

INFLUENCE OF MENTORSHIP PRACTICE ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FAMILY OWNED TOURISM BUISNESSES IN MAHE ISLAND, SEYCHELLES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of mentorship practices on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses on Mahe Island. Despite the Seychelles Tourism Department's aim to establish Seychelles as a sustainable tourism leader by 2033, the current research overlooks the impact of its unique socioeconomic and cultural context on the effectiveness of mentorship practices. This study employed a descriptive survey research design using a structured questionnaire guided by the sustainable family business theory (SFBT). Data were collected from a sample of 253 owners/CEOs/managers of family owned tourism businesses and analyzed using simple regression analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between mentorship practice and sustainability of tourism businesses ($\beta=0.838$, $p<0.05$). Mentorship practices accounted for 51.3% of the sustainability

variation. This study concludes that effective mentorship facilitates knowledge transfer, skill development, and succession planning, which are crucial for ensuring business continuity across generations. Implementing structured mentorship programs can enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of family owned tourism enterprises in the evolving tourism industry. This study recommends creating work environments that encourage learning, foster long-term relationships, and enhance interpersonal skills to promote professional development and organizational success, thereby boosting sustainability.

Keywords: Family-Run Tourism Businesses, Sustainability, Mentoring Strategies, Planning for Succession, Family Enterprises, Transfer of Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Sustainable practices are increasingly recognized as essential for ensuring the enduring prosperity and sustainability of family run enterprises, and they have an immediate impact on the reputation of the business, its relationships with local communities, ethical considerations, and corporate governance. According to Memili et al. (2017), sustainability is essential to ensure generational continuity in family businesses. Kalash (2023) argues that sustainability is crucial for long-term survival, image enhancement, and regulatory compliance in French companies. Borazon et al. (2023) and Carty (2021) discuss the resilience of family owned tourism businesses in small island contexts and the importance of developing capability-based continuity plans for disaster resilience. Kanthan and Anjaneyaswamy (2009) emphasize the significance of family run businesses in Pondicherry's tourism industry, suggesting that

socioeconomic factors and government policies can influence their success. Interestingly, while some studies have reported challenges that threaten sustainability, others have identified factors that contribute to resilience and longevity. Engeset (2020) identified family capital as a key component in the resilience of rural hotels in Europe, and Peters and Kallmuenzer (2015) noted the unique entrepreneurial behaviors of family firms in hospitality and tourism, which may affect their performance and sustainability.

The sustainability of family owned businesses in the tourism sector presents a complex challenge, marked by both obstacles and instances of resilience. Chundu et al. (2021) emphasized that family owned businesses in Willowvale often struggle with inadequate capital, unfavorable economic conditions, and intense competition, which can impede their sustainability. Similarly, Onyeukwu and Jekelle (2019) noted that a lack of clear succession plans and vision disconnects could contribute to the unsustainability of Nigerian family businesses. In contrast, Akume and Iguisi (2020) indicated that family structure, spirituality, and stewardship can serve as important drivers of sustainability in Nigerian family businesses.

The Seychelles Tourism Department aims to establish the country as a sustainable tourism leader by 2033. However, current research has overlooked the impact of Seychelles' unique socioeconomic and cultural context on the effectiveness of mentorship practices. Innovative educational approaches and entrepreneurial knowledge are vital for family owned tourism businesses in Seychelles to facilitate business transitions and strategic sustainability management, as foreign ownership of many tourism businesses poses security risks. The 2024 Experience Seychelles Mega Fam event highlights the importance of sustainability in family owned tourism businesses, and aligning hospitality training with industry needs is essential, as per the Tourism Development (Standards) Regulations 2023. Despite extensive research, no evidence suggests that mentorship practices affect the sustainability of family owned tourism in Seychelles. This study examines how mentorship practices influence the longevity of family owned tourism businesses in Seychelles after the founders' departure.

Mentorship Practice

Mentorship is crucial for the survival of family run enterprises, because it facilitates the transmission of knowledge, abilities, and values from one generation to the next (Ramadani et al., 2023). An entrepreneurial mindset, which includes awareness of opportunities and a positive outlook, is vital for business success (Bencsik, 2022). Effective mentorship can enhance these aspects. Furthermore, family engagement in education (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020) and its strong cultural impact on family caregivers (Ahmed et al., 2021) indicate a societal foundation that can foster mentorship in family businesses.

Mentorship is crucial for sustaining family businesses, as research has shown that it enhances succession planning and long-term success (Chenane et al. 2024; Onyeukwu & Jekelle 2019). Mentorship equips successors with essential skills that promote continuity across generations (Onyeukwu and Jekelle, 2019). However, mentorship alone is insufficient to achieve sustainability. A comprehensive approach, including innovation investment, governance, and knowledge management, is more effective (Pane & Christanti, 2023; Chenane, 2024). The

effectiveness of mentorship also depends on the successor's willingness and business environment (Tshehla et al., 2021). Integrating mentorship with other practices tailored to the business context and successor engagement is recommended to achieve long-term success (Mboto et al. 2024; Onyeukwu & Jekelle 2019).

