



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

An assessment of the challenges to succession planning at Transnet

Engineering

by

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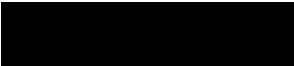
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DECLARATION

I, **Thabile Nomusa Qaqane**, declare that:

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- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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ABSTRACT

Succession planning is a critical process for organisations, ensuring a stable leadership pipeline. In Transnet Engineering, a key division of Transnet focused on engineering and manufacturing, assessing challenges to succession planning is essential for the organisation's continued success. The study aimed to investigate the various challenges faced by Transnet Engineering in executing effective succession planning. The study sought to identify shortcomings in succession planning governance by examining the challenges related to succession planning. This assessment is crucial for addressing various elements that improve organisational effectiveness. The research employed a qualitative research approach, an exploratory research design, purposive sampling, in-depth interviews with twelve managers, and thematic analysis to analyse data to achieve its objectives. The study found that Transnet Engineering faces multiple challenges in identifying crucial roles, developing succession criteria, assessing employees, planning for growth, nurturing successors, and reviewing succession strategies. The study recommends addressing these challenges to foster a resilient workforce capable of adapting to the ever-changing demands of the engineering sector. There is a need to implement structured processes and promote an inclusive culture. This can help Transnet Engineering to enhance its succession planning efforts and secure its leadership for the future.

Keywords: Assessment; succession planning; organisational effectiveness; leadership; Transnet Engineering

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved son, Ncebazakhe Qaqane, and my daughter, Khethelo Mkhize, whose unconditional love has been a constant source of strength. To my mother, Nokuthula Mathonsi, I am profoundly grateful for your unwavering prayers. My siblings, Sandile, Nontobeko, and Siza Mathonsi, although our journeys may lead us in different directions, our roots remain forever intertwined.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Succession planning is a critical process that ensures the long-term sustainability of organisational growth, and strategic advantage. The introduction of this chapter presents the background and context of the study on an assessment of the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering in KwaZulu Natal, Durban, a division of Transnet SOC Ltd. with over 35 years old, officially established on April 1, 1990, by restructuring [South African Transport Services](#) (SATS).

Transnet Engineering (TE) is Transnet's advanced manufacturing and maintenance arm, responsible for designing, building, refurbishing, and servicing rail rolling stock (locomotives, wagons, coaches) and port equipment for Africa and beyond.

In South Africa, challenges to effective succession planning are significant and deserve thorough analysis. Understanding these challenges can provide insights into how the organisation can better prepare for future leadership needs. This study assessed challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is on the study background, research problem, aim, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, and a brief introduction to the literature and methodology (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

1.2 Background to the study

State-owned companies like Transnet Engineering should ensure that the company remains competitive and is ready for succession planning. As the company continue with digital transformation and ensures a seamless transition into the digital era.

The global workforce is changing quickly and volatile, requiring talented leaders (Allen, 2016). Organisations that don't plan for changes and uncertainty are at risk of falling behind. Succession planning is still experiencing regional challenges and difficulties in South Africa due to its past inequality and prejudice. This resulted in an unclear methodology for identifying, developing, and nurturing future leaders. Currently, Transnet Engineering is

struggling to conduct succession planning (Transnet Annual Report, 2023). This interrupts operations and causes a loss of institutional knowledge and experience by reducing the number of capable leaders. Mechanical and electrical engineering are highly specialised skills, which can be very challenging to recruit workers with such skills and knowledge to operate the organisation (Williams & Ngqabutho, 2017). To train future leaders from its own workforce is not easy owed to talent shortages. Highly skilled and high-ranking Transnet Engineering personnel are fearing being replaced or marginalisation. There is fear of the unknown, and this resistance challenges succession planning and the company's capability to develop future leaders" (Khoza & Nkomo, 2020).

Transnet Engineering has challenges to invest in training and mentoring for internal talent (Transnet Annual Report, 2023). Creating a culture of continual learning and growth allows the organisation to consistently recruit top people for critical roles. In addition, Transnet Engineering is battling to develop leaders internally due to the dearth of potential applicants to take up the key leadership roles. Transnet Engineering is a highly specialised engineering business. Senior managers and executives are reluctant to participate in identifying and nurturing prospective successors. This may also weaken succession planning and create a stumbling block for the company from a strong pipeline of future leaders (Masimula & Lekgoro, 2021). It is evident that there is a need to examine the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering. The organisation needs assistance to come up with a clear and effective methodology to identify those individuals with high potential in assessing the readiness to take up leadership positions and be provided with suitable opportunities for growth and development.

