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Enhancing Sustainability through Apprenticeship Practices: A study of Family Owned Tourism Enterprises in Mahe Island, Seychelles

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how apprenticeship practices affect the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in Mahe Island. While apprenticeships are vital for developing skills and transferring knowledge, there is limited evidence of how these practices are specifically adapted to family-owned tourism enterprises in Seychelles. This study employed a descriptive survey research design using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 253 business owners/CEOs/managers in the Seychelles tourism industry. Data analysis was conducted using a simple regression analysis guided by sustainable family business theory. The results show a significant and positive correlation between apprenticeship practices and the sustainability of tourism businesses ($\beta=0.688$, $p=0.000$). Leadership in family-owned tourism businesses was found to implement elements such as technical skills, confidence, entrepreneurial spirit, and personal abilities, to a limited degree. The study suggests establishing formal apprenticeship programs, partnering with local educational institutions to create customized curricula, implementing mentorship initiatives, investing in continuous training and development, and providing government support through incentives and policies. These strategies can significantly improve the sustainability of family-owned tourism businesses on Mahe Island, Seychelles, by promoting skill transfer, preserving traditional knowledge, and adapting to changing industrial trends.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable practices are increasingly acknowledged as vital for the enduring prosperity and sustainability of family owned enterprises (FOEs). These practices have an immediate effect on a business's reputation and its relationships with local communities as well as on ethical considerations and corporate governance. According to Memili *et al.* (2017), sustainability is crucial to ensure generational continuity in family firms. Kalash (2023) contends that sustainability is essential for long-term survival, image enhancement, and regulatory compliance in France. Borazon *et al.* (2023) and Carty (2021) explored the resilience of family run tourism enterprises in small island settings and highlighted the need for continuity plans based on capabilities to enhance disaster resilience. Kanthan and Anjaneyaswamy (2009) underscore the importance 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 of 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 multifaceted challenge marked by hurdles and instances of resilience. Chundu *et al.*, (2021) highlight that family owned businesses in Willowvale

frequently face issues such as insufficient capital, adverse economic conditions, and fierce competition, all of which can hinder their sustainability. Similarly, Onyeukwu and Jekelle (2019) observed that the absence of clear succession plans and vision misalignments could lead to unsustainability of family businesses in Nigeria. Conversely, Akume and Iguisi (2020) suggested that family structure, spirituality, and stewardship are significant sustainability drivers in Nigerian family businesses. The Seychelles Tourism Department aims to become a leader in sustainable tourism by 2033. However, current research often neglects the influence of a country's distinct socioeconomic and cultural context on the success of entrepreneurial succession practices. For family owned tourism businesses in Seychelles, innovative educational strategies and entrepreneurial knowledge are crucial for facilitating business transitions and managing strategic sustainability, especially because the foreign ownership of many tourism enterprises poses security risks. The 2024 Experience Seychelles Mega Fam event underscored the significance of sustainability in family owned tourism ventures, emphasizing the need to align hospitality training with industry demands, as outlined in the Tourism Development (Standards) Regulations 2023. Despite a thorough investigation, no evidence suggests that entrepreneurial succession management practices affect the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in Seychelles. This study explores how family culture influences these practices and impacts the longevity of family owned tourism businesses in Seychelles after the founders' departure, focusing on how

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resilience factors and other entrepreneurial succession management practices can be effectively implemented to support sustainable tourism.

Apprenticeship Practice

According to Muehleemann *et al.* (2020), the German apprenticeship market experienced a high demand before the current crisis. Retail apprenticeships equip individuals with practical skills and fundamental knowledge in the retail sector. Apprenticeships play a critical role in vocational education by offering students hands-on experience, employability skills, and industry-specific qualifications. The training provided to apprentices extends beyond technical skills, encompassing the development of their entrepreneurial spirit, including self-confidence, motivation, sense of responsibility, resourcefulness, and understanding of personal planning. Additionally, apprenticeships foster interpersonal skills essential for effective management within a company.

Eneh *et al.* (2023) state that apprenticeships offer paid, trade-specific training through practical experience and external learning, preparing individuals with essential trade skills. Apprentices gain measurable competencies while working for their employers over a defined period. Successful apprenticeships require initiative, perseverance, ambition, and effective communication. Work-related assessments help employers gauge apprentices' skill levels accurately. However, apprenticeships are not always formally structured or prioritized, which complicates the succession process (Saan *et al.*, 2018). The role of apprenticeships varies across cultural contexts and is influenced by factors such as gender inclusivity and the founders' educational level (Arambhan & Seetharaman, 2022). These variations highlight the complexity of apprenticeships in family businesses and the need for tailored succession management strategies.

Apprenticeship programs are essential for the long-term sustainability of family run tourism businesses in Seychelles, facilitating skill transfer and resilience (Engeset, 2020). These programs are vital for succession planning, providing the next generation with necessary skills. Informal education and tacit knowledge from apprenticeships effectively transfer business ownership and knowledge across generations (Quew-Jones, 2022; Ehwareme *et al.* (2024). However, the formality of succession planning and cultural factors influences the effectiveness of apprenticeships. Despite the global and regional benefits, there is limited evidence on how apprenticeship practices are adapted to family owned tourism businesses in Seychelles. The Seychelles Tourism Department aims to lead sustainable tourism, but lacks systematic apprenticeship practices tailored to local needs, creating a significant gap in its strategic sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

An apprenticeship program within family run tourism businesses on Mahé Island, Seychelles, blends traditional knowledge with modern tourism management practices.

