INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH
P-ISSN: 1118-4256, E-ISSN:3034-4327
Vol. 6| No.3 | Oct 2025
Page No.: 106 – 133

GENDER RESTRICTIVE CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILTY OF FAMILY FIRMS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined gender restrictive culture and sustainability of family firm in Anambra State. The main trust was to determine whether gender preference have any negative influence of on the sustainability of family firms. The researcher purposivel, conveniently and randomly selected forty-four (44) family firms with a total of four hundred and fifty (450) employees as the study population include family firms within Anambra state.Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 306. The research instrument used to elicit data for the study was structured questionnaire which was administered to respondents. Data were obtained from 280 respondents using a cross-sectional survey of descriptive research design. Data from the questionnaire were analysed and tested using Z-score to determine the influence gender preference on the long- term survival of family firms. The study found out that gender preference has significant influence on the long-term survival of family firm. The study therefore conclude that the gender restrictive culture of inheritance has a considerable influence on the sustainability of family firms. This culture does not provide an acceptable mechanism for the transmission of ownership from one generation to the next. Researcher therefore recommends that in order to limit the likelihood of conflict between potential heir or co-heirs, and family firm owners of the business must abandon its traditional systems, which are incompatible with succession.

These traditional systems include the gender restrictive culture as well as the entirety of beliefs, knowledge, and practises. This can be achieved through intensive and extensive public awareness campaign. While business competence, capacity and interest should be the key determinant in choosing a successor rather than cultural stereotype of the girl-child. This will determine the long-term survival of the family firm.

KEYWORDS: Gender preference; Inheritance culture, Sustainability, Family firms, and primogeniture rule.

Introduction

Family Firms are the [Oil] that runs the engine of economic progress in both developed and developing economies. They play pivotal role in the economic growth and development all over the world; stimulating wealth creation and economic prosperity . They constitute between 80 - 90 percent of all businesses in the world of free economies, contributing between 70–90 percent of the global GDP, and creating more than half of the total workforce in the developed nations. Family Firms comprised of at least two-third of businesses worldwide (KPMG Family Business, 2018).

In Nigerian, According to Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria, (2020) family firms in Nigeria contribute about 46-54% to Gross Domestic Product in 2018 and also create significantly hundreds of thousands productive Jobs for the large unengaged population (Nnabuife & Okolie 2017). Nnabuife and Okolie (2017) state that family owned firms employed more than 50% of the workforce within the private sector. These family firms are structured in various sizes ranging from small, medium and large scale businesses which have made remarkable presence in all the sectors of the economy. Among notable owners/founders of family firms that have not only made significant contribution to the nations economy, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs include; Chief Gabriel Igbinedio founder of Independent Television, Igbinedion University and many other businesses, Chief Dokpesi founder of AIT and Raypower Radio; Alhaji Aliku Dangote, just to mention but a few. These enterprises have created millions of jobs and contributed immensely to the growth and development of Nigerian economy. Expanding

this view, Okoli, Ezeanolue, & Edokobi, .(2019) posits that approximately ninety-six percent (96 %) of enterprises in the country Nigeria are family firms. Some of these family firms are well established and have expanded their operations not just the length and breath of the country but also across national boundaries. Thus, the importance of Family firms to the Nigerian economy should not be underestimated.

In the Anambra State however, the importance of family firms cannot be underestimated. The Igbos are renowned for their dogged determination and boundless energy in business that spans several decades. Late Sir Louis Odumegwu Ojukwu, was one of those who made their marks in establishing family firms that span through decades. He established the Ojukwu transport company, which was the first major transport company in the south-east. His legacy lives on through the Ojukwu family. These family firms were created with key objective to provide employment, expedite economic prosperity, provide essentials goods and services and enhance the standard of living of the population. It is on record that family firms in the Anambra State employ more than 70% of the workforce of the productive sector of the state economy hence they are rated as a key sources of wealth creation (Onyeizugbe and Ezute, 2024).

