

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Managers' perspectives into skills required for young professionals in
Transnet Property to assume leadership roles**

By

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DECLARATION

I, S'Phamandla Andile Masinga, declare that:

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ABSTRACT

The evolving landscape of public sector entities in South Africa necessitates a strong pipeline of capable young leaders to drive strategic transformation and operational efficiency. Transnet Property, an operating division of Transnet SOC Ltd, plays a crucial role in managing a vast and diverse property portfolio with a mandate to optimise the returns from the Transnet property portfolio. As Transnet Property navigates a complex and evolving business environment, the development of future leadership from within its pool of young professionals is critical to ensuring long-term organisational sustainability. This study explores the perspectives of managers at Transnet Property regarding the essential skills young professionals need to assume leadership roles within the organisation. A qualitative research approach was employed, and participants were purposefully selected due to their in-depth knowledge and experience that they possess in the property industry and in leadership roles. Semi structured interviews were conducted with nine Regional Managers in the leasing, operations and facilities management department within Transnet Property. Thematic analysis and NVivo software were utilised to identify key themes and insights across participant responses. Findings revealed six key skills that are required by young professionals at Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. These are: emotional intelligence and awareness, visionary and strategic thinking, transformative and adaptability, people and relationship management, ethics and values, and communication and collaboration. Furthermore, the research identified several challenges faced by young professionals at Transnet Property in their pursuit of leadership roles. These are: progress and mobility, developmental barriers, financial and resource constraints, organisational dynamics, and red tapes and resistance. Managers identified several support mechanisms to develop young professionals within Transnet Property for leadership roles these include: training and learning, formalised mentorship, capacity and resources, increased management exposure, and organisational culture change. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on leadership development and provides actionable recommendations for Transnet Property to enhance its leadership pipeline. It underscores the importance of targeted skills development initiatives that respond to managerial expectations and organisational objectives to foster the growth of competent future leaders.

Keywords: leadership development, leadership skills, managers perspectives, Transnet Property, young professionals

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ACRONYMS

EI – Emotional Intelligence

HR – Human Resources

KPI's – Key Performance Indicators

SAFMA - South African Facilities Management Association

SAPOA - South African Property Owners Association

SOE's – State Owned Entities

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In the contemporary business landscape, leadership is increasingly being recognised as a critical factor for organisational success, particularly within dynamic and complex environments such as state-owned entities (SOEs) (Badarai et al., 2023). Transnet Property, an operating division of Transnet SOC Ltd, plays a vital role in managing the non-core property portfolio of commercial, retail, industrial and residential properties with a mandate to optimise the returns from Transnet property portfolio (Munsanje, 2021). As the organisation evolves, there is a growing imperative to prepare the next generation of leaders to navigate challenges and drive performance. The transition from operational roles to leadership positions requires not only technical competencies but also a nuanced set of soft skills, including strategic thinking, emotional intelligence and decision-making (Maphumulo, 2023). Understanding managers' perspectives on these required leadership skills can inform human capital strategies, development of targeted leadership training programmes, and succession planning efforts within Transnet Property.

Despite numerous young professional development programmes in South Africa, there is limited research that directly addresses the specific leadership capabilities expected by current managers in the public property sector. Much of the existing literature focuses broadly on general leadership theories, leaving a gap in practical insights on leadership readiness within organisational contexts like Transnet Property (Jackson et al., 2022 and Roper, 2018). Young professionals often struggle to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world leadership expectations. As a result, organisations risk underutilising potential talent or encountering leadership vacuums if the transition from junior roles to leadership is not adequately supported (Manzini and Malatjie, 2023). Therefore, identifying the specific skills deemed essential by managers is critical to align training efforts with organisational needs.

This study seeks to explore managers' perspectives at Transnet Property regarding the essential skills young professionals require to assume leadership roles effectively. The study focuses on managers' perspectives due to their valuable insights on the day-to-day operational demands, organisational culture and leadership expectations. Their input helps bridge the gap between

theoretical leadership competencies and the actual expectations and realities within Transnet Property. By investigating these viewpoints, the research aims to contribute to leadership development literature within the South African public sector and to offer practical recommendations for talent management. The findings may also help inform human resource policies and learning interventions that can better prepare young professionals for future leadership roles. Equipping the next generation of leaders with the right competencies is not only vital for organisational continuity but also for ensuring sustained service delivery and innovation in state-owned entities.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research problem, outline the study's aim and objectives, explain the rationale behind the study and briefly describe the methodology used for study. Lastly, a concise summary of the structure of each chapter is also included.

1.2 Background of the study

In today's dynamic and complex business environment, leadership development has become a critical component of organisational success, especially in state-owned entities such as Transnet Property. As organisations strive to remain competitive and sustainable, the demand for competent, future-ready leaders has intensified (Buthelezi, 2018). Central to this challenge is the preparation of young professionals to transition into leadership roles, a process that requires not only technical proficiency but also a robust set of soft and strategic skills. The success of this transition significantly depends on how organisations understand, support and cultivate these leadership competencies.

Globally and locally, leadership is no longer perceived solely as a function of seniority or years of experience, but as a set of adaptive competencies that enable individuals to navigate uncertainty, drive change, and influence others (Abukalusa and Oosthuizen, 2023). In the South African context, leadership development is also shaped by socio-economic transformation imperatives, including employment equity and youth empowerment (Public Service and Administration, 2025). Consequently, SOEs like Transnet Property must not only ensure that leadership pipelines are robust but also that young professionals are equipped with the right blend of interpersonal, strategic, and contextual skills.

Transnet SOC Ltd is a state-owned entity, established under the legal succession to the South African Transport Services Act No.9 of 1989, with the South African government as the sole shareholder through the Ministry of Transport (Kgafela, 2021). Transnet oversees the country's ports, railways and pipeline infrastructure, operating as an integrated freight transport company (Havenga et al., 2023). Transnet has six operating divisions: National Ports Authority, Port Terminals, Pipelines, Engineering, Freight Rail and Property.

The study is based at Transnet Property a division of Transnet SOC Ltd. Transnet Property was formed on 1 January 2008 through the merger of former property entities, Propnet and Transnet Housing (Mabaso, 2017). Transnet Property manages the non-core property portfolio of commercial, retail, industrial and residential properties with a mandate to optimise the returns from Transnet property portfolio (Munsanje, 2021). The property portfolio currently overseen by Transnet Property is valued at R11 billion (Transnet, 2024).

In the dynamic and constantly changing business landscape, it is essential for organisations to consistently invest in leadership development to maintain long-term success and sustainability (Maroga et al., 2024). This need is particularly significant in large, complex organisations like Transnet Property. As many experienced professionals approach retirement and workplace expectations continue to evolve, there is a pressing necessity to equip young professionals to take on future leadership roles (Transnet, 2024).

A mismatch between the skills young professionals bring and the expectations of leadership roles can hinder their growth and effectiveness in the workplace (Mpangeva and De Braine, 2024). Managers, with their insight into organisational needs and strategic direction, are well positioned to inform which competencies are truly required. Their perspectives can bridge the gap between theoretical leadership models and the practical realities of leadership within Transnet Property.

By exploring managers' perspectives, this study seeks to contribute to the discourse on leadership development, with a specific focus on identifying the skill sets that young professionals must cultivate to successfully step into leadership roles. The findings are expected to inform human capital strategies, development of targeted leadership training programmes, and succession planning efforts at Transnet Property, ultimately aiding in the development of a competent, future-ready leadership cohort.

1.2.1 Overview of leadership in the organisation context

All organisations have goals and objectives. To remain viable and sustainable, an organisation must actively pursue and accomplish its goals. Achieving these goals is impossible without effective leadership (Jonck, 2024). Koetaan (2020) describes leadership as function and position. As a function, leadership serves as a vital tool essential to the success and survival of the organisation. Leadership as a position emphasises the interpersonal aspect of leadership, particularly the communication and interaction between the leader and their followers (Koetaan, 2020).

Leaders are responsible for inspiring others to consistently engage in actions and behaviors that enhance the organisations' or businesses' ability to achieve their set goals and objectives (Northouse, 2025). Bolden et al. (2023) urges that the significance of leadership is also evident in the positive influence a successful organisation can have on the lives of its employees and the broader community they belong to. Strong leadership enhances the organisation's ability to contribute meaningfully to society. On the other hand, poor leadership can have the opposite effect, diminishing an organisation's effectiveness and sustainability.

1.2.2 Skills required for leaders: multi-dimensional competency frameworks

Skills are capabilities, knowledge and expertise that a person develops through education, training or experience, allowing them to carry out tasks in an effective and efficient manner (Tiekam and Myres, 2023). Skills are viewed as both individual and organisational resources that enable the organisation to enhance its productivity and competitiveness (Sousa and Rocha, 2019). A skill is a knowledge gained through training, and it is demonstrated by actions.

Leadership skills are traits and capabilities that allow a person to direct, inspire, influence and effectively lead others to working toward shared objectives. Mumford et al. (2007) indicated that skills can be divided into four categories namely: interpersonal skills, cognitive skills, strategic skills and business skills:

a) Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills are core mental abilities that are involved in acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience and senses (Mumford et al., 2007). Cognitive skills are considered the foundation requirement for effective and capable leadership. These skills include processes such as focus, memory, reasoning, problem solving, perception and decision-making.

According to Mumford et al. (2017) cognitive skills are considered one of the most crucial skills a leader must possess. This involves fundamental skills linked to cognitive abilities such as gathering, comprehension, sharing of information and learning (Tiekam and Myres, 2023).

b) Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills refer to the capabilities that allow individuals to engage with others in a positive and effective manner (Mumford et al., 2007). These skills include communication, active listening, empathy, conflict management, collaboration and emotional awareness. According to Aquino et al. (2025) interpersonal skills are also known as “people skills”. People skills relate to an individual’s ability to build and maintain relationships with others. Interpersonal skills also involve emotional intelligence (EI), which is the ability to connect with others on an emotional level (Beenen, 2021).

c) Business skills

Business skills refer to the knowledge and expertise needed to efficiently manage and run a business or organisation (Tiekam and Myres, 2023). These skills include a variety of competencies such as strategic planning, financial oversight, marketing, problem-solving, negotiation, decision-making, and leadership. Mumford et al., (2007) stated that business skills are crucial for leaders because they provide the foundation for making informed decisions, driving organisational growth, and ensuring long-term success.

d) Strategic skills

Strategic skills involve the conceptual abilities required to comprehend complexity by adopting a systems perspective. Strategic skills are the capabilities that allow individuals to assess complex situations, make well-informed decisions, and create long-term plans to reach organisational objectives (Yozi and Mbokota, 2024). These skills include critical thinking, planning, problem solving and the ability to see the bigger picture. Strategic skills are essential for leaders because they enable them to guide their organisations toward long-term success in an ever-changing environment.

1.3 Problem statement

The leadership landscape within organisations is constantly evolving, particularly as younger generations enter the workforce with diverse skill sets and expectations (Molek et al., 2023). At Transnet Property, the development of young professionals is crucial for sustaining leadership and organisational growth (Buthelezi, 2018). However, a noticeable gap exists in understanding the specific skills required for young professionals to thrive in leadership roles. Despite the strategic importance of this initiative, little research has been conducted on the specific skills that managers in Transnet Property believe are necessary for young professionals to assume leadership roles. This knowledge gap limits the organisation's ability to effectively groom its future leaders and ensure a smooth transition of leadership over time.

Managers play a critical role in identifying and nurturing leadership potential, yet their perspectives on the competencies young professionals need to develop remain underexplored, particularly in the context of South Africa's evolving business landscape. Existing literature on leadership development often focuses on broad categories such as emotional intelligence, communication, and strategic thinking (Ngayo Fotso, 2021; Fadhil et al., 2021), but seldom addresses the specific skills required for leadership within the South African property sector, especially within a state-owned entity like Transnet Property. Moreover, the challenges of operating in an economically complex environment, characterised by shifting political, economic and social dynamics, further complicate the identification of these competencies (Rimita, 2019). As a result, the lack of tailored frameworks leaves Transnet Property's leadership development initiatives potentially misaligned with the actual demands of future leadership.

This study aims to address this gap by exploring managers' perspectives on the essential skills young professionals need to successfully transition into leadership roles at Transnet Property. By gaining insights from those in leadership positions, the research seeks to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive and contextually relevant skills framework. This framework could serve as a guide for future talent development strategies, ensuring that young professionals are adequately prepared to take on leadership roles and meet the evolving needs of the organisation. The findings from this study could also inform human capital strategies, development of targeted leadership training programmes, and succession planning efforts aimed

at fostering a leadership pipeline that is both capable and aligned with Transnet Property's long-term goals.

1.4 Focus of the study

The focus of this study was centered around exploring and understanding the key skills that managers believe are crucial for young professionals to develop in order to take on leadership roles within Transnet Property.

1.5 Aim and research objectives

The aim of the study was to examine the managers' perspectives on skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.

The objectives of the study were:

- To identify key skills that managers believe are essential for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.
- To determine the challenges experienced by young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.
- To identify the support that managers can put in place to develop young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.

1.6 Research questions

The research questions of the study were:

- What are the key skills that managers believe are essential for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles?
- What are the challenges experienced by young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles?
- What support can managers put in place to develop young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles?

1.7 Significance of the study

The research study explores managers' perspectives on skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. This study is significant as it seeks to bridge the gap between the expectations of leadership within Transnet Property and the preparedness of young professionals to assume such roles. The study also offers a roadmap for personal and professional development of young professionals, guiding them on which skills to cultivate in order to position themselves for leadership opportunities within Transnet Property.

1.8 Research methodology

This study was conducted at Transnet Property, South Africa. The study adopted a qualitative approach, which was deemed the most suitable method to gain an in-depth understanding of the skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. The participants were selected purposefully due to the in-depth knowledge and experience they possess in the property industry and in leadership roles. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine (9) Regional Managers in the Operations, Leasing, and Facilities departments.

A gatekeeper's letter was obtained, permitting the study to take place at Transnet Property (attached marked as appendix 4). Ethical clearance for the research was sought from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (attached marked as appendix 3). Emails were sent to invite participation in the study. An informed consent form (attached marked as appendix 1) was received from all those willing to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams from 10 June 2025 to 26 June 2025. The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants and the transcription was generated by Microsoft Teams. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes within the data. The principle of saturation was considered. No secondary data was used in the study.

1.9 Structure of dissertation

1.9.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 provided a brief introduction and an overview of the study. It offered insight into the background of the research and outlined the problem statement, research aim, objectives, and research questions. Additionally, the chapter included a concise explanation of the research methodology.

1.9.2 Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter examines existing literature related to the skills required for leadership roles. The literature review is guided by the study's objectives and research questions. It identifies relevant theories and outlines the research perspective within the context of the existing body of literature.

1.9.3 Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology used in the study. It provides an overview of the research design, approach, and the rationale behind the chosen methods. The chapter also outlines the data collection techniques, including the instruments, sampling methods, and target population. Additionally, it describes the procedures followed during data collection and the approaches used for data analysis.

1.9.4 Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the results of interviews conducted with nine (9) regional managers in the leasing, operations and facilities management departments at Transnet Property regarding skills required for young professionals to assume leadership roles.

1.9.5 Chapter 5: Discussions

This chapter interprets the study results in relation to the research questions and objectives. It examined the implications of the findings, comparing them with existing literature and theoretical frameworks.

1.9.6 Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This is the last chapter of the study which outlines the main findings of the study and presented final conclusions derived from the results and discussions. It emphasised the key insights and their relevance to the study. Additionally, the chapter also provided recommendations.

1.10 Summary

Chapter 1 introduces the study by providing the background and context for examining the leadership skills required for young professionals to assume leadership roles within Transnet Property. The chapter highlights the increasing importance of leadership development within state-owned entities and the need to prepare young professionals to transition effectively into leadership positions. It presents the research problem, which focuses on the limited understanding of the specific skills managers believe young professionals require to succeed in leadership roles within Transnet Property. The aim of the study is therefore to explore managers' perspectives on the skills required for young professionals to assume leadership roles. To achieve this aim, the study addresses three key objectives: identifying the essential leadership skills required, determining the challenges experienced by young professionals when transitioning into leadership roles, and exploring the support mechanisms managers can implement to develop these future leaders.

The chapter also outlines the research questions guiding the study and explains the significance of the research in contributing to leadership development and human capital strategies within Transnet Property. A qualitative research approach was adopted to obtain an in-depth understanding of managers' perspectives. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with nine regional managers from the operations, leasing and facilities departments, who were selected through purposive sampling due to their leadership experience. The interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and the data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to the leadership skills required for young professionals. The chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the dissertation and providing a brief description of the focus of each subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Building leadership capabilities in young professionals is increasingly seen as essential for maintaining organisational continuity, promoting adaptability and achieving long-term success (Samoka, Oginde and Kiambi, 2023). Within Transnet Property this need is particularly pronounced due to ongoing transformation mandates, skills shortages and the necessity to develop sustainable talent pipelines (Chetty and Moodley, 2022). Consequently, there is a growing interest in identifying the specific skills and competencies young professionals need to successfully move into leadership roles.

As a State-Owned Entity (SOE) Transnet Property operate within a unique environment where developing leadership is both a business necessity and socio-economic obligation. In South Africa, government initiatives like the National Development Plan and Skills Development Act emphasise how crucial it is for young people to be empowered and developed as leaders in the public sector (Raphuti, 2023). Understanding the managers' perspectives within Transnet Property provides a meaningful insight into the alignment between the organisation expectations and the actual preparedness of young professionals

In order to bolster the investigation and elucidate the essential ideas and theories that will guide the interpretation of the findings and subsequent debates, this chapter reviews the body of existing literature. The review provides the foundation for the study, which explores the managers' perspectives on skills required for young professionals at Transnet Property to take on leadership roles.

The chapter begins by defining what skills means, explaining what skills are and their relevance in leadership. It then covers categories of skills; distinguishing between soft skills and technical skills. The chapter then provides an understanding of leadership and what leaders have to do. It then outlines leadership concepts, responsibilities, and qualities of effective leaders. It provides an overview of key leadership styles, such as autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, transactional and situational. The chapter concludes with Katz's skills model and approaches to leadership development, focusing on technical, interpersonal or human, and conceptual skills, and methods to cultivate leadership through training and mentorship.

2.2 Definition of skills

Skills refers to knowledge acquired through training and is reflected in practical application or performance (Asefer and Abidin, 2021). This definition aligns with Lamri and Lubart (2023), who describe skills as knowledge gained through both formal and informal training, as well as through practical experience. A skill is a developed ability or proficiency in a particular area or activity, acquired through a combination of knowledge, practice and experience (Marin-Zapata et al., 2022). The concept of skills is widely and accurately recognised as a crucial area of knowledge that must be gained to function effectively and efficiently in any task that is supposed to be executed (Asefer and Abidin, 2021).

Lewis (2020) defined skill as the capacity to exhibit behaviour that is practically relevant to achieving a performance objective. Skills refer to the capabilities or expertise developed through practice, training, or experience that allow a person to carry out tasks successfully and efficiently (Kroon et al., 2021). Lyu and Liu (2021) defined skills as a process and explains that all skills, whether mental, physical and social, share certain traits, for instance they are learned. The concept of skill relates to knowledge and its application. Andreas (2022) explains that even when certain skills can be developed, special attention should be granted to behavioural skills since they are unchangeable.

Skill denotes a person's capability to complete tasks by effectively using suitable resources, often developed through training or past experience (Lamri and Lubart, 2023). The concept of skill includes the capacity to process, comprehend, interpret and apply information to carry out a task (DeKeyser, 2020). Skills are the acquired abilities both technical and behavioral, that empower individuals to complete tasks efficiently and adjust to dynamic or challenging work environments (Caeiro-Rodríguez et al., 2021). They include a blend of cognitive skills, social behaviors, and professional expertise that are crucial for individuals to effectively perform specific roles within an organization.

In the context of this study and drawing from the literature reviewed above, a clear and comprehensive definition of "skill" can be established, one that adopts a strategic perspective by considering the abilities and attributes employers deem essential for effective employee performance in the workplace. The literature further suggests that skills are developed through learning and sustained practice.

2.3 Categories of skills

Generally, there are two primary categories of skills: technical skills and soft skills.

2.3.1 Soft skills

Soft skills are non-technical, interpersonal abilities that are critical for success in social and professional contexts (Visser and Terblanche, 2025). Soft skills are a confluence of social and personal qualities that enable people to work and communicate with others in a productive and peaceful manner (Daly et al., 2022). Rodriguez Martinez (2021) characterises soft skills as beneficial traits for specific types of jobs, noting that they rely less on learned knowledge and more on qualities like common sense and adaptability. Soft skills, often known as interpersonal or people skills, are characterised by how people relate to and engage with others. Soft skills are characterised as a personal relationship with others. In contrast to technical skills, which are tailored to a specific job and can be easily taught, soft skills are more subjective and harder to quantify (Visser and Terblanche, 2025).

In leadership, soft skills are crucial for fostering a positive and effective workplace (Lemos and Brunstein, 2023). They enable leaders to actively listen, offer helpful feedback, handle stress and adjust to change, abilities that are vital in today's dynamic and demanding work environments (Fulmore et al., 2023). A leader who possesses strong soft skills is typically viewed as accessible, reliable and persuasive, strengthening their capacity to lead diverse teams successfully (Makri and Vlachopoulos, 2019). Kumar et al. (2022) stated that soft skills directly affect a leader's team's and organisation's overall success and growth in addition to enhancing their own performance. Soft skills empower leaders to navigate change, inspire innovation and maintain a positive work environment.

Soft skills are necessary for effective leadership. They help leaders build trust, communicate vision, manage teams and handle challenges with emotional intelligence. Soft skills have emerged as a crucial focus in both current and future leadership, serving as a priority for achieving high performance because they are recognised as a vital and impactful factor in the success of any organisation (Sadq, 2019). According to Ariratana et al. (2015) and Kumar et al. (2022) the essential soft skills every leader should develop include effective communication, emotional intelligence, adaptability, sound decision-making skills and problem-solving abilities.

2.3.1.1 Communication skills

Communication is the process by which a sender conveys a message to a receiver, who then interprets, comprehends and reacts to it (Rybachynska, 2023). Communication skills encompass the ability to effectively express, receive, and interpret verbal and nonverbal messages, ensuring that everyone involved accurately understands the information being communicated (Sabbah, Hallabieh and Hussein, 2020). These skills encompass speaking, active listening, writing, observing and interpreting tone, body language and various other forms of interpersonal interaction (Gidron, 2020). Effective communication skills are essential for fostering relationships, resolving issues, leading teams and promoting mutual understanding in both professional and personal environments (Sarkar, 2020). This includes having the capacity to speak clearly, listen intently and adapt your communication to different audiences

Effective leaders must have strong communication skills in order to clearly convey to their team their vision, objectives, and expectations (Wangchuk, 2021). A leader with strong communication skills can build trust, offer clear guidance and encourage others to work toward a shared goal (Saputra, 2021). To be an effective leader, one must excel at communicating and influencing others by making sound decisions, setting clear goals and ensuring tasks are completed on time (Galli, 2021). Clear and concise communication prevents misunderstandings and ensures that everyone is on the same page and working effectively. Arendt et al. (2019) emphasised that the way leaders customise their communication with followers is vital for developing strong relationships and attaining significant work outcomes, such as followers' satisfaction, commitment, and performance. Strong communication skills enable leaders to guide their teams more effectively and achieve organisational success.

2.3.1.2 Emotional intelligence

Emotion and intelligence are two intricate concepts that are combined in the term emotional intelligence. According to Sayed and Proches (2021) intelligence is objective, while emotions are subjective. Being 'emotional' means experiencing and expressing feelings strongly or openly. The term 'intelligence' denotes the capacity to obtain and apply knowledge and skills. The ability to recognise, understand, control, and influence your own emotions as well as those of others is known as emotional intelligence (EI) (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). It includes key skills such as self-

awareness, emotional control, empathy, interpersonal abilities, and motivation. It entails understanding how emotions impact conduct, applying that knowledge to guide decisions and deeds, and fostering close relationships with others (Dugué et al., 2021). People with high emotional intelligence can handle relationships thoughtfully and efficiently, make thoughtful decisions, manage stress and successfully navigate complex social environments (Halimi, et al., 2021). This skill is crucial for clear communication, resolving conflicts and effective leadership in both personal and professional environments (Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez, 2023).

A crucial component of good leadership is emotional intelligence, which enables leaders to both identify and control their own emotions as well as be perceptive to and receptive to those of others (Tan et al., 2022). Leaders with strong emotional intelligence possess greater self-awareness, enabling them to understand how their emotions influence their thoughts and actions (Lee et al., 2022). They communicate effectively, resolve conflicts positively and inspire and influence others with both confidence and empathy (Goleman and Cherniss, 2024). Emotional intelligence allows leaders to guide others using not only logic but also empathy and insight, qualities that are crucial for sustained success and the growth of an organisation (Görgens-Ekermans and Roux, 2021). According to Lubbadah (2020) a leader's feelings and emotions can influence the emotional state of the team. When a leader is in a positive mood, it tends to boost team members' confidence in their abilities, enhance creativity and improve decision-making. Conversely, if the leader is in a negative mood, that feeling can spread to others, leading to a decline in overall performance (Lubbadah, 2020).

2.3.1.3 Decision making skills

Decision-making skills involve the capacity to identify and evaluate different options, weigh evidence and potential results, and choose the best course of action (Trunk et al., 2020). Torlak et al. (2022) explained that the capacity to select the best course of action from a range of possibilities in order to effectively solve issues or seize opportunities is known as decision-making skills. These skills require the use of critical thinking and sound judgment, often in high pressure situations or when information is limited. Effective decision making skills enable individuals, particularly leaders, to resolve problems efficiently, adjust to evolving circumstances and lead others toward accomplishing goals (Driscoll et al., 2022).