Several studies have shown that mentorship practices are essential for business sustainability. Asquith et al. (2024) underscored the role of mentorship in workforce development in clinical and translational science, while Hakim et al. (2024) analyzed its impact on entrepreneurial performance in SMEs. Armistead and Woods (2021) focus on culturally aware mentorship practices. However, there has been no direct examination of mentorship in the context of business sustainability in the Seychelles. The role of mentorship in skill development, strategic planning, and innovation is highlighted, which could benefit businesses in Seychelles aiming to adopt sustainable practices (Hakim et al. 2024). These studies affirm the value of mentorship in promoting sustainable business practices in Seychelles. Future research should investigate how mentorship is implemented in Seychelles to support sustainable business development and to address this research gap. Despite the well-documented global and regional benefits, there is little evidence of mentorship practices in family owned tourism businesses in Seychelles, indicating a notable gap. Although the Seychelles Tourism Department aims to promote sustainable tourism, there is a shortfall in the systematic application of entrepreneurial succession management practices suited to the needs of the local tourism sector, creating a gap in sustainability.

Statement of the problem

Given the rapid advancements in science and technology, new approaches and techniques are required to teach entrepreneurial knowledge. Acquiring this knowledge through mentorship is essential for family owned businesses, particularly those in Seychelles' tourism sector. This knowledge is vital for business transitions and strategic management to ensure long-term sustainability of tourism enterprises.

Despite the recognized benefits of mentorship in the business sector, limited research exists on how mentorship practices influence the sustainability of family owned tourism enterprises in Seychelles. Family owned tourism businesses face challenges, including legal noncompliance, inadequate employee training, the absence of a family business board, poor customer satisfaction, competition with global chains, and the effects of economic downturns. Foreign transnational hotel chains dominate the tourism industry by importing personnel, technology, and supplies, hindering local business growth and sustainability, and leading to precarious employment and security threats (Giampiccoli et al., 2020). Labor earnings are vital for poverty reduction; however, labor and skill shortages, teenage pregnancies, and substance abuse impede progress, as noted in the Seychelles Vision 2033. Approximately 70% of family businesses fail to transition to the second generation, 88% to the third generation, and only 3% to the fourth generation or beyond (Walsh 2011; Mokhber et al. 2017). The revival of Bliss Boutique Hotel Seychelles in 2003, after its abandonment in the 1990s, demonstrated the potential to overcome challenges through entrepreneurial succession practices. The Coral Strand Smart Choice Hotel and Reef Hotel further exemplify the management challenges faced

by family owned tourism businesses. Inadequate knowledge of entrepreneurial succession practices can result in conflicts, decreased market share, and failure.

Jamil et al. (2024) investigated sustainability in Pakistani family businesses from a strategic entrepreneurship perspective. They found that sustainability was not systematically managed because of low awareness of the processes involved. The scope of this study was limited by the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives in the family business sector. Rahmiati (2020) examined the sustainability of family businesses in Indonesia through CSR initiatives in the local community. This study suggests that CSR activities enhance competitiveness by building positive reputations and community relationships, thus contributing to business success. However, qualitative methods that focus on a single family business limit their applicability. Memili et al. (2017) studied the relationship between family ownership, long-term orientation (LTO), and sustainability practices in family tourism businesses in the USA. They found that family ownership is negatively correlated with sustainability practices, although the LTO mitigates this effect. The cross-sectional design of this study limits causal inferences.

The tourism sector in Seychelles, which is primarily composed of family owned businesses, faces unique challenges in terms of sustainability and growth. Although the existing literature underscores the significance of mentorship in small businesses, there is a noticeable gap in understanding its application and effectiveness in the Seychelles' tourism industry. This study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by exploring how mentorship practices can be customized to address the distinct obstacles faced by family owned tourism enterprises in Seychelles. These challenges include limited access to resources, the necessity for skill development in the rapidly changing global tourism market, and the complexities of balancing family dynamics and business operations. By examining the potential of mentorship to address these issues, this study aims to contribute to the development of targeted strategies to enhance the resilience and competitiveness of Seychelles' family owned tourism enterprises.

Objective of the Study

This study examines the role of mentorship practices in enhancing the sustainability of family owned tourism enterprises on Mahe Island, Seychelles.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Mentorship practices have no statistically significant effect on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses on Mahe Island, Seychelles.

Significance of the study

The tourism sector is the cornerstone of the Seychelles economy and contributes significantly to the GDP, employment, and foreign exchange earnings. As a small island developing state, Seychelles relies heavily on tourism to drive its economic growth and support infrastructure development. Family owned businesses play a vital role in offering personalized services, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting sustainable tourism. These enterprises, often involved in accommodations, guided tours, and local crafts, enhance the authenticity of the visitor experience while fostering community-based economic growth.

Limitations to the study

The focus of this study on a single geographic area restricts its applicability to other regions or countries with varying cultural, economic and regulatory contexts. The sample size and selection process may introduce bias if they do not accurately represent the entire population of family owned tourism businesses on the island. Moreover, self-reporting bias could influence the data collected from family business owners, as they may portray a more favorable view of their succession practices and sustainability efforts than is warranted. However, the cross-sectional design of this study may not adequately capture the long-term effects of succession planning on the sustainability of businesses. Additionally, the distinctive characteristics of the tourism industry in Seychelles may limit the relevance of these findings to other sectors of the economy. Future research should employ a longitudinal design, larger sample sizes, and comparative studies across multiple locations to enhance the generalizability and robustness of the findings.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The sustainable family business theory (SFBT)

Stafford et al. (1999) introduced the sustainable family business theory (SFBT), which was developed by Danes and Brewton (2012). SFBT identifies the resources, constraints, processes, and transactions that lead to business success and well-being (Jamil et al. 2024). Based on general system theory, SFBT explains the interdependence between business and family systems (Danes & Brewton, 2012). This theory provides a lens for assessing family business sustainability and emphasizes family business interactions (Bertoldi, 2021; Deng & Turner, 2023).