The importance of family firms as highlighted above cannot be overstated. These family firms, especially in Anambra State, are rapidly rising to the top of the commercial sector. They are bound to amass in both wealth and size in the not-too-distant future. This is due to the fact that small and medium scale businesses hold promise for fostering the growth of indigenous entrepreneurialism, improving local technology, diversifying output, and integrating with larger corporations. Despite the fact that family firms plays essential role as the oil that runs the engines of prosperity, wealth creation, job creation, and improving the living standards of the Nigerian population ; these firms are characterised by frighteningly worsening survival rates. According to Salau (2022), the data published by

the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Association of Nigeria stated that more than 2.783 million small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) had temporarily ceased operations because the proprietors had died or become ill. This number poses a risk to the industry's capacity to continue operating successfully into the foreseeable future and to maintain a business that transit from from generation to generation.

According to Otika, Okocha, and Ejiofor (2019), there is a continuous cause for worry over the high death rate of family owned businesses. Salau (2022) supporting this viewpoint noted that only thirty percent of family firms survive beyond the first generation, and just ten to fifteen percent survive beyond the third generation. According to research by Otika et al.(2019), in Nigeria, over seventy percent of small and medium-sized family businesses (SMEs) fail to outlive their founders because most of them are unable to make it through a generational change. One of the very challenging issues facing family owned firms today is the crisis of succession as stated by Onyeizugbe, and Ezute, (2023). This dilemma has emerged as a potential roadblock that business owners, consultants, and academics need to find solution for. This is consistent with the observation made by Olubiyi, Lawal, and Adeoye (2022) who state that a high mortality rate among first- and second-generation family firms can be attributed to the failure to successfully transfer ownership and management from one generation to another. According to the findings of study conducted by Olubiyi, et. al. (2022), challenges in succession constitute one of the primary reasons why firms fail. In addition to this, they mentioned that these challenges are typically associated with cultural and relational issues, such as inheritance culture and gender discrimination, rather than issues pertaining to business. These issues are not exclusive to family firms s in Anambra State; rather, they are prevalent in the majority of established and developing economies around the world.

Within the cultural context of Anambra State, Nigeria, a variety of inheritance restrictions exist. The rules governing inheritance encompass several principles, such as the primogeniture rule, which designates the eldest child as the primary inheritor, and gender-restrictive inheritance rule where daughters are not entitle to any form of inheritance from the father.

Research has shown that women are unlikely to be named successors in family firms. (Adedayo, Olanipekun, et. Al. 2015). The primogeniture rule which stipulates that the firstborn male child takes over the family firm remains influential. Daughters have been found to be denied leadership roles and to settle for less influential roles in the firm. This study therefore investigates the effect of gender restrictive culture on the sustainability of family firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. Despite the significant economic impact of family firms their survival rate raises very serious concern. Available statistics shows that very few family firms in Anambra state struggled to survive beyond the founder even to the third generation. The late Chief Augustine Ejikeme Ilodibe, owner of Ekene Dili Chukwu Transport Company Limited. and the late Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu's business empire are two particularly frightening examples of collapsing family firms. Empirical studies carried out so far on the sustainability of family firms shows that none have rigorously examined the influence of gender restrictive culture on the long-term survival of family firms but also preventing the girl child from inheriting family firm and gaining leadership positions in family owned firms. It is in this regard that this study investigates the influence of gender restrictive culture on sustainability of family firms in Anambra State.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is examine the influence of gender restrictive culture on the sustainability of family firms in Anambra State. The specific objective was:

To determine whether gender preference have any negative influence of on the sustainability of family firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H_O: Gender Preference does not have any negative influence on sustainability of family firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1.1. Concept of Family Firm

This section examined the concept of family firm, sustainability, inheritance culture, gender restrictive culture and the relevant theory the guided the study.

Despite its substantial impact on national economies and the considerable interest in the topic from researchers, there is no widely accepted definition of a family firm. (Olubiyi, et. al. 2022; Onyeizugbe and Ezute, 2023; Nnabuife, & Okoli, 2017. Okeke (2021) defines a family business as an enterprise when two or more members of an extended family own ownership rights, managerial responsibilities, or influence over the firm's direction. In addition, he categorised family firms according to four factors: the degree of family ownership, the management style, the degree of family engagement, and the likelihood of passing the business down through several generations. Oyeladun (2020) defines a family firm as an enterprise run by family members who work together with "members of an emotional kinship group that has experienced at least one generational transition" to oversee the formulation of policies. Oyeladun highlighted Donnelly's research, which states that the primary distinguishing element for a firm to be classified as a family enterprise is the generational transfer of ownership from one family to the next. As the name suggests, a family firm is a type of firm that is managed by a family. This point of view was expressed by Nnabuife and Okoli (2017). Onyeizugbe & Ezute (2023) define a

family business as a commercial enterprise where one or more family members hold a sizable portion of the company and are committed to its success as a whole.

