The Influence of Digital Technology, Service Quality, and Continuous Professional Development on the Type of Succession in Family-Owned Schools Mediated by Socioemotional Wealth

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Abstract

The sustainability of family-owned schools is largely determined by the success of leadership succession processes that are well planned and rooted in family values. This study aims to analyze the influence of digital technology, service quality, and continuous professional development on the type of leadership succession in family-owned schools, with socioemotional wealth serving as a mediating variable. The study employed a quantitative explanatory design using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) method. Data were collected through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire distributed to principals, teachers, parents, and foundation board members of private family-owned schools that have operated for more than 20 years. The results indicate that digital technology and service quality have a positive effect on leadership succession type through the full mediation of socioemotional wealth, while continuous professional development exerts a positive influence through partial mediation. The mediating effect of socioemotional wealth is stronger in intrafamily succession, emphasizing that family socioemotional values play a critical role in linking organizational factors with successful leadership transitions. In contrast, hybrid succession tends to be more strongly influenced by managerial professionalism than by family emotional aspects. Managerial implications highlight the importance of integrating family values with professional management practices to design sustainable succession strategies. Accordingly, socioemotional wealth functions as a strategic element that balances the preservation of family identity and the implementation of professional governance, both of which are essential foundations for the longevity of family-owned schools.

Keywords: leadership succession, family-owned schools, intrafamily succession, hybrid succession, socioemotional wealth,

INTRODUCTION

Effective human resource management is a critical factor in ensuring organizational sustainability. One of the most challenging aspects of this management function is leadership transition without a well-designed succession plan Åberg, Sundkvist, & Campopiano, 2025). Groves Consulting Group (2023) emphasizes that systematic succession planning helps organizations manage institutional knowledge, develop leadership capacity, and strategically position talent to achieve long-term goals. Despite this, awareness of the importance of succession planning remains relatively low, including within the education sector (Djuanda et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that the relationship between socioemotional wealth, digital innovation, and succession processes in family organizations has not been comprehensively explored (Fitzgerald et al., 2014). Martínez-Alonso (2018) revealed that research linking socioemotional wealth and technological innovation remains limited, as most studies treat socioemotional wealth as a single construct rather than examining its internal dimensions. Furthermore, the majority of studies have focused on Western contexts, while research in Asia, particularly within the non-profit education sector such as family-owned schools, remains scarce.

Sun (2025) reinforced this view through a study in China that focused solely on financial aspects and treated socioemotional wealth as a moderating variable, without considering organizational factors such as digital technology, service quality, and continuous professional development. Similarly, Nieto et al. (2023) found that the relationship between digitalization and technological collaboration has not been sufficiently examined in connection with long-term performance or leadership continuity. Consequently, a research gap remains—specifically, how these organizational factors interact with socioemotional wealth to influence leadership succession types in family-owned schools.

In this study, leadership succession is categorized into two main types: intrafamily succession and hybrid succession. Intrafamily succession refers to a leadership transition in which authority and management are entirely inherited within the family, allowing family control, values, and identity to continue shaping the organization's direction. In contrast, hybrid succession reflects a collaborative model between family members and external professionals, combining professionalized management practices with the preservation of family values (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2015). Within the context of family-owned schools, these two models illustrate a tension between maintaining socioemotional family values and addressing the need for efficiency and managerial objectivity in school governance.

In Indonesia, family-owned schools play a crucial role in supporting the national goal of sustainable educational development, as articulated in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution and Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. These legal frameworks affirm that education is a fundamental right of every citizen and aims to foster intellectual and moral development. However, many family-owned schools struggle to maintain leadership continuity due to the absence of structured succession plans. DRG Talent Consulting Experts (2023) note that succession planning practices are common in the corporate world and increasingly applied in the non-profit sector, yet remain rare in educational institutions. Nevertheless, educational institutions equally require leadership regeneration strategies to preserve institutional values and service quality (Abdellah, 2021; Guillen & Patan, 2025).

This leadership crisis is further exacerbated by the shortage of qualified educators. According to data from Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (Habibah, 2023), the country faces a deficit of approximately 1.3 million teachers by 2024 due to mass retirements, with an average of 70,000 teachers retiring each year. This phenomenon suggests that leadership challenges in schools will become increasingly complex if not accompanied by systematic succession strategies.

The same issue applies to family-owned schools, which, beyond their educational function, also exhibit the distinctive characteristics of family enterprises. The Three-Circle Model explains that family organizations comprise three overlapping subsystems: family, ownership, and business. In the context of family-owned schools, these roles often blur, as the founders, owners, and managers are interconnected by familial ties. The lack of clarity in these overlapping roles can lead to conflicts of interest and hinder professionalization. Pane and Christanti (2023) observed that recruitment and succession processes in family organizations often remain informal and based on emotional proximity rather than professional competence.