This theory assumes that having knowledge and applying effective management practices can result in success, even in difficult situations (Anderson et al. 2018; Li and Song, 2019). According to Ramírez-Solís et al. (2022), using models can benefit business sustainability if they are constructed carefully. The theory assumes that family members can discover optimal solutions for conflict resolution through open discussions and brainstorming. Moreover, the theory assumes factors such as the population growth rate, projected manufacturing output increase, and potential impact of mitigation measures.

Critiques of this theory include coordination issues between family and business roles, which can lead to conflicts that threaten the viability of family enterprises. A Standardized Family Business Taxonomy (SFBT) lacks sufficient detail and fails to account for the dynamic nature of family businesses. This may be due to the diversity within family businesses, which varies significantly, especially when compared with conventional family owned businesses (Cho et al. 2022).

Sustainable family business theory (SFBT) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the distinct dynamics and long-term success factors of family owned tourism enterprises. This theory supports the hypothesis of this study by highlighting the interaction between family and business systems, indicating that sustainable family businesses balance

family needs and business goals. The study's methodology is rooted in SFBT's holistic approach, which considers various dimensions, such as family structure, business strategy, and resource management. By applying SFBT principles, the research design likely employs quantitative methods to capture the intricate interactions between family relationships and sustainability practices. This theoretical foundation allows us to examine how family businesses navigate challenges, utilize intergenerational knowledge transfers, and sustain their competitive edge over time, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured approach to explaining the purpose and rationale of a project as well as how it is executed. In other words, it provides insights into why a project is conducted in a specific manner and its expected outcomes (Shaffer, 2024). As Kothari (2019) points out, having a framework helps clarify why a project is undertaken in a particular way, thus allowing for the estimation of the time required to progress from one stage to the next. This makes it possible to obtain an idea of how long it might take to move from one point to the next (Mugenda 2024). In this study, an appropriate conceptual framework was generated to show the interrelationships between independent and dependent variables. The Conceptual Framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

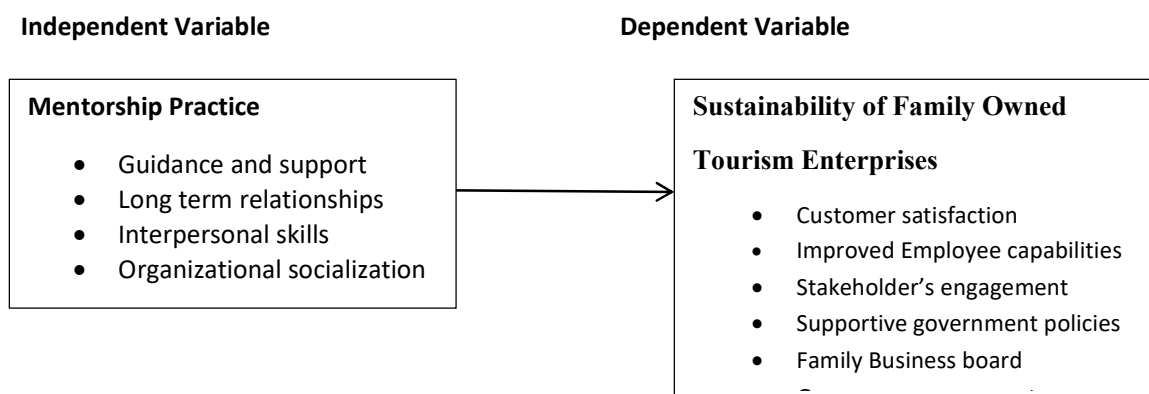


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework considers mentorship practices as independent variables that play a crucial role in the long-term sustainability of family owned tourism. Mentorship is believed to significantly affect business success in the tourism industry. Mentorship is a process in which seasoned individuals provide guidance and motivation to help others attain personal and professional objectives. This relationship is characterized by mutual respect and trust and aids in skill development, performance improvement, and personal growth. Mentors inspire mentees to reach their full potential by offering support and guidance.

Proponents of sustainability emphasize meeting the needs of the present generation without hindering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Environmentally responsible practices are crucial for the long-term success of family owned businesses. Achieving sustainability requires businesses to enhance their capabilities to satisfy various performance criteria. These practices include sustainable development plans, adherence to regulations, educational programs for customer awareness, employee protection, the establishment of family business boards, governance agreements, and customer satisfaction, which can lead to increased market share and profitability, thereby contributing to the viability of the business.

Empirical Review

Mentorship practice and sustainability of tourism businesses

Theaker (2023) examined the mentorship experiences of female entrepreneurs in the rural United Kingdom, studying the role of mentoring in women entrepreneurs' achievements and the key elements of effective mentoring. This study evaluated the contribution of mentoring to entrepreneurial success through interviews with 24 female entrepreneurs and six female mentors. While participants viewed mentoring as important, it was one of many success factors. Peer mentoring has emerged as the most effective form of mentoring with programmatic implications. This study used semi-structured interviews without theoretical guidance and employed a descriptive survey methodology with a structured questionnaire based on the sustainable family business theory. This study was conducted on family tourism businesses on Mahe Island in Seychelles. The structured questionnaire provided a standardized approach to data collection, complementing qualitative insights from prior studies. By applying sustainable family theory, this study examines peer mentoring in family tourism enterprises, with Mahe Island offering a unique context for evaluation.