Onyeukwu, & Jekelle, (2019) cites Ibrahim & Ellis'(2014) who define family firms as businesses where a single family or close relatives own at least 51% of the shares. The Family Business Association of Nigeria (2020) defines a family firm as one in which at least one family member is involved in the management or administration of the business; where the company is listed; and where the person who established or acquired the business (or his or her spouse, parents, children, or children's direct heirs) holds the majority of the votes.

From the forgoing therefore and for the purpose of this study, the researcher conclude that Family firms include various combinations which including husbands and wives, children and parents, extended families,(Onyeukuwu et al (2019), two or more generations in the forms of employees, stock holders, advisors, partners, board members, and so on (Onyladun, 2020). This scenario of multiple membership of family businesses is mostly common in the US and Europe. In most developing countries, including Nigeria, ownership and membership of family enterprises are limited to nuclear (Salau et. al. 2022; Nnabuife and Okoli 2017) and sometimes, the extended family, coupled with conflicts that may also account for the reason why family firms have high mortality rate in Nigeria (Salau et. al. 2022).

In South-East Nigeria, estimates indicate that family firms are the predominant form of business. They comprise about 80% of all businesses in South-East Nigeria and 60% of the companies listed on the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) (Ezute, 2024). Some of these family firms includes; Innoson Motors, Chisco Transport, and Ibeto Group just to mention but a few.

2.1.2. Sustainability

The term 'sustainability' holds varying interpretations among individuals. Within the realm of family business , the concept of sustainability is commonly examined in relation to various aspects such as business growth, business continuity, trans-generational entrepreneurship, socio-emotional wealth, and sustainability itself (Aladejebi, 2021; LeCounte, 2020; Onyeukwu and Jekelle, 2019; Onyeizugbe and Ezute, 2023; Jideofor, et. al. 2023). The family firm has a high degree of complexity and distinctiveness due to its pursuit of several objectives. According to Otika et al. (2019), the objectives that family firm aim to accomplish over successive generations include the preservation of unity and harmony within the family, the attainment of prosperity for the family business, the retention of control over the business across generations, the mitigation of family conflicts, and the preservation of liquid assets. According to Jideofor et al. (2023), family firms are often perceived by family members as a means to foster the well-being of the family in the long term. This includes the potential for future generations to find employment, financial stability, and a sense of belonging within the community. Consequently, owner managers prioritise the achievement of intergenerational success as a central objective for their family business. According to Jideofor, et. al. (2023), family firms exhibit significant heterogeneity, and their competitive advantage stems from a unique combination of resources that are idiosyncratic, immovable, inimitable, and occasionally intangible. As the family firm continues to thrive, it benefits from its ability to adapt and maintain continuity, as well as its internal cohesion and exterior connections (Otika, et. al. 2019; Onyeizugbe & Ezute, 2023).

2.1.3 Igbo Inheritance Culture

The rules of inheritance on succession in Igboland vary from one place to another . However, some homogeneity can still be identified. The predominant principle of inheritance rule of succession among the Ibos is the rule of first born known as

Primogeniture rule, although this rule is also seen in the culture rule of inheritance of other ethnic groups in Nigeria. This rule determines the right to inherit both properties and businesses at the demise of the founder. The exception to this inheritance rule can be found in Afikpo and Bende desent of Ebonyi and Abia States, where the feminine gender have cultural and legal right to own land and to transfer such rights and interests to any of their offspring's. Under the primogeniture rule, transfer of ownership and control of property and business is through the eldest son in the family who is known as „ Diokpala, Diokpa , or Okpala ".