Effective leaders frequently need to make critical decisions that affect their teams and organisations, thus decision-making skills are crucial (Hallo et al., 2020). For leaders, this skill entails clearly identifying the problem, collecting and evaluating pertinent information, considering various options and choosing a timely, well-informed solution that supports organisational goals. According to Guzmán et al. (2020) effective leaders gather feedback from their team, consider diverse viewpoints, and apply critical thinking to reach well-informed decisions. Lussier and Achua (2022) emphasised that leaders must be confident and decisive in their choices. Hesitation or indecision can create confusion and reduce team confidence.

2.3.1.4 Problem solving skills

The capacity to recognise, assess, and develop practical solutions for problems or obstacles is referred to as problem solving skills (Middleton, 2020). These skills encompass critical thinking, creativity, decision-making and persistence. The process includes identifying the underlying cause of a problem, creating strategic solutions and applying changes that result in lasting improvements rather than temporary fixes (Kumar et al., 2022). Strong problem solving skills allow individuals to dissect complex challenges, assess potential solutions and determine the most effective path forward (Winkler et al., 2021). In professional settings particularly for leaders, these abilities are crucial for addressing obstacles, enhancing workflows and driving successful results.

Problem-solving skills are vital for effective leadership, as leaders frequently encounter challenges that demand careful and prompt resolution (Guzmán et al., 2020). Leaders rely on problem-solving to handle complexity and uncertainty by fostering teamwork, promoting innovative thinking, and staying aligned with long-term goals. Leaders who demonstrate strong problem-solving abilities instill confidence in their teams by exemplifying how to face challenges with resilience and flexibility (Ariratana et al., 2015). Problem solving skills are crucial for advancing progress and ensuring sustained success within any organisation.

2.3.1.5 Adaptability

Adaptability is the capacity to respond successfully to new situations, changes, or challenges (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). It requires openness to new ideas, flexibility in methods and a readiness to learn and develop when encountering uncertainty or unforeseen events. Niemeyer-Rens, Sullivan and Self (2022) highlighted that adaptability is an essential quality for leaders, particularly in the rapidly evolving and uncertain workplaces of today. Adaptable leaders can respond swiftly and efficiently to new challenges, changing priorities or unforeseen obstacles while maintaining their focus (Dunn, 2020). This skill is vital for handling uncertainty, capitalising on opportunities and reducing risks, allowing leaders to effectively steer their organisations through complex and dynamic business environments (McLoughlin and Priyadarshini, 2021). Adaptable leaders promote adaptability within their teams by encouraging continuous learning, creativity and a growth mindset, helping team members embrace uncertainty and stay motivated to develop solutions (Dunn, 2020).

2.3.2 Technical skills

Technical skills are the specialised knowledge and abilities required to do particular tasks or make effective use of specific tools and technologies within a given industry or trade (Ismail and Hassan, 2019). These abilities are typically hands on and quantifiable, encompassing mastery. Technical skills are necessary for precisely and effectively carrying out particular job obligations and are usually acquired through formal education, training, or practical experience (Munir, 2022). They allow professionals to use theoretical knowledge in practical situations, address issues effectively and uphold industry benchmarks.

The following technical skills are crucial in the real estate sector, according to the South African Facilities Management Association (SAFMA) and the South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA):

- **Property management** - involves the expertise and skills needed to efficiently supervise and maintain real estate assets (Wadu-Mesthrige, 2021). It involves tasks such as budgeting, leasing, tenant relations, maintenance coordination, legal compliance and financial reporting.

- **Facilities management** - the understanding and skills necessary to effectively manage the operations and upkeep of buildings, infrastructure and associated services (Matarneh et al., 2019). This encompasses overseeing systems like Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), electrical, plumbing, security and cleaning, while also ensuring adherence to health, safety and environmental standards.
- **Property development** - the abilities and expertise needed to plan, design, finance, and oversee the construction or renovation of real estate projects (Botha et al., 2014). This includes a strong grasp of market analysis, zoning regulations, project management, budgeting and adherence to legal requirements.
- **Asset management** - this refers to the structured approach of managing, operating, maintaining and disposing of assets (usually financial or physical properties), with the goal of maximising their value and investment returns (Gavrikova et al., 2020). It demands proficiency in financial analysis, risk evaluation, portfolio management and strategic decision-making.
- **Property valuation** - this entails the capability to precisely determine the market value of real estate assets. It involves understanding appraisal techniques, conducting market analysis and being aware of legal regulations and economic conditions that affect property values (Kitulazzi and Mirembe, 2024).
- **Property finance** - this involves the specialised knowledge and skills necessary to handle the financing and financial management of real estate projects (Kitulazzi and Mirembe, 2024). It encompasses understanding mortgage lending, investment evaluation, budgeting, cash flow oversight and risk analysis associated with property acquisition, development and management.

2.4 Understanding leadership

Leadership has been present since ancient times and will persist as long as humanity exists (Bolden et al., 2023). Leadership is present in various human activities, including politics, military operations, and sports, to name just a few (Stone, 2009). Leadership is defined as a non-coercive relationship driven by influence. Leadership seems to be a process, action, or influence that motivates people to take action by inspiring, organising, persuading, or influencing them in some way (Genza, 2021).

The capacity to direct, sway, or inspire people to realise a shared objective or vision is known as leadership (Grint and Jones, 2022). It entails establishing a clear direction, motivating individuals, and encouraging teamwork to achieve positive results within a group or organisation (Wilson, 2023). Leadership, according to Grobler and Koen (2024), is the process of helping others comprehend and agree on what has to be done and how to do it effectively while also encouraging both individual and collective efforts to achieve shared goals.

Leadership can arise at any level within an organisation and is not limited to the chief executive officer or senior management (Bolden et al., 2023). It can be seen as an interpersonal process that involves influencing others to accomplish desired objectives. Effective leadership is built on clearly defining and establishing the organisation's mission (Hanna et al., 2021). The leader is responsible for setting goals, prioritising tasks, and establishing and upholding standards (Balcerzyk, 2021). Leadership, in general, is a process that involves influencing, motivating, inspiring, organising, impressing, persuading, or encouraging individuals either individually or in combination to behave in a desired manner (Zen et al., 2023).

Leadership involves developing and clearly conveying a vision, promoting teamwork, and encouraging others to give their best (Caulfield et al., 2021). Leadership goes beyond formal roles or titles; it is a social process that facilitates shared direction, coordination, and commitment within a team or organisation (Dasmadi, 2023). Leadership in organisations refers to a range of ideas and methods intended to maximise individual capabilities, promote creativity, successfully adjust to change, and accomplish strategic goals (Genza, 2021). Effective leaders influence organisational culture, establish clear direction, and enable others to succeed by balancing a strong vision with empathy and trust, fostering environments where individuals can flourish (Deng et al., 2023).

In conclusion, it can be summarised that leadership involves setting new directions for an organisation with the goal of enhancing performance and seizing potentially more profitable opportunities. Leadership is both an art and a set of skills that combine vision, effective communication, trust-building, empowerment, and collaboration to steer organisations toward long-term success (Luedi, 2022). It involves influencing stakeholders, peers, subordinates, supervisors and senior management to willingly support and follow the leader's direction (Lussier and Achua, 2022). Leadership will always remain a vital component of any organisation's management, essential for survival in the face of growing national and global competition (Samimi et al., 2022).

2.5 What do leaders have to do?

In an organisation, leaders play a vital role by fulfilling key responsibilities that steer their teams and contribute significantly to achieving overall business objectives (Siyal et al., 2021). Leaders are forward-thinking, promote transformation, depend on people and focus on doing the right things effectively (Hai et al., 2021). In the workplace, a leader inherently occupies a position of authority, which grants them the formal or informal power to influence, direct, and guide the actions of others toward achieving organisational goals (Ullah et al., 2022). This authority may stem from their designated role within the organisational hierarchy or from their ability to inspire and motivate through personal attributes such as expertise, integrity and vision.

A leader is someone who, due to their distinctive abilities and role, is naturally driven to proactively and instinctively guide others toward the achievement of their envisioned goals (Marais, 2014). Musaigwa (2023) defined a leader as an individual who establishes a clear direction, fosters alignment among team members, and sustains their commitment within a group working toward shared objectives. They build and guide teams, support employee development, uphold organisational values, and ensure accountability (Eddy et al., 2023). Leaders drive performance and help the organisation achieve its goals.

Leaders in an organisation act as visionaries, inspirers, strategic thinkers, role models, mentors, and enablers who steer their teams toward common objectives, uphold the organisation's values, and cultivate a supportive and effective workplace culture (Ojogiwa, 2021). Leaders hold individuals accountable, monitor performance and represent the organisation to external stakeholders, ensuring the overall success and sustainability of the organisation (Loganathan,

2013). Leaders are accountable for steering the organisation, enabling team growth, and ensuring long-term success (Klus and Müller, 2021). The nine leadership qualities listed by Farr, Walesh and Forsythe (1997) are shown in Figure 2.1 below. Gaining a thorough grasp of these qualities can aid in defining the characteristics of an effective leader and pointing out areas in need of improvement.

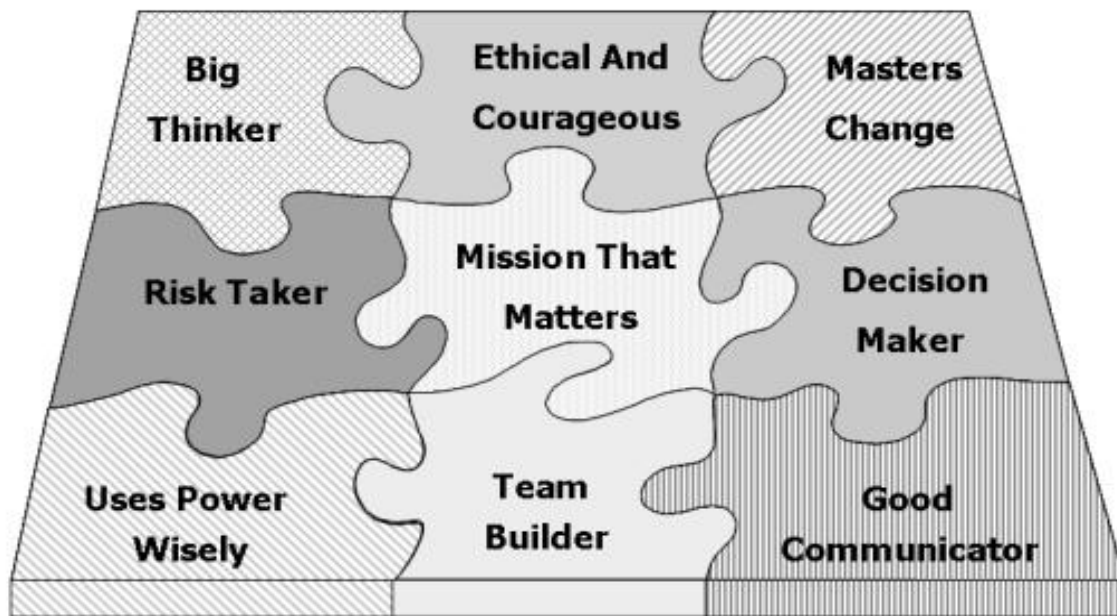


Figure 2.1 – The nine qualities of effective leadership
Source: Farr et al. (1997)

Farr et al. (1997) proposed that an effective leader should have a broad perspective, especially when it comes to quality and responsibility. Such a leader should act ethically and be skilled at navigating change, an important trait given the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds among team members. Additionally, a strong leader needs to be willing to take risks and pursue meaningful goals. Decision-making ability, the capacity to motivate teams through collaboration, and a commitment to not misusing authority are also crucial. Ultimately, effective communication is key for leaders to convey their vision and ensure their message is understood.

2.6 Overview of key leadership styles for leaders

2.6.1 Autocratic leadership

The hallmark of an autocratic leadership style is a leader who has total control over choices and gives staff members instructions on their specific responsibilities (Ahmed and Simha, 2023). Autocratic leaders are typically characterised by their use of authority to assign tasks with minimal explanation, their tendency to make decisions without consulting the team, and a lower level of trust in employees' ability to carry out tasks independently (Jaafar et al., 2021). In this style, the leader sets tasks, procedures, and objectives with little to no input from employees. Leaders who use this style often succeed in meeting project deadlines because decisions are made swiftly by the manager rather than the team, and tasks are efficiently handled through clear delegation and a well-defined structure (Rosing et al., 2022).

The disadvantage of this style is that it limits creativity and innovation, as employees are not given the opportunity to express their ideas or perspectives (Chukwusa, 2018). As a result, employees may become unmotivated, disengaged, and resistant to working toward the desired goals. This style proves advantageous in crisis situations or demanding work environments (Pizzolitto et al., 2023). An excellent illustration of autocratic leadership is in a hospital emergency room, where the chief doctor quickly makes decisions alone and instructs the medical staff on precise steps to accomplish the vital objective of saving a patient's life.

2.6.2 Democratic leadership

A leader that practices democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, actively engages and welcomes team members to participate in decision-making (Woods, 2021). This approach is characterised by collaborative decision-making, where team members and the leader share accountability and influence at every stage (Dastane, 2020). This style promotes teamwork and open dialogue, placing importance on the input and viewpoints of all stakeholders (Bhatti et al., 2012). The leader maintains final decision making power but promotes group input, ideas and feedback to inform their choices and actions. A leader who adopts this style typically demonstrates strong delegation skills, makes well-informed decisions, and engages effectively in consultative interactions (Syam et al., 2020).

When leaders involve team members in decision-making, they can access a wider variety of ideas and viewpoints, which helps encourage creativity and innovation (Yunarsih et al., 2020). One

benefit of democratic leadership is its focus on teamwork and transparent communication, which often results in greater employee involvement and improved job satisfaction (Hikmat and Ghorbandi, 2024). Reaching a consensus among differing viewpoints can make the decision-making process slow and time consuming in democratic leadership.

2.6.3 Laissez-faire leadership

The phrase "laissez-faire" comes from French and translates to "let do" or "let it be," symbolising an approach based on minimal interference or involvement (Jaafar et al, 2021). Laissez-faire leadership, sometimes referred to as delegative leadership, is a relaxed, hands-off approach in which team members are given the freedom to decide for themselves and handle their own responsibilities with little direction (Kamal and Kesuma, 2024). A leader who adopts this style relies very little on traditional leadership abilities, engages minimally with their team, and does not establish any goals for them (Lundmark et al., 2022). This leadership approach is suitable when the team members are self-reliant and highly skilled (Khan and Tidman, 2021). The advantage of laissez faire leadership is its ability to promote creativity and innovation within the team by allowing members to make decisions and work on their own (Kostiainen, 2023). This leadership style cultivates a sense of responsibility and personal ownership. The drawback is that unclear guidance and supervision can lead to ambiguity and decreased effectiveness (Zhang et al., 2023).

2.6.4 Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership is a management approach that emphasises defined objectives, well-organised tasks, and the application of incentives or sanctions according to individual performance (Dong, 2023). Leaders who use this style set clear guidelines and performance standards, closely track performance, and offer rewards (like bonuses or recognition) when targets are achieved, or impose penalties when performance is inadequate (Jaqua and Jaqua, 2021). Dong (2023) stated that it functions within set systems and processes, prioritising efficiency, discipline, and achieving short-term outcomes. This leadership style is most effective in organised settings where tasks are well defined and employees are driven by specific goals and incentives (Abbas and Ali, 2023). The advantage of transactional leadership is its ability to establish clear structure and enhance efficiency within an organisation (Bwalya, 2023). Since this style emphasises strict rules, procedures and short-term objectives, it often limits employees' creativity and discourages them from going beyond their assigned duties or taking initiative (Jaqua and Jaqua, 2021).

2.6.5 Transformational leadership

Followers of transformational leadership are inspired and motivated to put the organisation or a larger goal ahead of their individual interests (Deng et al., 2023). This style involves leaders inspiring and motivating employees to innovate, develop and actively contribute to the organisation's long-term success by promoting a shared vision and nurturing creativity (Saad-Alessa, 2021). Leaders who adopt this style enable their teams to make decisions, question existing norms, and align their personal values with the organisation's mission, fostering a culture of ongoing growth and flexibility (Anderson, 2017). These leaders typically cultivate a work environment that is both competitive and innovative. Unlike transactional leadership, which focuses on defining and carrying out tasks, transformational leadership seeks to inspire and motivate followers to accomplish these tasks (Tegor et al., 2023). This often encourages followers to move beyond their personal interests and align themselves with the organisation's strategic objectives.

One of the main benefits of transformational leadership is its ability to motivate and inspire staff members to accomplish above and beyond their typical capabilities (Aidillah and Gunawan, 2024). This leadership approach fosters creativity and innovation by encouraging employees to think critically and consider new ideas (Bakker et al., 2023). The drawback of transformational leadership is that it can occasionally lead to staff burnout because of the high standards and intense drive it promotes.

2.6.6 Situational leadership

Situational leadership is a flexible leadership approach grounded in the belief that no single leadership method is universally best (Mustofa, 2021). Depending on the situation, the team's requirements, and the experience or skill level of the individuals they are guiding, leaders modify their approach (Wuryania et al., 2021). Instead of applying a uniform approach, situational leaders evaluate their followers' performance readiness, that is their ability and willingness to complete a task and adapt their leadership style to match (Mulyana et al., 2022). According to Safrida et al. (2025) situational leadership demands that the leader evaluate the environment and context, and based on this evaluation, apply a leadership style that fits the specific circumstances.

Flexibility is a strength of situational leadership, enabling leaders to tailor their style to the demands of the task and the unique needs of their team (Hutagaluh et al., 2020). Situational leaders

can promote team growth, elevate morale, and boost overall productivity by tailoring their leadership approach to fit the situation. According to Mustofa (2021) leaders may find it difficult to precisely evaluate the needs, skills, and preparedness of each team member in every circumstance.

2.7 Core skills for effective leadership: A critical review of Katz's skills Model

Katz's Skills Model, developed by Robert L. Katz in 1955, is a philosophy of leadership that highlights the significance of particular abilities as essential to effective leadership. The skills model developed by Katz (1955) remains a cornerstone of leadership theory, as it redirects attention from inborn traits to teachable skills that are essential for effective leadership. Figure 2.2 below shows the three essential skills identified by Katz (1955) that leaders must possess for effective leadership: Technical abilities, interpersonal (or people) skills, and conceptual understanding. Jaqua and Jaqua (2021) state that in order to succeed in their positions, leaders at all levels whether in senior, middle, or junior management must have all three kinds of abilities. Katz's (1955) model has greatly influenced leadership training and development, especially because of its practical use at different management levels.



Figure 2.2 - Three skills for effective leadership
Source: Katz (1955)

According to Katz (1955) technical skills which involve specialised knowledge and expertise in specific tasks are most valuable for junior managers. Middle managers benefit greatly from strong human (or interpersonal) skills, focusing on communication, teamwork and managing conflicts. For top management, conceptual skills like strategic planning, complex problem-solving and understanding organisational systems are crucial.

2.7.1 Technical skills

Technical skills include the specific knowledge and aptitude required to carry out particular jobs or make effective use of particular instruments, techniques, and procedures (Laghari et al., 2024). Technical skills are described as an acquired ability in nearly any area of work or education (Sharma, 2021). These skills include specialised knowledge and hands-on experience, which are particularly important at lower management levels where leaders are actively involved in day to day operations (Yi and Zulaikha, 2022). For instance, a supervisor at a manufacturing facility needs to know how the machinery operates and how to effectively direct workers in its use. Jaqua and Jaqua (2021) stated that a leader lacking strong technical skills may find it difficult to gain credibility and efficiently oversee task execution.

The advantage of technical skills is that they enable leaders to understand and perform specific job related tasks, leading to greater efficiency and productivity (Guzmán et al., 2020). Leaders who possess strong technical abilities can offer precise direction, resolve issues efficiently and assist their teams with practical knowledge (Godfrey, 2024). This improves overall performance and establishes credibility and trust since workers are more inclined to respect and obey leaders who have a thorough understanding of the job at hand.

2.7.2 Interpersonal or human skills

Interpersonal skills, sometimes referred to as human skills, are the capacity to successfully engage, communicate, and form bonds with others (Koprowska, 2024). These skills are crucial for leaders across all levels because they involve comprehending others' emotions, motivations and behaviors (Modric et al., 2024). Zaloga (2024) stated that interpersonal skills allow leaders to inspire, work effectively with and comprehend their team members. Important components of interpersonal skills include active listening, empathy, collaboration, resolving conflicts and the capacity to encourage and inspire others.

For leaders, possessing strong interpersonal skills supports the creation of a positive workplace, promotes teamwork and enables effective management of team dynamics (Fulmore et al., 2023). Since middle managers act as a liaison between frontline employees and senior leadership, these abilities are very important. Zaloga (2024) states that leaders with strong interpersonal skills can recognise and respond to the needs and concerns of their team members, which in turn increases motivation and morale. Strong interpersonal skills help leaders resolve conflicts peacefully, avoid misunderstandings, and sustain positive relationships among team members.

2.7.3 Conceptual skills

The ability to envision the organisation as a whole, comprehend difficult issues, and make strategic decisions that support long-term objectives are all examples of conceptual skills (Mohd Ariffin et al., 2024). These skills encompass problem-solving, analytical reasoning and the capacity for abstract thinking. Conceptual skills enable leaders to create a vision, address problems strategically and prepare for the future (Campos and Campos, 2023). Jaqua and Jaqua (2021) highlight that for leaders who are in charge of establishing the organisation's vision, strategy, and general direction, conceptual skills are especially crucial. Conceptual skills improve problem-solving by fostering creative thinking and promoting a comprehensive understanding of how various components of the organisation are linked.

A leader with strong conceptual thinking skills can foresee upcoming challenges, recognise potential opportunities and navigate the organisation through periods of change and uncertainty (Ali and Anwar, 2021). These skills help leaders grasp the broader perspective enabling them to comprehend intricate situations, think strategically and make well informed decisions that support long term objectives of the organisation (Jaqua and Jaqua, 2021). Leaders with strong conceptual skills are able to recognise trends, foresee potential obstacles and detect new opportunities ahead of others.

2.8 Approaches to leadership development

2.8.1 Mentorship

In a mentoring relationship, a more seasoned person (the mentor) helps a less seasoned person (the mentee) advance their skills and career by providing support, counsel, and direction (Blue, 2022). Through mentorship a more knowledgeable person can mentor a less knowledgeable person to help them reach their goals (Burgess et al., 2018). Ivey and Dupré (2022) define mentorship as an activity in which an individual with advanced experience actively helps and supports to enhance the career development of an individual with less experience. It involves sharing expertise, offering advice, and fostering growth through encouragement, feedback, and role modeling (Shields et al., 2023).

Mentorship is a valuable and dynamic resource for developing leadership, providing meaningful advantages to both mentors and mentees (Grocutt et al., 2022). It plays a key role in building vital leadership abilities, enhancing self-awareness and strengthening emotional intelligence, core elements necessary for strong and effective leadership (Murrell et al., 2021). Mentorship also promotes introspection, strengthens self-assurance, and supports emerging leaders in approaching challenges with improved understanding and direction (Yip and Walker, 2022). It cultivates an environment of ongoing learning, creativity, and collaboration within organisations, ultimately supporting the growth of both individuals and the organisation as a whole.

A mentor and mentee can have a mentorship relationship in a variety of settings such as informal and formal (Nthontho et al., 2022). Formal mentorship is structured and administered by the organisations to transfer skills and knowledge to the mentee. Formal mentorship is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Scutelnicu-Todoran, 2023). Informal mentorship is a naturally occurring relationship that develops organically without formal structure. These relationships are typically initiated by the mentee within an organization and can positively impact on the mentee's job performance (Gowdy and Hogan, 2021). Table 2.1 outlines the criteria proposed by Premraj (2016) that defined the fundamental qualities of an effective mentor and mentee.

Table 2.1: Criteria for success of mentors and mentees list

Mentor	Mentee
Helps the mentee acclimate to the organisation	Utilises mentoring time effectively
Boosts the mentee self confidence	Is aware of mentor's expectations
Accessible to provide support during difficult situations	Takes the initiative in setting goals, asking questions and seeking feedback
Encourages creativity and independence	Understands personal strengths and areas for development
Demonstrates a genuine interest in the mentee growth and invests time and effort in the relationship	Clearly defines objectives and works actively towards achieving them
Offers constructive advice, encouragement and resources for development	Values the mentor's time, maintains confidentiality and acts with integrity.

Source: Premaj (2016)

Establishing a structured mentorship programme within a company can have a significant positive impact on workers' career development and the organisation by increasing performance (Fowler et al., 2021). The systematic and planned transfer of skills and information from senior to younger personnel is made possible by a formal mentoring program (Jones and Smith, 2022). Additionally, it ensures that senior staff members are dedicated to setting aside time for mentoring while providing junior staff with the assistance they require during their early phases of development.

As defined by Premraj (2016), the advantages of a structured mentorship programme within an organisation can be summarised as follows:

- Develop employee technical and soft skills
- Increase productivity and performance
- Enhance employee satisfaction and foster a positive workplace atmosphere
- Career growth and advancement opportunities
- The deliberate and purposeful transfer of knowledge

2.8.2 Training

Training is the process of teaching or improving particular behaviors, information, or abilities through structured instruction, hands-on practice, and monitored support (Prince and Wang, 2020). Training is a structured, instructor-led and content-focused intervention aimed at bringing about desired behavioral changes, which, unless conducted as on the job training, typically requires participants to step away from their regular work environment to engage in classroom or similar settings (Al Karim, 2019). According to Tamsah et al. (2020), training is a learning experience in that it seeks to achieve a change in an individual so that they can perform their job more effectively.