Abhari et al. (2021) conducted a study on "Smart Entrepreneurial Systems: An Application of Deep Reinforcement Learning in Improving Entrepreneurship Mentorship" in India. This study aims to bridge the gap in creating efficient educational platforms with mentorship mechanisms for novice entrepreneurs. This study proposes the creation of a smart mentorship agent for entrepreneurship education platforms to address the challenges of scalability, inclusivity, and customizability. The agent provides personalized learning experiences to novice entrepreneurs using reinforcement learning algorithms to identify the success factors for content recommendations. The BizzyB platform served as a testing ground to demonstrate the practicality of the algorithm. This study has significant implications, offering a novel approach to developing intelligent entrepreneurial systems and supporting data-driven entrepreneurship education. Reinforcement learning algorithms have the potential to revolutionize entrepreneurship education by tailoring the learning experience. The BizzyB platform demonstrates the potential of AI-driven personalization in educational technology. Although this study provides insights into intelligent entrepreneurial systems, their applicability to the tourism sector on Mahé Island requires further investigation. Further research is essential to enhance the tourism sector of Mahe Island in the Republic of Seychelles.

Mboto et al. (2024) conducted a study titled "Mentorship; A Panacea for Success" in Nigeria. This study aimed to demonstrate the role of mentorship in achieving success at the individual, group, and societal levels. This suggests that success is a universal goal that begins with the individual. This study identifies willpower and passion as key success drivers activated through socialization, schooling, and mentorship. While education is essential for skill development, mentorship is more effective as it involves skill transfer and develops passion, self-worth, and positive attitudes in mentees. However, mentorship alone cannot guarantee success, as it is measurable in various ways and requires the achievement of multiple factors. This study employed a descriptive survey design with a structured questionnaire for primary data collection, guided by a theoretical framework. This framework provides a systematic approach to understanding the influence of mentorship on success, while the questionnaire data offers insights into the practical applications of mentorship.

Tshehla et al. (2021) explore the link between mentorship and the success of young entrepreneurs in Telkom, South Africa. This study investigates whether mentorship can help tackle unemployment and the decline in youth entrepreneurship in Tshwane. Employing a qualitative methodology, they conducted semi-structured interviews with mentors and young mentees from the Telkom mentorship database and analyzed the data using ATLAS.ti 8.0. The literature suggests that mentoring is advantageous for both mentors and entrepreneurs, with significant contributions from the government and private sectors. The results affirm the beneficial impact of mentorship on youth entrepreneurship, identifying three key themes: factors contributing to success, factors hindering progress, and the role of mentorship. This study suggests enhancing mentorship programs, boosting government initiatives, and providing financial support to address these challenges. Additionally, a descriptive survey design with structured questionnaires was used to investigate the connection between mentorship and the sustainability of family owned businesses in Mahe Island's tourism industry. By focusing on tourism in Seychelles, this study provides insights into how mentorship affects the sustainability of family enterprises. The survey design facilitated a thorough analysis of mentorship and business sustainability in this context.

Mwamba et al. (2021) studied entrepreneurship strategies to enhance mentorship at Zambia's Kwame Nkrumah University and investigated ways to improve entrepreneurship mentorship among undergraduate students. This study evaluated the current state of mentorship and determined enhancement strategies. This study utilized a pragmatism-based research paradigm and a mixed-method approach with a concurrent triangulation design, employing simple random sampling for students, random sampling for lecturers, and purposive sampling for the administrators. Data collected through questionnaires and interviews were analyzed using frequency tables and graphs. The findings showed that most students recognized the importance of mentorship and sought entrepreneurial skills. However, few business students accessed the mentorship. University management's focus on entrepreneurial skills and knowledge is inadequate. The study recommends revising curricula for inclusive mentorship, creating educational policies, and establishing resource centers. To validate this research, a comparable study on Mahe Island, Seychelles, focusing on mentorship and family owned tourism business sustainability is needed. This could examine how tailored mentorship

programs enhance business sustainability, while comparing findings from both regions to reveal cross-cultural insights into entrepreneurship education practices.

Chenane et al. (2024) explored how innovative leadership impacts the success of mission hospitals in Kenya, along with the moderating role of perceived organizational support. This study used servant and transactional leadership theories, with a cross-sectional survey design. The sample included 285 middle- or lower-level mission hospital employees selected through a census. Data were collected via a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 24, which presented descriptive and inferential statistics using linear regression analysis. The findings revealed the significant impact of effective coaching on individual and organizational success in Kenyan mission hospitals. The significant consensus among participants and the statistical link between mentorship and enhanced performance underscore the value of mentoring initiatives. The effect of mentorship on hospital success is influenced by perceived organizational support. This study used a descriptive survey design with structured questionnaires to collect data from family owned tourism enterprises on Mahe Island. This enabled a detailed exploration of these businesses' operations and challenges, while allowing the collection of comparable data for a comprehensive analysis of the tourism industry.

Sustainability of family owned tourism businesses

Memili et al. (2017) conducted a study on the sustainability practices of family firms in Turkey, focusing on the interplay between family ownership and long-term orientation. This study highlights the significance of sustainable practices for the continuity of family businesses and their community relationships. However, not all family businesses support sustainability. This study employs a socioemotional wealth perspective to develop a theoretical model that examines the effects of family ownership on sustainability adoption, while also considering the moderating effect of long-term orientation (LTO). Data were gathered from 327 surveys of members of the Turkish tourism and hospitality sector between 2014 and 2015 as part of a collaborative research effort between Turkish and US universities. The analysis focused on 195 family owned businesses in these sectors. The findings suggest that family ownership negatively impacts sustainability, with LTO moderating this relationship: family owners with high LTO are more inclined to adopt sustainable practices than are those with low LTO. This cross-sectional study contrasts with the current research, which utilized a descriptive survey design with a structured questionnaire and simple regression analysis, guided by sustainable family business theory in the Seychelles tourism industry.