In the case the extended family, succession is through the eldest son of the predecessor in that line irrespective of the fact that the Diokpala may in fact be younger in age to other members of the extended family. On the demise of the head of a family, his firstborn son succeeds him as the head of the family. The firstborn son is entitled to special inheritance by virtue of his status in the family. He enjoys this right of ownership of property and business throughout his life time to the exclusion of his other male siblings. He is also entitled to the use of the piece of land within or surrounding the father"s compound and to harvest the economic trees in it such as palm, coconut and kola-trees. In Okigwe, the first born son is given another piece of fertile land called ala Iasi Obi. In Orunba, Mbaise, Udoka and Agudo all in Awka the first born son is shown a piece of farm land by the administrators of the estate. in Ogoni, he is entitled to a piece of farm land and in Annang, he is shown a fertile piece of land and a palm bush.

|He is also entitled to the dresses which his father wore in special occasion together with his walking stick. He also inherits his father"s personal ofo and other objects of worship. Where a title survives the holder, the firstborn son inherits the father"s title. He is also entitled to the insignia of a hereditary office which he has no right to sell, being family property.

Under Igbo inheritance rule, women are denied the right to any form of inheritance whether as a girl child or a widow. A case in point is in Ugboma V. Ibeneme where it was held in accordance with the general Ibo inheritance rule which is also the inheritance rule of the deceased home in Anambra Local Government Area, were daughters are not entitled to inherit land from their father. In the case between Nezianya V. Okagbue, it was held that possession by a widow of her husband‟s land cannot be adverse to the right of her husband‟ family to enable her acquire an absolute right to possession of it against the family.

Although a widow cannot alienate any part of the deceased‟s estate, she is entitled to live on the deceased husband‟s house as a member of the family until she remarries or dies. The Diokpa has no right under native law and custom to dispose of the property occupied by her without an alternative accommodation so long as she behaves well.

The girl child , like wives, do not inherit under Igbo rule of inheritance. She can only inherit were she accepts to remain unmarried in her father‟s house with a view of raising children in her father‟s name. This is known as “Nrachi”41 “Idigbe” institution. It usually happens when the deceased left behind a substantial estate but no surviving male child or other male issue of the lineage to inherit it. The idea behind this practice is to save the lineage from extinction. The girl child as an “Idegbe’ or Nrachi is entitled to inherit both movable and immovable property of her deceased father‟s estate. This legal interest vests in her until she gives birth to her own children. However, if she bears sons and daughters, the sons and not the daughters will succeed her in accordance with the rule of primogeniture. Daughters have no right of inheritance over their mother‟s landed property. Where a wife predecease her husband, the sons will inherit and failing, the husband inherits and failing his male relatives. In some parts of Igbo land where the intestate died without sons, brothers or father, his estate is inherited by his eldest nearest paternal male relation. Such relation is known as “Oriekpe” while the custom is known as “IriEkpe” Custom.

2.1.4. Gender-Restrictive Inheritance Culture and Succession

Gender has traditionally been seen as a crucial deciding factor in the process of succession planning within family-owned enterprises. Otika et al. (2019) explored the role of gender as a major determinant in selecting successors to positions of leadership. In contrast, Adriana et al., (2020) discovered that, although having primogeniture, the daughter was not regarded qualified to head the family firm. Despite the fact that she was the primogeniture holder, this was the situation. According to a number of research papers (Aladejebi, 2021; Okeke 2021: Otika et al. 2019; Aderemi and Awotona 2019), several proprietors preferred selling their businesses rather than entrusting their daughters with leadership roles. These company owners were more concerned with selling their companies than with entrusting their daughters with leadership responsibilities.

According to the findings of a study conducted by Aladejebi, (2021); Okeke (2021) young girls are treated in a way that is obviously different from that of their male siblings over the course of their socialization. Following the release of the aforementioned study, this discovery was made public. When compared to their male counterparts, females invest less time, develop a narrower range of skills, and receive far less encouragement. Individuals' decisions are generally made for them throughout their formative years, sometimes without their comprehension of the diversity of possibilities available.