Experienced family members would mentor apprentices, sharing insights into the local culture, hospitality traditions, and sustainable practices unique to the Seychellois environment. This approach preserves the cultural heritage and ensures business viability. Apprentices would gain hands-on experience in tourism operations, from guest services to environmental conservation, while learning about financial management and marketing. This apprenticeship model can sustain family owned tourism ventures by developing skilled professionals who understand both family businesses and global tourism demands.

Although apprenticeship plays a crucial role in sustaining family run tourism businesses on Mahé Island, Seychelles, it highlights the complex interplay between traditional practices and modern challenges. This age-old method of passing down skills within family enterprises remains essential for the island's tourism industry. However, these businesses are increasingly pressured by globalization, shifting consumer preferences, and environmental concerns. Many find it difficult to maintain their distinct cultural heritage while adapting to modern tourism. Additionally, the scarcity of skilled labor on the island has led to greater dependence on apprenticeship programs to ensure smooth operations. Despite these hurdles, some family owned tourism businesses have managed to incorporate sustainable practices and innovative apprenticeship models, thereby boosting economic resilience and preserving the local traditions in Mahé's tourism sector.

The connection between apprenticeship practices and the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses on Mahé Island, Seychelles, remains largely unexplored in current research. Although apprenticeship programs are widely acknowledged to be effective for skill development and knowledge transfer across various industries, their specific impact on family owned tourism enterprises in this unique island setting has not been thoroughly examined. This gap in understanding is particularly important given the crucial role family owned businesses play in Seychelles' tourism sector and the potential for apprenticeships to address challenges, such as succession planning, skill shortages, and adapting to changing market demands in the tourism sector. Exploring this relationship could offer valuable insights into how apprenticeship practices can be tailored to enhance the long-term viability and competitiveness of family owned tourism businesses on Mahé Island, ultimately contributing to the sustainable development of the local economy and the preservation of cultural heritage within the tourism industry.

Objective of the Study

This study examines the effect of apprenticeship practices on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in Mahe Island, Seychelles.

Research Hypothesis

H01: Apprenticeship practice has no statistically

significant effect on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in Mahe Island, Seychelles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The sustainable family business theory (SFBT)

The sustainable family business theory (SFBT) was introduced by Stafford *et al.* in 1999 and further developed by Danes and Brewton in 2012. SFBT seeks to identify the family and business resources, constraints, processes, and transactions that lead to sustainable business success and well-being (Jamil *et al.* 2024). According to Elmo *et al.* (2020), SFBT is based on the general system theory, which explains the interdependence between business and family systems and their relationship between the two systems. The SFBT provides a lens through which the sustainability of family businesses can be assessed, emphasizing the interplay between family dynamics and business practices. The Sustainable Family Business Theory (SFBT) revolves around the notion of preserving the sustainability and longevity of family owned businesses, with a specific focus on integrating innovative strategies and sustainable practices into their operations. The SFBT makes several theoretical assumptions regarding apprenticeship practices in family owned tourism businesses on Mahe Island. This posits that innovation is essential for business sustainability, involving both new practices and traditional apprenticeships to develop an adaptable workforce (Arcese *et al.*, 2020; Elmo *et al.*, 2020). The SFBT assumes that aligning apprenticeship training with sustainability principles enhances human resource capabilities to meet global sustainability goals (Syafruddin *et al.*, 2025). Apprenticeship programmes bridge intergenerational gaps, ensuring the transmission of sustainable practices for business longevity (Ismail *et al.*, 2018). The SFBT emphasizes that sustainable performance improves through stakeholder integration, with apprenticeships requiring collaboration between businesses, educational institutions, and community stakeholders (Baggio & Valeri, 2020). Additionally, apprenticeship programs should incorporate technical and soft skills to balance socioeconomic and environmental needs, thereby contributing to community wellbeing (Carlisle *et al.*, 2021). These assumptions highlight the role of apprenticeships in promoting sustainable tourism practices in family businesses on Mahe Island.

The SFBT faces criticism when applied to apprenticeships in family owned tourism businesses. This theory may not adequately address the complexities of intergenerational knowledge transfer, which are crucial to the apprenticeship model. SFBT's solution-oriented focus of SFBT may not fully address conflicts in transferring tacit knowledge across generations (Herrera & De Las Heras-Rosas, 2020; Atilgan & Kellermanns, 2025). Its short-term focus is misaligned with the long-term planning needed to sustain family tourism businesses through apprenticeships (Mctiernan *et al.*, 2021). The theory also inadequately considers the cultural, economic, and social factors

that shape tourism businesses (Renkert, 2019). While SFBT offers insights into family business management, its applicability to tourism enterprise apprenticeships is limited by its short-term focus and the oversight of intergenerational challenges.