Within this context, intrafamily succession tends to preserve family values but risks innovation stagnation and emotional bias in decision-making. Conversely, hybrid succession can enhance governance and efficiency through the involvement of external professionals but may generate value tensions due to differing orientations between family and non-family actors (Jones, 2019; Munhurrun et al., 2010; Qazi & Pachler, 2025). Therefore, successful succession in family-owned schools depends on the organization's ability to balance managerial professionalism with the preservation of socioemotional family values mediated by socioemotional wealth.

Based on this discussion, the present study aims to analyze the effects of digital technology, service quality, and continuous professional development on the type of leadership succession (intrafamily and hybrid) in family-owned schools, with socioemotional wealth as a mediating variable.

This study is expected to make both empirical and theoretical contributions by broadening the understanding of leadership succession dynamics in family-based educational institutions and by offering a new conceptual framework that explains how socioemotional family values mediate the relationship between organizational factors and the success of sustainable leadership transitions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) method to analyze the effects of digital technology, service quality, and continuous professional development (CPD) on leadership succession type in family-owned schools, with socioemotional wealth (SEW) serving as a mediating variable.

The SEM–PLS approach was selected for its capacity to test both direct and indirect relationships among latent variables and to examine mediation effects within complex models. This methodological design offers a comprehensive framework to evaluate how structural (organizational) and emotional (family) factors interact to sustain leadership continuity in family-owned educational institutions.

Data were collected using a survey approach to systematically capture perceptions from multiple school stakeholders involved in governance and succession processes. This design enables empirical testing of the proposed conceptual framework and provides

insights into the mechanisms underpinning leadership sustainability in family-based educational settings.

The population of this study comprised private family-owned schools located in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek), which includes Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. The research targeted respondents actively involved in the management, leadership, and sustainability of these schools, including principals, foundation board members, teachers, administrative staff, and parents.

A total of 353 valid responses were obtained. Among the respondents, 75.9% were female and 24.1% male. The majority were teachers and education staff (72.5%), followed by parents (17.6%), and foundation administrators (9.9%). This demographic distribution reflects the dominant role of educators in maintaining organizational continuity within family-owned schools.

To ensure representativeness, the study established inclusion criteria for participating schools:

1. Schools that have operated for more than 20 years;
2. Schools undergoing leadership regeneration toward the second generation;
3. Schools with a minimum of 150 active students; and
4. Schools operating in urban areas with modern managerial characteristics.

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire, distributed to respondents representing various stakeholder groups within the school. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to measure participants' perceptions of each construct.

The instrument measured five latent variables, adapted from established scales with proven reliability and validity:

1. Digital Technology (X1) – adapted from Begnini, Tonial, and Dalbosco (2023), assessing digital strategy, technology utilization, and barriers to digital development.
2. Service Quality (X2) – based on Djuanda et al. (2024) and Munhurrun et al. (2010), measuring care, competence, infrastructure quality, and trust in teachers.
3. Continuous Professional Development (X3) – adapted from Ng, Ming, and Chan (2014), Manegdeg et al. (2024), and Koskimäki et al. (2025), focusing on professional learning opportunities and mentoring processes.
4. Socioemotional Wealth (Z) – measured using the FIBER dimensions of Berrone et al. (2012) and Gerken et al. (2022), including family control and influence, family identification, social ties, and purpose beyond profit.
5. Succession Type (Y) – adapted from Wu et al. (2020) and Salim (2019), distinguishing between intrafamily succession and hybrid succession based on dimensions such as family business goals, employee retention strategies, leadership preparation, retirement planning, transition management, and trust.

A preliminary pilot survey was conducted to assess the instrument's clarity, internal consistency, and contextual fit to the education sector before final distribution.

Data analysis employed SmartPLS 3.0 software to estimate the measurement and structural models. The SEM–PLS approach was selected because it accommodates non-normal data distributions and models with multiple mediation relationships. The analysis consisted of two primary stages:

1. Measurement Model (Outer Model): Evaluating the reliability and validity of constructs using:
   a) Loading factor (> 0.70),
   b) Composite reliability (CR) (> 0.70), and

c) Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (> 0.50).

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loading values.

2. Structural Model (Inner Model): Testing causal relationships among variables through:
   a) Path coefficients (β),
   b) Coefficient of determination (R^2),
   c) Predictive relevance (Q^2), and
   d) Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to test significance at the 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$).