According to Imhanrenialena (2016), this discovery may provide some understanding regarding the ongoing disparity in the representation of men and women in top positions within family businesses. Previous research has focused on specific next-generation family members such as daughters (Otika et al., 2019), younger men (Imhanrenialena, 2016), and siblings (Nwadukwe, 2012). According to the findings of a study conducted by Otika et al. (2019), daughters and younger sons who become CEOs have a tough time detaching

themselves from their familial ties to lower positions within the family hierarchy. This is a challenge they encounter because they are the ones who have acquired the post of CEO. After being elevated to the post of chief executive officer, they move on to have critical roles within a range of organisational structures. Because of the hierarchical roles that individuals have within the two systems, all members of the familial unit may experience feelings of anguish, tension, and sorrow. Nwadukwe(2012) , Joy (2016), and Obidigbo (2015) all report that daughters are less likely than sons to succeed their dads in the family business. Despite the fact that females are more unlikely than males to carry on the family business, this is nonetheless the case. Moses (2021) claims that many dads assume their sons will one day run the family business.

In the context of Igbo inheritance culture, it is observed that when a man is totally survived by daughters rather than boys, the daughters are frequently not permitted to inherit their father's property or participate in their father's economic activities. This is due to the Igbo inheritance culture's preference for sons over daughters. However, as described by Nwadukwe (2012) cited in Onyeizugbe and Ezute (2023):, Otika et al. (2019), and Obidigbo (2015), this custom might differ in matrilineal groups such as Ohafia Division. This is something that should be taken into account. Obidigbo draws attention to the fact that the patriarchal Igbo community has its own distinct sort of bias. This bias derives from devolution, which is strongly established in the principle of primogeniture and must be strictly adhered to. According to this theory, the majority of a decedent's father's possessions are passed on to the oldest son, while the decedent's younger sons receive a smaller portion. It is vital to note that this inheritance system makes no provisions for females, with the exception of clothes and accessories.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Hofstede's Five Cultural Dimensions

The work-related cultural component developed by Hofstede (2001), which is regarded as a standard model in cross-cultural research, serves as the foundation for this investigation. The cultural characteristics identified by Hofstede were drawn from a comprehensive study including fifty different civilizations. Many people agree that this study is among the most thorough and detailed pieces of cross-cultural research.

Relevance of Hofstede's Five Cultural Dimensions

Given the above facts, Hofstede's cultural features are relevant to this study since the emphasis is on Anambra State, which is home to a mostly Igbo population. The Igbo culture may be described as profoundly patriarchal, intensely collectivist, and power-distanced.

2.4 Empirical Review Of Related Literature

. Awogbemi, Hauwa, and Omanyo (2022) examined how succession planning affects Nigerian family-owned enterprises' long-term sustainability. Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics' database targeted 16,363 small firms was taken as the population of study. A representative sample of 390 organisations was chosen. The research shows that mentorship, training, job rotation, and coaching improve family-owned businesses' longevity.

The research by Aladejebi (2021) examined how succession planning helps family companies survive. The study examined Nigerian family firm owners' succession planning techniques, which are vital to their businesses' survival. The sample includes four Nigerian family-owned businesses with over 10 years of experience. The study found that managerial skills, experience, negotiating skills, people management, market knowledge, gender discrimination, and religion bias affect succession planning. According to the

report, family-owned businesses' major stakeholders prioritise long-term profitability over emotive factors that might hurt performance.

Muhammad, Ukairo, and Buhari (2021) examined corporate governance and SME performance. This research examines if good corporate governance practises affect Nigerian SMEs' performance. The study used balanced panel data for survey research. A sample of 55 Katsina State SMEs was studied from 2013 to 2017. The study found that longer-tenure CEOs and family ownership in SMEs boost company performance. On the other hand, SMEs with CEO duality and women directors fare worse.

Onyeizugbe, and Ezute (2023) examined succession planning and sustainability of South-East Nigerian family-owned businesses. The "rule of first born," or primogeniture rule, and the longevity of family-owned enterprises in South East Nigeria were the main focus of this study. This study sought to determine how much the primogeniture law affected these companies' survival. The study used survey research. Yamane's method was used to choose 216 family-owned enterprises. The study team picked the Z-score to validate their hypothesis after using a descriptive survey technique. The primogeniture system of inheritance and succession planning in South-East Nigerian family-owned businesses are positively correlated. The founder and owner of a family-owned business should focus on organisational culture, succession planning, and a well-planned company future.