The Sustainable Family Business Theory (SFBT) can be applied to apprenticeship practices within family owned tourism businesses in the Seychelles by integrating sustainability into operations and training. As tourism drives economic growth in small island developing states, such as Seychelles, business sustainability is crucial (Benzaken *et al.*, 2024; Lee *et al.*, 2014). Partnerships between family businesses and educational institutions enhance apprenticeship. Research on degree apprenticeships highlights the importance of collaboration among educators, employers, and apprentices in creating supportive learning environments (Lester, 2020). By implementing SFBT-based apprenticeship schemes, businesses can strengthen their workforce resilience and operational sustainability through eco-friendly and climate-adaptive practices. This approach creates a framework for family businesses to sustain their competitiveness in tourism by aligning their training with economic and environmental goals.

Empirical Review

Apprenticeship practice and sustainability of tourism businesses

Dermentzi (2023) conducted a study titled "Using game-based learning and online flipped classrooms with degree apprenticeship students" in Newcastle, UK. This study aimed to assess the extent to which a learning strategy that unifies game-based learning and online flipped classrooms can boost the involvement and reflective abilities of degree apprenticeships. To attain this objective, two focus groups were arranged with UK Business School students who were working towards achieving a charter managerial standing. The talks were recorded and analyzed employing reflexive thematic analysis, yielding three primary themes: "change can be advantageous and difficult simultaneously," "the ideal game," and "the impact of others." The study findings indicated that degree apprenticeship students found game-based learning and online flipped classrooms profitable, given that appropriate support was provided to them. The students preferred simulation games to quiz games, although they required more time outside class. It is suggested that teachers collaborate closely with diverse teams to enable students to share their work experiences and learn from one another. This study used a focus group and reflexive thematic analysis and did not include a theoretical framework for the analysis. The current study proposes a descriptive survey research design with a structured questionnaire and analyzes the data using simple regression analysis guided by sustainable family business theory.

Mitchell *et al.* (2023) conducted a study on inclusive apprenticeships among jobseekers with disabilities in

Boston, MA, USA. This study aims to explore the function of the VR system in fostering partnerships, emphasizing mutual education and learning, and thoroughly examining all impediments encountered by individuals with disabilities when attempting to access apprenticeship opportunities in the VR system. Specifically, this study focuses on developing adaptable apprenticeship models for individuals with substantial disabilities (SDs). As a viable employment strategy, VR agencies have proactively increased the number of individuals with disabilities in apprenticeship programs. This includes advocating for the necessary changes to make apprenticeship programs more inclusive, equitable, and accessible. The findings of this study suggest that, although apprenticeships offer significant potential for enhancing employment prospects for people with disabilities, numerous obstacles at the individual, programmatic, and systemic levels must be addressed to access them. To create more inclusive apprenticeships for people with disabilities, a long-term, structured approach is necessary to establish strong connections between disability and apprenticeship communities, mutual learning and education, testing various models and approaches, and addressing the fundamental barriers that currently exist. This study used a vocational rehabilitation (VR) system for the analysis, which was not guided by any specific theoretical framework. The current study proposes a descriptive survey research design with a structured questionnaire and analyzes the data using simple regression analysis guided by sustainable family business theory.

Gupta *et al.* (2023) conducted a study of Digital Apprenticeships in India. The primary goal of this study was to motivate entrepreneurs to develop digital apprenticeship solutions, encourage businesses and trade associations to enhance the quality and quantity of apprenticeships, and foster innovation and prototyping in the digital apprenticeship field. This study presents a business model that enables companies to reduce the cost of providing apprenticeships, while enhancing their quality. Ed-tech businesses can tap into the apprentice market by creating simulation-based modules and eventually achieve self-sufficiency after the initial years of cost sharing with firms. The findings of this study indicate that the apprenticeship system is a successful means to transition from education to work. To exploit India's demographic dividends, the number of operational apprenticeships must be increased. Despite the presence of over 60 million enterprises and millions of jobseekers, the annual number of apprenticeships offered is low. India's digital infrastructure can be leveraged to offer digital apprenticeships to youth. Many VET-qualified individuals outside India may be interested in the diverse Indian socioeconomic spectrum and opt for online Indian apprenticeships. With digitalization, the potential for digital apprenticeships is vast, even extending to scenarios where Indian youth can become apprentices for Space X or Western youth can become apprentices for New Space India Limited (NSIL). The previous study implemented

simulation-based online apprenticeship modules, whereas the current research employed a descriptive survey design using a structured questionnaire, and analyzed the results using simple regression analysis. Digital apprenticeships offer distinctive opportunities for global and cross-cultural learning and skill-sharing. By utilizing digital platforms, apprentices can acquire valuable experience and industry knowledge without requiring their physical relocation to the workplace. This forward-thinking method of vocational education and training has the potential to close the gap between theoretical understanding and practical skills while also promoting international cooperation and comprehension.

