cooke, et'al (2021) carried out research on "Talent Management: Four 'Buying Versus Making' Talent Development Approaches". Comparative case studies of different talent management strategies in multinational corporations using interviews and performance data. The study found that companies that developed internal talent had more sustained corporate survival compared to those relying solely on external hires, and concluded that internal talent development strengthens organizational resilience and long-term performance. The study may overlook contextual factors such as regional differences or industry-specific challenges that affect talent management and sustainability outcomes.

Endres, et'al (2022) carried out a study on "Digital Innovation Management for Entrepreneurial Ecosystems". The study examined innovation management practices across companies using qualitative interviews and surveys. The study found out that companies with strong talent management pools were better at adopting innovation management software, enhancing their competitive edge, and concluded that robust talent pool drives innovation and sustainability, crucial for corporate survival in dynamic markets. The study focuses on a specific sector, findings may not be applicable to other industries. Broadening the scope could enhance the relevance of the insights.

Leadership Pipeline and Corporate Sustainability

Goyal, et'al (2022), examined the intricacies of organizational and attitudinal factors with leadership style and performance measures: A family business perspective. This study examined leadership styles and business performance through surveys and statistical analysis of data from family-owned businesses. It found that leadership styles that align with the organization's goals and employee values significantly enhance business performance, particularly in multi-generational family firms. The study highlights the importance of adaptive leadership styles in maintaining corporate sustainability in family businesses. The study's sample size is relatively small for a broad conclusion, and more robust statistical analysis would strengthen claims about causation.

Alarifi and Adam (2023) conducted a study on "The Role of Participatory Leadership and Employee Innovative Behavior on SMEs' Endurance." The study collected data from 390 managers in medium-sized enterprises in Saudi Arabia using surveys. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to

test the relationships between leadership styles, employee behavior, and SME survival. The study found that there was a positive effect of participatory leadership and employee innovative behavior on SMEs' endurance, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The research suggested that participatory leadership fosters employee engagement and innovation, which are crucial for corporate survival, especially during challenging times. The case study approach, while rich in detail, may limit the ability to draw broad conclusions applicable to other contexts or industries.

Garzón-Lasso, et'al (2024) carried out a study on "full range leadership style and its effect on effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and extra effort: an empirical study." The study used a questionnaire administered to 577 executives from Colombian companies and analyzed the data using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The research found that transformational and transactional leadership styles positively impact extra effort, effectiveness, and employee satisfaction, with transformational leadership having the greatest effect. Conversely, passive-avoidant leadership negatively affected these variables. The study validated the effectiveness of the full range leadership model and emphasized the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing organizational outcomes. While the large sample size enhances reliability, the study may overlook regional variations in leadership practices and sustainability challenges.

Replacement Plan and Corporate Sustainability

Johnson and Wang (2021), studied the Role of Replacement Planning in Enhancing Corporate Sustainability. Study carried out survey of 200 firms across various sectors, using quantitative analysis to assess relationships between replacement planning and sustainability metrics, and found that organizations with structured replacement planning practices report higher sustainability performance and lower turnover rates among key personnel. The study concluded that effective replacement planning contributes positively to maintaining sustainability efforts during leadership transitions, and recommended that Firms should formalize replacement planning processes to ensure continuity in sustainability initiatives. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, and the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality.

Garcia and Patel (2022) examined Replacement Planning as a Strategy for Sustaining Corporate Sustainability Goals. The study adopted mixed methods approach, including quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with HR managers from 100 companies, and found that companies with proactive replacement plans are better positioned to meet sustainability targets and adapt to leadership changes swiftly. The study concluded that a well-developed replacement plan ensures that sustainability initiatives remain on track during transitions, and recommended that incorporate sustainability criteria into replacement planning frameworks. The small sample size for qualitative interviews may limit the depth of insights, and the study could benefit from a broader industry representation.