The study tested ten primary hypotheses encompassing both direct and indirect effects between digital technology, service quality, CPD, and succession type through the mediating role of socioemotional wealth.

Results indicated that digital technology and service quality did not directly influence succession type but showed indirect positive effects via socioemotional wealth (full mediation). In contrast, continuous professional development (CPD) exhibited both direct and indirect effects, suggesting that professional competence enhancement also strengthens socioemotional values within family-based organizations.

Validity tests were conducted to ensure that each indicator accurately measured its intended construct. Convergent validity was assessed using factor loadings following Ghozali and Latan (2012) and Hair et al. (2019), with acceptable values above 0. Results demonstrated that most indicators met the required thresholds, with a few exceptions:

1. In the Digital Technology (X1) variable, indicators X1.7 and X1.8 were removed due to low factor loadings.
2. In Socioemotional Wealth (Z), one indicator (Z4) was eliminated for the same reason.
3. For Succession Type (Y1) representing intrafamily succession, one indicator (Y1.3) was excluded, while all indicators for Hybrid Succession (Y2) remained valid.
4. In total, 40 out of 44 indicators were retained for further analysis, confirming satisfactory construct validity.

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum threshold of 0.60 (Sekaran, 2013). Instruments achieving Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.60 were considered reliable, indicating internal consistency among measurement items.

Table 1. Reliability Testing Result

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Conclusion
Digital Technology	6	0,836	Reliable
Service Quality	8	0,897	Reliable
Continuous Professional Development	8	0,897	Reliable
Socioemotional Wealth	7	0,788	Reliable
Succession Type I (Intrafamily)	7	0,860	Reliable
Succeccion Type II (Hybrid)	8	0,900	Reliable

Source: Processed Data (SPSS 22), 2025

All constructs demonstrated high reliability, supporting their inclusion in the SEM analysis.

Model fit was assessed using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Root Mean Square Theta (RMS_θ) as recommended by Hair et al. (2019) and Cangur & Ercan (2015). The model was considered acceptable if SRMR < 0.08, NFI > 0.90, and RMS_θ < 0.102.

Results showed that both the intrafamily and hybrid models met these standards, indicating adequate model fit.

Table 2. Model Fit Results

Criteria	Saturated Model		Estimated Model	
	Type I	Type II	Type I	Type II
SRMR	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068
d_ULS	2.781	2.776	2.781	2.776
d_G	0.771	0.867	0.771	0.867
Chi-Square	1517.728	1766.289	1517.728	1766.289
NFI	0.803	0.789	0.803	0.789
rms Theta	Type I = 0.114		Type II = 0.128	

Source: Processed Data (SPSS 22) (2025)

These results confirm that both succession models demonstrated acceptable goodness-of-fit and are suitable for explaining the relationships among variables in this study.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to obtain the mean values of each research variable, including digital technology, service quality, continuous professional development, socioemotional wealth, and succession type. Subsequently, the relationships among variables were tested using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis provided mean values for each latent variable measured using a five-point Likert scale

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Interpretation
Digital Technology	4,52	High – schools have widely adopted digital technologies, especially in social media and online administration systems.
Service Quality	4,60	Very High – strong professionalism and empathy among teachers toward students and parents.
Continuous Professional Development	4,48	High – schools consistently implement structured professional training programs.
Socioemotional Wealth	4,05	High – strong emotional bonds and collective family identity.
Succession Type I (Intrafamily)	3,98	Moderate–High – leadership remains largely family-dominated.

Variable	Mean	Interpretation
Succeccion Type II (Hybrid)	3,88	Moderate – openness toward collaboration with external professionals.

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2025

These results indicate that family-owned schools in the Jabodetabek region have achieved a high level of digitalization, service quality, and professional development, supported by strong socioemotional cohesion as a foundation for leadership continuity.

Structural Model Analysis (SEM–PLS Results)

The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 3.0 to evaluate two structural models: Model I (Intrafamily Succession) and Model II (Hybrid Succession).

The path coefficient (β) and p-value were employed to test both the direct and indirect effects among the research variables. These indicators determine the strength and statistical significance of relationships within the proposed conceptual framework.

Partial Least Squares (PLS) Analysis

Figure 1 presents the path diagram generated from the PLS Algorithm output, which visually depicts the relationships among variables tested in this study.