Muehleman *et al.* (2020) explored how expectations regarding business cycles impact the German apprenticeship market in their study titled "The effect of business cycle expectations on the German apprenticeship market: estimating the impact of Covid-19." This study highlights that firms' expectations of future economic conditions play a crucial role in their decisions to offer apprenticeships. By analyzing data from 2007 to 2019 at both the state and occupational levels, this study investigates the influence of business cycle expectations on various aspects of the apprenticeship market, including annual log changes in apprentice demand, unfilled vacancies, unsuccessful applicants, and apprenticeship contracts. This study employs first-difference regressions to account for unobserved heterogeneity across states and occupations, thereby identifying the connections between shifts in business cycle expectations (measured by the Ifo Business Climate Index and Employment Barometer) and subsequent changes in the apprenticeship market indicators. Prior to the crisis, there was excess demand for apprentices in the German market, although some states experienced problems matching supply and demand. Utilizing business cycle expectation data up to June 2020, this study estimates that the decline in firms' expectations due to the coronavirus resulted in an 8% drop in apprentice demand and a 6% decrease in new apprenticeship positions compared to 2019, equating to 30,000 fewer contracts (with a 95% confidence interval of ± 8000). This research relies on data from 2007-2019 at the state and occupation levels, and does not incorporate a theoretical framework. The current study proposes a descriptive survey research design with a structured questionnaire and analyzes the data using simple regression analysis guided by sustainable family business theory.

Lüthi *et al.* (2020) conducted research in Switzerland to explore the resilience of apprenticeship to economic changes. This study examines the relationship between new apprenticeships and economic cycles by using panel data from Swiss cantons and dynamic regression models. It investigates the link between new apprenticeships and economic cycles using cantonal unemployment rates and GDP per capita growth as indicators. Linear regression models were used to analyze a panel dataset covering Swiss cantons from 1987 to 2016. Data on the supply

and demand for new apprenticeships were unavailable; thus, the study relied on the number of newly created apprenticeships per year and cantons, which represents the demand-supply balance. These findings illustrate only the consequences of the number of filled apprenticeship positions in the labor market. Second, it remains uncertain whether these consequences stem from changes in the demand or supply. The study also accounts for structural breaks caused by changes in the statistical definition of apprenticeships in the four cantons during the analysis period by including dummy variables for each canton and year. This study used recent panel data from the Swiss cantons. The methodology employed in this study diverges from that used in Swiss research, potentially offering novel insights into the Seychelles tourism industry. By implementing a descriptive survey research design in conjunction with a simple regression analysis, this approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing apprenticeship outcomes within the specific context of the Seychelles tourism sector. Furthermore, this methodological shift could address some of the limitations identified in the Swiss study, such as distinguishing between the demand and supply side effects on apprenticeship positions.

Quew-Jones (2022) conducted research on “Enhancing apprenticeships within the Higher Education Curriculum - an Action Learning and Action Research study” in the United Kingdom. This Action Learning (AL)/Action Research (AR) initiative investigates how AL can improve higher education (H.E.) apprenticeships by promoting cooperation between university providers (UP) and businesses. To achieve this, a participatory, democratic approach was employed that emphasized the development of practical knowledge in pursuit of meaningful goals, rooted in a participatory worldview. The primary data collection method was AL sets, with ambassadors from contracted organizations and current program apprentices as key contributors. These findings suggest that apprenticeship training programmes can provide valuable foundational ideas for professional development. Successful apprenticeships can also improve the likelihood of obtaining informal work, and may even lead to a transition from informal to formal work, with associated benefits and increased opportunities for advancement. Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic development by fostering job creation and changing the society as a whole. It is closely associated with small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are essential for promoting industrial growth and economic advancement in developed countries. This study employed the Action Learning (AL) methodology and a pragmatic approach, whereas the current study suggests a positivist philosophy and a descriptive survey research design. It uses a structured questionnaire and simple regression analysis to thoroughly explore the impact of apprenticeship on managing family owned businesses in the tourism industry in the Republic of Seychelles.

Eneh *et al.* (2023) conducted a study titled “Apprenticeships

and sustainable growth of family businesses: A regional assessment’ in Nigeria, concentrating on the southern areas. This study seeks to determine how job creation, vocational training, and apprenticeship skills contribute to the sustained growth of family businesses in Southern Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey using stratified sampling was used to collect data from 329 apprentices employed in 48 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the area. Data were collected using a questionnaire featuring a five-point Likert scale, and data quality was evaluated using tests for normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. The results of the correlation analysis indicate that job creation has a weak but statistically significant link to the sustainable growth of family businesses (30.0%). Vocational training showed a notable connection with sustainable family business growth and apprentice competencies were strongly correlated with sustainable family business growth (72.1%; $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that continuous apprenticeship practices are vital for achieving business growth, which is essential for the socioeconomic development and long-term sustainability of family businesses. This study employed a cross-sectional survey and a stratified sampling method. Nonetheless, the current study suggests using a descriptive survey research design that includes a structured questionnaire and a theoretical framework to assess the relevance of these findings to the sustainability of family owned businesses in the tourism sector. The theoretical framework offers a solid basis for exploring the relationship between these variables and the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses, potentially uncovering unique insights into this area.