2.4.1 Review of Related literature Summary.

An empirical examination of existing studies on family firm sustainability has revealed a notable deficiency in knowledge. In the context of South-East and in particular as well as Nigeria as a whole, it is evident that existing studies have failed to adequately examine the influence of gender restrictive culture and long-term sustainability of family firm beyond its initial founders. Consequently, this work therefore is carried out to fill this gap.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Given the nature of this study, survey research design was employed. A survey research is one in which a group of people or items is studied collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group (Nworgu, 2006 as cited in Onyeizugbe, 2017) .

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3.2 Population of the Study

The population of study consist of all family firms operating in Anambra State as at December 2024. According to Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) Facts book, Anambra State chapter, there are 73,081 family firms in the State. Due to the high number of family firms within the research scope and considering time constraint the researcher purposively conveniently and randomly selected forty-four (44) family firms with a total of four hundred and fifty employees for the study

3.3 Sample Size Determination and Sampling Technique

The researcher determined the sample size usig Yaro Yamane's formula.

Thus: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)2}$

where n = the sample size sought ?

e = the level of significance 0.025

1 = constant

N = the population size 450

The sample size can be computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{1 + 450(0.025)^2} = \frac{450}{1.46875} = 306.4 \text{ sample size.}$$

n = Sample size = 306.

3.4 Reliability of the Instrument

According to Onyeizugbe, (2017) reliability of a test instrument is the consistency of the test in measuring whatever is it purports to measure. The reliability of instrument was determine by a reliability test through the use of pilot study. Test and retest approach was be adopted and the pretest was be done using questionnaire administered to the respondents from Anambra State.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Distribution and Return of Questionnaire

Table 4.1 Return Rate of Questionnaire

Firms	No. Distributed (Sample)			Usable Returns			No not Returned	No Accepted	%
	O/Fs	M/Ms	N/Ms	O/Ms	M/Ms	N/Ms			
	1	20	46	1	20	44	2	65	23.2
	5	30	50	4	28	40	13	73	26.2
	2	10	25	2	10	22	3	34	12.2
	4	22	3	4	20	34	3	57	20.2
	4	20	32	3	18	30	5	51	18.2
Total	16	102	191	14	96	170	26	280	100
	306			280					

***Source: Field Survey, 2025. Note: O/FS (Owner-founders), M/MS (*Middle-managers) and NMSS (Non-managerial staff).**

The table above shows that out of the 306 copies of questionnaire distributed to respondents , 280 were returned. This give a response rate of 91%; 14 out of the 306 questionnaire administered were not returned, thus, giving a non-response rate of 9%. Of the 16 questionnaire sent to owner-founders, 14 were returned, giving a response rate of 87.5%. All the 102 questionnaire administered to the middle managers and non-managerial staff were returned, giving a response rate of 100%. These returns, in terms of response rate are reasonably high and adequate for a study of this nature.

Table 4.3: **Business performance during the transition from the founder to successor**

How well is this company doing?	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL	%TOTAL
Excellent	2	6.1%	4	12.1	6	18.2
Good	2	6.1%	4	12.1	6	18.2
Fair	3	9.1%	5	15.2	8	24.3
Poor	3	9.1%	8	24.2	11	33.3
V. Poor	1	3.0%	1	3.0	2	6.0
Total	11	42.4%	22	66.6	33	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The study enquired on the performance of the enterprises to ascertain the general level of performance of these enterprises that are still operational. Table 4.3 shows that of the 22 enterprises that were still operational, the performance of greater proportion (33.3%) were rated as _poor‘. 18.2% and 18.2% performance ratings were _excellent‘ and _good‘. 24.2% of the enterprises‘ performance was _fair‘. The result of the analysis shows that generally the performance of the enterprises was rated poor.