Sutandyo et al. (2021) studied succession planning in family businesses, focusing on tourism in Indonesia. This study aimed to observe the succession process in family businesses by examining second-generation takeovers in Italy's tourism sector. The researchers used a qualitative method to gather information from the owners and two children designated as successors. They used interviews and observations for data collection and applied descriptive analysis to depict the succession process of a family business. They found that the data were coded using Walsh's model of succession activities, and the results were categorized into management and ownership succession. The study found that succession planning for both management and ownership was effective, with clear results. However, this study did not use

a theoretical framework and examined only one model, thus limiting its applicability to other contexts. The sample size was small, consisting of one business owner and two successors, which limits the generalizability of these findings. Finally, the study only analyzed descriptively, limiting its potential for replication in other contexts, such as Seychelles. This study used a descriptive survey research design and simple linear regression analysis to explore the influence of mentorship practices on family owned business sustainability in Seychelles' tourism industry.

Nnabuife and Okoli (2017) conducted a study titled "Succession Planning and Sustainability of Selected Family Owned Businesses in Anambra State, Nigeria." This study aimed to assess the importance of succession planning in maintaining the sustainability of family owned businesses (FOBs) in Anambra State. A total of 275 FOBs were surveyed, comprising 50 incorporated and 225 unincorporated businesses, using questionnaires and a complete enumeration method. Data analysis was performed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients and t-tests. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between mentorship and sustainability ($r = .858$, $p < .05$), with no notable difference in perceptions between the groups regarding succession planning ($t = -218$, $p > .05$). The study concludes that mentorship is vital for the survival of family businesses and recommends considering it a gradual process. Business owners should ensure that potential successors are genuinely interested in the business and view succession as a strategy for long-term sustainability of the business. This study suggests a descriptive survey research design with structured questionnaires and simple regression analysis, guided by the sustainable family business theory, in the context of FOBs in the Seychelles tourism industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy

This study employed a positivist research philosophy because it deals with precise quantitative data and can therefore be easily compared, generating reliable evidence from responses collected through a questionnaire (Gerasimov, 2020; Şen, 2025; Bhangu et al., 2023).

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey research design is well-suited for this study as it facilitates a thorough examination of the current state of the phenomena being investigated. This approach allows for the collection of detailed data from a large sample, offering a broad perspective on the research topic. The strength of the design lies in its capacity to capture participants' attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics, providing a snapshot of the population at a specific point in time (Qualitative Research Methods, 2021). Additionally, descriptive surveys are cost-effective and can be administered to geographically dispersed samples, thereby enhancing study representativeness. However, this design has limitations, such as the potential for response bias and the inability to establish causal relationships between variables. Moreover, the cross-sectional nature of descriptive surveys may not capture changes over time, limiting the study's ability to track trends or developments. Despite these constraints, a descriptive survey design remains a valuable tool for gathering

rich, quantifiable data that can inform policy decisions and guide future research in the field (Şen 2025).

Target Population of the Study

This study involved 405 owners/CEOs/managers of businesses in the tourism industry in Seychelles, as listed by the Ministry of Finance, National Planning, and Trade in November 2022. These establishments were divided into three distinct categories: star-rated hotels and resorts; self-catering tourism facilities and establishments; and guesthouses' tourism accommodation facilities and establishments. The selection of family owned tourism businesses was based on their substantial contribution to GDP and the pressing sustainability challenges they encountered. Non-family tourism businesses are excluded from this study.

Sampling

Of the 405 target populations, a sample size of 202 was calculated using Yamane's model at a confidence level of 95% or 5% significance interval, as indicated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \dots\dots\dots Eq.1$$

The sample size, denoted by 'n,' was determined using a confidence level of 95% and population size (N) of 405. The margin of error, denoted by 'e', is calculated to be 0.05, or alternatively, the level of precision is always set to 0.05. Therefore,

$$n = \frac{405}{1 + 405 \times 0.05^2} = 202$$

The formula yielded 202 respondents with a 95% confidence level and $\pm 5\%$ precision ($P = 0.5$). The researcher provided a non-response, which Bell et al. (2022) averaged for social studies, and approximately 80% of the questionnaires were self-administered. Therefore, the researcher in this study anticipated non-response and hence provided a 20% sample increase to cater to respondents' non-response.

$$\text{Final sample size} = \frac{202}{1 - 0.2} = \frac{202}{0.8} = 253 \text{ respondents}$$

Therefore, the required sample size is 253. According to Gerasimov (2020), this analysis determined that the sample size was appropriate because it was sufficiently large to minimize sampling error and comply with the absolute size of the chosen sample in relation to the complexity of the population.