Training programme not only enhances employee development but also enable organisations to optimise their human resources to gain a competitive edge. Therefore, it is crucial for organisations to carefully design these programs to enhance the skills and competencies needed in the workplace. Training serves as a vital tool for developing leadership, equipping both current and emerging leaders with the essential knowledge, skills, and experiences required for effective leadership (Nkosi, 2018). Leaders can enhance key skills like communication, decision making, emotional intelligence and strategic thinking through organised training programs, workshops and practical simulations. Training introduces leaders to fresh perspectives and methods, enabling them to adjust to evolving environments and manage diverse teams more successfully (Hashimy et al., 2023).

According to Upadhyay (2023) and Waqanimaravu and Arasanmi (2020), the benefits of training in an organisation can be summarised as follows:

- Enhances employees' existing skills and teaches new ones
- Increase productivity because well trained employees perform tasks more efficiently
- Identifies and nurtures future leaders
- Keeps staff updated with the latest industry trends and technologies
- Fosters a culture of continuous improvement

2.9 Summary

This chapter reviewed the existing body of literature relevant to the skills required for young professionals to assume leadership roles, with particular attention to organisational contexts similar to Transnet Property. The literature emphasises that leadership effectiveness is not determined solely by positional authority but by a combination of developed competencies, behaviours and contextual awareness. Scholars consistently highlight that leadership skills are learned capabilities developed through training, experience and continuous professional development. The review further distinguishes between technical and soft skills, noting that while technical skills provide the professional expertise required to perform industry-specific tasks, soft skills such as communication, emotional intelligence, decision-making, adaptability and problem-solving are critical for effective leadership. These interpersonal and behavioural competencies enable leaders to manage teams, build relationships and navigate organisational complexity. Within the property sector, technical expertise in areas such as property management, asset management and facilities management remains important; however, literature suggests that technical competence alone is insufficient for leadership effectiveness without the complementary development of interpersonal and strategic skills.

The chapter also explored key leadership theories and frameworks, including various leadership styles and Katz's Skills Model, which categorises leadership competencies into technical, human and conceptual skills. These frameworks collectively highlight that effective leadership requires the ability to integrate operational knowledge with interpersonal competence and strategic thinking. In addition, the literature emphasises that leadership development within organisations is strengthened through structured initiatives such as mentorship and training programmes, which play a significant role in preparing young professionals for leadership responsibilities. Despite the extensive discussion on leadership competencies in the broader literature, a notable gap remains regarding the specific skills required for young professionals within state-owned entities and the South African property sector. This gap reinforces the importance of understanding managers' perspectives in organisations such as Transnet Property. Consequently, the insights from the literature directly inform the objectives of this study by providing a conceptual foundation for identifying the key leadership skills required, understanding the challenges young professionals face when transitioning into leadership roles, and exploring the organisational support mechanisms

that can facilitate leadership development. The next chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to investigate these issues within the context of Transnet Property.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research is an artistic and precise work that is about accumulating information, analysing data, providing proof of information, and translating it to make it easy to understand (Flick, 2015). Kumar (2018) asserted that research means to search for information. Research methodology is an analysis that relies on design and data collection rather than conjecture (Myers, 2009). Pandey and Pandey (2021) defined research methodology as an organised process for conducting research, which includes the techniques and tools required for analysing and interpreting data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) characterise research methodology as a structured and deliberate framework designed to effectively explore and answer specific research inquiries.

The methodology chapter outlines the reasoning behind the choice of particular methods and techniques used to locate, select, and analyse data, playing a crucial role in assessing the overall credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings (Weyant, 2022). This section focuses on two key questions: how the data was obtained and how it was analysed. These questions are central to the methodology, as using an unreliable method can lead to inaccurate results, which in turn undermines the credibility of the study's findings (Hazari, 2024).

This chapter thus outlines the research approach adopted for gathering data in this study and explores the different methodological strategies utilised throughout the research process. It will also outline the way of thinking about and studying social phenomena. The chapter also goes into detail on the research strategy, data gathering techniques, research location, and participants. It also looks at the paradigm and research methodology that served as the study's compass. The next section of the chapter examines the methods used to gather data, including the population and sample size of the study, the sampling strategy and methodology, and the data gathering tool.

3.2 Research paradigm

A fundamental framework or ideology that guides the research process and influences the researcher's strategy, design, and methodology is known as a research paradigm (Kumatongo and Muzata, 2021). The researcher's philosophical position is reflected in the research paradigm. It includes the researcher's worldview, presumptions, attitudes, and convictions regarding the nature of knowledge, reality, and research in general (Ugwu et al., 2021). A paradigm suggests the direction along which to look rather than a description of what to see. According to Creswell and

Creswell (2018), researchers must determine their philosophical stance because it influences the research methodology used to achieve the goals of the study.

The three primary types of research paradigms are interpretivism, positivism and pragmatism. Positivism research paradigm is a philosophical framework that approaches research with a focus on objectivity, empiricism and scientific methodology (Park et al., 2020). Creswell (2014) asserted that a positivism paradigm emphasises the search for objective truth. It is rooted in the ideas of positivist philosophy which emphasises the use of scientific methods to study social phenomena (Ali, 2024). The description of positivism clearly highlights that the paradigm focuses on using a quantitative research approach. Positivist researchers employ quantitative methods to accomplish the research objectives by gathering observations from participants using questionnaires and analysing the data using statistical methods (Saunders et al., 2019). The positivist research is grounded on truth and data validity.

The interpretivism paradigm is rooted in the ideas of interpretivist philosophy which emphasises the value of understanding social phenomenon from the participant's points of view (Kumatongo and Muzata, 2021). Interpretivist researchers use qualitative approaches to achieve objectives by gathering and analysing participants' experience in narratives to conceptualise new understandings of the phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2019). Interpretivism advocates that people are distinctive from the phenomena as they create significance for events.

Pragmatism focuses on actions and consequences rather than cause and effect (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Pragmatism is rooted in the ideas of pragmatist philosophy which emphasises the importance of experimentation, experience, and practical application (Borges and Reves, 2019). The pragmatic research paradigm employs multiple approaches aimed at finding solutions to the problem and addressing the research objectives and questions (Creswell, 2013). It views knowledge as something that is best understood through its practical consequences and usefulness in solving real-world problems. It is grounded in the idea that truth is what works in each situation. Table 3.1 below summarises the differences between the research paradigms more clearly.

Table 3.1: Overview of research paradigms

	Positivism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Reason for the research	To discover objective truths and establish general laws or cause and effect relationships through observable and measurable facts	To understand human experiences, social contexts and the interpretations people give to their actions or environments	To solve practical problems by using the most effective methods available, regardless of whether they are qualitative or quantitative
Ontology	Reality is objective and measurable	Reality is subjective and socially constructed	Focused on what works best to solve problems.
The theory of knowledge	Knowledge is acquired through observable and quantifiable data	Knowledge is interpreted through the experiences and interpretations people attribute to them	Knowledge is temporary, practical, and grounded in its utility
Research approach or methods	Quantitative techniques (e.g., experiments, questionnaires)	Qualitative techniques (e.g., interviews, case analyses)	Combination of methods (both qualitative and quantitative)
Goal	Discover general laws or cause-and-effect relationships	Understand deeper meanings and perspectives	Practical outcomes and real-world applications

Source: Kumatongo and Muzata (2021)

This study adopted the interpretivist paradigm as it seeks to get in-depth views of managers regarding the skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. This paradigm was most suitable because it allowed for the interpretation of participants' perceptions of the skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. The interpretivism paradigm believes that people have different realities because of their

experiences and background and that these must be considered when investigating individual's perception of the phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2019). The following qualities made the interpretivism paradigm appropriate to direct the course of this study:

- Interpretivism believes that understanding the world being studied requires deep, subjective experience of the participants.
- Interpretivism employs a qualitative technique.
- Interpretivism captures the real-life experiences related to the phenomenon being studied.
- Interpretivism focuses on how participants construct meaning and interpret their experience.

3.3 Research approaches

The general plan or viewpoint utilised for carrying out research, including the procedures and methods for collecting and analysing data, is referred to as the research approach (Bhattacharjee, 2012). A research approach encompasses the plan and steps to be taken in order to achieve the study's objectives (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Taherdoost (2022) asserted that there are three different methods for conducting research: (1) quantitative research, an analytical method designed to produce values that can be measured, (2) qualitative research, a systematic approach to explore and understand social or human issues using a descriptive data obtained from research participants and examines the non-numerical data and (3) both qualitative and quantitative approaches are integrated in mixed methods research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study. The choice of research approach utilised is dictated by the nature of the research problem (Asenahabi, 2019).

3.3.1 Quantitative approach

Quantitative research is associated with numbers and statistics (Fischer et al., 2023). It is used to answer inquiries concerning the connections between quantifiable factors in order to understand, forecast, and regulate a phenomenon. The quantitative approach uses quantifiable data to prove claims and spot trends in studies (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2016). Taherdoost (2022) stated that since the data for quantitative research is acquired through questionnaires, rating scales and tests the diagrams, charts and graphs can be used to show results.

According to Pandey et al. (2023), the advantages of quantitative research are:

- Allow researchers to measure and analyse data.
- Can be applied in situations when gathering vast amounts of data
- The results are numerical (quantifiable) and hence considered more objective.
- A thorough analysis of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is conducted, which is advantageous since it enables the researcher to interpret the research findings with greater objectivity.
- Larger data sets can be analysed quickly, making it time effective.
- Provides exact measurements and numerical results allowing for precise conclusions.

According to Taherdoost (2022), the limitations of quantitative research are:

- It doesn't always capture the full complexity of human experience or perception
- It fails to ascertain deeper underlying meanings and explanations.
- The data collection is labour intensive.

3.3.2 Qualitative approach

Qualitative approach gathers and analyses non-numerical data, aiming to interpret its meaning (Teherani et al., 2015). Qualitative research is a systematic approach involving collecting rich textual data in the participants natural setting to investigate and understand the meaning that the intended population ascribes to phenomenon (Vishnevsky and Beanlands, 2004). To gain a deeper knowledge of the phenomenon, the qualitative approach focuses on gathering and analysing non-numerical data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

Qualitative research can be done through focus groups, observation and interviews. Such detailed and thorough interpretations of data generate rich, comprehensive explanations, allowing researchers to gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon they are investigating (Bergin, 2018). Neely and Ponshunmugam (2019) stated that a qualitative approach is not concerned with numerical representatives, but it is concerned with deepening the understanding of the problem. It emphasises elements of reality that are impossible to quantify or measure.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) qualitative approach has the following advantages:

- In-depth examination of the phenomenon.
- Not limited to rigidly definable variables.
- Researchers can modify or direct interviews as the discussion progresses, and they are not limited to predetermined questions.
- The information is derived from human experience, which frequently yields more significant and perceptive results than data gathered from quantitative study.
- Provides a thorough and in-depth comprehension of the research topic.
- It can produce valuable insights with small samples.

According to Rahman (2020), the qualitative approach has the following disadvantages:

- Data analysis and interpretation may be more difficult and complex.
- It requires labour intensive analysis process.
- High degree of difficulty to generalise findings in certain settings.

Table 3.2: The differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches

Quantitative Approach	Qualitative Approach
To quantify information and extrapolate findings from a sample to the entire population	To understand meanings, experiences, and social contexts
Numerical (numbers, statistics)	Non-numerical (words, images, observations)
Measures variables, identifies patterns	Explores depth, complexity, and context
Statistical, mathematical	Thematic, content, or discourse analysis
Objective, measurable results	Rich, detailed understanding of human behavior
Large, representative samples	Small, purposeful samples
Emphasises reliability and replicability	Emphasises credibility and trustworthiness
Surveys, experiments, structured observations	Interviews, focus groups, open-ended observations

Source: Ahmadin (2022)

3.3.3 Mixed method approach

A research strategy known as the mixed method approach combines qualitative and quantitative techniques in a single study (Dawadi et al., 2021). By combining the advantages of both data kinds, this method provides a more thorough and sophisticated knowledge of the research subject (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The knowledge that a single method would not always yield accurate answers to research issues and that integrating several approaches might provide a more thorough and clearer view on the research topic are the reasons behind employing a mixed methods approach (Kumar, 2018).

3.3.4 The adopted research approach

After reviewing the various research methods suitable for this study, a qualitative approach was chosen to gather and analyse the data. This is due to the fact that qualitative research aligned data collection techniques, including interviews, provide a deeper comprehension of reality. The study aimed to determine managers' perspectives into the skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. Since the goal of the study was to better understand these skills from the managers' point of view, the qualitative technique was more suitable. The qualitative approach was essential because it provided a deeper comprehension of the skills needed for young professionals at Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 Target population

The group of people from which the participants are chosen is known as the population. Saunders et al. (2019) described the population as the group of cases from which the sample is drawn. Creswell and Creswell (2017) explained that the population is the entirety of the phenomenon that captures the researcher's interest. The bigger group that the researcher is interested in is known as the population. Creswell and Poth (2016) asserted that it is crucial to discuss the population in the study, including its size and the methods used to identify participants in the population.

This study's primary goal was to explore managers' perceptions of the skills required for young professionals at Transnet Property to take on leadership roles. These skills were explored from a manager's perspective. Sixty (60) employees in management positions at Transnet Property were the study's target group. These managers are directly involved in talent development and

organisational leadership, making them well-positioned to provide informed insights into the skills necessary for young professionals to transition into leadership roles.

3.4.2 Sampling

The practice of choosing certain components from the intended population is known as sampling. Sampling involves dividing the group into manageable sizes, from which information will be collected and analysed (Shaheen and Pradhan, 2019). A sample is an accurate reflection of the population. Researchers gather information from the sample and utilise it to draw conclusions about the complete group rather than researching the entire population (Casteel and Bridier, 2021).

Purposive, non-probability sampling was used because the study was qualitative. Thomas (2022) stated that this sampling method is utilised where the intention to select certain participants is deliberate to reflect the population. Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique, was used by the researcher to choose individuals who fit the requirements of being managers at Transnet Property. The participants were intentionally chosen for their extensive knowledge and experience in the property industry and leadership roles. The sample chosen for this study was anticipated to be sufficient in answering all the research questions and was in line with the suggested objectives.

3.4.2.1 Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014), is a technique where participants are selected not by chance but according to predetermined standards or attributes. In non-probability sampling, participants are chosen according to standards such as accessibility, knowledge, or ease of use. It is impossible to forecast in advance the possibility that each individual element will be chosen for the sample when using non-probability sampling (Rahman, 2023). Rather than being chosen at random, samples are chosen according to specific criteria, convenience, or the researcher's judgment. With non-probability sampling, not every member of the population has a known chance of being selected for the sample (Pace, 2021).

3.4.2.1 Purposive sampling

In purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select subjects they believe are relevant and suitable for the study (Thomas, 2022). Participants are chosen according to their experience, knowledge, or skills that are pertinent to the research study. Purposive sampling allows researchers to extract much knowledge out of the collected data (Taherdoost, 2016). Purposive sampling has

the benefit over other sampling techniques as it is time effective and cheaper compared to the other sampling methods (Taherdoost, 2016). According to Aggarwal (2011) purposive sampling has characteristics of theoretical sampling in the sense that it looks for individuals who can assist in building a certain theory further.

3.4.3 Sample size

A little representation of the target population is called a research sample (Hennink and Kaiser, 2022). In qualitative research, the sample size is determined by data saturation. When gathering more data does not provide fresh or pertinent information or insights on the research issue, it is referred to as data saturation in qualitative research (Mwita, 2022). When participants or sources in a qualitative study consistently notice or express the same themes, ideas, opinions or patterns, data saturation is reached (Chitac, 2022). It refers to the point at which collecting more data no longer yields new information, themes, or insights relevant to the research questions (Ahmed, 2025).

In this qualitative study conducted at Transnet Property, the target population consisted of 60 employees in management positions across all departments. The inclusion criteria required that individuals be currently serving, or acting, as a regional manager within the leasing, operations, or facilities management departments, and be willing and available to participate in the study. These criteria ensured that participants had sufficient professional experience and operational insight to meaningfully contribute to the research objectives. The exclusion criteria included managers outside the specified departments and individuals not occupying regional manager positions. Based on these criteria, fifteen (15) regional managers were identified as eligible, of whom nine (9) ultimately participated. The decision to conduct only nine interviews was guided by data saturation, which occurs when additional interviews no longer yield new or relevant insights, themes, or perspectives related to the research questions. Once saturation was reached after the ninth interview, the remaining six eligible regional managers were not interviewed, as further data collection was unlikely to provide additional meaningful information. Table 3.3 presents the details of the nine regional managers who participated, representing a research sample that reflects the broader target population.

Table 3.3: Details of participants in the study

Participants	Department	Position	Gender
P1	Operations	Acting Regional Manager: Operations	Female
P2	Leasing	Acting Regional Manager: Leasing	Male
P3	Facilities	Regional Manager: Facilities Management	Male
P4	Operations	Regional Manager: Operations	Female
P5	Facilities	Regional Manager: Facilities Management	Male
P6	Leasing	Regional Manager: Leasing	Male
P7	Operations	Regional Manager: Operations	Male
P8	Leasing	Acting Regional Manager: Leasing	Female
P9	Leasing	Regional Manager: Leasing	Female

3.5 Data collection

The approach used to obtain the information required to answer the study questions is known as the data collecting method (Saunders et al., 2019). Data collection is a critical component of any research study; therefore, researchers must be careful about the type and quality of data they gather (Mazhar et al., 2021). Researchers must ensure the data they collect is accurate and reliable, as it directly impacts the study's results and conclusions. The chosen research approach serves as a guide for the selection of data gathering techniques in the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

3.5.1 Primary data collection

Interviews were used since the study took a qualitative approach. Interviews involve conducting in-depth one-on-one conversations with multiple participants to gain insight into their views on a specific idea or situation (Qu and Dumay, 2011). Carter and Henderson (2005) noted that one of the main ways to gather data is through interviews, which can be done one-on-one or in groups. It is designed to gather information through a person's spoken responses to verbal questions. Understanding the research issue from the interviewees' point of view and investigating the factors that influence their opinions are the goals of the interviews (Alshengeeti, 2014). Interviews are generally more comfortable and easier for participants, particularly when the researcher is aiming to gather perceptions and opinions.

3.5.1.1 Interview types

There are various types of interviews that can be used as methods for data collection, namely:

- **Structured interviews:** These interviews involve a set of predefined questions that all interviewees respond to (Byrne, 2001). They necessitate the use of an interview schedule, which should include a set of instructions for the interviewer.
- **Unstructured interviews:** These interviews do not follow a fixed set of predetermined questions, although the interviewer typically has specific topics they aim to discuss during the interview (Robinson, 2023). In this type of interview, the researcher has limited control over the participants' responses.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** It is a blend of both unstructured and structured interviews. It gives the interviewer the freedom to go deeper into particular subjects or answers while still answering a predetermined list of open-ended questions (Berger, 2018).

The study employed semi-structured interviews as a method for data collection. The best interviews are semi-structured ones since they facilitate two-way dialogue. The interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams with nine (9) regional managers in the operations, leasing, and facilities departments at Transnet Property to allow for conversation to flow between the interviewer and the participants. The interview questions (attached marked as Appendix 2) were developed with careful consideration of the primary aim of the study and the objectives it seeks to achieve. The interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams between 10 June 2025 and 26 June 2025. With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded, and the transcriptions were generated through Microsoft Teams. Through the semi-structured interviews, the researcher delved deeper into the managers' views on the skills needed for young professionals in Transnet Property to take on leadership roles.

3.5.1.1.1 Benefits of semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews enable thorough probing while also allowing the researcher to maintain focus within the study's boundaries (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021). Similarly, Ruslin et al. (2022) proposed that semi-structured interviews have the following strengths:

- Permit participants to respond in an open-ended manner.
- Encourages two-way communication.
- There are more opportunities to ask probing questions.
- Allow participants time to open about sensitive issues.
- They combine elements of structure and unstructured interviews, offering the advantages of both.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of extracting valuable insights, meanings and patterns from data sets to help achieve the study's objectives (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Creswell and Poth (2016) explained that analysing qualitative data entails understanding text and visuals so that the researcher can produce insightful responses to the study questions. It involves structuring the information with the aim of analysing it followed by a thorough and detailed examination (Creswell and Poth, 2016).

Since the researcher employed a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews, the data collected consisted of textual responses from transcript generated on Microsoft Teams and audio recordings. Using the thematic analysis, the information obtained from the interviews was examined. Thematic analysis is a method of examining data to identify recurring patterns and themes (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams, and transcriptions were generated and downloaded from the platform. NVivo software was then used to develop themes and codes to support the study's objectives. Using NVivo, specific concepts, ideas, and recurrent patterns were highlighted by assigning codes to specific portions of the interview transcripts. Following that, the researcher classified the codes according to common ideas and traits. The thematic analysis approach enabled the researcher to delve into the managers' viewpoints, insights, and experiences about the skills they believe are necessary for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.

The process of coding the collected data to identify themes, along with the thematic analysis method utilised is outlined below based on the work of Dawadi (2020).

Phase 1: Becoming acquainted with the data

This process entails the researcher deeply engaging with the collected data to fully understand it to recognise emerging themes and patterns. In this study, the researcher reviewed audio recordings and transcripts produced by Microsoft Teams to gain a thorough understanding of the data

Phase 2: Creating codes

At this stage, the data is organised based on recurring concepts or prominent ideas. The researcher used NVivo software to facilitate the coding process. Participant data was imported into the NVivo qualitative analysis tool, where initial coding identified key concepts, which were then labeled. The data was re-examined to uncover broader themes and subthemes. A thematic framework was then created and used to examine the entire data set.

Phase 3: Identifying and refining themes

At this point, the researcher carefully examined the identified themes, discarding those that were not relevant and refining the remaining ones to ensure they were consistent with the research objectives.

Phase 4: Defining and labelling themes

The final phase of thematic analysis involves identifying and naming the themes. The researcher made sure that each theme was clearly linked to the focus of the study and was supported by data provided by the participants.

3.7 Ethical issues and considerations

To maintain the integrity and accountability of the research process, ethical issues are crucial. The set of rules or guidelines that define appropriate behavior and aid in differentiating between morally right and wrong is known as ethics (Resnik, 2015). A set of moral precepts and professional standards known as research ethics govern how research is conducted and guarantee that it is done with honesty, decency, responsibility, and equity (Drolet et al., 2023). These ethical guidelines are intended to protect participants' rights, welfare, and dignity while upholding the integrity of the research process and bolstering the validity of the findings (Armond et al., 2021).

Ethical standards help ensure that researchers do not engage in producing false or misleading data, thereby supporting the pursuit of truth and knowledge, which is the fundamental aim of research (Stevens, 2013). The following ethical considerations have been taken into account:

- The University of KwaZulu-Natal's research office granted the researcher ethical approval. Clearance No. for Ethics: HSSREC/00008536/2025, (attached marked as appendix 3).
- Transnet provided the researcher with a Gatekeeper letter (attached marked as appendix 4) before data collection began, and the study participants signed an informed permission form (attached marked as appendix 1).
- The researcher made certain that participants' privacy and confidentiality were maintained during the course of the study.
- Participants felt relaxed and at ease participating in the study because the researcher made sure they weren't under any unnecessary pressure.
- There were no negative consequences if the participants decided to leave the research at any point.
- There were no incentives or prizes offered to individuals for their involvement in the study; participation was entirely voluntary.

3.8 Data quality

Qualitative data quality is evaluated using four criteria: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Ahmed, 2024). The following sections explain each criterion and describe how the researcher addressed them in this study.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence in the truth and accuracy of the findings (Haq et al., 2023). It reflects how well the researcher has captured participants' actual experiences and perspectives. Credibility helps guarantee that research results are believable and reliable (Abidin et al., 2024). Member check was used to allow participants to check the transcribed data to confirm that it accurately reflected their perspectives. The study has also used direct quotes to accurately report the participants' views.

3.8.2 Dependability

Dependability relates to how stable and reliable the research process is across time (Kasirye, 2021). It emphasises having well-documented, coherent and transparent procedures so that another researcher could replicate the steps and arrive at comparable findings (Ahmed, 2024). To achieve this, the researcher offered thorough explanations of the data collection methods, the analysis process, and the way the findings were connected to the study's objectives. Establishing and maintaining an audit trail, containing detailed documentation of all decisions made throughout the research process, allows other researchers to replicate the study and thereby strengthens the reliability of its findings. This study has presented a clear and comprehensive audit trail that would allow another researcher to replicate the work.

3.8.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied or transferred to other contexts, settings or groups (Haq et al., 2023). To accomplish this, the researcher needs to give sufficient details about the participants and the study setting, allowing readers to judge the applicability of the findings. To ensure the transferability of the findings, the researcher has provided detailed information about the study context, participant selection at Transnet Property, the characteristics and roles of the participants, the research methodology, data collection timeframes, and comprehensive results. This enables readers to evaluate whether and how the findings may be applied to other relevant contexts within the property industry.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the research findings reflect the participants' perspectives rather than being influenced by the researcher's biases, motives, or assumptions (Gunbayi, 2024). It emphasises objectivity within the qualitative paradigm. To achieve this, the researcher provided the steps of thematic analysis used. The steps followed to analyse the data and to align the data to research objectives were outlined. The researcher included direct quotes from participants within the identified themes and kept an audit trail to allow independent verification of the research findings. A member checking process was also employed, allowing participants to review the transcripts and confirm that they accurately represented their perspectives expressed during the interviews. These practices helped demonstrate that conclusions are grounded in the data, not personal preference.