Thompson and Lee (2023), assessed the Impact of Replacement Planning on Long-Term Sustainability Outcomes. The study adopted longitudinal study analyzing replacement planning practices and sustainability performance metrics over five years across 150 firms, and found that firms with ongoing replacement planning show significant improvements in sustainability performance compared to those without such practices. It concluded that continuous replacement planning is essential for sustaining corporate sustainability over the long term, and recommended that the implementation of regular reviews of replacement plans to align with evolving sustainability goals. While the longitudinal approach is robust, the study may not account for external factors that influence sustainability outcomes, potentially skewing results.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories such as Human Capital Theory, Resource Based theory, Agency theory, Institutional theory, Social Capital theory, Upper Echelon Theory, Leadership Continuity theory, Knowledge-based View, Organizational Ecology theory, Contingency theory, Path Goal theory, and Transformational Leadership theory, that explains the relationship between Succession Bench Strength

Management as a strategy for corporate sustainability. However, two theories underpinned this study, the Human Capital Theory, propounded by Gary Becker (1994), emphasizes the value of investing in employees, and the Resource-Based View (RBV), by Jay Barney (1991) highlights the strategic role of personnel in achieving competitive advantage. They provide a more suitable theoretical explanations for the relationship between the variables of interest.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a descriptive survey method. Five (5) Quoted Construction Firms on the Nigeria Exchange Group (NGX) in Abuja, Nigeria was selected for this study, with emphasis on their years in operation, capital base, and branches across Abuja. The Construction Companies included Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Arbico Plc, Costain (West Africa) Plc, Cappa & D'Alberto Plc, and Roads Nigeria Plc. The research participants were staff at the selected construction firms, comprising a total of 613 staff from the five (5) Construction Firms. A sample size of 236 was received, using the Bill Godden formula. Based on the population being finite. The study employed five-point Likert scale questionnaire adapted from the work of Lee and Leh (2011) and was administered manually to respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to 236 staff of the five firms in, Abuja.

The questionnaire contained 20 items; (Corporate Sustainability-5, Talent Pool -5, Leadership Pipeline-5 and Replacement Plan-5). This questionnaire was subjected to validity and reliability tests using the Crombach Alpha, Average Variance (AVE), Convergent and Discriminant Validity, and results of the tests were reported accordingly. A proportionate stratified sampling approach, using Bowley's proportional formula, was used to choose respondents in each of the selected firms under investigation. Content validity of the instrument was conducted by three management experts from both the industry and academia. The instrument's reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.83, suggesting strong instrument consistency, and at a 5% probability threshold of significance. Lastly, the study used the Pearson's product-moment correlation to analyze the data.

Table 1 indicates that a total of 236 questionnaires were distributed using criterion sampling to focus only on top, middle and supervisory management staff of the selected construction firms who have experience and exposure in human resource management as follows: 141 were distributed to Julius Berger Nigeria PLC and 133 were returned; 19 were distributed to Arbico Plc and 15 were returned; 27 were distributed to Costain West Africa and 25 were returned; 26 were distributed to Cappa & D'Alberto Plc and 19 were returned; and 23 were distributed to Roads Nigeria Plc and 21 were returned.

Table 1. Questionnaire distribution and return.

S/N	Department	No. of staff	No. of Returned and valid questionnaire A	No of unreturned questionnaire B	No. of questionnaire distributed C (A+B)	Percentage of returned and valid questionnaire
1	Julius Berger Nigeria Plc	398	133	8	141	46.18%
2	Arbico Plc	40	15	4	19	4.66%
3	Costain (West Africa) Plc	52	25	2	27	9.32%
4	Cappa & D'Alberto Plc	69	19	7	26	6.35%
5	Roads Nigeria Plc	54	21	2	23	4.23%
	Total	613	213	23	236	90.25%

Source: Authors Computation 2024.

The study applied multiple regression analysis to assess causal relationship between the independent variables of Bench Strength Management and Corporate Sustainability. The Model is depicted below:

Model Specification

The model for the study is specified thus: $CS_{it} = bo + \beta_1 TPit + \beta_2 LP_{it} + \beta_3 RP_{3it}\ e_i$…….....(i)
Where;
CS= Corporate Sustainability; TP = Talent Pool; LP = Leadership Pipeline; and RP = Replacement Plan
β0 = intercept/constant term; β1, β2, β3 = coefficients of determination; U_{it} = error term

Tests of Significance

Whereby Y is the dependent variable, β0 is the regression constant or Y intercept β1…. B3 are the coefficients of the regression model. Coefficient of determination was used to establish whether the model is a good predictor. The test of significance is the ANOVA test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

A descriptive statistic explains the behavior of data used for any study. For the purpose of this study, the behavior of the primary data collected from the sampled respondents expressed in mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum is presented and explained below;

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Questions	MEAN	STD. DEV.	MIN.	MAX
Corporate Sustainability (CS)	2.5712	1.0905	1	5
Talent Pool (TP)	2.4796	1.0372	1	5
Leadership Pipeline (LP)	2.7384	1.1487	1	5
Replacement Plan (RP)	2.7567	1.2167	1	5

Source: STATA OUTPUT, 2024

Table 2 show the responses of respondents as indicated in the descriptive statistics. The results show the level of agreement and disagreements with the indices of Corporate Sustainability. The result reveals a mean of 2.5712 and a standard deviation of 1.0905. The result provided the evidence to signal that respondent were almost equally divided in their opinion on the assertions raised on Corporate Sustainability.