Data collection Instruments

Primary data were used for this study and were collected using questionnaires. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions designed to assess mentorship practices and was meticulously crafted to gather comprehensive insights into mentor-mentee relationships and their effectiveness. Questions were strategically selected to address key aspects of mentorship, such as the frequency of communication, goal-setting processes, skill development

opportunities, and overall satisfaction. The inclusion of questions regarding mentor availability and responsiveness was based on research highlighting these factors as critical for successful mentorship outcomes. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to a rigorous validation process, which included pilot testing with a small group of mentors, followed by expert review by seasoned researchers in professional development. Feedback was used to refine question wording, eliminate ambiguities, and ensure construct validity. Additionally, statistical analyses, including factor analysis and reliability tests, were conducted to confirm the instrument's internal consistency and reliability. This meticulous approach to questionnaire design and validation aimed to create a robust tool for the effective evaluation of mentorship practices.

Data collection procedures

Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to all participants with the help of research assistants. Efforts were made to ensure a high return rate for questionnaires. The selected respondents received the questionnaires using a drop-and-pick approach method.

Data Analysis and Presentation

A simple regression analysis guided by the equation

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e,$$

Where:

Y= Sustainability of family owned businesses in the tourism industry (Dependent variable)

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Regression Coefficient

X_1 = Mentoring practice

was chosen for this study because it effectively examines the relationship between a single independent variable and a dependent variable, which aligns with our research objective. This method enables the prediction of the dependent variable based on the independent variable, offering valuable insights into the strength and direction of their association. The assumptions of the regression analysis, including linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals, were evaluated meticulously. Linearity was assessed using scatter plots, and the Durbin-Watson test confirmed the independence of the errors. Homoscedasticity was examined using residual plots, and the normality of residuals was verified using Q-Q plots and the Shapiro-Wilk test. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was selected as the statistical software for analysis because of its user-friendly interface, comprehensive set of statistical tools, and widespread use in academic research. Its capability to handle large datasets, perform various statistical tests, and generate clear graphical outputs makes it particularly suitable for the present study.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured a Letter of Introduction from Kisii University to verify his identity and comply with established protocols, thereby adhering to the policy. This letter was addressed to the Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (ISERC) of Kisii University to facilitate the issuance of a research permission letter confirming that the research conformed to the ethical guidelines for scientific research. Subsequently, the researcher sought official approval and research permission from the Seychelles Bureau of Standards to collect scientific data in the Republic of Seychelles using an introduction letter from Kisii University and an ethics clearance letter from the KSU ISERC. Upon receiving approval and the research permit, the researcher contacted family owned tourism enterprises and coordinated with research assistants to distribute and collect the questionnaires, thereby adhering to ethical guidelines throughout the process. The participants were informed of the study's purpose, their right to confidentiality, and their option to withdraw at any time, fostering a transparent and ethical research environment.

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

Response rate

This study aimed to determine the participation rates of the targeted respondents. This assessment was crucial for establishing whether the study had achieved a sufficient number of respondents to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the results. A sample of 253 respondents was surveyed using a structured questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 80.6% (204 respondents) that was used for the analysis. Consequently, the collected data were deemed relevant for making conclusions and recommendations, as Barroga et al. (2023) and Bell et al. (2022) suggested that a response rate of 30-60% is adequate for such purposes. The non-response rate was 19.4%, indicating that only 49 respondents did not return their questionnaires for analysis.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

This section provides a descriptive analysis of independent and dependent variables. A 5-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the variables.

Mentorship Practice

This study indicated that participants agreed that guidance and support are mentorship practices that contribute to entrepreneurial skills, which are crucial for the sustainability of family operated tourism businesses. The respondents believed that mentors offered comprehensive expertise, including vital skills for managing business challenges ($M = 4.4804$, $SD = 0.61557$). They concur that mentors play a critical role in developing entrepreneurial abilities, helping mentees improve interpersonal skills such as presentation, sales, and other essential business competencies (mean = 4.1225, Std dev. 0.75572). This aligns with Mboto et al. (2024), who presented mentorship as crucial for success, by guiding individuals, cultivating skills, and promoting personal growth. Prastyaningtyas et al. (2023) noted that mentors provide direction and support to young entrepreneurs, helping them to overcome obstacles during business initiation and operations.

Regarding enduring relationships, survey participants indicated that mentors guide mentees to crucial resources, such as libraries, article and book collections, training initiatives, and potential investors or collaborators, providing the necessary knowledge for managing family enterprises ($M=4.1225$, $SD = 0.67549$). Respondents strongly agreed that mentors link mentees with entrepreneurs, investors, and industry specialists, offering advice on family business challenges and helping them acquire essential resources ($M= 4.5392$, $SD = 0.59838$). This aligns with Mouammer and Bazan (2021), who suggested that a successful mentoring experience depends on the mentor's credibility and connections and the mentee's perception of commonalities with their mentors.

Regarding interpersonal abilities, the survey participants agreed that mentoring guidance was essential for fostering team collaboration ($M=4.2451$, $SD = .62676$). This aligns with Sarabipour et al. (2021), who asserted that a robust mentor-protégé connection is vital for professional success and work-life balance.

Regarding organizational socialization, the survey participants agreed that mentoring helps employees acquire skills and qualifications for advancement, and enhances integration ($M = 4.3824$, $SD = 0.75650$). Mentors assigned additional tasks to sustain mentees' learning momentum and promote interpersonal abilities and growth ($M = 4.3088$, $SD = 0.74788$). They ensured that mentees applied lessons in their family businesses to facilitate their action plans and priorities ($M = 4.3529$, $SD = 0.67535$). This aligns with Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2015), who found that employee performance strongly correlates with the extent to which employees perform better when receiving career support through organizational socialization.