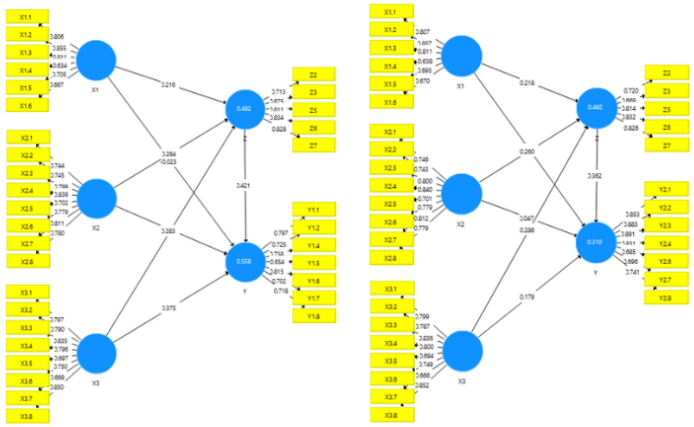

Figure 1. Path Diagram – Results of Hypothesis Testing Using PLS Algorithm
Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 3.0 software (2025)

Direct Effects

Table 4. Direct Effects Testing Results for Intrafamily and Hybrid Succession Models

Hypotheses	Relationships Among the Variables	β	p-value	Result
H1a	Digital Technology → Succession Type (intrafamily)	-0,023	0,363	Not Supported
H2a	Digital Technology → Socioemotional Wealth	0,216	0,002	Supported

Hypotheses	Relationships Among the Variables	β	p-value	Result
H3a	Service Quality → Succession Type (intrafamily)	0,047	0,253	Not Supported
H4a	Service Quality → Socioemotional Wealth	0,264	0,001	Supported
H5a	CPD → Succession Type (intrafamily)	0,375	0,000	Supported
H6a	CPD → Socioemotional Wealth	0,283	0,000	Supported
H7a	SEW → Succession Type (intrafamily)	0,421	0,000	Supported

Hypotheses	Relationships Among the Variables	β	p-value	Result
H1b	Digital Technology → Succession Type (Hybrid)	0,029	0,373	Not Supported
H2b	Digital Technology → Socioemotional Wealth	0,218	0,002	Supported
H3b	Service Quality → Succession Type (Hybrid)	0,047	0,316	Not Supported
H4b	Service Quality → Socioemotional Wealth	0,260	0,001	Supported
H5b	CPD → Succession Type (Hybrid)	0,179	0,031	Supported
H6b	CPD → Socioemotional Wealth	0,286	0,001	Supported
H7b	SEW → Succession Type (Hybrid)	0,362	0,000	Supported

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2025

The results above indicate that digital technology and service quality have a positive and significant influence on socioemotional wealth, yet they do not have a direct effect on the type of leadership succession. In contrast, continuous professional development (CPD) demonstrates a significant direct effect on both types of succession as well as on socioemotional wealth. Among all variables, socioemotional wealth exhibits the strongest influence on the success of leadership succession.

Indirect Effects (Mediation of Socioemotional Wealth)

Table 5. Inderect Effects Testing Results for Intrafamily and Hybrid Succession Models

Hypothesis	Relationships Among the Variables	β	p-value	Result
H8a	Digital Technology → Socioemotional Wealth → Succession (Intrafamily)	0,091	0,005	Full mediation
H9a	Service Quality → Socioemotional Wealth → Succession (Intrafamily)	0,111	0,002	Full mediation
H10a	Continuous Professional Development → Socioemotional Wealth → Succession (Intrafamily)	0,119	0,002	Partial mediation
H8b	Digital Technology → Socioemotional Wealth → Succession (Hybrid)	0,079	0,007	Full mediation

Hypothesis	Relationships Among the Variables	β	p-value	Result
H9b	Service Quality → Socioemotional Wealth → Succession (Hybrid)	0,094	0,005	Full mediation
H10b	Continuous Professional Development → Socioemotional Wealth → Succession (Hybrid)	0,103	0,002	Partial mediation
H8a	Digital Technology → Socioemotional Wealth → Succession (Intrafamily)	0,091	0,005	Full mediation

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2025

The findings indicate that socioemotional wealth serves as a significant mediating variable across all tested relationships. Full mediation occurs in the effects of digital technology and service quality, whereas continuous professional development (CPD) is partially mediated by socioemotional wealth. The mediating effect of socioemotional wealth is stronger in intrafamily succession than in the hybrid family–professional model, underscoring that emotional and relational capital play a more central role when leadership transitions remain within the family.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Out of 20 hypotheses tested across the two models, 17 were empirically supported. Direct effects were observed only for continuous professional development (CPD), while digital technology and service quality exerted indirect effects through socioemotional wealth. Among all variables, socioemotional wealth demonstrated the strongest positive influence on leadership succession success ($\beta \approx 0.42–0.52$; $p < 0.001$).