As seen from table 2, Talent Pool as bench strength management strategy has a cumulative mean of 2.4796 with a corresponding standard deviation of 1.0372 which shows that the respondents had a negative opinion concerning the questions raised about Talent Pool as a strategy for enhanced Corporate Sustainability.

It was also, found that Leadership Pipeline have a mean of 2.7384 and a standard deviation of 1.1487 which also, indicate that most of the respondents show a positive view on the assertions concerning leadership pipeline as a strategy for motivating staff towards enhanced corporate sustainability.

The study also, elicited the opinion of respondents on the issues regarding Replacement Plan in ensuring continuity for increased corporate sustainability. In this circumstance, the outcome depicted an average of 2.7567 and a corresponding standard deviation of 1.2167 which clearly showed a certain level of agreement with replacement plan developed by companies as continuity strategy for increased corporate sustainability.

Regression Diagnostic Tests: **Correlation Coefficient Matrix**

A correlation matrix is a statistical technique used in determining the relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study. The table below showed the Pearson correlation coefficients between all combinations of dependent and independent variables.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of the Independent and Dependent Variables

Variables	CS	TP	LP	RP
CS	1.000			
TP	0.0590	1.000		
LP	0.1993	-0.1350	1.000	
RP	0.0235	0.1066	0.1539	1.000

Source: STATA output, 2024.

Table 3 showed the correlation between the dependent variable, Corporate Sustainability and the independent variables, TP, LP and RP on the one hand, and equally among the independent variable themselves on the other hand. Generally, high correlation is expected between dependent and independent variables while low correlation is expected among independent variables. According to Gujarati (2004), a correlation coefficient between two independent variables ranging up to 0.80 (80%) is considered excessive and thus certain measures are required to correct that anomaly in the data. From Table 3, it can be seen that all the correlation coefficients among the independent variables are below 0.80. This points to the absence of possible Multicollinearity though the value inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance value (TV) test is still required to confirm the assumption. Specifically, the table revealed a positive correlation between the dependent variable of corporate sustainability and the explanatory variables of TP and LP with coefficients of 0.0590 and 0.1993 respectively. This implies that the two explanatory variables move in the same direction with corporate sustainability. The table also revealed that Replacement plan exhibit positive correlations with Corporate Sustainability, with coefficients of 0.0235. This imply Replacement Plan influence Corporate Sustainability.

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity is a statistical situation where some independent variables in a multiple regression model are highly auto-correlated. When multicollinearity occurs, the correlated predictors provide redundant information about the responses (Lauridsen & Mur, 2005). It is therefore, imperative to undertake a multicollinearity test to help reduce the variables that measure the similar things (Robert, 2007). According to O'Brien (2007), the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) measures the impact of collinearity among the variables in a regression model. Values of VIF that exceed 10 are often regarded as indicating multicollinearity problem.

Table 4.4 Variance Inflation Factor Measure of Multicollinearity Test

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
TP	1.26	0.790524
LP	1.21	0.827585
RP	1.13	0.887705
MEAN VIF	1.17	
Source: Regression Result Using STATA, 2024.		

Table 4. Showed that VIF and tolerance value for all the variables had mean VIF of less than 10 and tolerance of higher than 0.05 implying therefore, that there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables.

Homoscedacity Test for Corporate Sustainability

Homoscedascity means that the previous error terms influence other error terms and hence violating the statistical assumption that the error terms have a constant variance. But, Homoscedascity suggests that the dependent variable has an equal level of variability for each of the values of the independent variables (Garson, 2012). A test for homoscedascity is made to test for variance in residuals in the regression model used. If there exists equal variance of the error terms, we have a normal distribution. Lack of an equal level of variability for each value of the independent variables is known as heteroscedasticity, the Breusch-pagan test developed by Breusch and pagan (1979) was used to test for homogeneity in a linear

regression mode. The rule is that if p-value is greater than 0.05, Ho is accepted and H_1 is rejected, if the p-value is less than 0.05, Ho is rejected and H_1 is accepted.