Table 4.4 Successful Handover of Business and Gender-restrictive Inheritance Culture

Rating	Founders		Middle Managers		Non-Managerial Staff		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	1	9.09	11	11.36	10	5.97	21	7.6
D			9	9.784	9	5.37	18	6.6
N	2	12.12	6	6.06	14	8.35	22	8
A	6	39.39	52	54.54	102	60	160	57.2
SA	5	33.33	17	18.18	136	80.29	58	20.6
TOTAL	14	100	96	100	170	100	280	100
MEAN	3.81		3.58		3.83		3.76	
SDEV	1.21		1.21		0.90		1.08	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

An enquiry on gender-related cultural factors was made to find out if management succession is affected. The result of the analysis as shown in table 4.4 reveals that 21(7.6%) of the respondents strongly disagree, 18(6.6%) of the respondents disagree out of 280 respondents with the statement. 160(57.2%) of the respondents agree and 58(20.6%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement. However, 22(8.0%) were indifferent. Given that the acceptance cut-point was 3.0, the grand mean value of 3.76 indicates that successful handover of business is adversely affected by the application of rule of inheritance that excludes daughters.

Table 4.5 Exclusion of Daughters and Competent Successors

Rating	Owner-managers		Middle managers		Non-managerial Staff		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	0	0	13	13.63	8	4.77	20	7
D	0	0	2	2.27	6	3.28	8	3
N	2	14.3	6	6.06	2	1.19	8	3
A	7	48.48	57	59.84	109	64.17	174	62
SA	5	33.33	17	18.18	45	26.56	69	24.8
Total	14	100	96	100	170	100	280	100
MEAN	4.06		3.66		4.04		3.94	
SD	1.60		1.2		1.35		1.11	

Source: Field Survey 2025

The result of the analysis as shown in table 4.5 reveals that 20(7%) of the respondents strongly disagree, 8(3%) of the respondents disagree out of 280 respondents with the statement. 174(62%) of the respondents agree and 69(24.8%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement. However, 8(3%) were indifferent. Given that the acceptance cut-point was 3.0, the grand mean value of 3.94 indicates that exclusion of daughters limits the owner-founders choice of competent successor.

Table 4.6 Preference of sons over competent daughters and family business succession.

Rating	**Owner-managers**		**Middle managers**		**Non-managerial Staff**		**Total**	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	2	14	13	13.63	8	4.77	21	7.6
D	0	-	8	8.33	4	2.08	11	4
N	0	-	4	3.78	11	6.26	16	5.6
A	6	39.39	47	48.48	102	59.70	156	55.4
SA	5	36.36	25	25.75	46	27.16	77	27.4
Total	14	100	96	100	170	100	280	100
MEAN	3.81		3.64		4.02		3.91	
SD	1.30		1.30		1.79		2.22	

Source: Field survey 2025

Preference of sons over competent daughters was studied considering the negative impact on management succession. The result of the analysis as shown in table 4.6 reveals that 21(7.6%) of the respondents strongly disagree, 11(4%) of the respondents disagree out of 280 respondents with the statement while 156(55.4%) of the respondents agree and 77(27.4%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement. However, 16(5.6%) were indifferent. Given that the acceptance cut-point was 3.0, the grand mean value of 3.91 indicates that preference of sons over competent daughters lead to conflict which negatively affects management succession.

4.3 Hypothesis :

HO: Gender Preference does not have any negative influence on sustainability of family firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

H1: Gender Preference have any negative influence on sustainability of family firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Data from Tables 4.3 to 4.5 were used to test hypothesis 4 using Z – test for population mean at 0.05(5%) level of significance.

Summary of Tables 4.3 to 4.5

Table 4.7

Rating	**Table 4.3**		**Table 4.4**		**Table 4.5**	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
SD	21	7.6	20	7	21	7.6
D	18	6.6	8	3	11	4
N	22	8	8	3.2	16	5.6
A	160	57.2	174	62	156	55.4
SA	58	20.6	69	24.8	77	27.4
Total	280	100	280	100	280	100
Mean	3.76		3.94		3.91	
SD	1.08		1.11		2.22	

Table 4.7A Z -

Relationship between Gender Preference and sustainability of Family Firm in Anambra State

			Std				
	N	Mean	UN	μ	Zcal	Zcnt	Decision
1	280	3.76	1.08	3.00	15.2	1.96	Significant
2	280	3.94	1.11	3.00	18.8	1.96	Significant
3	280	3.91	2.22	3.00	9.1	1.96	Significant

The Z- test for population means in table 4.11A showed that there was a significant different between the sample mean value and the hypothesize μ(3.0) for the three items (Z-Cal = 15.2 ≥ Z = crit = 1.96, α = 0.05; Z = Cal = 18.8 ≥ Zcrit = 1.96 and Z = cal = 9.1 ≥ Z-crit = 1.96.)