Ehwarieme *et al.* (2024) conducted a study on staff training procedures and their impact on Nigerian universities, focusing on Delta State University and Edwin Clark University. This study explores how staff training programs influence job performance in these institutions. This study aims to assess the effects of various training programs on university staff performance, including on-the-job training, job rotations, seminars, and conferences. It also seeks to evaluate the role of university management in supporting staff training, examine staff attitudes towards attending and participating in conferences, and identifies organizational challenges that hinder staff training and development in universities. Eight research questions were formulated to guide this study. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting a population of 50 staff members, including management staff, department heads, and lecturers from both universities, using a questionnaire. The samples were selected using a stratified random sampling technique, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, and mean, were used to analyze and present the data. The findings revealed that participation in on-the-job training, job rotations, seminars and conferences positively impacted staff job performance at both universities. These benefits include acquiring new knowledge and skills

that enhance task performance, leading to job satisfaction and motivation. However, the university management did not provide adequate support for staff training.

Tumpa *et al.* (2024) investigated the influence of knowledge management on the innovative capabilities of employees within the pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh. The potential of knowledge management practices to enhance employees' innovative abilities remains insufficiently explored in the dynamic context of this industry. To address this gap, the study examines the relationship between knowledge management and employees' innovative capabilities. By conducting a comprehensive survey of 238 knowledgeable employees from ten pharmaceutical companies, this study employs the PLS-SEM method to rigorously assess reliability, validity, and research hypotheses. The findings indicate that knowledge acquisition, dissemination, and application significantly influence employees' innovative capabilities. By establishing a clear link between knowledge management and innovation, this study contributes valuable insights to the literature.

Sustainability of family owned tourism businesses

Memili *et al.* (2017) conducted a study in Turkey titled 'Sustainability Practices of Family Firms: The Interplay between Family Ownership and Long-Term Orientation'. This study emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices for family businesses as they significantly impact business continuity and relationships with local community members. However, not all family businesses support adoption of sustainable practices. To investigate this, this study used the socioemotional wealth perspective to develop a theoretical model of the detrimental effects of family ownership on sustainability adoption. This study also examined the moderating effect of long-term orientation (LTO) on this relationship. Data were collected through 327 surveys of Turkish tourism and hospitality sector members between 2014 and 2015, as part of broader research collaboration between four universities in Turkey and the United States. This study analyzed a sample of 195 family owned businesses in the tourism and hospitality sectors. These results support our hypothesis that family ownership negatively affects sustainability. Furthermore, the findings reveal that LTO moderates the relationship between family ownership and sustainability adoption, such that family owners with high LTO are more likely to adopt sustainable practices than those with low LTO. This is a cross-sectional study. Conversely, the current study aims to utilize a descriptive survey research design, featuring a structured questionnaire and applying simple regression analysis guided by sustainable family business theory in the context of family owned businesses in the Seychelles tourism sector.

Setiyawati and Munandar (2023) conducted a study focusing on the influence of Business Ethics and Corporate Governance on the sustainability of family businesses with company size as an intervening variable

in Indonesia. This study examines the impact of business ethics and corporate governance on the long-term success of family owned businesses, while considering the moderating role of company size. Company size serves as an indicator of the business magnitude. The research sample comprised 38 companies and all members of the West Java Jamu Entrepreneurs Association. The association was chosen based on the criterion of being a family business, resulting in the selection of 12 family businesses and 48 respondents. Data were collected using various instruments including questionnaires, interviews, and field observations. These findings suggest that business ethics positively influences the long-term viability of family owned businesses. Additionally, good corporate governance positively affects the sustainability of family businesses. Furthermore, company size positively impacts the sustainability of a family business, functioning as a moderating variable that influences the relationship between business ethics and sustainability, and between good corporate governance and sustainability. The results of this study are beneficial for owners of herbal medicine companies, providing insights into the role of these variables in the sustainability of their family businesses. This information can assist employers in better understanding the dynamics of family business sustainability and promote business ethics, good governance, and company size in family businesses. This study used questionnaires, interviews, and field observations, while the current study used a structured questionnaire and descriptive survey research design to explore the effects of apprenticeship practices on the long-term viability of family operated enterprises in the tourism industry in Seychelles.

Sutandyo *et al.* (2021) conducted a study on succession planning in family businesses with a particular focus on tourism in Indonesia. This study aims to gain insights into and observe the succession process in a family business by focusing specifically on second-generation takeovers in the 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 as data collection methods and applied descriptive analysis to depict the succession process in a family business. The collected data were coded using Walsh's model of succession activities and the results were categorized into management and ownership succession. This study found that succession planning for both management and ownership was relatively effective, with clearly desired outcomes. However, this study did not use a theoretical framework and examined only one model, thus limiting its applicability to other contexts. Additionally, the sample size was small, consisting only of the business owner and his two successors, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the study only analyzed descriptively, which limited its potential for replication in other contexts such as Seychelles.