Test for Heteroscedasticity in the response and residuals.

1.003	3	0.2080
Test – Statistics	Df	Sig

The result of the test shown above indicate that the test statistic is 1.003 p-value = 0.2080. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis was accepted and concluded that the data is homoscedascity in nature (that is, the data is not heterogeneous in variance), which satisfies the assumption of regression.

Test of Hypotheses

In this section of the study, the data collected was subjected to statistical analysis using multiple regression technique. Also, the hypotheses formulated were tested in an effort to ascertain the causality between the individual explanatory variables with the dependent variable. Below, is the table showing the statistical output generated from STATA version 13.

Table 5 Regression Result

Variables	Statistics	p-values	
R Square	0.9269		
Adj. R square	0.9258		
F. statistics	890.22	0.000	

	Variables	Coefficient	t-Statistics	P-Value	Decision
Ho1	Talent Pool	0.1335198	0.817	0.039	Rejected
Ho2	Leadership Pipeline	0.3297243	0.538	0.000	Rejected
Ho3	Replacement Plan	0.133175	0.053	0.037	Rejected

Source: STATA Output, 2021

This section analyses and presents the regression results of the model of the study. The result of the linear regression in table 5 indicated R-squared=0.9269. The R-squared value of 0.9269, gives an indication that there is a strong linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The R-squared indicated that the explanatory power of the independent variables is 93%. This means that about 93% of the level of Corporate Sustainability of selected construction companies in the study area can be explained by the independent variables while the remaining 7% is explained by variables not included in the model. The adjusted R-squared which is slightly lower than the R-squared value is a precise indicator of the strength of the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables because is sensitive to the addition of irrelevant variables.

The table 5 also showed the model is fitted as indicated by the F-Statistics of 890.22 which is significant at 1% level of significance (as evidenced by the p-value of 0.0000).

Hypothesis One

$H0_1$ Talent Pool has no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja.

The result from the table 5 showed Talent Pool have a coefficient of 0.1335198 and a p-value of 0.0039. Based on the p-value which is less than the t-statistic of 0.05, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis which states that, Talent Pool; such as having a database of competent and experienced employees, with potential to fill key roles within the organization, employees that are ready for promotion, or mature candidates through engagement efforts, have no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja. This implies that Talent Pool exerts significant influence on organizational productivity as seen in the case of the selected Construction Firms in Abuja.

Hypothesis Two

$H0_2$ Leadership Pipeline has no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja.

From the table 5 Leadership Pipeline have a coefficient of 0.6297243 and p-value of 0.0000. Based on this finding which is evidenced by a p-value of 0.0000 we reject the null hypothesis which states that Leadership Pipeline; such as progression of leaders within an organization, experienced employees ready to take complex leadership roles, individuals and competencies for leadership roles, clearly defined career pathways, targeted training, and on-the-job experiences, developing leadership competencies, have no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability. This means that Leadership Pipeline could be used as a strategy for improving corporate sustainability in Nigeria evidenced from Construction Companies in Abuja.

Hypothesis Three

$H0_3$ Replacement Plan has no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja

The result in the table above showed a coefficient of 0.133175 and a p-value of 0.037. Considering the p-value which is greater than the t-statistics 0.05, the study accepts the null hypothesis which states that Replacement Plan has no significant effect on Corporate Sustainability. This infers that Replacement Plan such as identification of key position, and key personnel, preparing and designating employees in the event of vacancy due to retirement, resignation, or other unforeseen circumstances, could not be said to have any influence on Corporate Sustainability in the area covered by the study.

Discussion of Findings

Talent Pool and Corporate Sustainability

The first objective of the study is to assess the effect of Talent Pool on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja. The hypothesis tested states that there is no significant positive relationship between Talent Pool and Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja. The result of the regression shows that Talent Pool has significant effect on Corporate Sustainability in the area covered by the study. The effect of this result is that in the event of unplanned vacancy, sudden departure or retirement of an employee, talent pool aids the organizations to immediately fill vacant positions, effectively minimized disruptions, strengthens resilience and long-term performance. The result also, underscore the relevance of Talent Pool in an organization such as availability of competent and experienced employees, employees ready for promotion, or mature candidates through engagements, enhance the possibility of organizational stability. This out outcome supports the Resource Based View which is one of the core theories underpinning this work and consistent with finding of Cooke et'al (2021); Endres et'al (2022) and Cui et'al (2018).