3.9 Summary

This chapter provided a thorough discussion of the techniques and steps taken to conduct the research. The chapter emphasised the measures taken to guarantee the validity and reliability of the results while also outlining the strategy used to answer the research questions. It encompasses a discussion of the research design, methods for data collection, and techniques used for data analysis. The study used an interpretivist research paradigm to explore the perspectives of managers regarding the skills required for young professionals at Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. A qualitative research methodology was used for this study in order to obtain in-depth information through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for a comprehensive comprehension of the managers' viewpoints.

The target population consisted of managers at Transnet Property. Participants were selected using a purposive selection technique because of their leadership roles and wealth of knowledge and expertise in the property industry. Throughout the study, strict adherence to ethical principles was maintained, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Thematic analysis of the data gathered made it easier to find important themes and trends in the managers' perspectives. To ensure data quality, the principles of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability were applied at every stage of the research process.

Having outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study, the next chapter presents the findings derived from the data collected. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed account of the themes and patterns identified from the managers' perspectives regarding the skills required for young professionals at Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to determine managers' perspectives on skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. The research methodology employed in the study was detailed in Chapter Three. Purposeful sampling was used to select nine regional managers from the leasing, operations, and facilities management departments. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded on Microsoft Teams for further analysis. The interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was carried out using NVivo.

This chapter presents the findings derived from the data analysis. The results are organised according to the key themes that emerged from the interviews with the participants. The analysis identified three main themes: skills and qualities required to promote young leaders, challenges affecting the attainment of leadership roles, and recommendations for improvement to better identify and develop young leaders. These themes provide insight into managers' perspectives on leadership development for young professionals within Transnet Property and highlight areas for potential organisational improvement.

Note: The responses from all nine participants are presented exactly as spoken. Since English is a second or third language for these individuals, some quotes may include grammatical errors. These have been left unchanged to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the participants' voices.

4.2 Demographic information

Purposeful sampling was used to select the study participants, consisting of nine regional managers from the leasing, operations, and facilities management departments. Table 4.1 below shows the profiles of the research participants.

Table 4.1: Profiles of the research participants

Participants	Department	Role	Gender	Date of the Interview	Duration of the interview
P1	Operations	Acting Regional Manager: Operations	Female	11 June 2025	54:48
P2	Leasing	Acting Regional Manager: Leasing	Male	12 June 2025	1:07:01
P3	Facilities	Regional Manager: Facilities Management	Male	13 June 2025	1:02:03
P4	Operations	Regional Manager: Operations	Female	12 June 2025	50:21
P5	Facilities	Regional Manager: Facilities Management	Male	25 June 2025	1:04:30
P6	Leasing	Regional Manager: Leasing	Male	10 June 2025	1:02:31
P7	Operations	Regional Manager: Operations	Male	26 June 2025	48:02
P8	Leasing	Acting Regional Manager: Leasing	Female	10 June 2025	52:55
P9	Leasing	Regional Manager: Leasing	Female	11 June 2025	56:26

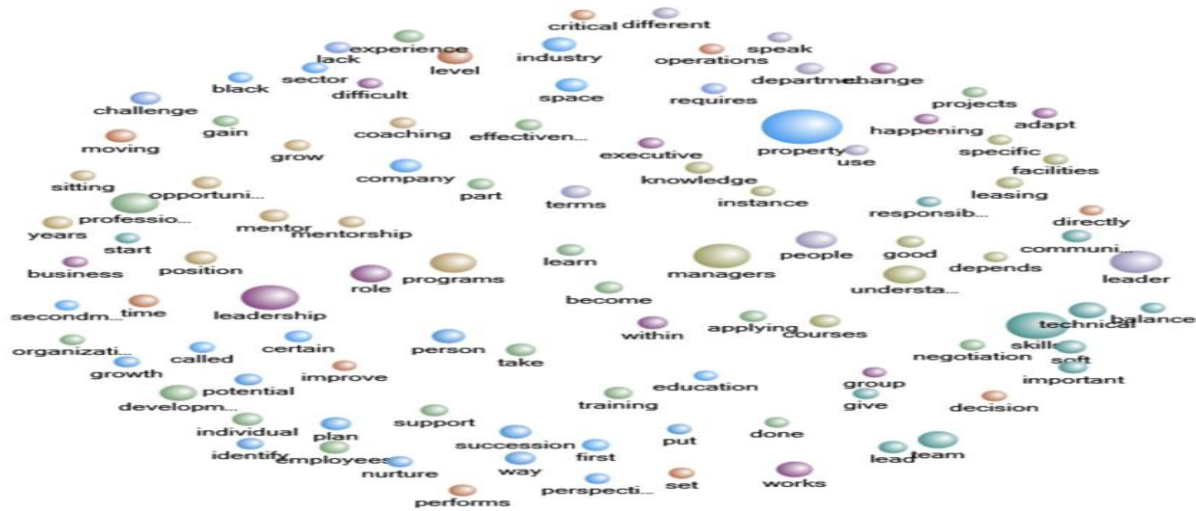


Figure 4.2 - Cluster analysis
Source: Adapted from NVivo

4.3.3 Tree maps

Tree maps show the data (frequently used words) in terms of size of blocks. As illustrated in Figure 4.3 below the largest blocks are property, skills and leadership, indicating that these are the core pillars of the discussion. Nested within them are important subthemes such as managers, programs, team, development, experience, training and support reflecting a strong managerial emphasis on structured learning and professional growth. Terms like communication, technical, decision, challenge and succession suggest that both interpersonal and job-specific skills are seen as essential.

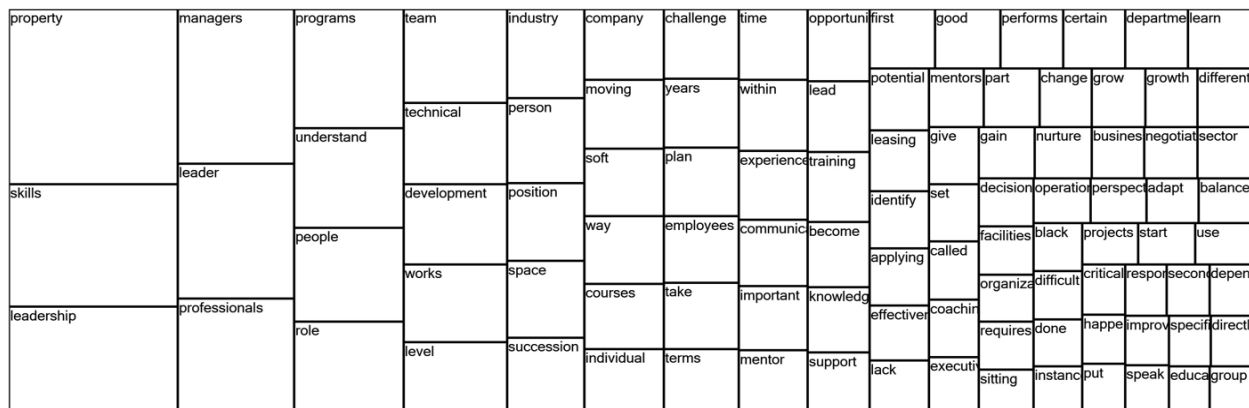


Figure 4.3 - Tree map
Source: Adapted from NVivo

4.3.4 Hierarchy charts

Hierarchy charts reflect the size of the nodes. The larger the size the more volume/concentration of responses in that area. As illustrated in Figure 4.4 below the most prominent area focuses on skills and qualities to promote young leaders, particularly emphasising key skills, qualities, and industry-specific competencies. Another significant segment highlights challenges affecting leadership role attainment, such as organisational barriers, developmental issues and industry-specific challenges like regulatory and qualification constraints.

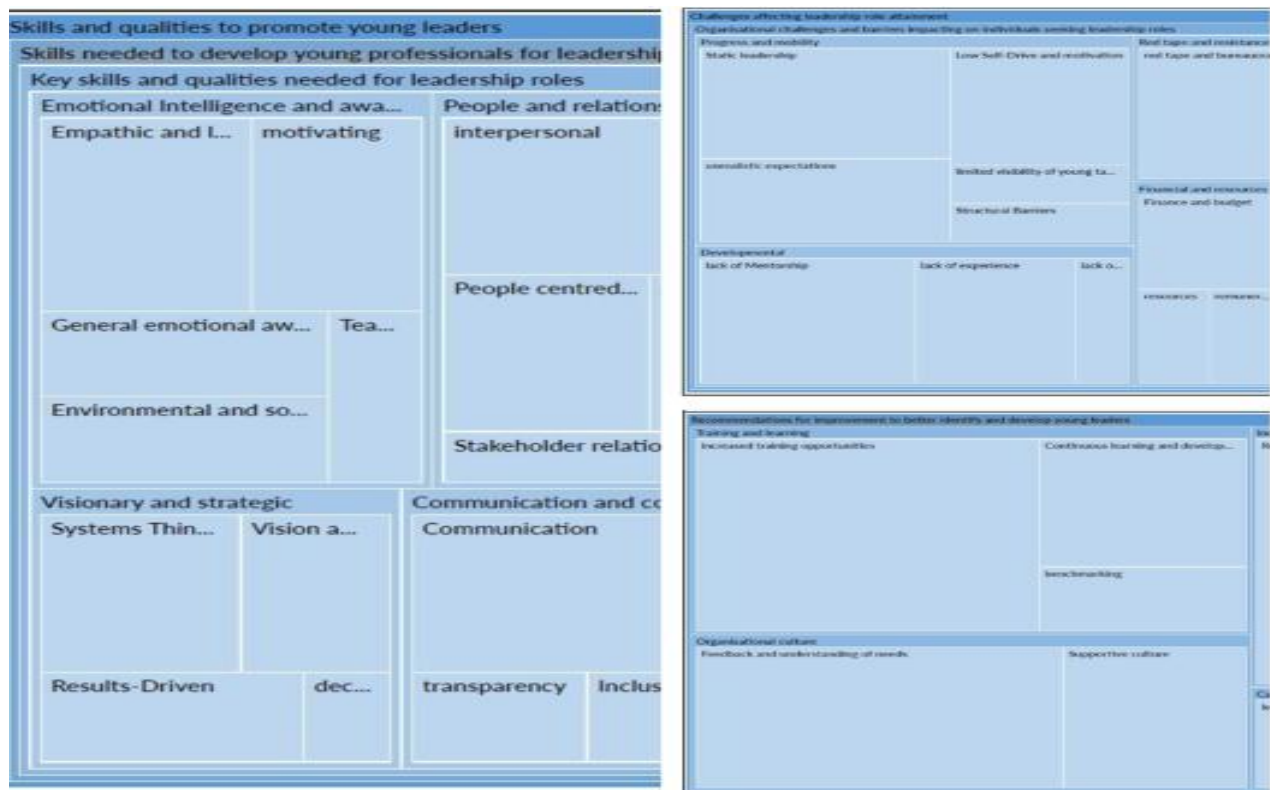


Figure 4.4 - Hierarchy chart
Source: Adapted from NVivo

4.3.5 Word trees

Word trees are used to depict key words and the words/sentences connected to that word. It allows you to see how these words connect to other words and sentences/views. In Figure 4.5 below, soft skills such as communication, attitude, customer relations and the ability to integrate within a team are considered equally, if not more, critical for leadership success.

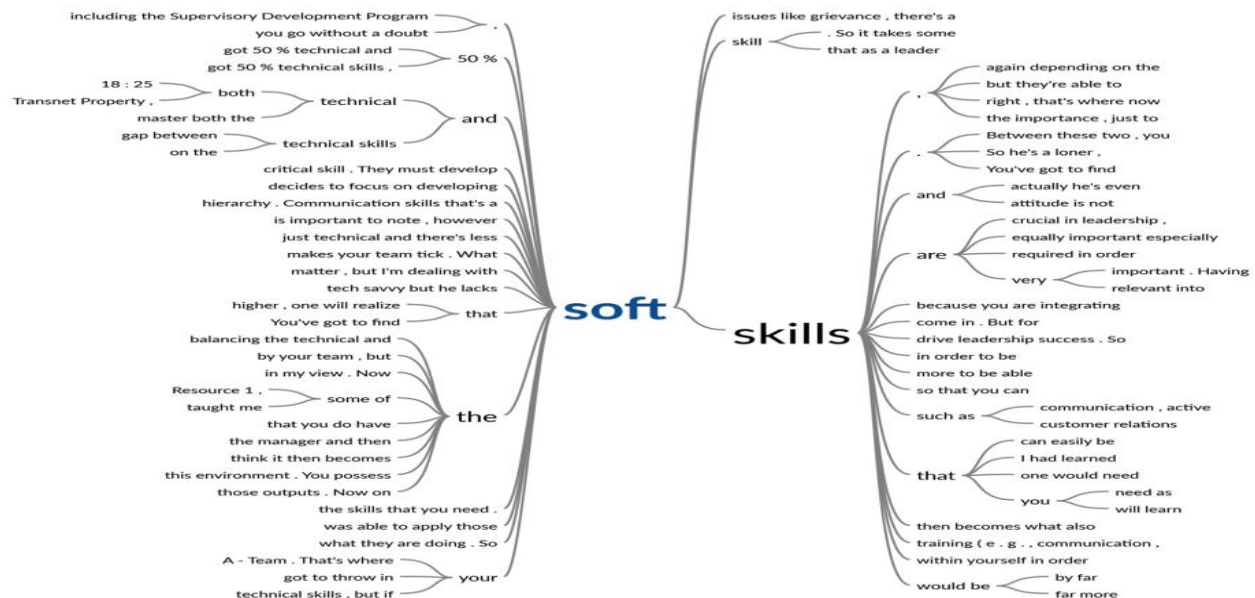


Figure 4.5 - Word tree
Source: Adapted from NVivo

4.4 Themes

For ease of reference, the analysis was aligned to the following key themes.

- Skills and qualities to promote young leaders
- Challenges affecting leadership role attainment
- Recommendations for improvement to better identify and develop young leaders

4.4.1 Skills and qualities to promote young leaders

This primary theme established the perceptions of current leadership at Transnet Property as well as the skills needed to develop young professionals for leadership roles.

4.4.1.1 Perceptions of leadership characteristics within organisational context

The current perceptions of leadership characteristics within organisational context was informed by the following.

a) Strategic

Leadership was seen as strategic. This was based on the following factors

- Strategy and innovation

Participants described leadership as having undergone a recent reshuffle to reassess and reinvent strategies. It was hence viewed as strategic and capable with a focus on managing the organisation's property portfolio to support broader economic and transformation goals. In light of this, innovation also played a key role in unlocking value from underutilised assets and maximising their potential.

“But we have just reshuffled the current leadership. To reassess our stance and regrow and reinvent methodologies to enhance the business so that we can become profitable. So that in itself will tell you that we have the right leadership skills in Transnet Property.” [P8]

“I would say leadership in the context of Transnet Property involves the ability to strategically guide and manage the organization's extensive real estate portfolio to support Transnet's broader objectives, including economic growth and transformation.” [P4]

“While also driving innovation to unlock the full potential of property assets.” [P6]

- Strategic thinking and decision-making

Participants indicated that leadership in the organisation also provided strategic thinking, guidance and decision-making. It involved a strategic overview of the property portfolio with an emphasis on analytical thinking to assess market conditions and respond to tenant needs.

“Now where we sit in scenarios where a decision must be made, that’s where leadership comes in. The day-to-day operations have got their own set rules, but a lot of times they become stuck because of one or another issue or maybe there’s no budget, that’s where leadership comes in. Leadership is strategic and they come with a strategic thinking of the entire property portfolio or space.” [P7]

“Analytical thinking to assess market conditions and tenant requests” [P6]

- Strategic implementation and alignment

Participants indicated that departmental leaders were responsible for cascading and implementing the corporate plan across the organisation. This approach ensured alignment with broader targets and mandates with a focus on strategic execution to meet objectives set by executive leadership.

“We can be able to realise the targets and reach what has been mandated for us by the board, the Transnet Group CEO and the CEO of Transnet Property.” [P5]

“I think in the context of Transnet property, we have a corporate plan that comes from the top, which then would outline what is the what is the target or the contribution of Transnet property to the bigger Transnet as a whole. So for me, I always take it as it gets cascaded to different departments. You have different leaders in those departments.” [P3]

b) Progressive and sustainable

Some did view leadership as progressive and focusing on sustainability. This was informed by the following.

- Growth driven

Participants noted that leadership at Transnet Property was characterised as results-driven and growth-oriented with a focus on empowering young professionals through responsibility and accountability while still allowing room for further development.

“So when I define leadership in the context of Transnet property, it is leadership that has room for growth. Its leadership that is a result driven and its leadership that promotes growth in giving young professionals responsibilities and being accountable for the work they do.” [P1]

- Profitability and revenue focus

Leadership was seen as highly effective having demonstrated the ability to turn the business around over the past 18 months. Hence, it was described as capable of managing difficult situation with a focus on profitability and maximising revenue and performance.

“In Transnet Property, the leadership skills is great. We’ve proven that in the last 18 months that we can really turn the business around into a profitable company. That will generate profits that’ll maximize revenue, that will sweat the assets in layman’s terms and add to Transnet’s balance sheet and add to Transnet’s revenue as such, so that in itself speaks volumes about leadership and that they are adaptable. They can manage difficult situations.” [P8]

c) Exemplary and values

Ethics and leading by example was highlighted by some of the participants.

- Ethical governance and accountability

Participants indicated that effective leadership was seen as rooted in strong ethical governance and the ability to enforce accountability. Timely task execution was emphasised as essential, given the interconnected nature of departments where delays in one area could impact the entire organisation’s performance.

“Effective leadership here also entails strong ethical governance.” [P4]

“Whereby just to give an example, if there’s an instruction that there is a task that needs to be done at a certain time, then that task need to be done at that time because the consequences of not that deadline it will not only affect your department, if you are in a certain department because all the roles in Transnet Property intertwined. Each role, each department relies to the other department to execute well on their duties.” [P2]

- Leading by example

Participants emphasised self-respect and professional conduct as foundational with the expectation that leaders model the behaviour they expect from others. Therefore, leading by example, earning respect and guiding teams with clarity were seen as essential qualities.

“Leadership must lead by example. I cannot be a leader of mechanics if I don’t know how to fix a car myself. A leader must be able to lead by example, but in the context of Transnet Property, I would say it’s an individual who is able to lead a group of people, to steer the group of people in a certain direction and then to be followed and respected by the people.” [P7]

“So the definition of Leadership within the context of Transnet property, I would say it start with self-respect. And how each individual conduct themselves within their working environment and when you’re a leader, you need to lead by example.” [P2]

d) Communication and alignment

Communication and fostering of alignment was brought to the fore through responses.

- Communication and shared understanding

Participants expressed the view that effective leadership involved open communication, mutual understanding and willingness to consider diverse perspectives including those from junior staff. In addition, they would provide clear direction, motivation and necessary support within the team.

“So, the role of the leader is to motivate, is to guide, is to support and is to reward when necessary. I would sum it in this way to say the role of the leader is to be a visionary, provide direction, try and capture the backing of your team, support and give clear guidance.” [P3]

“Also, by being a leader you must be a person that is open for other people views. Being a leader, it doesn’t mean you’re always right, you must also cater for other people’s views, even if the person is a junior staff or below your level in terms of the employment grade within Transnet Property.” [P2]

- Direction and alignment

Participants described leadership as being responsible for guiding teams with clarity and direction thereby ensuring their efforts align with broader organisational goals. It involved setting the tone from a higher level, while enabling those at operational levels to focus on implementation.

“Leadership is setting a direction and is setting a tone for things from a high level. You know, at the bottom level, that’s where we work on the nuts and bolts. Uh, so your administrators and some of those people, they work on the nuts and bolts.” [P7]

“Leadership as far by definition, it’s a role where one is actually entrusted to be able to guide, to lead and ensure that the people that you are guiding are then able to see direction.” [P3]

- Balancing generational dynamics

Participant indicated that it was also important for leadership to promote balance by valuing experienced staff and supporting the growth of younger employees entering the organisation. It required adaptability to manage both traditional practices and fresh perspectives effectively.

“Leadership in Transnet Property, it’s kind of unique in such a way that you’re dealing with the with the old and the new and then you’ll need to find a balance, meaning you need to nourish the experience and the people who’ve been here the longest and at the same time you have to ensure that at least you manage and you lead young people that are just entering into the space.” [P5]

e) Hierarchical and authoritative

However, some participants did report a hierarchical structure as well as fear-based leadership.

- Hierarchical

Participant indicated that leadership was described as being defined by organisational position and grade level typically starting from Level G (supervisory roles) up to Level A, encompassing roles such as team leads and supervisors. This reflects a hierarchical view of leadership within the organisation.

“Your leadership positions normally start from your Level F all the way up to Level A and some of it actually starts at Level G, which is normally your supervisory level. Which will be things like Team leads, supervisors, so that is basically how Transnet property then describes leadership in this case, it is based on the position and the grade that you hold.” [P9]

- Fear based leadership

Participants expressed the view that at the executive level, leadership was described as fear-driven with a focus on consequences for failure. However, some of the regional managers in certain areas sought to adapt and transform this style into one that better reflected their own values and approach.

“Now, if you then take it to the other layer, which is now the Chief Executive office at Transnet property, the leadership there, Its leadership through fear. We are being led through fear that should this not happen, there’ll be consequences. But as the Western Cape region, we try as the leaders to absorb that leadership style and translate it into something that we believe in as the region.” [P1]

4.4.1.2 Skills needed to develop young professionals for leadership roles

This primary theme outlined the skills needed to develop young professionals for leadership roles.

a) Key skills and qualities needed for leadership roles

There were a variety of skills and qualities needed for leadership roles as outlined by the participants. These were classified in subthemes below.

- **Emotional Intelligence and awareness**

The most highly ranked skill and quality revolved around emotional intelligence. This highlights its critical role at a leadership level.

- **General emotional awareness and philosophy**

Participants linked effective leadership to strong emotional intelligence thereby enabling leaders to communicate well and manage relationships effectively. One participant raised that having a sound philosophical approach and grounding decisions through informed facts rather than hearsay was a critical leadership skill.

“Good leader is emotionally intelligent. It requires a lot of emotional intelligence in the leadership roles that we’re doing here at Transnet.” [P7]

“which speaks more to your emotional intelligence and leaders that are able to lead by direction.” [P9]

“I think philosophy is a very important skill. I’m just going to make an example that we have leaders that would be in an argument situation without informed facts. If a leader has philosophy, then you need to state your arguments with facts. You do not use hearsay as a leader.” [P1]

- Empathetic and listening

Participants emphasised that empathy and active listening were also essential leadership qualities. Leaders needed to be empathetic and reflective as well as understanding others' perspectives before making decisions. This required self-awareness and adaptability as important traits for effective leadership.

"You need to be very empathetic. You need to be a good listener." [P5]

"You are able to be empathetic where required, sympathetic where it's required. Those are the strong qualities that you have to develop as the leader. Being able to also know yourself, having to be able to reflect when you have to reflect and be able to adapt and change your perspective as you are trying to solve a certain problem that you will be seeing" [P3]

"Leaders that have empathy. Having empathy, understanding what is empathy." [P9]

"To be a successful leader one needs to listen to other people views before taking a decision that will affect them." [P2]

- Motivating

A leader's success was seen as directly connected to the motivation and positivity of their team along with empathy playing a key role in fostering this environment. Therefore, successful leadership was also linked to the ability to empower and motivate diverse teams.

"You cannot be a successful leader without the support of your team. So, on my side I always say my success can only be seen from my team. If you deem my team as failing, then I am failing as the leader. So, a successful leader is the one that has a team that is highly motivated." [P3]

"The ability to inspire and empower diverse teams are equally essential." [P4]

"You need to be able to have motivational skills which also talks part to your empathy side of things." [P9]

- Environmental and social awareness

Participants indicated that leaders needed social and political awareness to navigate relationships with municipalities, communities and public entities effectively. Beyond just financial goals,

leadership was needed to include a strong sense of social and environmental responsibility recognising the broader impact of an organisation's actions on society.

"Another thing that I can add they need to be or have political astuteness. So, in Transnet Property, you're dealing with municipalities, you're dealing with communities, you'll be dealing with a lot of public entities, so you need to be able to manoeuvre within." [P5]

"But in that drive, are we then aware of the social responsibilities that we have as leaders, because it doesn't only end at the monetary value, but there's also the social aspect of it. There's environmental aspect of it because when you make too much of something, there is something that is forsaken somewhere." [P1]

- Team dynamics

Emotional intelligence through combining self-awareness, empathy and technical knowledge was seen as important for understanding and effectively managing teams. Leaders also needed to be adaptable and open to learning to build trust and lead with sensitivity.

"You need to have a certain level of emotional intelligence in order to understand your team and that intelligence needs to be incorporated with your technical knowledge and the training that you have experienced in your studies." [P8]

"Emotional intelligence, including self-awareness and empathy, allows leaders to build trust and manage teams with sensitivity and respect. Adaptability and a willingness to learn are also crucial." [P6]

- Visionary and Strategic

Being a visionary in order to promote proactive strategy was an added skills that was needed.

- Vision and drive

Participants indicated that people in a leadership role should have a clear and sustained long-term vision and focus on strategic goals. This included applying entrepreneurial thinking to drive economic growth and revenue stability. Strategic foresight planning in phases over several years was also emphasised as key to building sustainable systems.