Aladejebi (2021) researched succession planning, which is an essential component of the long-term sustainability

of family companies in Nigeria. Succession planning is crucial as only 12% of family companies reach the third generation. This qualitative multiple-case study examines the methods used by Nigerian family company owners to maintain the viability of their enterprises. This study included four family run companies in Nigeria that had been in operation for more than ten years and employed a qualitative research methodology. Participants were selected based on their recommendations and experiences. In accordance with Covid-19 guidelines, interviews were conducted using a combination of in-person observations and phone calls. The conclusions show that the family companies included in this study have existed for at least 20 years, demonstrating the tenacity and endurance of well-run family firms. This study determined variables that affect succession planning, such as gender, religious prejudice, experience, negotiating skills, people management, managerial aptitude, and market knowledge. These factors offer insights into the criteria used by family business owners when selecting their successors, and conclude that key decision-makers in family businesses prioritize the sustainability of the business over sentimental decisions, which could negatively impact the business. Although this study focused on succession-related variables, it did not capture them in the data. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in Mahe Island, Seychelles.

Awni and Salih (2025) conducted a study on Human Resource Competencies and Their Role in Enhancing the Efficiency of Contemporary Organizations. This study aims to develop comprehensive intellectual visions and clear perceptions regarding the relationship between human resource competencies and their role in boosting the efficiency of business organizations amidst globalization, dynamic changes in the business environment, and intensifying competition for talent. This study seeks to generalize the model and assess its applicability in Iraq. The research originated from an intellectual challenge, characterized by the existing disparity in understanding due to the novelty of the subject, and aims to bridge the knowledge gap between philosophical proposals and practical application by identifying the impact of human resource competencies on organizational efficiency. The study employed a descriptive analytical approach, formulating and testing hypotheses based on a questionnaire distributed to 86 senior management and employees from a sample of hotels in Baghdad (Taj, Babylon, and Baghdad Hotels). Statistical methods and tools, including SPSS and AMOS 23, were used to analyze the data. The results confirmed the validity of all main and sub-hypotheses. Consequently, a set of conclusions was drawn, recommending that hotels in the research sample increase investment in human resource competencies, innovate ideas, enhance hotel services for guests, and focus on building trust while fostering a blend of creative and innovative human resources.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study embraced a positivist approach because of its emphasis on quantitative data, which are precise and facilitate straightforward comparisons, thus yielding reliable evidence from gathered questionnaire data (Gerasimov, 2020; Şen, 2025; Bhangu *et al.*, 2023). This study used a descriptive survey research design that effectively met these objectives. First, it identifies the connection between mentorship practices and the sustainability of family run tourism businesses (Qualitative Research Methods, 2021; Şen, 2025). Second, it outlines the characteristics of the relationships between variables and draws conclusions from these connections. Third, this design offers quantitative data that provides a snapshot of sustainability at a specific point in time. Finally, this design is consistent with the positivist research philosophy adopted in this study.

This study encompasses 405 business owners/CEOs/managers in the Seychelles tourism sector as listed by the Ministry of Finance, National Planning, and Trade of the Republic of Seychelles in November 2022. These businesses were categorized into three distinct groups: star-rated hotels and resorts, self-catering tourism facilities and establishments, and guesthouses' tourism accommodation facilities and establishments. The focus on family owned tourism businesses was on their significant contribution to GDP and the urgent sustainability challenges they face. Non-family tourism businesses are excluded from this study. From the target population of 405, a sample size of 202 was determined using Yamane's model with a confidence level of 95% or a 5% significance interval, as detailed below.

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2) \quad \dots(1)$$

The sample size, denoted by 'n,' was determined using a confidence level of 95% and a 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; approximately 80% of the questionnaires were self-administered. Therefore, the researcher in this study anticipated non-response and provided a 20% sample increase to cater to respondents' non-responses.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Final sample size} &= \frac{\text{EffectiveSampleSize}}{1 - \text{NonResponseRateAnticipated}} \\ &= \frac{202}{1 - 0.2} = \frac{202}{0.8} = 253 \text{ respondents} \end{aligned}$$

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 concerning population complexity.

Primary data for this study were collected using questionnaires with closed-ended questions designed according to the conceptual framework. This study also assessed the construct validity of the instruments, which evaluated how effectively the scale items represented abstract or theoretical constructs (Baistaman *et al.*, 2020; Cheah *et al.*, 2018). To establish validity, the researcher employed factor analysis, a method that analyzes internal data correlations to develop consistent surrogate variables (Shao *et al.*, 2022; Nha, 2021; Steenkamp & Maydeu-Olivares, 2020). These correlations assist in the interpretation of the data components. While Zikmund and Babin (2015) considered a loading of 0.7, other researchers suggested a minimum threshold of 0.4. Rodrigues *et al.* (2017) noted that an item loading below 0.4 might indicate either a lack of relation to other items or the presence of an additional factor that requires further investigation. Following Alavi *et al.*, (2023) recommendation, the study regarded factor loadings above 0.4 at a significance level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ as valid constructs. This guidance informed us of the necessary adjustments and revisions to the instrument, thereby enhancing its validity.