Decision rule: Therefore the alternate hypothesis was accepted. It was concluded that Gender Preference have negative influence on sustainability of family firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

In discussing the findings of the study, the researcher used responses on tables 4.3 to 4.6 The question that generated these responses on gender-related cultural factors was designed to find out if family firm performance is affected by restricting female (s) who have the competent, interest and willingness to take over. The result of the analysis of research question showed that 78% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agree that successful handover of business is adversely affected by the application of rule of inheritance that excludes daughters from inheritance. The computed mean of the responses is 3.76 which

is above the expected mean of 3.0. These two statistics suggest that that application of rule of inheritance upsets effective performance in family firms in Anambra State. The result of the analysis of sex distribution on table 4.2 revealed a relatively poor involvement of the female gender in the management of family owned businesses. Only one female owner-manager (3.03%) and 6.4% female managers were involved in the study.

The finding of the study underpins the notion of Agbim, (2019); Akorede, and Agbabiaka, (2017) and Chukwuma-Nwuba, (2019) that there is an important bias against women in the succession practice and succession process even if the daughter was the primogeniture. In a study carried out by Agbim (2019) on corporate governance, Agbim found that during inheritance, the legitimate heir is the eldest son who inherits everything including the father's business outfits. It is not in doubt that the Igbo society is a masculine society, where the family rotates on patriarchal principles of male superiority and dominance, that it becomes an aberration for anybody who tries to disorganise the statuesque antebellum (Nwadukwe,2012). When a man dies without leaving sons, but leaving only daughters, his daughters are excluded from succeeding to his property (Nwadukwe) except in matrilineal societies (Ohafia Division) where women are part of inheritance of their father's property. This ongoing adherence to male-dominated traditions of property ownership and control has generally meant that women cannot take advantage of the wide range of benefits associated with ownership, governance and control of property. This poses a barrier to overall socioeconomic progress of the people. One of the hidden sources of economic growth and development is Africa's women (Suess, 2014). Suess argues that providing African women with equal education and access to managerial positions could raise economic growth by as much as one percentage point.

Despite these barriers some women get around the obstacles and are encouraged to join the family business, developing an interest in the business and/or in leadership as a consequence of one or more of the following factors: their brothers are not strong leaders ,

they have no family responsibilities, or their fathers ask them to join the company (Nwadukwe, 2012). Further, the Nigerian Supreme Court early pasted a law empowering women to be part of their father's inheritance.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The study shows existence of a negative significant relationship between gender-preference and sustainability of family business fims in Anambra State. since the result yeilded Z-Cal values = 15.2, 18.8, 9.1 ≥ Z-Crit = 1.96, α = 0.05). This result confirmed the findings of Poza, D. (2014). and Nwadukwe, (2012) that inheritance culture and gender-bias, issues affect longevity and mortality of family firms From the results, about 73% of the respondents indicate that the most symptomtic of the cultural constraints within these family firms is the strict primogeniture rule. This finding is therefore found to be consistent with the findings of Onyeukwu, Helen and Jekelle, (2019); Nyamwanza, Mavhiki, and Ganyani, (2018). that, the most symptomtic of the cultural constraints within these firms is the strict primogeniture and. The inheritance culture that govern many of these family firms affect their level of mortality.

5.2 Conclusion

In Anambra State Nigeria, the culture of inheritance has a considerable influence on the succession and sustainability of family firms. These traits not only made succession process, and execution less successful, but they also played an important role in the evolution of enterprises' organisational structures and the efficacy of their operations. As a result, the beliefs and practises that underpin Igboland's customary inheritance do not provide an acceptable mechanism for the transmission of ownership from one generation to the next. According to the study's findings, the main barrier to successfully transitioning ownership of a family business from one generation to the next is the application of gender restrictive culture.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher make the following recommendation which will be relevant, not only to family firms in Anambra State, but also to government owned firms.

In order to limit the likelihood of conflict between siblings or co-heirs, the owner-founder of the business must abandon its traditional systems, which are incompatible with succession planning. These traditional systems include the gender restrictive culture as well as the entirety of beliefs, knowledge, and practises.

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