“You need to have that vision at all times to say, this is where we need to be. You need to have that drive and that focus to get to where you want to be.” [P8]

“Also again in my space I had to use a lot of I think strategic foresight it’s called whereby you needed to have a plan to say between the first six months, what is the plan? From the six months to the 12 months, what needed to be done? That is year 1. What is the plan for year 2? What is the plan for year 3? So that at least on year 4 or year 5, then the system is self-running.” [P5]

“You need to see the long term vision. You can’t be short-sighted when you’re working in Transnet. You need to always see the long-term vision. I mean, even at the national level, we’re looking at a national development plan in 2030, for instance. So you need to be able to look at those things from an entrepreneurial point of view. How can you develop and grow the economy. How can you stabilize revenue generation.” [P8]

- Results-driven

Participants felt that a leader needed to be results-driven by having the ability to set clear goals and performance targets and to lead teams toward achieving or exceeding those targets. Various measures needed to be used to assess results and for performance management.

“I think if you have set targets first, you have to meet the targets or be closer to the targets.” [P3]

“So you have to ensure that you have a team that is positive, that is close to achieving and exceeding the targets that have been put forward. I think if you would look when we looked at the final year result of Transnet property, the measure in most cases would be EBITDA. So for me I always say you have a budget, you have targets, so as a leader, to be then called successfully, you should have worked to get closer to the target or exceed them where possible.” [P3]

“A good leaders should be able to know how to clearly set goals for the team. To clearly set key performance areas for the team and individuals, of course.” [P9]

- Decision making

Participant expressed the view that effective leaders also needed strong decision-making abilities, including the capacity to consult collaboratively while proposing practical solutions.

“They must have good decision-making skills. Being a decision maker does not mean that you don’t need to consult, but when you consult your line manager, consult him with a solution or a way that a problem needs to be dealt with.” [P2]

- Systems thinking

Participants emphasised a systems thinking approach as crucial for leadership, requiring an understanding of how various operating division of Transnet SOC Ltd such as Transnet Property, Transnet National Ports Authority and Transnet Freight Rail interconnect within the broader organisational ecosystem. Leaders needed to grasp how even small actions could have ripple effects across departments thereby highlighting the importance of holistic thinking and integration.

“So, Ports and Rail and then you’ve got Transnet property coming in and then Transnet property will need to understand and integrate into the business environment and into the logistical framework to say how can I support Rail and how can Transnet Property support the Ports you see.” [P8]

“And you know there’s a lot of systems that one needed to bring. So you know the system thinking in terms of how then are we going to go about blocking what we don’t want, what we need, how then do we go about ensuring that we move along with what works and the likes.” [P5]

“Within the operating divisions, you need to know how the ecosystem is operating. Also decision making, what impact will one decision do. You to understand the supply chain of the entire system.” [P5]

“It can be as small as filing but you need to understand the ripple effect that if I don’t put that file in shelf number two, how is it going to impact the leasing team? How is it going to impact operations? How is it going to impact finance? How is it going to impact facilities, just from misplacing 1 file and that’s the a very important skill because then it doesn’t only deal with what you work with, but you’re seeing things holistically.” [P1]

- Transformative and adaptive

Leader needs to be adaptable and transformative within a changing environment.

- Adaptability

Adaptability was consistently highlighted as a critical leadership trait especially in the face of a fast-changing and dynamic work environment. Leaders needed to be versatile, capable of adjusting their approach to meet shifting demands in the evolving property sector.

“If you don’t adapt the way the people want you to adapt then you are going to have an issue. You also need to be versatile.” [P8]

“Ability to adapt in a fast-changing work environment.” [P4]

“Adaptability, as I mentioned, being able to deal with changes that are happening, especially for Transnet property, seeming that it is a subject topic that we have picked up, there’s a lot of dynamics that are happening and as we are in a consistent change mode. Therefore, you need leaders that are able to adapt to change.” [P9]

“Adaptability and a deep understanding of the property market are critical for a leader at Transnet Property.” [P6]

- Digital

Participants indicated that as we are in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, there was a recognised need for leaders to embrace emerging technologies for innovation. This included being digitally literate and tech-savvy with an understanding of tools such as AI and Internet of things.

“They need to be digital tech savvy or fluent, where they are able to use Internet of things, AI driven tools. They need to be able to understand AI driven solutions.” [P5]

“And then of course your computer skills goes without saying that you need.” [P4]

- Transformative

Participants noted that it was important for leaders to be transformative especially in an environment that was diverse. This required shifting and being adaptive across different contexts such as economic downturns or COVID-19 crises situation with the ability to transition between leadership styles to manage changing circumstances effectively.

“I think number 1 is transformative. Like you want a leader that is charismatic to be successful in Transnet property because Transnet property has legacy issues. Transnet property is not core business of Transnet, now when you are not core, you are perceived to be wasting time because you are not seen as core.” [P1]

“We need to have leaders that are able to transition into different types of leadership to suit the certain season. Because I believe there’s different seasons like there would be a recession and then after recession there’ll be a good phase. Now we need leaders that are able to transform. We had COVID where everything was complete on stand still, that’s when we need leaders that have skills to transform that, We are in this situation, how we then best manage it, right?” [P9]

- Interdisciplinary

Participant felt that a strong understanding of the property industry was considered essential, including knowledge of financial principles, leasing processes, market demands and property valuation. Leaders needed to be well-versed in operational aspects such as setting market-related rentals and structuring lease agreements to manage property assets effectively.

“I grew up in property. I started within a financial sector where you need to have the financial understanding of how property industry operates and from there, I moved on to the leasing department where you need to know how to lease property that is under your management, what the market is requesting, what the parameters are when you sell buildings, how do you establish your market related rental or what length of lease agreements do you sign, What everything goes into a lease agreement.” [P4]

- Benchmarking and innovation

Participants identified Innovation and benchmarking as strong capabilities for leaders. Setting trends and aligning standards with global best practices were considered essential for maintaining industry relevance and competitiveness.

“What’s critical here in terms of industry, is benchmarking across national level, benchmarking across international level. So setting the trends and standards against international benchmarking, that’s critical. That’s a critical skill that you need to have as a young professional.” [P8]

“You needed to be very innovative.” [P5]

“And then when I mentioned the issue of innovation, we needed to make sure that we move with the times, you know, issues of digitizing, met our properties, how I’m going to ensure that our maintenance are up to the standard norms.” [P6]

- People and relationships

An organisation was driven by its people and human capital, therefore having strong human resource and people skills was crucial.

- Interpersonal

Participants indicated that strong interpersonal skills such as communication, active listening, patience, confidence and emotional intelligence were widely viewed as important for effective leadership. These skills were seen as particularly important in environments with diverse experience levels and political dynamics, where building relationships and conveying ideas clearly were key to success.

“You just need to be very patient. You just need to be very empathetic. Sympathetic at the same time, you know, emotional intelligence in all levels.” [P5]

“Your interpersonal skills must be good. You must be confident. If you don’t have confidence, you can’t be a leader and you must be able to also make decision as a leader. I think the main thing is the Intellectual awareness.” [P7]

“They must develop soft skills such as communication, active listening, patience and critical thinking. These traits help reconcile learned knowledge with what’s actually happening on the ground.” [P6]

“But for Transnet, I think because it’s a bit of a political space and environment, you would need those interpersonal skills a little bit more than technical to be 110% honest with you.” [P7]

“The other skill is interpersonal skills. It is very important for the individual to have interpersonal skills.” [P2]

- People centred and human resources

Effective leadership was seen to rely heavily on people skills and a deep understanding of human dynamics. This included the ability to manage group dynamics, personality differences and conflict, as well as fostering a supportive and open environment. Training in human resource principles and soft skills was recommended to prepare leaders for these relational aspects.

“You need to have good people skills. If you don’t have good people skills, you’re not gonna have the people on your team.” [P8]

“So for me, one of the major skills that we always oversee or we don’t take cognizance of is HR skills, human skills and I’m speaking zoning specifically to how to Interpret call it group dynamics. Understanding the stages that your team is in, you know from your forming perspective, your storming, your norming performance and the adjourning side.” [P9]

“So for me, as a young professional I would say that if you can do a human resource course. Even if it’s Human Resource 1, some of the soft skills that you will learn from that will actually empower you so that it can prepare you when you get into those leadership roles. and then you will have an understanding of group dynamics, personality dynamics, conflict management and change management, especially in situations where there could be changes that are happening.” [P9]

- Alignment and expectations

Participants were of the view that successful leadership involved alignment with both peers and subordinates, ensuring that everyone clearly understood expected outcomes. Leaders were expected to communicate the business model effectively and align their teams towards success rather than pursuing it in isolation.

“To be successful in the leadership role within Transnet Property, you first need to align with your peers or with your subordinates. People reporting under you need to know what type of work outcome is expected from them.” [P2]

“They are able to allow people to understand the business model and they are able to take the teams with them into success and not leave your teams behind and go and chase success alone.” [P1]

- Stakeholder relations

Participants felt that effective leadership within the organisation also required the ability to manage complex stakeholder relationships, both internal and external. This involves building and sustaining networks, communicating clearly and aligning property strategies with broader organisational or developmental goals.

“Our context of the Transnet property, you have external tenants, you have internal tenants. So you have to bridge all those gaps, meaning you have to bring about those relationships and networks that you are able to maintain and grow with them.” [P3]

“Young professionals must be able to navigate stakeholder relationships, engage with regulatory bodies and align property solutions with broader business or development goals.” [P6]

- Ethics and values

Participants were of the view that a leader must possess strong ethics and values.

- Ethical and accountability

Ethical leadership and accountability were highlighted as critical qualities. Participants stressed the need to instil ethical behaviour in response to past mismanagement concerns especially in handling finances and large projects. A lack of ethics and accountability in broader country related to leadership across sectors was also identified as a systemic issue.

“Also again, I don’t know if I mentioned ethical where we needed to deal with issues of leases, dealing with big projects that needed to use a lot of money because there was this narrative that at Transnet Property people are just mismanaging company funds and all that stuff. So we needed to instil the issue of being an ethical employee, ethical team player.” [P5]

“Maintaining accountability and ethical leadership.” [P4]

“You should be able to also make sure their accountability side of things. As well that you are able to hold people accountable for whatever tasks that you have appointed them to.” [P9]

“There’s so many corruption in South Africa as a whole, and the corruption we are seeing its political leaders. Its company holders and it’s there at leadership and one asks themselves that what went wrong, what happened and in me being involved in programs and also studying. I’ve noticed the gap where ethics are insufficient in our leadership, be it in your state-owned entities or your public sector or your political leaders.” [P1]

- Hardworking

Participants identified Hard work and passion as key leadership traits. Effective leaders are those who are willing to be hands-on, dedicated and driven by genuine passion for their roles.

“From my perspective, the first thing I’ll say is the leader must be hard working. You cannot have a leader that doesn’t work hard and doesn’t get their hands dirty.” [P7]

“Leaders that lead with passion as well.” [P9]

- Resilience and strength

Strong and resilient leadership was seen as much needed especially in challenging environment where the organisation operates in. Leaders must withstand scrutiny, navigate criticism and remain composed during crises. Hence, being resilient enables them to manage disruptions and still drive projects forward while maintaining their integrity and purpose.

“I’ve seen over the years that you need to be a strong leader.” [P8]

“They also need to be resilient under scrutiny. I always use this phrase that being in facilities is one of the toughest jobs. Today you’re a superstar, tomorrow you’ll label like you don’t know anything under the sun. So they just have to be resilient under scrutiny. Be able to face all the criticism, but at the same time they need to be able to simulate this crisis so that they can be able to come up with solutions.” [P5]

- Values Driven

Participants were of the view that leaders are expected to embody the organisations core values and organisational culture, demonstrating alignment with the company's principles in their conduct.

“And then I think I would also lean on the Transnet core values, which you know quite well as well. So you have to embody the core values of the organization. So you also have to embody the culture.” [P7]

- Communication and collaboration

Communication and collaboration was a mandatory skill to possess especially when dealing with staff and stakeholders.

- Communication

Effective communication emerged as a critical leadership skill across the interviews. In light of this, participants emphasised the need for young professionals to communicate clearly in order to convey expectations, manage stakeholder relationships, provide respectful feedback and build trust amongst staff and stakeholders alike.

“You need communication skills as well. I’ve noticed these days that with the young professionals they don’t have communication skills. So I feel like you need to have those communication skills as well.” [P8]

“The basics would be how to communicate, so communication skills as it all depends on communication and your ability to gain the trust of a person that you are leading and negotiating with.” [P4]

“Strong communication and stakeholder management are essential, as the leader must communicate with their team, tenants and external partners.” [P6]

“Your professionals need to master their communication skills, they must be able to communicate and relay certain messages to their colleagues or various stakeholders.” [P2]

- Inclusivity and collaboration

Relating to communication, inclusive collaboration was further highlighted as key for effective leadership roles. Leaders needed to foster teamwork across departments by involving all, including junior staff, in problem-solving. They also needed to act as ‘translators’ to bridge communication gaps between technical and operational teams.

“One needed to be a collaborative leader, inviting junior engineers, technicians, artisans to run with issues. You need to be a translator, so that you bridge the gap, you know the language gap in terms of the engineering, in terms of the activities and the likes.” [P5]

“We have a set of departments so not one department can operate or thrive on its own, so that there will always be this link between the departments. So to be able to grow in the space, you have to be able to communicate and be able to collaborate teams.” [P3]

- Transparency

Participants indicated that effective leadership at Transnet Property included being transparent, communication as good leaders are also honest, direct and willing to point out areas where others need to improve in a constructive way.

“A good leader will not shy away from telling you your shortfalls and shortcomings.” [P7]

“So I think a successful leader at Transnet Property needs to be a leader that communicates, needs to be a leader that is transparent, needs to be a leader that is charismatic.” [P1]

- b) Technical versus soft skills

This primary subtheme established the importance of soft skills and technical skills with an intention of determining which skills were more important to have at leadership level. Whilst results imply a high weighting on soft skills, it also emphasised that a balance between the two are crucial for effective leadership.

- Soft skills

Soft skills were more highly ranked than technical skills for leadership level. This was informed by the following.

- Soft skills for leadership success

A clear consensus emerged on the increasing importance of soft skills in leadership as professionals progressed to higher roles. While technical skills formed a necessary foundation, soft skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, empathy, ethical decision-making and strategic thinking became more critical in managing teams, engaging stakeholders and driving organisational objectives. Effective leaders were expected to balance both skill sets, but greater emphasis was placed on soft skills at senior levels where the focus shifted from execution to coordination and influence.

“On the technical skills and soft skills, the importance, just to add, technical skills are the baseline. I think that that is important to note, however soft skills drive leadership success.

“So it is important that as us leaders we manage a multi-generational teams, we embark into community interests so skills like conflict resolution, adaptive communication, ethical decision making. I mean those that determine the long term impact.” [P5]

“I think in the space of Transnet property one needs to possess both. I think as you go up, I think it then becomes the soft skills more to be able then to balance everything.” [P3]

“I would also say the higher you go without a doubt, soft skills would be far more important than what technical skills are going to be because you’ve got people reporting to you and you must be able to communicate with them and drive the company strategy across. Your responsibility would be more to get the groups together to agree on what is asked of them and to be successful in what they are doing. So soft skills would be by far the best ability that you must apply.” [P4]

- Soft skills enhance technical application

Participants highlighted soft skills as crucial for enhancing the impact of technical expertise especially in team leadership contexts. While technical knowledge was necessary for understanding tasks and guiding execution, soft skills were what enabled effective collaboration, communication and influence within teams.

“You need to build your relationship with your team, so you can’t just throw in your technical skills at somebody, you’ve got to throw in your soft skills. You’ve got to find that soft skills within yourself in order to enhance your technical skills.” [P8]

“They both equally important in my view. Now the soft skills then becomes what also enhances your technical skills once you lead A-Team. That’s where your soft skills come in. But for you to be able to lead A-Team you need to have some technical understanding of what is it that the team needs to go and execute. So both of them are equally important in my view.” [P9]

- Staff management

Participants argued that while technical knowledge provided a foundational understanding, most daily challenges involved managing people, addressing grievances and navigating complex interpersonal situations. Hence, leaders needed emotional awareness and empathy to effectively support their teams. They needed to acknowledge that employees were human beings first with personal and emotional needs that directly influenced their work.

“It is also equally important that you do have the soft skills so that you can be able to address the issues because If I can give more examples is that between 7:00 in the morning and 16:00 when I’m in the office, I’m hardly dealing with any technical matter, but I’m dealing with soft issues like grievance, there’s a complaint about this. So you need to balance the scale. It’s very difficult, particularly in my role leading 120 or 130 odd people in a team that you just purely just technical and there’s less soft skill.” [P5]

“In order to be able to be aware of your team and you understand the dynamics of your teams and you understand that your team members are humans before they become an employee at Transnet Property. And those two aspects are important because you cannot deal with an employee separately with a human being.” [P1]

- Technical skills

Technical skills however were seen as important by some participants, in the following ways.

- Career pathing dependant

Participant emphasised that technical skills were important but their relevance varied depending on one’s role and career path within the organisation. For example, positions in facilities management required specific technical qualifications, often accredited by professional bodies such as engineering councils. The nature and depth of technical expertise needed were hence shaped by the direction of one’s career path.

“So for me, those are some of the technical skills that you need and again, it depends on where in Transnet Property your line of career growth is sitting. So for somebody that sits in facilities management will have different technical skills, sometimes they need to be accredited by certain Institutions or by certain boards like they need to have engineering whatever, because they could be civil engineers. So that technical skill it needs to be shaped by your career path and the position that you’re currently holding and where you see yourself.” [P9]

- Role specific technical skills

Participants indicated that technical knowledge needed to align with the specific leadership role held. For example, leading a facilities management team requires technical skills relevant to that area. Hence, there must be a balance between technical expertise and leadership responsibilities, tailored to the position.

“You need to know what property management is all about. The last thing you want is to have a leader that doesn’t know what the company’s business model is based on. So it’s a balance of both. In my view, you can’t be lacking too much technically and it also depends on the position that you hold. Again, from a leadership perspective, if you’re going to be leading a facilities management team, the expectation is that your skills, technical skill sets must speak to that role.” [P9]

- Tasks and output

Participants felt that technical skills were necessary to understand and perform the job effectively. As they enabled a leader to realise and manage the expected outputs successfully.

“Having said that you need to have an understanding of the technical skills required to do the job.” [P2]

“So the technical skills are important in order for a person to realize the outputs and be able to manage those outputs.” [P1]

- Complexities and efficiencies

Technical skills help leaders grasp the complexities of property management, which was important for making informed decisions and ensuring operational efficiency.

“Technical skills ensure leaders understand the complexities of property management which are critical for informed decision making and operational efficiency.” [P4]

- Balanced integration

Majority of the participant pointed to having a balanced integration of technical and soft skills. This was informed by the following.

- Leadership effectiveness (technical and soft skills)

Participants were of the view that both technical and soft skills were essential for effective leadership at the organisation. Technical skills are seen as crucial for management functions, while soft skills are key to effective leadership and interpersonal influence.

“But as I grow, I’ve learned to understand that you actually need to possess both skills for you to be able to thrive as a leader, to be able to lead, let me say in this context of property management.” [P3]

“At Transnet Property, both technical and soft skills are crucial in leadership, but their importance often depends on context and balance.” [P4]

“So I feel like both skills are important. But the technical skills are more relevant to being the manager and then the soft skills are very relevant into becoming a leader.” [P1]

- Experiential learning beyond education

Participants indicated that success in the workplace required balance and bridging the gap between theory and practice, especially in complex, people-centred environments. Whilst formal education provided foundational knowledge, real-world experience was essential for applying that knowledge effectively. Teamwork, problem-solving and practical exposure helped develop the skills that education alone could not fully instil.

“So at universities and at higher educational institutions they don’t train you how to deal with people on the ground. That is the training that you can only get when you are dealing with people so teamwork is very important and problem solving.” [P8]

“it’s a combination of your education and it’s a combination of your experience. And the reason I say that is because when you do your education, you are taught certain parameters, aspects, goals,

definitions and way of working that you then have to go and apply within the sector that you are working in.” [P4]

“Assuming a person has the academic foundation whether it’s a degree or a diploma, they need to bridge the gap between theory and practical application. They need to be able to apply knowledge they have in real world situations. For example, you may have studied contract law in school, but once you’re in the workplace, not every contract will appear as it does in textbooks.” [P6]

- Mentoring and teaching

An example was shared of a manager who initially excelled in technical skills but lacked soft skills which hindered their ability to collaborate effectively. After attending a management programme, they showed significant improvement becoming more inclusive and better at balancing both skill sets. They eventually took on a mentoring role, demonstrating the importance of integrating technical and soft skills for effective leadership.

“I’ve got one manager; he’s very tech savvy but he lacks soft skills. So, he’s a loner, he prefers to work alone but his role is that he needs to work with others to be able for him to realize his targets. There’s a management program that I recommended that he does at Gordon Institute of Business School (GIBS), and I think ever since he returned, I mean he has improved a lot. He’s more inclusive, he’s balancing the technical and the soft skills and actually he’s even leading in terms of mentoring the team that he’s leading, showing them the way and the like. So, it is quite important that you balance the two.” [P5]

- Team integration and performance

Understanding team dynamics and applying appropriate soft skills such as empathy, communication and adaptability was important to gaining trust and achieving high performance. Leaders needed to connect with their teams and not just manage them.

“you can’t just walk into a team and say, OK, I’m here now, I’m doctor so and so, I’ve got experience. I’ve got an MBA. I’ve got this and I’ve got that. You’ve already got a fully established team. That team is going to look at you and go like Huh. So, you need to integrate into the team. You need to understand what makes your team tick. What soft skills are required in order to get the highest achievement or the highest output from your team.”

c) Industry specific skills

This primary subtheme outlined the industry specific skills needed for leadership roles at the organisation.

- Qualifications and foundational knowledge

Qualifications and foundational knowledge ranked the highest in terms of industry specific skills.

- Academic credentials enable eligibility

Qualifications in property management, real estate, or built environment disciplines were seen as particularly valuable especially when paired with an understanding of relevant legal frameworks. Some noted that any formal qualification could be a starting point, provided the individual supplements it with property-specific knowledge to thrive in leadership roles at the organisation.

“Get your qualifications right. Decide what you want to do first, whether you want to be a leader in the facilities management space, whether you want to be a leader in the leasing space, whether you want to be a leader like me, who does everything, a bit of everything.” [P7]

“Firstly, the background of education is very important. So in the context of a Transnet Property, one needs a degree or diploma in Property or Real Estate as a foundation.” [P2]

“I think firstly it with property, It doesn’t matter which industry you have studied in it, you can be you can have BSc in Statistics. But I think that the education that would be instilled in you would be logic, number one because you are an academic, you know how to represent yourself, right? So I think on the technical skills, the first point is to be able to have some sort of qualification it doesn’t matter which industry, but just the qualification would make you eligible to work at Transnet property or any property company.” [P1]

- Technical qualifications

Participants emphasised the need for industry-specific or technical qualifications in property management, real estate, finance, engineering or depending on one’s area of specialisation. While various academic backgrounds were considered relevant, a common requirement was acquiring additional property-focused training or courses to develop the technical competence necessary for effective leadership in the property sector.

“So key background understanding of property management, I would say most of you guys have the real estate qualifications and property management qualification.” [P3]

“They need to have an understanding of property and that understanding can only be gained through education. So they need to educate themselves, for example enrol in property related programs and courses in order to get the technical skills to do their job. So, they must do a property degree or diploma or even property courses, they will be able to gain that technical skills in property.” [P2]

“The technical skills that one would need would depend in the area you want to specialize in. There’s a variety of areas that you can specialize in. For instance, if you look at Transnet properties, facilities management, there can be an engineer, so you would go for training within that department. But overall, you would need a property related qualification in order to lead in Transnet Property because you need to have basic understanding of property management.” [P4]

“I would even say certification in property definitely. Anything finance related. Partly engineering as well because like I said, we also have the facilities side of this.” [P9]

- Foundational and background knowledge

A foundational understanding of property management and its different departments is essential. Building on this knowledge through continuous learning enables leaders to adapt, grow and effectively apply their skills within the property sector. Therefore, progression in property leadership requires ongoing education and exposure to the industry through structured programmes.

“OK so we will start with your introduction to the commercial property program, that’s generally a week or two and that will expose you to the property industry. So even if you have a BSc in Property you will still need to be able to adapt to your property industry. You’ve also got your essential commercial property program that’s also a week or two. Then you’ve got your commercial property program, that is a year’s program. So all of these in time develop yourself as a person and as an individual” [P8]

“All right. At Transnet property we have different departments. So we have leasing team, property management, facilities management, risk and other departments. So one is to firstly you must have

background of property management, just a brief knowledge of what is property management, what is it all about and what are the expectations and which area one has to improve in order to grow within the space.” [P3]

“The more background information you have via your training, the more knowledge you have to apply.” [P4]

- Property and leasing

Some participants emphasised the importance of having focused knowledge on property and leasing aspect.

- In-depth technical knowledge

A thorough understanding of property management principles including leasing, facilities management, relevant laws and operational systems was seen as fundamental for technical competence in the field. Mastery of these core areas enables leaders to align their operations with industry standards and effectively manage property portfolios.

“Technical skills that you need. First of all, you need to understand property management. What is property management all about? We are operating or the intention is for us to be get to the levels of operating like your private sector property companies. What is a property company or property management company all about? So from a technical skills perspective, you need to understand that you need to understand the systems that are used in property management. You need to understand and know the laws and the by laws that speaks to property management.” [P9]

“A solid understanding of property management principles, including leasing, facilities management and contract administration, is essential.” [P6]

- Role specific skills in property

Participants were of the view that technical skills in property leadership also depended on the area of specialisation. Key skills included property and asset management, law, valuation, facilities management and lease administration. However, leasing roles focus on property studies and asset management requires finance and investment skills. Given the organisation’s broad scope, skills must match the specific role.