Data analysis was conducted following the data-collection phase, which is a crucial step that renders the data sensible and interpretable. The choice of data analysis tool is contingent on the nature of the data, specifically whether it is qualitative or quantitative. A regression model was employed to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables as follows:

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

Where,

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

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Regression Coefficient

X_1 = Apprenticeship practice

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to assess the participation rates of the targeted respondents, a crucial step in determining whether the study had gathered enough participants to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on its findings. A structured questionnaire was used to survey a sample of 253 respondents, achieving a response rate of 80.6% (204 respondents), which was then analyzed. Consequently, the data collected were considered 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

Influence of Apprenticeship Programs on Family-Owned

Tourism Businesses on Mahe Island, Seychelles

The results indicated that the participants concurred with the importance of technical skills acquired through both formal and informal apprenticeship programs, which provide hands-on training and real-world experiences in the tourism industry (M=4.5637, SD= 0.65905). They also agreed that technical proficiency relies on grasping concepts, paying close attention to details, and actively engaging in practical training (M=4.3529; SD=0.64552). Furthermore, the participants acknowledged that technical training aids apprentices in developing socioeconomic abilities, which ultimately contributes to the growth of family businesses by generating value (M = 4.4461, SD=0.65242).

Regarding entrepreneurial orientation, apprenticeships played a crucial role in developing the essential informal business skills and knowledge necessary for entrepreneurial success (M=4.4314, SD= 0.70200). Additionally, vocational abilities acquired through apprenticeships enabled participants to engage in revenue-generating activities in their family enterprises, thereby providing financial support (M=4.3235, SD=0.66823).

This research revealed that participants concurred with the importance of self-confidence in apprentices in evaluating the competency of potential successors in family operated tourism businesses, as demonstrated by their expertise and abilities (M=4.3284, SD=0.69124). Additionally, self-assurance was found to be indicative of individual capabilities, which are crucial for the longevity and future expansion of tourism entrepreneurial ventures, and contribute to their resilience and long-term success (M=4.3235, SD=0.64574). Regarding individual abilities, participants' inclination to pursue entrepreneurship was indicative of their capacity to embrace risks and capitalize on environmental opportunities (M=4.2892, SD=0.72239).

Participants generally concurred that apprenticeship serves as an effective entrepreneurial succession strategy to maintain the longevity of tourism enterprises, as evidenced by the combined average score of 4.3823. This suggests that aspects such as technical proficiency, self-assurance, entrepreneurial mindset, and individual capabilities are implemented to a limited degree by the leadership of family operated tourism businesses. The overall standard deviation of 0.6733 indicates minimal divergence in respondents' opinions. This aligns with English *et al.* (2010), who indicated that apprentices require training in areas such as self-confidence, responsibility, resourcefulness, and knowledge of their career goals as well as the interpersonal skills necessary for business management.

Sustainability of family owned tourism businesses

The findings revealed that participants concurred with a sustainability framework that encompassed strategies for seamless transitions between roles and leadership (M=4.4412, SD=0.75689). Employing a sustainability officer to implement environmentally friendly practices

and appointing dedicated senior managers with relevant expertise is crucial for a company's success and sustainability (M=4.1618, SD=0.81749). Customer satisfaction is pivotal for achieving business excellence, enabling a company to outperform its competitors and establish a strong market presence (M=4.1814, SD=0.68872). Enhancing employee capabilities equips employees with the skills necessary for critical operations, thereby facilitating strategy implementation and ensuring long-term sustainability (M=4.2696, SD=0.70246). Engaging stakeholders included educating the local community about sustainability, fostering a healthier environment, and promoting sustainable growth (M=4.2843, SD=0.68592).

Government policies that support the industry include providing sustainability training to participants and local organizations (M=4.2304, SD=0.74335) and facilitating external assistance to ensure long-term success through entrepreneurial transition strategies (M=4.2157, SD=0.73782). Family business boards play a crucial role in mitigating potential biases from family owners and executives (M=4.2941, SD=0.70310) by prioritizing the prosperity of future

generations (M=4.1667, SD=0.78261). Governance agreements are instrumental in fostering trust, enhancing family relationships, and contributing to long-term sustainability (M=4.2157, SD=0.77685). The respondents generally agreed with statements concerning 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, with an overall mean score of 4.2461. A collective standard deviation of 0.7395 indicated minimal variation in respondents' opinions.

Relationship between Apprenticeship Practice and Sustainability of tourism businesses

This study explored the relationship between apprenticeship practices and sustainability of tourism enterprises. To analyze this relationship, an ordinary least squares regression model was employed, which is a statistical method that helps determine the strength and direction of the connection between the variables. Table 1 summarizes the model results.

Table 1: Relationship between apprenticeship and Sustainability (Model summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.565 ^a	0.319	0.316	0.36888

a. Predictors: (Constant), Apprenticeship practice

Source: Survey data (2025)

The findings indicate that apprenticeship practices accounted for 31.9% of the variations in the sustainability of tourism businesses on Mahe Island during the study period, whereas the remaining 68.1% of the changes in sustainability were attributed to other

factors not included in the model.

The evaluation of model fitness involved a comparison between the F-critical and F-calculated values. Table 2 lists the F-calculated results.

Table 2: Relationship between apprenticeship practice and Sustainability (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.880	1	12.880	94.658	0.000b
	Residual	27.487	202	0.136		
	Total	40.367	203			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of tourism businesses

b. Predictors: (Constant), Apprenticeship practice

Source: Survey data (2025)

With an F-critical value of 3.841 at F 0.05, 1, 202, the calculated F value of 94.658 exceeded this threshold, leading to the conclusion that the model was adequate.