The study's findings showed that participants generally supported mentorship as an entrepreneurial succession strategy to sustain tourism businesses, with a combined mean score of 4.3382. This finding suggests that family owned tourism enterprises in Seychelles use mentorship for succession planning. An overall standard deviation of 0.6815 indicated minimal divergence in respondents' opinions. These results align with those of Zvaigzne et al. (2020), who noted that mentoring can positively impact the national economy by encouraging new business formation, decreasing unemployment, and enhancing competitiveness. Similarly, Izlem (2017) suggested that when organizations cultivate a balanced work environment and implement mentorship, employees are more likely to show increased organizational commitment.

Sustainability of family owned tourism businesses

The results indicated that participants agreed on a sustainability framework that included plans for seamless transitions in roles and leadership ($M=4.4412$, $SD=0.75689$). Employing a sustainability officer to implement eco-friendly practices and appointing committed senior managers with expertise are vital for a company's success and sustainability ($M=4.1618$, $SD=0.81749$). Customer satisfaction is key to business excellence, enabling a company to surpass its competitors and establish a market presence ($M=4.1814$, $SD=0.68872$). Enhancing employee capabilities provides skills for critical operations, facilitating strategy implementation and long-term sustainability ($M=4.2696$, $SD=0.70246$). Engaging

stakeholders, including educating the local community about sustainability, promotes a healthier environment and sustainable growth (M=4.2843, SD=0.68592).

Government policies that support the industry include offering sustainability training to participants and local organizations (M=4.2304, SD=0.74335) and providing external assistance to ensure long-term success through entrepreneurial transition strategies (M=4.2157, SD=0.73782). Family business boards help to mitigate potential biases from family owners and executives (M=4.2941, SD=0.70310) by focusing on the prosperity of future generations (M=4.1667, SD=0.78261). Governance agreements foster trust, enhance family relationships, and contribute to long-term sustainability (M=4.2157; SD=0.77685).

Respondents generally concurred with statements regarding the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses, particularly in areas such as sustainability frameworks, customer satisfaction, enhanced employee skills, stakeholder involvement, supportive government policies, and family business governance, achieving an overall mean score of 4.2461. A collective standard deviation of 0.7395 indicates minimal variation in respondents' opinions.

Relationship between mentorship practice and sustainability

This study aimed to determine the connection between mentorship practices and sustainability of tourism enterprises. An ordinary least squares regression model was employed for this purpose. A summary of the model results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mentorship Practice and Sustainability (Model summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.716 ^a	0.513	0.511	0.31193

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship practice

Source: Survey data (2025)

This study identified a positive link between mentorship practices and sustainability, as indicated by a Pearson coefficient of 0.716. Additionally, the findings revealed that mentorship practices accounted for up to 51.3% of the variation in the sustainability of tourism businesses on Mahé Island. This suggests that the remaining 48.7% of the changes in sustainability were due to factors other than the mentorship program.

This study further verified the robustness of the model. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mentorship Practice and Sustainability (Model Fitness) (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.712	1	20.712	212.857	0.000 ^b
	Residual	19.655	202	0.097		
	Total	40.367	203			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of tourism businesses

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship practice

Source: Survey data (2025)

These findings indicate that the model connecting mentorship practices and sustainability is a good fit. This is evidenced by the fact that the F-calculated value surpassed the F-critical values of $F_{0.05, 1, \text{ and } 202}$ ($212.857 > 3.841$). The study concluded that the overall model is statistically significant. This conclusion is further supported by a p-value of 0.000, which is below the standard significance threshold of 0.05. This study also displays The regression model coefficients are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between mentorship practice and sustainability (Model Coefficients)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.611	0.250	2.445	0.015
	Mentorship practice	0.838	0.057	14.590	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of tourism businesses

Source: Survey data (2025)

The findings revealed a significant and positive link between mentorship practices and the sustainability of tourism businesses, as demonstrated by a beta coefficient of 0.838 and a p-value of 0.000. These results highlight the importance of mentorship for promoting the long-term success of family owned tourism enterprises. Effective mentorship can facilitate knowledge transfer, skill development, and succession planning, all of which are crucial for ensuring continuity across generations. Establishing structured mentorship programs can help family owned tourism businesses improve their sustainability and competitiveness in an ever-evolving tourism sector.

Model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$$

Therefore,

$$Y = 0.611 + 0.838X_1 + e$$

Test of Hypothesis

This study aimed to assess the effect of mentorship practices on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses on Mahe Island. To achieve this objective, the following null hypothesis was tested.

H₀₁: Mentorship practices have no statistically significant effect on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses on Mahe Island.

The data in Table 3 reveal that the mentorship coefficient is 0.838. This implies that a one-unit increase in mentorship results in a 0.838 increase in the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses provided all other variables remain unchanged. Furthermore, the P-value for mentorship practice was 0.000, which was below the significance level of 0.05. As a result, we reject the null hypothesis that states, "Mentorship practice has no statistically significant effect on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in Mahe Island, Seychelles."

These findings align with those of Osabohien et al. (2024), who emphasized that well-structured mentorship programmes and innovative strategies can significantly enhance entrepreneurial success, promote economic growth, and ensure the sustainability of business enterprises. The results also align with those of Tshehla et al. (2021), who highlight the positive impact of mentorship on the sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures. According to Mboto et al. (2024), although education is essential for skill acquisition, mentorship offers a more effective path to success by facilitating skill transfer, nurturing passion and self-esteem, and creating a positive mindset in the mentee. However, this study acknowledges that mentorship alone is not a guaranteed path to success as it is a universal value subject to various interpretations. Therefore, achieving success requires a combination of multiple factors including mentorship. Mittal and Kumar (2017) find a positive correlation between mentoring and sustainability.