“There are several property industry specific skills such as an understanding of property and asset management, property law, property valuation and knowledge of facilities management and lease administration.” [P4]

“It’s all dependent on what leadership are you looking at. If you’re going to be in leasing, for instance, the strongest part will be of course your straight property related studies that you might you might need to do And if you’re going to be in asset management, so things like your finance and investment management those things definitely come into play because in the asset management is all about acquisitions and disposals as well so you need to do financial modelling. You need to know how to do all of that. So for me, I wouldn’t say there is a specific one that is tailor made specifically for this because remember Transnet Property is very vast.” [P9]

- Industry forums

Participant raised that attending forums and workshops helped deepen understanding of property management and its relevance. Engaging with industry leaders and peers broadened knowledge with current trends as well as industry norms and practices thereby highlighting the value of continuous learning and exposure.

“I then got exposed to many forums that are property related. And then there was a recommendation that I needed to attend a course at one of the universities that dealt with property management. To enhance my knowledge in terms of what is property management and why is property management important. And then I started to attend these forums, you know, workshops, you know, then you get to meet the industry players, the industry leaders, then the language changes, the conversation changes. Then you get to understand the norms, the tricks of the trade. What’s the hit in the property market at the moment?” [P5]

- Knowledge from professional bodies

Professional organisations such as South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) play a crucial role in developing property professionals. Their courses, forums and reports help build industry knowledge, leadership capacity and awareness of current issues. Hence, engagement with such bodies exposes individuals to best practices and regulatory updates which is crucial in the property sector.

“Ok. In leasing specifically, right, I think your South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) courses are absolutely key in developing young leaders at Transnet property.” [P8]

“But I think when they join the industry these young professionals, they need to be exposed to such property forums. They need to join these entities whereby you’re part of the professional body. Because now those professional bodies, they invite you to seminars, forums, workshops and that’s when then you get to understand, learn and then when you come back you dig in where you are, what you’ve learned, you bring them in here. You know you try to better yourself and improve the environment that you’re currently servicing at the time.” [P5]

“You need to also read different reports by different property organizations like the South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA).” [P2]

“SAPOA is an abbreviation of South African Property Owners Association. Now we call SAPOA in layman terms, as our AI in the property industry. It is an organization that is able to regulate how things are done in property. And how things should be accepted in the industry.” [P1]

- Negotiation

Participants highlighted negotiation as a key skill across property roles. Professionals needed to be persuasive and articulate when dealing with tenants and stakeholders. Successful negotiation required both interpersonal ability and market awareness, making it essential for securing deals and aligning with industry trends.

“You see, I think it’s difficult because like I was saying, you know, if you want to be a leader in the in the leasing space, you need to know your negotiation.” [P7]

“Secondly, negotiation skills go hand-in-hand with interpersonal skills. A successful leasing professional must be articulate and persuasive when dealing with prospective tenants, but also when presenting deals internally to the business. Often, we negotiate externally to secure tenants and then have to “sell” the deal internally to decision makers at Transnet.” [P6]

“You need to have negotiation skills, because the job requires you to negotiate property rentals. So you need to have those negotiation skills.” [P2]

- Analytical and reporting

Proficiency in report writing and data analysis was important as such skills enabled professionals to communicate effectively, provide insights and handle diverse responsibilities.

“Second to that now to empower yourself to be good in the industry and specifically Transnet property, I would advise that some of those technical skills would be to be able to do report writing and analyze data. You need to be able to report on any matter and be an all-rounder.” [P1]

- Client services

Strong client service was considered vital as staff represented the public face of the company. Being approachable, responsive and professional helped build trust and ensured clients felt valued thereby reflecting positively on the business and its leadership.

“Firstly, client services, As I mentioned earlier, we are the face of the company to the outside world. How we engage with clients reflects directly on the business. Strong client service means being approachable, responsive and professional ensuring that the client feels heard, understood and valued.” [P6]

4.4.2 Challenges affecting leadership role attainment

This primary theme was pertinent in determining the current challenges that hindered young professionals from attaining leadership roles.

4.4.2.1 Organisational challenges and barriers impacting on individuals seeking leadership roles

Results imply a plethora of organisational challenges and barriers impacting on individuals seeking leadership roles.

a) Progress and mobility

Progress and mobility related challenges were the most highly ranked as reported by participants.

- Static leadership

Participants expressed the view that advancement opportunities for young professionals are frequently hindered by long-serving leaders who remain in their positions for extended periods.

This lack of movement creates a bottleneck making it difficult for eager and capable young professionals to progress into leadership roles. Hence without vacancies or turnover in senior positions, opportunities for growth and promotion remain scarce, posing a significant challenge for leadership development within the organisation.

“I think it's number one, it's opportunities. You might find that you are in the same position for the next 10 years because there's no opportunity for you to go up and maybe your boss is not quitting or moving. So the opportunity must avail itself as well, number one, because in Transnet a lot of people have been here for 15-20 years long periods of time, so there's not a lot of movement in some instances.” [P7]

“They don't want to go anywhere, so if I don't leave as a leader, it means I don't open room for young professionals to come up. And then you find me sitting in this leadership position forever. That means you, as a young person, you can't just grow above me because there's a value chain of growth unfortunately that is set, so if I don't leave then young professionals don't come up.” [P9]

“Another challenge is that some employees in leadership roles become too comfortable in their roles. They settle into one position without aspiring to move higher or take on new responsibilities and making it difficult for young professional to grow or move up to a leadership position.” [P2]

- Structural barriers

Participants felt that there was a need for young leaders who could overcome bureaucratic barriers that delayed career advancement. Frustration was expressed over employees remaining in the same role for more than five years, highlighting the importance of having clear systems with specific goals to be achieved within set timeframes to ensure progress and growth.

“But I feel that you need young leaders who can be able to break these barriers, the bureaucracy, these structures and delay advancement. I still don't understand why one needs to be in a role for more than five years and still do the same thing. I mean, why? Why? You know? So it's just a challenge that I have, I still cannot fathom. How that is happening. We need to have a system whereby we do know that within three years you need to have achieved X. In five years you need to have achieved X and Y, whatever that is.” [P5]

- Limited visibility of young talent

Participant indicated that young talent often lacked visibility beyond their immediate teams and were frequently overlooked due to limited experience as senior leaders tended to favour more experienced and high-performing candidates.

“So, it's limited visibility of young talent beyond the teams. That's one. There's also an experience biasness because they are quite new and they are overlooked. Obviously senior leaders, they tend to prefer proven candidates who are high performing.” [P5]

- Unrealistic expectations

Participants felt that young professionals were also often eager to advance too quickly, assuming that academic qualifications alone were sufficient for leadership roles. Participants stressed that leadership required practical experience and gradual development in order to grow into such responsibilities.

“The problem I have with young professionals these days is that they get the degrees. And they want to be right on the top. They want to automatically assume these management roles. And you need to develop yourself. Getting a degree does not mean anything.” [P8]

“Its lack of experience in leadership. See in Transnet you need to grow into a leadership role. You can't just come out as a university graduate and say, OK, I'm going to walk into a leadership role. It doesn't work that way. You need to start at ground level and then work yourself up.” [P8]

“One common mistake that young professionals make is wanting to move too quickly. You may come in with a degree or even a postgraduate qualification, but it's important to understand that real growth often comes through practical experience.” [P6]

- Low self-drive and motivation

Participants indicated that young professionals also experienced self-related challenges in progressing into leadership roles. These included issues such as self-doubt and imposter syndrome which affected their confidence in leading teams. In addition, a lack of motivation with current roles led some to stop seeking growth opportunities, they also lacked drive and initiative, focusing only on their assigned tasks without trying to understand the bigger picture or engage critically with processes.

“Young professionals may also struggle with self-doubt or imposter syndrome and that may become a challenge in assuming leadership roles because these roles require confidence and the ability to lead a team.” [P6]

“Another challenge is lack of motivation and comfort zone. Many employees say, 'I'm happy where I am. I'm comfortable with my current duties,' and they stop growing. But staying in that mindset limits their potential. If you're always working quietly in the background, it's difficult for leadership to notice you or consider you for future roles. Leadership requires visibility, curiosity and a willingness to learn.” [P2]

“Another challenge is lack of drive, young professionals lack the drive. They only focus on the narrow scope of what they were appointed to do, for example, just general admin duties without trying to understand the broader process. They don't ask critical questions like, 'Where does this instruction come from?' or 'How was the client engaged before this step?' This lack of initiative is a serious challenge.” [P2]

b) Developmental

Developmental related challenges were at play, and these revolved around the following.

- **Lack of experience**

Participants identified lack of experience and exposure among young professionals as a key challenge. While many aspired to leadership roles, they often lacked the practical experience thereby limiting their chances of promotion.

“I think the biggest challenge of all is the lack of experience. So over the years I've noticed young professionals jumping into leadership roles and it's not sustainable. So yes, that's one of the biggest challenges is a lack of experience.” [P8]

“I also think that another problem with young professionals is experience and exposure. You know you'll be applying for a position, but you've got zero experience and exposure for it and then that ruins your chances. But where are you supposed to get that exposure from? You understand what I'm saying? So I think the other main problems is basically the opportunities must create themselves and must avail themselves.” [P7]

“Another main obstacles is a lack of experience, which can make it difficult to gain the trust of management to effectively execute in a leadership role.” [P6]

- Lack of appropriate qualifications

Participants were of the opinion that a challenge in the property sector was that many employees lacked formal qualifications, relying solely on experience. This made it difficult to shift mindsets toward correct, standards-based practices, leading to frustration when tasks were not done properly.

“Unfortunately, the current people working within property industry are people that do not have the book education behind them. They don't have the background of a Property degree or diploma. They only have the experience and it's very difficult to try and change the thinking of such a person to apply what actually should be done correctly? So, they do the work, but not correctly and it's frustrating.” [P4]

- Lack of mentorship

Whilst previous themes indicated strong mentorship, there were a few participants that indicated a lack of mentorship and effective pairing in development programmes. Without mentors, young professionals lacked guidance, encouragement and performance feedback. Poor coordination in mentor-mentee pairing further hindered the development of strategic and interpersonal leadership skills.

“The absence of mentors, it's one that would be the first to say it is a challenge if you don't have someone who is guiding you in the role as you come in as a young professional or you are already there but you are sitting now but there's no person who has confidence in you and who is able to throw you in the deep end and say I know you, I've seen you, you have potential, I know you can swim.” [P3]

“So you don't have a mentor while not having a mentor, you have a manager that is then not seeing your strength and is not able to manage in terms of your performance management, meaning he's not able to then tap in those areas that you are lacking, is able to encourage you where you are lacking.” [P2]

“However, the main challenge I see currently is in how it’s managed and how participants are paired. I believe the management of the pairing process and how mentees are sourced could be improved. I’m not sure if the coordination for pairing talents is yet at the level it should be.” [P3]

“Limited access to mentorship or professional networks can hinder young professionals ability to develop the strategic thinking and interpersonal skills required for effective leadership at Transnet Property.” [P6]

c) Financial and resources

Financial and resource constraints did have an impact on leadership progression.

- Finance and budget

Participants indicated that financial constraints leading to a hiring freeze were identified as key barriers limiting leadership advancement for young professionals. These prevent vacant positions from being filled, restricting opportunities for growth despite employees’ readiness to advance.

“I wouldn't say much except that now, remember now the issue is the challenge of Transnet as a whole, meaning the organization is not doing well. So the current barrier would be that we don't have money, there's no budget, so one cannot move. You would be told, no, we'd rather have that that position vacant than to fill it because that means we're moving someone from this R100 and now you want to give them R150. I think for me in the where I'm sitting, that's the only challenge.” [P3]

“The only barrier I can identify at the moment is the recent cost containment measures and the moratorium on filling vacant positions. This is an organizational challenge, driven by the company's current financial constraints. As a result, vacant posts are not being advertised in an effort to reduce personnel costs. Unfortunately, this can hinder the growth and progression of young professionals who are eager to advance in their careers.” [P2]

- Remuneration gaps

Remuneration bracket inconsistencies also created barriers to career progression, as moving from level G (supervisor) to level F (management level) can result in lower pay, making advancement unattractive for young professionals. This complicates upward mobility within the organisation.

“I think for that one, there's only one for me, which is the salary brackets that are inconsistent. Transnet has levels. There's level G, there's level H, there's level F and level F being the first level in management right, now between level G and F, there is an overlap in terms of salary brackets. And that is as a result of level F being considered as a manager and level G being considered as a supervisor, which has benefits of both sides, the manager and the bargaining unit, right? Now, as a young professional, that is at level G at Transnet Property, to move to level F which attracts different salary packages that are not enticing as their level G bargaining unit salary packages, one would not want to move to that because they will be worse off. In order for you to move higher up, it's difficult for a level G to move to level E without first going to level F.” [P1]

- Resources

Participant also noted that lack of management planning and insufficient resources also contribute to frustration among young professionals who are often overwhelmed with disorganised and unplanned workloads.

“So I think that lack of management and planning, it's not there but the main contributor to that as part is the lack of resources. If I want to put it to my to my space and confine it, the lack of resources is becoming a challenge. Now you get young individuals being frustrated because they are expected to now jump all over the show having to do this, while at this and is also required to do the other work. So there's that mismanagement. Things are not organized, they are not planned formal. So a young individual that finds themselves in there, they become frustrated.” [P3]

d) Nature of organisation

The natures of the organisation presented challenges and barriers in the following ways.

- Keeping abreast with industry standards

Participants indicated that there was considerable bureaucracy within the organisation which created challenges for career progression. To address this, structures needed to be simplified and modernised aligning them with current industry norms and best practices. This would help ensure that Transnet Property remained competitive and better equipped to attract and retain talent.

“So those are the ones, you just deal with a lot of bureaucracy and you know, succession planning, simplifying and modernizing the positions and tap into the industry norms. What is the industry

doing out there? And then link it to what you are currently doing. Is it fit for purpose? And If it's not fit for purpose, then we need to relook at our structures so that we can be able to compete because I mean Transnet Property is competing with a lot of other property companies out there. So why can't we match or better them you know?" [P5]

- Lack of urgency

Participants expressed the view that the organisation was a public institution which influenced perceptions and work attitudes. Many employees believed it differed from the private sector, leading to a lack of urgency in completing tasks. This mindset negatively affected employee growth and progress.

"First, it's important to remember that Transnet Property is a public institution. This often shapes people's perceptions. Many believe that working for a public institution is not the same as working in the private sector. As a result, there's a tendency among some employees to lack a strong sense of urgency when it comes to completing tasks. The general mindset is, "This is a public space, so things don't need to move fast," and that significantly affects a young professionals ability to learn and gain more experience." [P2]

- Organisational infancy

Participants noted that the organisation was still in infancy due to having officially relaunched in 2022. Since then, efforts had focused on developing policies, establishing systems, creating structures in order to ensure the right skill sets were brought into the company.

"Transnet property is still very new. I think you must also keep that in mind, by new I'm talking yes there was Transnet property many years ago. But the real one that kicked off was only kicked off in 2022. Where we needed to put policies together, set systems in place, look at things like organogram and make sure that the right skill sets is brought into the company." [P9]

e) Red tape and resistance

There was red tape and resistance related challenges that also impacted on leadership progress.

- Red tape and bureaucracy

Participants noted that outdated structures and excessive bureaucracy within the organisation limited professional growth. Budget constraints often required lengthy justification for development initiatives and succession planning frequently prioritised external candidates over internal talent. Inflexible policies and red tape around position creation and organogram structuring further hindered career progression.

“You know, old structures, too much bureaucracy. You'll be told about budget constraints that limit your development programs. You need to justify why you need to do certain programs and the likes. The one key thing that I really hate is the lack of succession planning, which in most cases prioritizes external hiring over the internal grooming and the likes.” [P5]

“There's a lot of red tapes in how positions are created in the company. There's a lot of red tapes in terms of how organogram's are put together, so policies that govern all of these things for me, that is what would be the things that will hinder young people from advancing into leadership roles.” [P9]

- Resistance to innovation from older leaders

While young professionals were expected to bring innovation and fresh ideas, they often encountered resistance from long-standing employees. These older colleagues tended to dismiss new contributions with a ‘been there, done that’ mindset thereby creating a negative environment that stifled innovation and discouraged initiative.

“And then secondly, it's the culture at Transnet property that I deem to be a challenge for young professionals, as I mentioned earlier, that when you speak of young professionals, you're thinking of innovation, you're thinking of new ideas, fresh ideas, because it's young professionals. Now there's a culture, at Transnet Property where old employees of Transnet Property are negative to a point that they'll be like we've been there, done that, what's new that are you coming with?” [P1]

- Older versus younger generation dynamics

Similarly, certain leaders may feel threatened by young professionals who brought newer modern knowledge or new skill sets. Rather than viewing these capabilities as organisational assets, such leaders saw them as a risk to their own positions. As a result, they withheld support or advancement opportunities.

“Another part would be Leaders that sometimes get threatened by young professionals who come possessing better knowledge and understanding and they sometimes frown upon the fact that they might not have some of the skill sets that these young people are bringing instead of looking at this as an advantage, then sometimes they look at it as a threat basically. So therefore they will not bring you up just because of a fear that you will take their job even.” [P9]

4.4.2.2 Industry specific challenges affecting leadership transitions in the property sector

Having established the organisational challenges and barriers above, this primary subtheme outlined the industry specific challenges that can/may affect leadership attainment for young professionals.

a) Environmental and culture

The environment and culture in which the organisation operates does present challenges in the following ways.

- Sector wide mobility

Participants indicated that the industry itself was considered small and stable with little movement between roles. Hence, leadership opportunities in the property and asset management sector were limited due to low turnover at senior levels. Those in leadership roles often remained until retirement leaving few openings for others to progress.

“In the industry out there, once you get to a certain high level of leadership, especially asset management, people stay there until they retire, so there's not a lot of movement out there within the leaders. So that also makes it a bit difficult to find those openings and gaps to enter. But I think the main thing, it's always comes down to this thing of experience, and that's why you always find older people and people with more years of experience taking the leadership roles and the other people not getting a chance.” [P7]

“But from experience I know that property industry is extremely small. So, once you've found your niche and you enjoy what you are doing, you're not going to move easily. So, the opportunities for young people to come into roles will be difficult due to the fact that there's not as many movement of people taking place, thus creating a role for a person to move into. But that is not just for Transnet. It's happening in the industry as a whole. It's not an industry where people move around quite a lot.” [P4]

- Market volatility and slow leadership transition

Participants suggests that market volatility, together with entrenched organisational cultures in property firms, significantly complicates leadership transitions, requiring leaders who can simultaneously navigate long-term strategic demands and adapt quickly to changing operational conditions.

“The market volatility demand leaders who can balance strategic foresight with operational agility. These factors, combined with the deeply rooted organizational cultures typical in property firms, can make leadership changes more complex and sensitive compared to other industries. Thanks.” [P5]

b) Legal and regulations

Legal and regulatory aspects were important but did pose barriers in certain ways.

- Legislation

Participant indicated that the property sector faced a high volume of legislation and legal requirements. Adapting to these laws was essential for both leaders and young professionals, but it added complexity to career progression and leadership development.

“So if you look at industry specific challenges, there's a lot of legislation. There's a lot of laws that you need to adapt to as a leader, as a young professional in the property sector. And I think those are those are industry specific challenges.” [P8]

- Regulations

Participants felt that the increasing regulatory demands made it more difficult to progress from one position to another. The property sector was heavily regulated requiring knowledge of various

municipal compliances and industry standards. Hence it was governed by multiple bodies such as SAIBPP and SAPOA and other credentials such as the Fidelity Fund certificate were needed.

“There's a lot of compliances, municipality compliances. You need to be knowledgeable in lots of things.” [P8]

“We have a lot of industry bodies out there that regulate the property sector. For example, you need to have your Fidelity Fund certificate and stuff like that to be able to be affiliated in the property industry. We have the South African Institute of Black Property Practitioners (SAIBPP) and South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA), we have many organizations which regulate your professional practice in the property industry.” [P8]

“There are a lot of regulations that are coming and changes that are coming and then which then increases the requirements for one to move from one position to the other.” [P3]

- Public versus private sector property management

Participants indicated that another key challenge in the property sector was the difference in working practices between government and the private sector. This is not covered in formal education as property management training did not specifically prepare individuals for the unique rules and regulations of the public sector thereby creating an obstacle for those entering the field.

“I think the biggest differentiation between government and the private sector is the difference in way of working and that you would not get from your book knowledge. Because they don't train specifically for government within property management, these are the different rules and regulations. So that is an obstacle that when a person wants to go into property.” [P4]

c) Race and gender inequalities

The property sector was still prone to race and gender inequities.

- Racial domination

Participants indicated that the property sector was widely described as still being White dominated which in turn presented significant barriers for African professionals seeking growth and leadership opportunities. This dominance also hindered development in underrepresented areas

such as townships, where potential remained untapped due to a lack of awareness and access within the African community.

“Also, when you're speaking about black people in the property space, there's not a lot of opportunities for us as black people in the property industry at large out there. Leadership is white dominated. If you start to look at who's actually controlling a lot of the property companies that are existing out there, it's very much a white dominated space and what you also find is the real leaders out there, they don't really, they don't move companies a lot.” [P7]

“I believe there are challenges that still exist, particularly when we look at the property sector as a whole. The reality is that, even today, the property sector in South Africa remains predominantly white-dominated. This presents significant challenges for emerging young black professionals who want to grow within the industry.” [P2]

“I was at an engagement last week at a property conference and part of the conversations in the conference was that the property development sector is so white dominated that there is potential in the townships, but they cannot be unlocked because of this white dominant Industry and we had uncomfortable conversations around that where we said that there's so much money coming in and out of Townships, but we cannot unlock the development of the infrastructure there as a result of the black community not being aware of what's out there.” [P1]

- Limited racial representation and transformation

In relation to the above, transformation in the property sector had been slow especially in the private sector. Private companies often exercised autonomy in leadership appointments, sometimes excluding non-white candidates regardless of their skills or qualifications. Despite many non-whites (African) South Africans possessing the talent and ambition to lead or start property businesses, these systemic biases continued to limit their access to opportunities.

“When I was in private sector, most of it, the leadership was led by the white, our white counterparts. Transformation is not something that has easily been implemented. Sometimes this leadership roles, because it's a private company they can decide that they won't have a black person in leadership and unfortunately that is their modus operandi. Whether you possess the skills or not, it doesn't matter whether you've got the knowledge or not, it doesn't matter.” [P9]

“Many black South Africans have innovative business ideas. Some aspire to start property development or property management companies, while others may not want to start a business but have the skills and potential to lead at executive levels such as becoming a General Manager or Director. However, systemic industry biases often make this difficult.” [P2]

“There is still a strong perception in parts of the industry that leadership roles should be held by white individuals. Some clients and investors continue to favour white-led companies, making it difficult for black-owned businesses and black professionals to gain access to opportunities regardless of their qualifications or capabilities.” [P6]

- Gender inequity

Apart from racial domination, the property industry has also historically been male dominated, making it particularly challenging for women, including African women to transition into leadership roles. Despite some progress being made, they still often had to fight hard to secure such positions.

“And it has always been male dominated. I feel like the one challenge in the industry as a Black women it's quite difficult to transition in a leadership role. You have to fight for your position there. But I am happy to see in the engagements that Black women are taking the space and they are showing up. And also black males. There's quite a few blacks as a whole in the property industry, which I think the more the black communities learn about the industry and what it entails, It's becoming better.” [P1]

d) Qualification and professionalism

There were challenges relating to professional qualifications that affected the industry.

- Qualification and career pathways

Participant indicated that there were high levels of unemployment and changes in educational qualifications, such as the phasing out of the national diploma, had shifted career pathways in engineering and facilities management. Consequently, fewer young professionals gained the necessary experience, thereby limiting opportunities for career progression, where experience remained the key factor for advancement.

“I've seen they are phasing out currently the national diploma. The introduction of these changes, they therefore shift the perspective and the career growth within the engineering and facilities space and now as you are seeing the economy is not doing well. And now meaning most graduates are currently unemployed in the facilities space because of what? If you look at it, remember government has to invest in terms of the infrastructure projects which then creates opportunities for young professionals to be employed to gain experience in that space. So with the lack of experience, you the pool becomes small for individuals to progress to the next level in the facilities space, the only thing that makes one sharper is the experience.” [P3]

- Unqualified professionals entering the industry

Participants noted that there were also concerns about unqualified individuals entering the industry with some even forming companies without proper credentials. Issues such as falsified documentation and inadequate vetting by authorities undermined the sector's integrity. This also restricted opportunities for young and emerging professionals to gain recognition and progress due to standards and trust within the industry.

“So I think the challenges that we are currently experiencing in the space is where now you are having a number of people getting into the space which are not then vetted.” [P2]

“What I've spoken into that there are people that are now forming companies that are not qualified in the space. So I think it's one that also is sitting with the with government and also the different councils where people are falsifying their documentation and then want to then portray as if they are qualified in the space. Those are the challenges that then limit the young and the upcoming professionals into getting to the space. You would have thought that you are working for this reputable company and you are not and we cannot recognize what you've been doing in that space. So those are the challenges that I'm seeing now, which is becoming a serious issue.” [P3]

4.4.3 Recommendations for improvements to better identify and develop young leaders

Having established the challenges above, this primary subtheme made recommendations for improvement to better identify and develop young leaders.

4.4.3.1 Training and learning

Increased training and learning was the most highly ranked recommendation. This was a logical finding given the dynamics of leadership.

a) Increased training opportunities

It was recommended that the organisation must provide more training and education opportunities. This included short courses, bursaries and practical leadership training that could be completed without lengthy formal study. Investing in ongoing training, including leadership workshops and courses focusing on communication, problem-solving and team management, was recommended to support sustained growth and improvement. Furthermore, skills development focused on key industry knowledge, such as finance and lease management, were also suggested to help employees understand their roles better.