Leadership Pipeline and Corporate Sustainability

The study also, evaluated role of Leadership Pipeline on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja. The hypothesis stated that there is no significant positive effect between Leadership Pipeline and Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja. The result of the study using multiple regression analysis indicated that Leadership Pipeline such as progression of leaders within an organization, experienced employees ready to take complex leadership roles, individuals and competencies for leadership roles, clearly defined career pathways, targeted training, and on-the-job experiences, developing leadership competencies, has significant effect on Corporate Sustainability in the area covered by the study. Most of the staff (respondents) agreed with the assertion that their organization has a structured framework in place to guide the development and progression of leaders at every level, and that Leaders in the organization are equipped with the skills, experience, and mindset required for each level of leadership. This outcome also supports the Human Resource Based theory which is one of the theories highlighted in this work, and also in line with the findings of Goyal et'al (2022) and Alarifi & Adams (2023).

Replacement Plan and Corporate Sustainability

The study also, determined the effect of Replacement Plan on Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja. The hypothesis in this situation states that there is no significant positive effect between Replacement Plan and Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja with evidence from area of study. In this case the result indicated that Replacement Plan has no significant effect on the Corporate Survival in the area covered by the study. This is evidenced by a large proportion of the respondents who strongly agreed that our organization has a strategic approach to identifying and preparing individuals to assume key positions in the event of a vacancy due to retirement, resignation, or other unforeseen circumstances, and that Our organization effectively designates and prepares employees to assume critical positions in the event of an unplanned vacancy, as well as that Qualified individuals are readily available within the organization to fill key positions as they become vacant**.** This finding supports the Resource Based theory and also inline with finding of Bolton & Roy (2004), and Emeka (2014).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examines Bench Strength Management and Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firms in Abuja. Based on the findings of this study, there is statistical evidence to conclude that Talent Pool, Leadership Pipeline and Replacement Plan have significant positive influence on Corporate Sustainability in the area covered by the study. Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends that construction firms should:

i. maintain robust talent pool to minimize project disruptions, achieve expected project quality, and delivery timelines in the event of sudden workforce changes;
ii. establish and maintain strong leadership pipeline through structured development programs to not only address talent shortages and leadership gaps, but to also encourage effective leadership behaviors for continuity; and
iii. implement effective replacement plan compactible with construction environment to mitigate risks associated with sudden vacancies in key positions, and meet immediate and strategic objectives, as well as improve resilience & sustainability.

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Section C: Bench Strength Management and Corporate Sustainability of Construction Firm

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	**Corporate sustainability**					
CS1	Our company focuses on long-term stability, not just short-term					
CS2	Sustainable practices are integrated into the firms business strategy					
CS3	Innovation for sustainability is a key business objective					
CS4	Employee well-being and work-life balance are prioritized					
CS5	The firm ensures fair labor practices across all levels					
2	**Talent Pool**					
TP 1	A database of potential candidates, both internal and external, is regularly updated and effectively utilized in our organization					
TP 2	The organization has a clear and structured process to identify employees who are ready for promotion					
TP 3	High-potential employees are consistently identified and provided with the necessary development opportunities to prepare them for future leadership roles					
TP 4	Our organization effectively balances the promotion of internal candidates and the recruitment of external talent for key positions					
TP 5	Succession planning in our organization ensures that there is always a pool of high-potential employees ready to step into key positions					
3	**Leadership Pipeline**					
LP 1	Our organization has a structured framework in place to guide the development and progression of leaders at every level					
LP 2	The leadership pipeline ensures a continuous flow of talent ready to step into increasingly complex leadership positions.					
LP 3	Leadership development within the organization includes clearly defined pathways, targeted training programs, and on-the-job experiences					
LP 4	Our organization is effective at cultivating internal talent to fill key leadership positions, minimizing the need for external recruitment					
LP 5	Leaders in the organization are equipped with the skills, experience, and mindset required for each level of leadership					
4	**Replacement Plan**					

RP 1	Our organization has a strategic approach to identifying and preparing individuals to assume key positions in the event of a vacancy due to retirement, resignation, or other unforeseen circumstances					
RP 2	Qualified individuals are readily available within the organization to fill key positions as they become vacant					
RP 3	There is a structured process in place to systematically identify and develop internal candidates who can step into essential roles when needed					
RP 4	Our organization effectively designates and prepares employees to assume critical positions in the event of an unplanned vacancy					
RP 5	Replacement plans are regularly updated to ensure continuity of leadership and key roles, minimizing disruptions caused by vacancies					