This conclusion was further reinforced by a p-value of 0.000, which is below the critical probability of 0.05. Table 3 presents the coefficients of the regression model.

Table 3: Relationship between apprenticeship and sustainability (Model Coefficients)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.233	0.311		3.966	0.000
	Apprenticeship practice	0.688	0.071	0.565	9.729	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of tourism businesses

Source: Survey data (2025)

The analysis demonstrated a positive and significant correlation between apprenticeship practices and the sustainability of tourism enterprises, as evidenced by a beta coefficient of 0.688 and p-value of 0.000. This finding suggests that a unit increase in apprenticeship practices results in a 0.688-unit enhancement in the sustainability of selected family led tourism businesses on Mahe Island in Seychelles. These results align with (Engeset, 2020) who argued that apprenticeship programs are crucial for the long-term sustainability of family run businesses, because they facilitate skill transfer and resilience. Quew-Jones (2022) further asserts that informal education and tacit knowledge gained from apprenticeships effectively transfer business ownership and knowledge across generations.

These findings align with Dermentzi (2023), who suggests that teachers should collaborate with diverse teams to facilitate students' sharing of work experiences and mutual learning for effective apprenticeships. Mitchell *et al.* (2023) noted that, while apprenticeships have significant potential for enhancing sustainability prospects, numerous obstacles at the individual, programmatic, and systemic levels must be addressed. Iwueke and Oparaku (2020) recommend that apprentices should have a minimum level of entrepreneurship education to understand trade knowledge and that masters should have mentoring skills to foster apprentices' creativity while considering business sustainability and trends.

This study reinforces the principles of sustainable family business theory (SFBT) concerning apprenticeship practices and sustainability within family owned tourism businesses. Achieving sustainable transformation in tourism requires a holistic strategy that encompasses socio-ecological systems, technology, innovation, and resilience (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). This framework can be applied across the tourism sector to address sustainability challenges. Memili *et al.* (2017) observed that family ownership can impede sustainability adoption, whereas Ismail *et al.* (2018) contended that transgenerational enterprises act as resilient factors in sustainable tourism development. This discrepancy underscores the need to incorporate family owned business dynamics into apprenticeship curricula. SFBT related to apprenticeship practices emphasizes training approaches that address self-efficacy, family dynamics, and long-term orientation. By incorporating these aspects, family owned tourism businesses can achieve sustainable transformations. Previous studies have shown that apprenticeships affect sustainable development through skill transfer and intergenerational learning (Rahatullah, 2024). The effectiveness of apprenticeships may depend on specific practices and organizational culture. Integrating family business dynamics into apprenticeship programs can help reconcile different views on sustainability practices while addressing the challenges of family ownership issues.

The New Model becomes;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e \quad \dots(1)$$

Sustainability = 1.233 + 0.688 apprenticeship practice + Margin of Error

Therefore, $Y = 1.233 + 0.688X_1$

CONCLUSION

Implementing effective apprenticeship practices can play a crucial role in sustaining family owned tourism businesses on Mahé Island. By establishing structured apprenticeship programs, these businesses can facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills from seasoned family members to younger generations, preserving traditional practices while embracing modern innovation. These programs should aim to develop a diverse skill set that encompasses hospitality management, sustainable tourism practices, and cultural preservation. Moreover, collaborating with local educational institutions to create tailored curricula can enhance apprenticeship quality and provide formal recognition of the acquired skills. Encouraging cross-generational mentorship within a family business structure can instill a sense of continuity and commitment among younger family members, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful succession planning in the future. Additionally, integrating sustainable tourism principles into apprenticeship training can help these businesses adapt to evolving environmental and market demands, ensuring their long-term viability in Seychelles' competitive tourism sector.

Recommendations

Based on the findings regarding the impact of apprenticeship practices on the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses on Mahé Island, Seychelles, several recommendations can be made. First, these businesses must establish formal apprenticeship programs that comply with industry standards and local regulations. This approach ensures a structured method for skill development and knowledge transfer within a family business framework. Second, family owned tourism enterprises should collaborate with local educational institutions to develop curricula tailored to the specific needs of the island's tourism sector. Additionally, implementing mentorship programs that pair experienced family members with apprentices can create a supportive learning environment and help preserve traditional knowledge. Furthermore, these businesses should invest in ongoing training and development opportunities for both apprentices and existing staff to remain competitive and adapt to evolving industrial trends. Finally, government support through incentives and policies that encourage the adoption of apprenticeships could significantly enhance the sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in Mahé.

Originality and value

This study significantly enriches the literature by examining the intersection of sustainability, apprenticeship practices, and family tourism enterprises in Mahe Island. This study addresses this gap by investigating how apprenticeship models within family owned tourism businesses can bolster sustainability efforts in small-island developing states. This study sheds light on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by these enterprises in balancing economic viability with environmental and

cultural preservation. By emphasizing the transfer of local knowledge and sustainable practices through apprenticeships, this study offers a fresh perspective on capacity-building and skill development in the tourism sector. Furthermore, it enhances our understanding of how intergenerational knowledge transfer within family businesses can support long-term sustainability goals, potentially providing a model for other small island tourism destinations that face similar challenges.

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