“First of all is to create opportunities in terms of allowing employees to be able to go to short courses, availing bursaries for those that have the energy and hunger to go further their studies.”
[P3]

“The only support that I can think of right now is Training. Managers should send young professionals to training to learn and develop the skills required for leadership roles and once they done with training they should come back and apply what they have learnt during training practical. Managers should also oversee if the young professionals are developing and they are applying whatever skill they have learnt in the workplace.” [P1]

“If you do not understand the basic background of the finance, how are you going to know if your tenant is profitable or not? How do you know if you don't understand a lease agreement? If I've got a tight enough lease agreement to bind my tenants in. I would rather prefer that Transnet provides more courses to all staff members as we are currently, for people to educate themselves to understand what is needed and how to apply it.” [P4]

“Another key support is investing in training and continuous learning. Managers should provide access to leadership development programs, workshops and online courses that focus on communication, problem-solving and team management.” [P6]

b) Continuous learning and development

Participants emphasised continuous development programmes for nurturing young professionals. Furthermore, encouraging young employees to challenge existing processes and innovate was seen as vital to avoid stagnation.

“But you know what. It needs to be a constant development program, because I've seen it in, in other places, in the private sector out there.” [P8]

“You are literally going to kill these young guys because you are not limiting them to be able to go all out, you know, to do research, to suggest, to recommend. Because I always say to my team that I might have written a process five years ago, but the process that I wrote five years ago, it was good five years ago, but it might not be good 10 years later. So you need to challenge the process that I wrote and better it by bettering It does not necessarily mean that I'm outdated, but it's because now you are challenging the status norm to improve the status that we are currently at.” [P5]

c) Benchmarking

Other organisations such as Shell were cited as examples, where potential leaders were identified, nurtured and groomed for executive roles through structured programmes. This approach created clear pathways for growth, ensuring that internal talent was prepared to step into leadership positions when terms of current executives ended. Perhaps the organisation can learn from such organisations.

“I know a company called Shell does that. Shell has levels of succession plans where they would say that, OK, this person is eligible. There's a certain color you are given when you are eligible to be the next CEO and then they nurture that potential and then groom that potential and that's where then you get room for growth because we know that our Chief Executives have a fixed term. They cannot be Chief Executive for until Kingdom comes, now are you grooming people within the

organization that already have knowledge and understanding of how the organization works to be able then to promote them?” [P1]

4.4.3.2 Formalised mentorship

Relating to training, mentorship also ranked highly, and this needed to be formalised.

a) Structured programmes and opportunities

Implementing formal mentorship programmes within organisation was recommended to support the leadership developmental process. By pairing young professionals with experienced mentors, they could gain essential leadership skills, industry insights and practical guidance for navigating workplace challenges and leadership progression.

“Managers can support the development of young professionals into leadership roles by providing structured mentorship and growth opportunities. Pairing young professionals with experienced mentors to allow them to learn critical leadership skills, gain industry insight and receive guidance on navigating workplace challenges.” [P6]

“I think managers at Transnet Property can support the development of young professionals into leadership roles by implementing structured mentorship programs.” [P2]

b) Initiatives

It was suggested that managers take a more active role in developing young professionals by creating initiatives or opportunities for them to shadow senior leaders. Similar to past initiatives such as ‘Take a Girl Child to Work Day’, such initiatives would allow young professionals to observe leadership in action, gain a clearer understanding and better prepare for future roles.

“To be honest, the managers should do more. I don't know what the right word to use it. Remember they used to do those take a girl child to work day things, but there should be more initiatives where you know the young professionals shadow their senior managers and actually see exactly what they do. You know, maybe a couple of times in the year there must be periods of time where there's somebody who's shadowing me and watching everything that I'm doing just to see what it looks like and that sort of work gets involved in terms of the leadership” [P7]

c) Key Performance Indicator (KPI) integration

Mentorship programmes should be formalised with clear KPIs to ensure accountability and effectiveness. Hence, it must be unambiguous and goal oriented.

“This is very easy. Formalize mentorship with key performance indicators and they just need to make sure that these KPIs are clear, simple and that there's no ambiguity in it. I know that my role is supposed to water the tree for the next month, for three months, If I don't water it, that tree is going to die. They need to be as clear and concise.” [P5]

4.4.3.3 Capacity and resources

Capacity and resources needed to be proved in the following ways.

a) Increased employment of young professionals

A concern raised was the insufficient employment of young professionals within organisation. Therefore, more efforts to bring in and develop emerging talent in the organisation was recommended.

“You know what. We don't employ enough young professionals in Transnet Property. I'm just going to leave it there. That's very critical.” [P8]

b) Investment in resources

It was also emphasised that while investing in young professionals is crucial, organisation must also ensure they are equipped with the necessary tools and resources to perform effectively. In the information age, lacking access to such support limits their ability to develop their potential.

“So, but it is equally important that as Transnet property we invest in in young professionals, but at the same time we have to make sure that we provide the tools for them to be able to do what they can be able to do because we are living in the information age. I mean when a young person joins an institution like Transnet Property or Transnet for that matter and there's no tools and resources for them to be able to perform or whatever that is expected for them to do.” [P5]

c) Leadership incubators

Introducing leadership incubators was suggested as a valuable initiative to develop emerging talent. These programmes would help identify, nurture and enhance potential leaders but would require strong support from executive leadership to be effective.

“It would be great if they can introduce. I once read about it. They call it the leadership incubators, in Transnet. By introducing such things like your leadership incubators, it also helps to address and solve some of the business challenges that come across, but obviously this needs to be supported by the executives leadership up there, you know it has to be endorsed by them. It needs to be supported by them and the like. So for me, talent management is one of the models that I think it's helping to identify talent, nurture talent and improve the talent.” [P5]

4.4.3.4 Increased management exposure

There was a need to increase respective exposure to management opportunities, through the following ways.

a) Cross departmental projects

Cross-departmental and cross-functional projects were seen as valuable opportunities for developing young professionals. Allowing them to lead or participate in such would expose them to diverse teams and respective responsibilities. This approach was believed to build confidence, enhance leadership capabilities and foster innovation.

“And I also support the issue of cross departmental innovation where you're given opportunity to lead projects in other departments and try to improve their processes. These projects must be led by the young professionals, I think if they lead those projects, I think they'll do wonders. It's just that they just need to be given a chance” [P9]

“Managers can encourage participation in cross-functional projects, giving young professionals exposure to diverse teams and decision making processes that build strategic thinking and confidence.” [P6]

b) Rotational

Similarly, there was a recommendation of having a structured rotational system. Such a system would allow young professionals to gain diverse experience across departments, climb the career ladder and eventually make room for new talent.

“So we don't have the system of this rotational system to say, you know what, here's a young professional. They've come in, they've gone up the ladder. Let's employ somebody else. We need to get that right, but I don't know with all of our red tape here in Transnet Property, we don't seem to get that right. Gain the knowledge, gain the experience and then they move off. You know, we don't have that rotational system in transit property.” [P8]

“But I think it would be nice if they can introduce something like that where they're doing rotational management roles in different departments and the likes.” [P5]

4.4.3.5 Organisational culture

Organisational culture would need to change to promote a positive environment for growth.

a) Supportive culture

Creating an inclusive and supportive organisational culture that encourages innovation, and continuous learning was also seen as crucial for growth and leadership development. Managers should take the time to understand each employee's individual strengths and weaknesses in order to support their development effectively.

“We have different challenges as individuals, so as a manager it becomes your role to understand each employee's strength and weaknesses once you've done that and then work about a way that you can then assist in developing that individual to turn their weaknesses into their strengths.” [P3]

“Fostering an inclusive and supportive culture that values innovation and continuous learning.” [P2]

b) Feedback and understanding needs

Support for young professionals was seen as most effective when managers actively engaged with employees through regular communication, personalised guidance and necessary feedback.

Managers were encouraged to understand employees' experiences and recommend relevant skills training, such as specific software or leadership courses. Performance reviews and continuous feedback were also considered vital, helping young professionals recognise their strengths, address areas for improvement.

"Should be able to go to a panel and convince the panel that this is what we'll be getting once a young professional has completed the certain course. The managers themselves should be there and have time, allocate time with their employees to understand the employees view, the background, what the employees are going through every day and how they can then assist in terms of supporting that employees." [P3]

"Like performance reviews. It is one of the good ways where manager and employee would sit down and say, but I think you should go for advanced Excel. I think you need to go for this and this and this. Identify those, support the individual, assist where it's required." [P3]

"Regular feedback and performance reviews also play a crucial role, as they help young professionals understand their strengths, identify areas for improvement and set clear goals." [P6]

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the findings based on participants' feedback gathered through semi-structured interviews. The analysis was guided by the three objectives of the study and employed a thematic approach using NVivo for qualitative data analysis. Techniques such as word clouds, hierarchy charts, cluster analysis, word trees, and tree maps were utilised to identify key themes and subthemes. Three main themes emerged from the analysis: skills and qualities to promote young leaders, challenges affecting leadership role attainment, and recommendations for improvement to better identify and develop young leaders. The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to existing literature.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a thorough interpretation of the study's main conclusions, evaluating them in light of the research objectives and the existing literature. This chapter aims to provide a critical interpretation of the results, highlighting their significance, implications and how they contribute to the broader understanding of the topic. The objectives of the study were:

- To identify key skills that managers believe are essential for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.
- To determine the challenges experienced by young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.
- To identify the support that managers can put in place to develop young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles.

The key findings of the research study are summarised in figure 5.1 below, taking into account the themes identified in Chapter Four, and are discussed in greater detail in this chapter.



Figure 5.1 - Summarised findings

5.2 Key skills needed to develop young professionals for leadership roles

Participants in the study identified six key skills that are required by young professionals to assume leadership roles. These are: (1) emotional intelligence and awareness, (2) visionary and strategic thinking, (3) transformative and adaptability, (4) people and relationship management, (5) ethics and values, and (6) communication and collaboration.

5.2.1 Emotional intelligence and awareness

The pre-eminence of emotional intelligence (EI) as a vital leadership skill was clear from the findings, underscoring its foundational role in effective leadership. Managers emphasised that by comprehending and controlling both their own and others' emotions, leaders with high emotional intelligence are better able to navigate interpersonal dynamics. This emotional awareness fosters communication that is not only clear but also empathetic, enabling leaders to build trust and rapport within their teams.

This emphasis on emotional intelligence aligns with the view that it is a critical component of effective leadership (Lee et al., 2022). The five essential characteristics of emotionally intelligent leaders self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills were confirmed by Goleman and Cherniss (2024) and were all highly evident in the participants' answers. The participants' emphasis on empathy and active listening mirrors Lubbadah's (2020) assertion that effective leaders must be able to tune into their followers' emotional states and perspectives to foster collaboration and resolve conflicts. These competencies are further supported by the perspective that emotional intelligence is a vital ability for navigating social complexities and fostering positive interactions within teams (Halimi et al., 2021).

The participants' recognition of environmental and social awareness as part of emotional intelligence extends traditional views of leadership. This more comprehensive viewpoint is in line with new leadership paradigms like responsible leadership, which integrates social and environmental factors into decision-making (Waldman et al., 2020). Leaders who are socially and politically aware are better positioned to navigate complex stakeholder landscapes, thus ensuring that organisational actions align with societal expectations. This socially conscious leadership style is especially relevant in Transnet Property where public impact and sustainability are integral to operational success.

5.2.2 Visionary and strategic

Managers consistently underscored the importance of visionary and strategic skills for leadership roles, emphasising the need for leaders to have a clear long-term vision and the capacity to implement proactive strategies. This ability to look beyond immediate concerns and anticipate future challenges and opportunities enables leaders to guide their teams toward sustainable success. The participants' reference to entrepreneurial thinking and economic growth further

illustrates that visionary leadership involves not just planning but also innovatively driving organisational performance and revenue stability over time.

This finding is well supported in leadership literature. Visionary leadership is recognised as a key driver of organisational change and innovation, playing a crucial role in inspiring commitment and steering complex organisations through uncertainty (Candrasari et al., 2023). The participants emphasis on strategic foresight aligns with this view, highlighting the necessity for leaders to develop phased plans that anticipate evolving market and operational conditions. Such foresight is critical in an organisation like Transnet Property where long-term infrastructure and asset management require sustained strategic thinking.

The results driven nature of leadership, as expressed by participants, reflects the transactional aspects of leadership theory, which focus on goal setting, performance monitoring and accountability (Dong, 2023). However, the integration of visionary foresight and entrepreneurial drive indicates that effective leadership in Transnet Property combines transactional and transformational elements. The systems thinking approach stressed by managers further adds complexity, requiring leaders to understand the interconnectedness of various divisions and departments within Transnet Property. This perspective aligns with the concept of a learning organisation, where leaders are expected to consider systemic impacts and ripple effects to promote coherence and integration across departments (Mills, 2021).

5.2.3 Transformative and adaptability

Adaptability emerged as a dominant theme, reflecting the necessity for leaders to remain flexible and responsive amid rapid changes in the organisation and external environment. Participants emphasised that effective leaders should be able to adjust their leadership style and strategies to navigate shifts brought on by technological advancements, economic fluctuations and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This adaptability is not merely reactive but transformative, enabling leaders to drive innovation and change while maintaining stability.

The emphasis on adaptability resonates with contemporary leadership research that stresses the importance of flexibility in dynamic contexts (Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). Adaptive leadership is essential for navigating complex and evolving challenges, as it requires leaders to continually adjust their behaviors and strategies in response to changing circumstances (Dunn, 2020). The participants focus on digital literacy reflects the increasing importance of technological

competence, as leaders must embrace tools such as internet of things and artificial intelligence to remain competitive in the fourth industrial revolution. This technological readiness also aligns with the concept of e-leadership, which integrates digital skills into leadership practice.

The participants noted that transformative leadership within a diverse environment requires shifting approaches depending on contextual demands. This flexible leadership approach reflects the need for leaders to possess strong problem-solving abilities across diverse disciplines and contexts (Schiuma et al., 2022). The inclusion of interdisciplinary knowledge, especially related to property management, finance and property market demands, underscores that leadership in Transnet Property demands a combination of technical expertise and adaptive thinking. The participants recognised innovation and benchmarking as essential capabilities, reinforcing the view that strategic leadership must consistently pursue improvement and align with global best practices to maintain a competitive edge (Singh et al., 2023).

5.2.4 People and relationship management

The findings reinforce that leadership is inherently people-centric, with managers emphasising the importance of interpersonal skills, human resource management, conflict resolution and the ability to manage complex group dynamics. Participants highlighted that successful leaders must excel at communication, active listening, patience and confidence, skills that enable them to engage effectively with diverse teams. This is especially important in environments characterised by varying experience levels and political nuances, where relationship building is essential for achieving organisational goals.

This focus on people skills reflects well established leadership theories that prioritise interpersonal effectiveness. Human skills are regarded as essential for enabling leaders to effectively motivate, influence and guide others (Guzmán et al., 2020). The participants call for training in human resource principles aligns with Katz's (1955) model, which positions human skills as critical across all managerial levels, but particularly important as leaders engage directly with staff and stakeholders. Understanding personality differences, managing conflict and fostering supportive environments are essential for maintaining team cohesion and performance.

Participants also highlighted the need for leaders to align expectations and communicate organisational goals clearly to both peers and subordinates. This approach ensures that everyone is working toward shared objectives, reducing ambiguity and enhancing coordination. The

relational component of leadership is further highlighted by the significance of managing stakeholder relationships, both internal and external. This perspective is supported by stakeholder theory, which advocates for leaders to balance varying interests and foster sustainable relationships (Barney and Harrison, 2020). Within Transnet Property managing relationships with municipalities, communities and public entities is particularly crucial given the organisation's public mandate and operational context.

5.2.5 Ethics and values

Ethics and values were prominently featured as essential leadership qualities, reflecting the critical need for integrity and accountability in leadership roles. Participants stressed that ethical behaviour is fundamental to restoring trust and addressing past mismanagement concerns, especially in financial and project oversight. The systemic nature of ethical challenges within South Africa's public sector underscores the urgency of embedding strong ethical frameworks within leadership practices at Transnet Property.

This emphasis aligns with the conceptualisation of ethical leadership, which highlights the leader's role as a moral exemplar who fosters ethical behaviour through integrity and accountability (Saha et al., 2020). The participants' focus on hard work and passion further complements this view, portraying effective leaders as hands-on and dedicated individuals who lead by example. The importance of resilience and strength also emerges as a key leadership trait, enabling leaders to withstand scrutiny, navigate criticism and maintain composure during crises, a necessity in challenging environments like Transnet Property.

Values driven leadership, where leaders embody and promote organisational culture and principles, is consistent with transformational leadership theories that emphasise the alignment of leader and organisational values to inspire commitment and ethical behaviour (Manu, 2022). This alignment fosters a cohesive culture that supports long-term organisational success and credibility.

5.2.6 Communication and collaboration

Effective communication and collaboration were identified as non-negotiable leadership skills, vital for managing staff, stakeholders and cross departmental teamwork. Participants emphasised the importance of clear communication for young leaders in order to establish expectations, offer helpful criticism, and foster trust. Communication is viewed not just as information exchange but as a relational tool that shapes organisational culture and influences team dynamics.

This view is supported by Wangchuk (2021), who highlight communication as central to leadership's influence and motivational functions. The focus on inclusivity and collaborative problem solving aligns with Galli's (2021) findings that inclusive leadership fosters psychological safety and innovation by involving diverse voices. Participants also emphasised the leader's role as a 'translator' to bridge gaps between technical and operational teams, highlighting the need for leaders to facilitate understanding and coordination across organisational silos.

Transparency, closely linked to communication, was emphasised as a hallmark of effective leadership at Transnet Property. Transparency, characterised by honesty and openness, is identified as a core attribute of credible leadership that fosters trust and accountability (Kouzes and Posner, 2017). Transparent communication also supports ethical leadership by promoting clarity about expectations, performance and areas for improvement, thus reinforcing a culture of continuous development and integrity.

5.2.7 Technical skills versus soft skills

The findings of this study highlight a significant emphasis on the importance of soft skills over technical skills in leadership roles. Participants consistently ranked soft skills such as communication, empathy, and emotional intelligence as more critical for leadership effectiveness. While technical expertise provides a foundational understanding of the work, soft skills were seen as key enablers of collaboration, influence and team engagement. This aligns with Makri and Vlachopoulos (2019), who asserted that emotional intelligence and interpersonal abilities are core determinants of leadership success. As leaders transition into roles that require more coordination than execution, the ability to inspire, connect and lead people becomes paramount (Northouse, 2021).

Despite the higher value placed on soft skills, the role of technical skills was not dismissed. Participants acknowledged that technical competence remains essential, particularly in career paths that demand specific qualifications, such as facilities or property management. Leaders may make wise judgments by comprehending the operational complexities of their domains thanks to role-specific expertise (Mumford et al., 2000). The study revealed that the relevance of technical skills varies depending on the nature of the role, with some positions requiring deep technical knowledge while others place more emphasis on leadership capacity. This is in line with Katz's

(1955) framework, which contends that human and conceptual abilities become more significant at higher management levels while technical skills are more crucial at lower levels.

The overarching insight that emerged from the findings is the need for a balanced integration of soft and technical skills to achieve leadership effectiveness. Participants emphasised that closing the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world experience is frequently necessary for success in the actual world. A recurring theme was that leadership is not merely about managing tasks but about guiding people through trust, adaptability and empathy. Leaders who combined technical proficiency with soft skills were better equipped to foster high performing teams and navigate interpersonal challenges (Munir, 2022). This integrated approach to leadership development reinforces the idea that effective leadership in complex environments requires both the capability to understand technical processes and the interpersonal acumen to lead people effectively (Guzmán et al., 2020).

5.3 Challenges experienced by young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles

The participants in this study identified five key themes that capture the challenges young professionals at Transnet Property encounter when aspiring to leadership roles. These themes are: (1) progress and mobility, (2) developmental barriers, (3) financial and resource constraints, (4) organisational dynamics, and (5) red tapes and resistance.

5.3.1 Progress and mobility

One of the most significant barriers identified was the issue of static leadership and the resultant bottlenecks that impede young professionals' advancement. Participants consistently pointed out that long-serving senior leaders, who occupy key positions for extended periods, limit opportunities for upward mobility. This finding supports the view that organisational stagnation in leadership roles can limit the availability of senior positions, ultimately hindering career advancement opportunities for younger employees (Maroga et al., 2024). The promotion bottleneck not only frustrates young professionals but also risks organisational stagnation by limiting fresh leadership perspectives (Marozva et al., 2024).

Structural barriers within the organisation, such as rigid bureaucratic processes and unclear promotion criteria, were also perceived to hinder leadership mobility. Participants expressed frustration over the lack of transparent systems and the tendency for employees to remain in the

same role for extended periods without clear goals or timelines for advancement. This aligns with Barkhuizen, Masakane and van der Sluis (2022), who argue that bureaucratic rigidity and a lack of defined career pathways discourage employee engagement and inhibit leadership development. The absence of such systems contributes to a sense of career deadlock, especially among high potential young professionals seeking clear trajectories.

Another key finding was the limited visibility and recognition of young talent beyond their immediate teams, which echoes Salib and Hudson's (2023) work on the importance of networking and visibility in career advancement. Senior leaders' preference for experienced candidates often means that younger professionals, despite their potential, are overlooked. This creates an invisible barrier where talent remains confined within siloed teams, lacking access to broader organisational platforms to showcase their capabilities. The implication is clear: leadership pipelines are not only blocked structurally but also socially, by limited opportunities for young professionals to build influential networks and gain critical exposure.

5.3.2 Development barriers

Lack of practical experience and formal qualifications emerged as significant developmental challenges affecting leadership progression. While many young professionals possess the ambition and foundational academic credentials, participants highlighted that leadership requires more than theoretical knowledge. This supports the view that leadership effectiveness relies on a blend of varied work experiences and the gradual development of skills, rather than solely on academic qualifications (Kaiser et al., 2023). Without adequate experiential learning opportunities, young professionals struggle to meet the demands of leadership roles, limiting their promotion prospects.

Mentorship, or the lack thereof, was identified as a critical missing component in leadership development. Although some participants noted positive mentorship experiences, others reported inadequate or poorly coordinated mentorship programs. The absence of effective mentoring deprives young professionals of vital guidance, support and feedback necessary for developing strategic and interpersonal skills. This gap aligns with the perspective that mentoring relationships are crucial for career advancement by providing both psychosocial support and opportunities for skill development (Nunan et al., 2023). For Transnet Property, the lack of robust mentorship programs may be a significant impediment to nurturing the next generation of leaders.

The developmental challenges are compounded by unrealistic expectations among some young professionals, who assume rapid advancement based solely on qualifications. Participants highlighted that leadership progression requires patience, resilience and the gradual accumulation of practical experience. This finding aligns with the caution that academic credentials should not be overvalued in the absence of relevant experiential learning (Segarra and Gentry, 2021). Together, these developmental barriers contribute to a leadership readiness gap that requires targeted developmental interventions focused on experiential learning and mentorship.

5.3.3 Financial and resource constraints

Financial constraints including hiring freezes and budget limitations were significant barriers to leadership progression reported by participants. Budgetary restrictions at Transnet Property, often result in frozen vacancies and limited new hires, thereby reducing opportunities for internal promotions. Makhanya (2024) highlights how fiscal constraints in public organisations create challenges in talent management, reducing mobility and progression. This financial situation limits young professionals from moving forward, even if they are ready and motivated.

Remuneration discrepancies were also cited as a demotivating factor. The reported pay gap between supervisory and management roles, where advancement may actually result in lower compensation, undermines the attractiveness of leadership positions for young professionals. This paradox is reflected in findings that salary structures which do not incentivise upward mobility can significantly diminish employees' motivation to seek leadership positions (Van Zyl, 2021). Without adequate financial incentives, young professionals may choose to remain in lower roles or seek opportunities elsewhere.

Resource shortages, including insufficient management planning and overwhelming workloads, were additional factors inhibiting leadership progression. Participants reported feeling burdened by disorganised task allocations and a lack of support, contributing to burnout and disengagement. Vermeulen and Scheepers (2020) emphasise that employee's perceptions of organisational support directly impact their willingness to accept leadership challenges. When resources are inadequate and planning is poor, young professionals may lose confidence in their capacity to lead effectively, further limiting their progression.

5.3.4 Nature of the organisation

Participants described Transnet Property as a relatively new operating division of Transnet SOC Ltd, noting that this factor contributed to the leadership challenges experienced. Participants emphasised the infancy of the organisation, with ongoing efforts to develop policies, structures, and systems. This developmental phase creates uncertainties and inefficiencies that hinder smooth leadership transitions. Public sector organisations in their formative stages often encounter bureaucratic inertia and limited agility, making it difficult to effectively address leadership development needs (Masipa, 2024). This slows career progression and inhibits young professionals growth.

The presence of bureaucratic red tape and outdated structures was a recurrent theme. Participants described the organisation as burdened by excessive layers of approval and inflexible policies, consistent with Melaletsa et al. (2023) observations on public sector rigidity. This inflexibility often necessitates prolonged justifications for development initiatives and promotes external hiring over internal promotions, which conflicts with succession planning principles that prioritise internal talent development.

A lack of urgency and a complacent work culture were identified as significant inhibitors of leadership ambition. Participants felt that the perceived difference between public and private sector attitudes fosters a culture where timely completion of tasks and proactive career development are undervalued. Public service motivation can at times contribute to complex attitudes regarding the pace of work and openness to innovation (Masukela et al., 2023). In this environment, young professionals may find it challenging to gain momentum for leadership progression, as organisational culture does not sufficiently reward or encourage such aspirations.