The results also corroborate the principles of sustainable family business theory (SFBT), which posits that intergenerational learning and knowledge transfer in family enterprises are consistent with mentorship principles. Hamilton (2011) explored entrepreneurial learning in family businesses, using a situated learning theory framework. This theory proposes that learning occurs through engagement in overlapping communities of practice, such as family and business, and that second-generation experiences contribute to both innovation and continuity in family enterprises (Bertoldi 2021). Effective mentorship is defined as reciprocity, mutual respect, clear expectations, personal connections, and shared values (Deng and Turner, 2023). These attributes may be particularly pertinent to family businesses where relationships are often more intricate and interconnected. This finding suggests that intergenerational knowledge transfer, succession planning, and balancing continuity with innovation are vital to maintaining family tourism. Mentorship, with its emphasis on reciprocal learning and development, may be instrumental to these processes.

The findings of this study, which reveal a positive relationship between mentorship practices and sustainability, are consistent with existing research in the field. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that effective mentorship enhances organizational sustainability by promoting knowledge transfer, skill development, and employee engagement. However, this study provides new insights by specifically examining the impact of mentorship on sustainability practices within organizations. This underscores how mentorship can directly contribute to the implementation and maintenance of sustainable initiatives, potentially through increased awareness, commitment, and practical knowledge among employees. This perspective extends beyond the traditional focus on the role of mentorship in career development and succession planning. A potential contradiction worth further exploration is whether the positive effects of mentorship on sustainability are universal across different industries and organizational cultures, as previous studies have suggested that mentorship effectiveness can vary depending on contextual factors.

Conclusion

This study concludes that mentorship practices play a crucial role in the sustainability of family owned tourism enterprises on Mahe Island. Effective mentorship facilitates the transfer of knowledge, skill development, and succession planning, which are vital for ensuring business continuity across generations. Implementing structured mentorship programs can help family owned tourism enterprises enhance their sustainability and competitiveness in an ever-evolving tourism industry. This study further highlights the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mind-set among younger family members. By encouraging innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability, these businesses can navigate the constantly changing tourism landscape more effectively. Additionally, the research suggests that establishing clear succession plans and involving potential successors in decision-making processes early on can significantly aid the smooth transition of leadership and long-term success of these businesses.

Recommendations

This study demonstrates that mentorship practices positively affect the sustainability of tourism enterprises on Mahe Island. In Seychelles, these practices can be customized to align with the country's distinct cultural and economic landscape. Given the nation's small population and close-knit communities, mentorship programs should focus on fostering personal relationships and community engagement. Such initiatives could address the challenges of a small island economy, such as limited resources and the need for diversification, by encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship among the mentees. Additionally, digital mentoring platforms can be employed to connect local mentees with international mentors, thereby expanding perspectives while maintaining a focus on local development needs of the mentees.

Consequently, businesses should create work environments that encourage employee learning. By integrating guidance and support, fostering long-term relationships, and enhancing interpersonal skills, a dynamic setting is created that promotes professional development and organizational success, thereby enhancing sustainability. When individuals receive mentorship and build strong workplace connections, they become more adept at navigating organizational

structures and fostering a positive work culture. As employees refine these skills, they become more proficient in managing the complexities of organizational socialization, thus adapting more effectively to the workplace culture and norms. This socialization process, supported by strong interpersonal skills and nurturing relationships, facilitates individuals' integration into their roles, significantly contributing to their teams and advancing their careers within the organization. This synergy benefits individual employees and strengthens the organization. By fostering an environment that prioritizes these elements, family owned tourism businesses can cultivate a more engaged, skilled, and adaptable workforce to meet the challenges of the ever-evolving business landscape.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for practitioners of family owned tourism. To enhance mentorship practices and improve sustainability, businesses should consider implementing structured mentorship programs that pair experienced family members with younger ones. This approach can facilitate knowledge transfer and skill development while preserving unique family business cultures. Practitioners should also focus on creating a supportive environment that encourages open communication and constructive feedback between mentors and mentees. Additionally, family owned tourism businesses could benefit from establishing clear succession plans that incorporate mentorship as a key component to ensure a smooth transition of leadership and preserve the business's long-term viability. To address potential challenges, businesses should consider involving external mentors or advisors to provide objective perspectives and introduce innovative ideas to the team. Finally, regular evaluation and adjustment of mentorship practices based on feedback from both mentors and mentees can help ensure the ongoing effectiveness and relevance of these initiatives in the ever-evolving tourism industry.

Future Research Directions

Future research could investigate the long-term impact of mentorship practices on family owned tourism enterprises in Seychelles by conducting longitudinal studies to evaluate sustainability outcomes over time. Exploring specific mentorship strategies that have the most significant effects on business sustainability offers valuable insights for practitioners. Additionally, comparative studies across various island nations or regions could shed light on how cultural and economic contexts affect the effectiveness of mentorship in family owned tourism. Research could also examine the potential challenges and barriers to implementing successful mentorship programs, such as resistance to change or generational conflicts within family businesses. Finally, analyzing the role of technology in facilitating mentorship relationships and knowledge transfer could provide innovative solutions for enhancing the sustainability of family owned tourism enterprises in Seychelles and similar destinations.

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