Key Findings

1. Digital technology does not directly affect the type of succession, but it enhances social cohesion and intergenerational knowledge transfer by strengthening socioemotional wealth.
2. Service quality indirectly contributes to succession success by fostering trust and relationship stability, reinforcing socioemotional dimensions such as binding social ties and emotional attachment.
3. Continuous professional development (CPD) is the only variable with both direct and indirect effects, confirming its strategic role in enhancing internal leadership readiness.
4. Socioemotional wealth serves as the principal linkage between organizational capability and succession success, highlighting the essential role of social and emotional values in sustaining family-owned schools.

Comparison of Succession Types

In intrafamily succession, socioemotional wealth functions as a full mediator, demonstrating that leadership transition success relies heavily on the emotional and relational capital among family members.

In contrast, within the family–professional hybrid succession model, the mediating role of socioemotional wealth weakens slightly, suggesting that external professional involvement reduces, but does not eliminate the influence of family emotional values in maintaining leadership continuity.

Overall, the results support the proposed conceptual model: the success of leadership succession in family-owned schools depends not only on structural and technological capabilities but also on the strength of socioemotional wealth, which underpins intergenerational relationships and organizational continuity.

The findings demonstrate that the success of leadership succession in family-owned schools is determined not only by structural factors such as digital technology, service quality, and continuous professional development (CPD) but also, and more profoundly, by the organization's socioemotional wealth. Socioemotional wealth acts as a vital bridge linking organizational capability with intergenerational leadership sustainability.

First, digital technology does not directly influence the succession type but has a significant positive effect on socioemotional wealth. This suggests that technological implementation in family-owned schools does not immediately alter leadership patterns but rather enhances communication, a sense of belonging, and emotional bonds across generations. In other words, digital technology serves as an enabler that reinforces family values, promotes transparency, and facilitates intergenerational knowledge transfer. These results align with Chrisman et al. (2021) and Goel et al. (2024), who assert that digitalization functions as a catalyst for trust and interaction rather than a direct determinant of succession.

Second, service quality does not directly affect success but positively influences socioemotional wealth. This indicates that high service quality alone does not guarantee leadership regeneration; instead, it strengthens trust and solidarity within the organization. Stakeholder-oriented service enhances emotional attachment and binding social ties among family members, teachers, and parents, key dimensions of socioemotional wealth. This finding is consistent with SERVQUAL theory Parasuraman et al., and the study by Zakirullah et al. (2025), both of which emphasize that high service quality enhances social relationships and institutional identity in educational settings.

Third, continuous professional development (CPD) shows both direct and indirect effects on succession type. CPD builds leadership capacity and prepares the next generation of leaders. Through training, mentoring, and collaborative learning, potential successors in family-owned schools develop managerial competence while internalizing family-based values embedded in socioemotional wealth. These findings support Fairman et al. (2023) and Simmie et al. (2024), who highlight that professional development not only strengthens technical capability but also deepens organizational commitment and loyalty.

The role of socioemotional wealth is proven to be central. SEW exerts the strongest positive influence on succession type in both intrafamily and hybrid models. It fully mediates the relationships between digital technology and service quality with succession type and partially mediates the effect of CPD. This underscores that in family organizations, non-economic values, such as emotional closeness, family pride, and the desire to preserve legacy, form the foundation of successful leadership transitions.

A comparative analysis of the two succession models reveals that the mediating effect of SEW is stronger in intrafamily succession, where leadership decisions are deeply rooted in emotional values, family control, and social bonds. Conversely, in hybrid succession, SEW's influence slightly decreases due to the moderating effect of professionalism, which reduces emotional involvement. Nonetheless, SEW remains a crucial bonding force that maintains harmony and leadership continuity.

Conceptually, these findings reinforce Socioemotional Wealth Theory (Berrone et al., 2012), which argues that family owners prioritize non-financial goals such as identity,

control, and transgenerational continuity over purely economic outcomes. In the context of family-owned schools, this manifests in leadership decisions driven by trust and the continuation of the founding family's vision rather than short-term performance metrics.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that socioemotional wealth is a crucial mediating factor connecting digital technology, service quality, and continuous professional development (CPD) to successful leadership succession in family-owned schools. While digital technology indirectly supports succession by enhancing socioemotional wealth, service quality strengthens emotional bonds and trust within the organization, which also benefits succession through this wealth. CPD influences succession both directly and indirectly, with socioemotional wealth amplifying its impact. Thus, socioemotional wealth integrates family values and professional management, ensuring leadership transition success by balancing governance competence with the preservation of founding family values. Future research could explore how different dimensions of socioemotional wealth uniquely affect succession outcomes across diverse cultural contexts and educational systems.

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