5.3.5 Red tape and resistance

Resistance to change and innovation emerged as a notable barrier, particularly the tension between younger professionals eager to introduce fresh ideas and older leaders resistant to these changes. This generational divide reflects findings that resistance to organisational change often stems from deeply rooted cultural norms and fears of losing power, which can hinder innovation (Darmawan and Azizah, 2020). Participants described older leaders adopting a dismissive ‘been there, done that’ attitude that discourages initiative and stifles creativity.

The dynamic between older and younger generations extends beyond resistance to innovation; it reflects a deeper insecurity among established leaders who may perceive younger professionals as threats to their authority and job security. Generational conflicts in the workplace frequently lead to disputes over power and influence, which can obstruct the development of collaborative leadership (Appelbaum et al., 2022). Such dynamics create an environment where young professionals feel unsupported and are deprived of critical endorsement needed to progress.

The persistence of organisational red tape further compounds resistance to change. Excessive bureaucracy around position creation, organogram structuring, and budget approvals was reported as a major obstacle. These systemic impediments limit flexibility in succession planning and slow down career advancement. This reflects Borges and Quintas' (2020) analysis of how bureaucratic hurdles can entrench resistance and inhibit organisational renewal, underscoring the need for structural reform to facilitate leadership mobility.

5.4 Support mechanisms to develop young professionals

The participants in this study identified several support mechanisms to develop young professionals within Transnet Property for leadership roles. These include: (1) training and learning, (2) formalised mentorship, (3) capacity and resources, (4) increased management exposure, and (5) organisational culture.

5.4.1 Training and learning

The most prominent recommendation from the study was the need for increased training and learning opportunities. Participants emphasised short courses, bursaries, and practical leadership training as essential for developing leadership competencies. This aligns with Nkosi's (2018) assertion that leadership development must be continuous and accessible, blending formal education with experiential learning to build critical skills such as communication, problem-solving, and team management.

The emphasis on industry specific skills, such as finance and lease management, resonates with the competency-based leadership development models advocated by Mumford et al. (2007), who argued that effective leaders must possess both generic leadership capabilities and contextual expertise. Continuous learning and development were also identified as vital, echoing the dynamic leadership framework by Mayer (2024), which promotes adaptability and innovation by encouraging leaders to challenge existing processes and stimulate growth.

5.4.2 Formalised mentorship

The study's findings strongly support formalised mentorship programmes as a cornerstone for leadership development. Participants argued that mentorship provides personalised guidance, knowledge transfer and psychosocial support, factors Grocutt et al (2022) identified as essential to successful mentoring relationships. Such relationships enable young professionals to navigate organisational complexities, gain valuable insider perspectives and build confidence all of which are essential for successfully transitioning into a leader.

The recommendation for initiatives that allow young professionals to shadow senior leaders further reinforces the importance of experiential learning embedded within mentorship. Shadowing offers real time exposure to leadership behaviours and decision-making processes, providing a richer understanding than classroom-based learning alone (Yip and Walker, 2022). This hands-on experience enables mentees to contextualise theoretical concepts, develop strategic thinking and observe how leaders respond to real world challenges. The continuation and formalisation of such initiatives can also reinforce organisational commitment to leadership inclusivity and development.

Integrating mentorship programmes into Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is an important advancement suggested by participants, promoting accountability and ensuring developmental efforts are goal driven. Gowdy and Hogan (2021) highlight that formal metrics are critical to evaluating the success of mentorship programs and aligning them with organisational outcomes. For Transnet Property, embedding mentorship within performance management frameworks can enhance manager participation and commitment, ensuring mentorship is not just a voluntary activity but a strategic imperative. This formalisation can also facilitate the measurement of mentorship impact on leadership pipeline robustness, fostering continuous improvement.

5.4.3 Capacity and resources

The findings reveal significant concerns regarding the limited employment of young professionals and insufficient allocation of resources to support their leadership development. The call for increased hiring efforts reflects the importance of talent acquisition as the foundation for a robust leadership pipeline. Organisations struggle to maintain leadership continuity and drive innovation without a consistent flow of emerging talent (Kravariti and Johnston, 2020). Therefore, actively

recruiting young professionals with leadership potential is a critical strategic priority for Transnet Property.

Participants also emphasised the necessity of investing in resources that empower young leaders to perform effectively. In the digital age, access to advanced tools, technology and information systems is indispensable for developing leadership competencies (Shahzad, 2024). Without such resources, even well designed training and mentorship programmes may fall short of their potential. Leadership incubators provide a focused and resource rich environment where young leaders can experiment, collaborate and grow under executive sponsorship. This concept aligns with the advocacy for immersive development programs that enhance leadership readiness by replicating complex organisational challenges in a supportive environment (McCauley and Palus, 2021). Implementing these initiatives requires strong executive buy in and sustained investment. For Transnet Property, building a business case for leadership incubators and other resource intensive programmes will be essential, highlighting their potential return on investment through enhanced retention, innovation, and succession planning. This approach underscores leadership development as not just a Human Resource (HR) function but a core business strategy.

5.4.4 Increased management exposure

The recommendation to increase young professionals' exposure to management opportunities through cross departmental projects and rotational assignments reflects a widely endorsed leadership development practice. Such experiences provide breadth and depth of organisational knowledge, enhance problem solving skills and foster interdepartmental collaboration (Bux et al., 2025). Participants noted that leading or participating in diverse teams builds confidence and prepares young leaders for complex, matrixed organisational environments.

Job rotation systems further enhance leadership readiness by exposing individuals to different functions, cultures and challenges, thereby broadening their strategic perspective. This exposure mitigates the risk of siloed thinking and equips young professionals with the adaptability needed in dynamic business landscapes. Malik (2023) underscores that developmental assignments, including rotations and project leadership, are critical experiential learning opportunities that significantly contribute to leadership growth.

Formalising rotational programmes and encouraging participation in cross functional projects can create a pipeline of well-rounded leaders capable of holistic decision making. However, such

initiatives require coordination and collaboration across departments, as well as clear objectives to ensure developmental outcomes. Integrating these practices within broader talent management frameworks can reinforce their impact and provide measurable evidence of leadership growth, supporting organisational agility and innovation.

5.4.5 Organisational culture

The findings highlight that a supportive organisational culture is crucial for fostering leadership development. Participants emphasised the need for a culture that values inclusivity, continuous learning and innovation. This aligns with Miraglia (2024) view that culture shapes how leadership is enacted and how employees engage in developmental processes. A positive culture creates psychological safety, encouraging young professionals to take risks, seek feedback and pursue growth opportunities without fear of negative consequences.

Managers' role in providing regular, personalised feedback and understanding employees' individual needs reflects principles of transformational leadership, which prioritises individualised consideration and developmental support (Ding and Lin, 2021). Such leadership behaviours create trust and motivate young professionals to reach their full potential. Performance reviews coupled with ongoing feedback provide critical checkpoints for development, enabling young leaders to recognise their strengths and address gaps proactively (Bristol-Alagbariya et al., 2022).

For Transnet Property, cultivating such a culture will require deliberate efforts to train managers in effective coaching and feedback techniques, as well as aligning cultural values with leadership development objectives. Embedding these values into organisational policies and reward systems can reinforce the desired behaviours and signal a genuine commitment to developing young leaders. Ultimately, a positive organisational culture acts as the fertile ground in which leadership talent can flourish, driving sustained organisational success.

5.5 Summary

The discussion focused on connecting the research findings to the study's objectives. It identified a range of key skills that managers considered essential for young professionals to effectively assume leadership roles, highlighted several challenges that young professionals face when transitioning into leadership roles, and the types of support that managers believe are necessary to facilitate the leadership development of young professionals, all in relation to the themes identified from participant interviews. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 was used to support and validate

the emerging themes. The next chapter builds on this discussion by summarising the key insights, evaluating their implications and offering practical recommendations for Transnet Property to better support young professionals in their transition into leadership roles.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore managers' perspectives on the essential skills required for young professionals at Transnet Property to successfully assume leadership roles. In an era where leadership development is critical to organisational sustainability, especially within state-owned entities like Transnet Property, understanding these skill requirements is fundamental to closing the gap between talent potential and leadership readiness. The research highlighted the multifaceted nature of leadership competencies needed, encompassing not only technical expertise but also soft skills. This study has also provided valuable insights into the challenges young professionals face and the developmental interventions deemed most effective in preparing future leaders.

This chapter offers the study's overall findings and suggestions based on the information acquired from managers regarding the essential skills young professionals need to successfully assume leadership roles within Transnet Property. An overview of the study is given in the first section, which also highlights the main findings, methodology, research aims, and conclusions. This is essential as it demonstrates how the research objectives were achieved. The second section focuses on recommendations derived from the study. Lastly, the summary of the entire study is presented. This is the last chapter, and it concludes the research study.

6.2 Addressing the research objectives

Before focusing on the research objectives, it is key to reiterate the methodological aspects of the study. Qualitative research approach was used, and semi structured interviews were carried out with nine (9) regional managers in the leasing, operations and facilities management departments at Transnet Property. NVivo was used to thematically analyse the research study's data in order to pinpoint important themes. In this subsection, the research themes that emerged from the data analysis will be aligned with the research objectives

6.2.1 To identify key skills that managers believe are essential for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles

The study's first objective was to identify the key skills that managers believe are essential for young professionals to assume leadership roles within Transnet Property. The findings revealed six key skills: emotional intelligence and awareness, visionary and strategic thinking, adaptability

and transformative capability, people and relationship management, ethics and values, and communication and collaboration. These skills were repeatedly cited by participants as critical for navigating the organisational, technical and socio-political complexities of leadership roles within Transnet Property. Managers emphasised that the ability to lead people effectively in such an environment goes beyond technical competence it requires a high level of emotional maturity, strategic foresight, ethical grounding and interpersonal dexterity.

Emotional intelligence emerged as a foundational skill, with participants stressing the importance of empathy, self-awareness and social skills in building trust and maintaining team cohesion. This was complemented by the need for visionary and strategic thinking, where young professionals are expected to adopt a long-term view, apply entrepreneurial thinking and align their leadership efforts with broader organisational goals. Participants also noted that leaders must be adaptive and transformative capable of responding proactively to change, particularly in the context of technological advancement and public sector volatility. These findings highlight the shift towards leadership models that favour flexibility, resilience and systems thinking over rigid, command and control styles.

The findings also stressed the importance of people and relationship management. Managers placed significant emphasis on relationship-based leadership. Skills in people management, stakeholder engagement and conflict resolution were seen as indispensable for maintaining performance in politically nuanced environments. Participants stressed that future leaders must not only manage teams internally but also navigate external relationships with stakeholders such as municipalities and communities. Ethics and values were also prioritised, with integrity, accountability and ethical decision-making regarded as essential traits to uphold governance standards. This reflects a growing expectation that leaders act as moral stewards in the organisation, particularly within the public sector landscape.

Collaboration and communication were found to be crucial facilitators of successful leadership. Managers highlighted the need for young leaders to articulate vision, provide feedback and foster inclusivity within teams. The ability to communicate across organisational silos and bridge operational and strategic functions was viewed as a critical skill for coordination and transparency. Furthermore, the findings highlighted a clear preference for soft skills over technical skills, although the latter was acknowledged as necessary in role-specific contexts. The participants

stressed that leadership effectiveness depends on the ability to integrate interpersonal, strategic and technical competencies, reinforcing the view that leadership is both a human and organisational practice. The study offers a well-rounded understanding of the competencies young professionals must cultivate to transition successfully into leadership roles at Transnet Property.

6.2.2 To determine the challenges experienced by young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles

The study's second objective was to determine the challenges experienced by young professionals in Transnet Property in assuming leadership roles. The findings reveal a multifaceted and deeply embedded set of structural, cultural and developmental barriers that hinder leadership progression for young professionals. Participants identified five key themes that encapsulate these challenges: progress and mobility, developmental barriers, financial and resource constraints, nature of the organisation, and red tape and resistance. Each theme reflects both systemic organisational issues and individual level experiences that collectively limit the emergence of new leadership talent within the organisation.

Challenges related to progress and mobility highlight the impact of static leadership structures and the absence of clear promotion pathways. The lack of upward movement due to entrenched senior leaders, coupled with opaque promotion systems, leaves many young professionals feeling professionally stagnant. These conditions are exacerbated by limited visibility beyond immediate teams and a lack of strategic exposure, which collectively hinder the development of a robust internal leadership pipeline. Developmental barriers further amplify this challenge, as managers reported limited access to practical experience and mentorship. Despite academic qualifications, many lack the strategic and interpersonal readiness expected in leadership roles pointing to a pressing need for targeted development programmes that bridge the experience gap.

The findings revealed that financial and resource constraints significantly restrict the ability of young professionals to ascend into leadership. Budgetary limitations, hiring freezes, and poor remuneration structures were cited as practical deterrents to leadership aspirations. Additionally, Transnet Property's organisational nature as a relatively new division within Transnet SOC Ltd creates further instability and resistance to change. Entrenched bureaucratic procedures and a culture of complacency slow down reform and make innovation difficult. The generational tensions and resistance to change from older leaders further compound these challenges. This

resistance not only prevents the infusion of fresh ideas but also perpetuates a hierarchical environment where young professionals struggle to gain endorsement and legitimacy. Collectively these findings highlight the urgent need for systemic interventions focused on transparency, leadership development, structural reform, and a culture shift to empower the next generation of leaders within Transnet Property.

6.2.3 To identify the support that managers can put in place to develop young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles

The study findings underscore a multifaceted approach that managers at Transnet Property can adopt to support young professionals in their journey toward leadership roles. Key mechanisms identified include training and learning opportunities, formalised mentorship programmes, resource allocation, structured management exposure, and the cultivation of a supportive organisational culture. These elements form a comprehensive support framework that, when implemented cohesively, can significantly enhance the leadership readiness of young professionals. Managers play a central role in operationalising these support systems by not only facilitating access but also ensuring their alignment with strategic organisational goals. The convergence between participant insights and academic literature reaffirms the importance of these mechanisms in shaping a sustainable leadership pipeline.

Training and learning emerged as a cornerstone of leadership development, with participants calling for short courses, bursaries, and practical leadership training tailored to the needs of the property sector. This focus is reinforced by theories that advocate for competency based and experiential learning, which equip young professionals with both foundational and property industry capabilities. Thus, managers are urged to support programs for ongoing development, the hiring of more young people, and the allocation of resources that close the theory-practice gap. Equally significant is the emphasis on formalised mentorship, which participants described as essential for providing personalised support and exposure to leadership behaviours. Mentorship not only facilitates knowledge transfer but also fosters the confidence and strategic thinking required for leadership success. Managers can institutionalise mentorship by integrating it into performance metrics, thereby ensuring it becomes a structured and accountable component of talent development.

The findings highlight the importance of broadening young professionals' exposure to management functions through rotational assignments and cross-functional projects. These initiatives enhance organisational understanding and leadership adaptability, particularly in complex, interdepartmental settings. Managers must take an active role in facilitating these experiences, coordinating across units to ensure developmental objectives are met. The organisational culture surfaced as a critical enabler of leadership development. A culture that supports inclusivity, feedback and innovation can amplify the effectiveness of all other support mechanisms. Managers are instrumental in modelling and reinforcing such a culture by providing regular feedback, recognising developmental efforts, and advocating for policies that align with leadership growth objectives. These strategies position managers not merely as supervisors, but as architects of leadership development within Transnet Property.

6.3 Recommendations

Below are the recommendations derived from the findings of the study.

6.3.1 Develop a leadership competency framework

A comprehensive leadership competency framework that explains the behaviors, abilities, and qualities needed for young professionals to be successful in leadership positions should be established by Transnet Property. This framework should focus on emotional intelligence, ethics, adaptability, strategic thinking, and communication. It will serve as a guide for hiring, development, and promotions, ensuring consistency and fairness across the organisation. By aligning development programmes and performance appraisals with this framework, young professionals gain clarity on expectations and leadership readiness. It will also enhance transparency and merit-based progression, improving motivation and trust. This structure supports a more strategic and objective approach to talent development.

6.3.2 Encourage cross-functional collaboration and strategic exposure

Young professionals should be given opportunities to participate in cross-functional teams and strategic projects that expose them to broader organisational dynamics. This helps them build systems thinking, collaboration, and leadership agility beyond their technical roles. Involvement

in interdepartmental initiatives and senior-level meetings enhances their strategic insight and decision-making ability. These exposures will help them understand the complexities of the business and align their actions with organisational priorities. It also encourages innovation and a culture of shared learning. Managers must facilitate such exposure to prepare future leaders for high-level responsibilities.

6.3.3 Create clear and transparent career progression pathways

Transnet Property needs to define and communicate structured career paths that show young professionals how to progress into leadership roles. This includes outlining required skills, experiences, and performance standards at each level. Transparent criteria will reduce ambiguity and perceived bias in promotion processes. Regular career conversations between managers and employees should be implemented to track progress and support growth. Visible internal opportunities and talent reviews will further encourage ambition and retention. Such pathways enhance motivation and create a sense of direction for emerging leaders. Additionally, Transnet Property should provide clear incentives for career progression, particularly from level G (Supervisor) to level F (Management), to further motivate young professionals to aspire to and prepare for leadership roles.

6.3.4 Establish structured development and mentorship programmes

Mentorship should be formalised as a key component of leadership development, with clear objectives, timelines, and accountability. Pairing young professionals with experienced leaders fosters learning, builds confidence, and accelerates leadership readiness. These programmes must be embedded into the talent development strategy and evaluated for impact. Group mentoring (a mentoring approach where one or more mentors work with a small group of mentees simultaneously) and reverse mentoring (a practice in which a typically younger or less experienced individual mentors someone more senior, often in areas like technology, social trends, or diversity and inclusion) can complement traditional approaches, promoting mutual growth. Including mentorship in manager KPIs ensures active participation and commitment. A structured mentorship culture can bridge experience gaps and promote continuous leadership development.

6.3.5 Institutionalise leadership development as a strategic priority

Leadership development should be embedded into Transnet Property's strategic objectives, with specific goals integrated into departmental plans and KPIs. This signals leadership growth as an organisational priority, not just an HR function. Leaders must champion development efforts, allocate resources, and monitor progress regularly. Managers should be held accountable for nurturing future leaders as part of their performance. Institutionalising this focus creates consistency and drives alignment between talent development and business goals. It also demonstrates a long-term commitment to internal leadership capacity building.

6.3.6 Provide continuous learning opportunities

To prepare for leadership roles, young professionals need access to ongoing learning through workshops, short courses, bursaries, and certifications. These should cover both technical property knowledge and soft skills like communication, ethics, and decision-making. Learning must be practical, industry-specific, and aligned with organisational needs. Incentives such as learning allowances and study support will boost participation. A strong learning culture fosters adaptability, curiosity, and resilience. Continuous development ensures the organisation stays competitive and its future leaders are well-equipped for evolving challenges.

6.4 Limitations of the study

One key limitation of this study is its exclusive reliance on the perspectives of managers, which may not fully capture the experiences, aspirations, or challenges faced by young professionals themselves in assuming leadership roles at Transnet Property. Although managers provided rich, in-depth data and valuable insights into the skills, they deem necessary for leadership, their views may be influenced by generational biases, organisational norms, or subjective expectations that do not necessarily align with the realities encountered by young professionals.

Another limitation of this study is its reliance on qualitative methods, which, while providing in-depth insights into managers' perspectives on the skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles, are inherently more subjective. This approach does not reveal how important these identified skills are or how widely they are recognised across the

organisation. To address this limitation, a quantitative follow-up study would be valuable to assess the prevalence and significance of these skills throughout Transnet Property, providing a more comprehensive understanding of their relevance for leadership development.

6.5 Areas of future research

Given the study's comprehensive insights into the skills, challenges, and support mechanisms relevant to young professionals assuming leadership roles within Transnet Property, future research could further explore several complementary areas. Longitudinal studies could examine the lasting effects of specific leadership development initiatives, like mentorship, rotational assignments, and training, on real leadership advancement within the organisation.

Future studies could incorporate the perspectives of young professionals themselves to triangulate findings and better understand the alignment or disconnect between managerial expectations and young professionals lived experiences. Lastly given the persistent barriers related to organisational culture and bureaucracy, further research could also focus on change management strategies that effectively shift entrenched mindsets and foster a more inclusive leadership pipeline.

6.6 Summary

This chapter summarised the study's conclusions, which explored managers' perspectives on the skills young professionals need to assume leadership roles within Transnet Property, the challenges they face in doing so, and the support mechanisms that can facilitate their leadership development. The first objective revealed six essential leadership skills identified by managers: emotional intelligence and awareness, visionary and strategic thinking, transformative and adaptability, people and relationship management, ethics and values, and communication. These competencies were seen as critical for navigating the technical and socio-political complexities of leadership, with emotional intelligence and ethical grounding highlighted as foundational.

The second objective exposed a range of barriers that hinder young professionals' leadership progression, including rigid organisational structures, lack of developmental opportunities, financial and resource constraints, organisational dynamics, red tapes and resistance to change. These systemic and cultural challenges contribute to a stagnant leadership pipeline and limit opportunities for growth. The third objective focused on potential solutions, with managers

identifying training, mentorship, capacity and resource support, increased management exposure, and a supportive organisational culture as key enablers of leadership development.

Despite its insights, the study's key limitation lies in its exclusive reliance on managerial perspectives, which might not accurately represent young professionals actual experiences. The chapter concluded with practical recommendations for leadership development and proposed future research to explore the perspectives of young professionals, assess long-term developmental impacts, and investigate change management approaches to shift organisational culture.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

MCLS Research Project

Researcher: S'phamandla Masinga ([REDACTED])

Supervisor: Prof Cecile Gerwel Proches ([REDACTED])

Dear Participant

My name is S'phamandla Masinga. I am a Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). You are invited to participate in a study entitled: *“Managers’ perspectives into skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles”*.

The aim of the study is to determine managers’ perspectives into skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. The study is expected to enroll 15 Regional Managers in the Operations, Leasing, and Facilities departments at Transnet Property. It will involve in-depth, semi structured interviews. The duration of the interview will be 45 minutes to 60 minutes. The study is not funded.

Through your participation, I hope to determine skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles. The results of the interview are intended to contribute in developing the skillset of young professionals in Transnet Property.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this interview. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00008536/2025).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher or supervisor at the numbers / emails listed above or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT

MCLS Research Project

Researcher: S'phamandla Masinga ()

Supervisor: Prof Cecile Gerwel Proches ()

I _____ (full names of participant) have been informed about the study entitled: *“Managers’ perspectives into skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles”* by S'phamandla Masinga.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study entitled: *“Managers’ perspectives into skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles”*.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor at the numbers / emails listed above.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent,

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview

YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

General questions

1. Can you describe your role at Transnet Property and your experience in leadership?
2. How would you define leadership in the context of Transnet Property?
3. From your perspective, what qualities make a successful leader at Transnet Property?

Research Question 1 - What are the key skills that managers believe are essential for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles?

4. What key skills do you believe young professionals need to develop to take on leadership roles?
5. How important are technical skills versus soft skills in leadership at Transnet Property?
6. Are there any industry-specific skills that young professionals must possess to be successful leaders in Transnet Property?

Research Question 2 - What are the challenges experienced by young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles?

7. What are the main challenges young professionals face when trying to move into leadership roles at Transnet Property?
8. Are there organizational barriers at Transnet Property that hinder young professionals from advancing into leadership roles? Please elaborate.
9. Do you think there are industry-specific challenges that make leadership transitions more difficult in the property sector? Please elaborate.

Research Question 3 - What support can managers put in place to develop young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles?

10. What leadership development programs or initiatives currently exist for young professionals at Transnet Property?
11. How effective do you think these programs are in preparing young professionals for leadership roles? Please elaborate.
12. What mentorship or coaching opportunities are available for young professionals?
13. How does Transnet Property currently identify and nurture leadership potential among young employees?

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



12 May 2025

S'Phamandla Andile Masinga (215006277)
Grad School of Bus & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear SA Masinga,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00008536/2025

Project title: Managers' perspectives into skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 11 April 2025 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 12 May 2026.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

Doctor Shamila Naidoo (Senior Deputy Chair)

/nng

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 4: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER



S'phamandla Masinga
Belhar Loft Apartments, Block D147
8 Proton Street, Belhar 8
Cape Town
7493

Email: Sphamandla.Masinga@transnet.net

Dear S'phamandla Masinga

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at Transnet Property a division of Transnet SOC Limited

Your submission of request for permission to conduct research at Transnet on "Managers' perspectives into skills required for young professionals in Transnet Property to assume leadership roles" for the period April 2025 to March 2026 is acknowledged.

We note the conditions of the study to be for strict academic purposes, that the results of the study will be submitted to Transnet, and the research will be confidential and that anonymity for both respondents and the organisation is guaranteed. Should you or University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) want to publish the study in any other manner than the final assignment, Transnet will be approached for permission to do so.

Based on the above conditions, your request to conduct the research study in Transnet is granted. We are looking forward to the outcome and recommendations of your study and the positive contributions towards skills development of young professionals at Transnet Property.

Yours sincerely,

Puleng Maseko
Head of Learning and Enablement, Transnet Academy
Transnet SOC LTD
Date: 04 April 2025

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*Executive

Group Company Secretary: Ms S Bopape

www.transnet.net

*This letterhead contains personal information as defined in the Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013 (the "Act"). The signatory consents to the processing of his/ her personal information and is obliged to handle other data subject's information in accordance with the requirements of the Act".

TRANSNET HAS A 'ZERO GIFTS' POLICY. NO EMPLOYEE IS ALLOWED TO ACCEPT GIFTS, FAVOURS OR BENEFITS