1.3 Research problem

Succession planning is an essential element of organisational success, as it ensures the availability of a group of capable and qualified individuals who are ready to take on leadership roles when needed. Transnet Engineering, a government-owned enterprise.

In South Africa prioritises succession planning to ensure the seamless continuation of operations and the continuous growth and development of the organisation (Transnet Annual Report, 2023). Transnet Engineering has many challenges in succession planning. Transnet Engineering has no well-defined plan for identifying and nurturing future leaders and has challenges in effectively training individuals for leadership positions (Transnet Annual

Report, 2023). Lack of a coherent framework is leading to employee perplexity and impeding the recognition of persons who are well-suited for crucial jobs within the company. In addition, Transnet Engineering is now facing a shortage of skilled individuals, particularly in critical areas such as engineering and technical roles (Mulaudzi & Masemola, 2019). The limited availability of skilled workers is creating challenges in finding capable candidates for leadership positions inside the company, leading to important positions being unfilled or being filled by individuals who may lack the requisite qualifications for the demands of leadership. As a result of lacking a sufficient reservoir of capable candidates, the organisation has challenges in guaranteeing a smooth transition of leadership in the future. The presence of resistance to change inside the organisation is a significant barrier to the effective implementation of succession planning at Transnet Engineering (Khoza & Nkomo, 2020). Organisational culture has a significant impact on the efficacy of succession planning initiatives. Since employees demonstrate reluctance towards novel concepts or protocols, it is hindering the organisation's ability to cultivate future leaders. To secure the organisation's readiness for the future, it is essential to conduct this study to generate findings that can help to overcome resistance to change and foster a culture that emphasises succession planning (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

This study is crucial because the effectiveness of succession planning at Transnet Engineering (TE) remains largely unknown, creating uncertainty within the organisation. This gap not only threatens Transnet Engineering performance but could also have broader economic implications for South Africa's economy (Transnet Annual Report, 2023). Therefore, the study holds both theoretical and practical significance. Its primary goal is to explore how the succession planning evaluation process can be optimised, allowing organisations to assess and enhance its effectiveness.

By adopting robust human resources management practices, South African organisations can increase their operational efficiency and improve competitiveness on a global scale. The insights gained from this study will provide management with valuable guidance on how to ensure succession planning processes are well-structured, resilient, and aligned with the organisation's long-term goals.

Additionally, the study is expected to emphasise the importance of evaluating succession planning as an ongoing process. This proactive approach helps mitigate the risk of business disruption and ensures a smooth transition of leadership. By doing so, organisations can tap

into their employees' intellectual capital, ultimately driving improved organisational performance. Ultimately, it is hoped that this research will lay the groundwork for future studies, encouraging further exploration of how succession planning can be refined to support long-term organisational growth and sustainability (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

1.4 Aim and objectives of the study

The “aim of the study is to assess challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering in order to develop a succession” planning framework.

1.5 Research objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the challenges encountered in identifying critical roles essential for succession planning within Transnet Engineering.
- To explore the difficulties involved in developing comprehensive, equitable, and transparent succession criteria.
- To analyse the challenges related to assessing employees' readiness, capability, and potential for leadership succession.
- To investigate the barriers that hinder effective planning and facilitation of employee growth and professional development in preparation for leadership transitions.
- To evaluate the organisational and cultural factors that affect the nurturing and development of potential successors.
- To assess the challenges associated with regularly reviewing, monitoring, and updating succession plans to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

1.6 Research questions

This study seeks to address the following key research questions

- What challenges does Transnet Engineering face in identifying critical roles for succession planning?
- What challenges arise in developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria within Transnet Engineering?
- What are the key challenges associated with assessing employees for succession readiness in Transnet Engineering?
- What obstacles hinder the effective planning and facilitation of employee growth and development for succession purposes?
- What are the challenges involved in nurturing and preparing potential successors within Transnet Engineering?
- What challenges are encountered in the regular review and modification of succession plans at Transnet Engineering?

1.7 Contribution/significance of the study

The study is important because it will address the obstacles impacting succession planning at Transnet Engineering by developing a thorough succession framework that establishes explicit rules and criteria for recognising, nurturing, and advancing potential leaders. This framework will provide workers with a clearly defined and strategic plan for advancing in their professional careers while also guaranteeing that the business maintains a consistent pool of talented executives to propel its achievements.

The study will help policymakers to improve their capacity to make informed judgments on leadership development and succession planning by implementing a clearly defined strategy. By taking this action, the organisation will maintain its ability to adapt and respond to changing circumstances quickly.

Additionally, the study will offer personnel at Transnet Engineering a well-defined and precise trajectory for professional growth to allow workers to have a clear comprehension of

the competencies and experiences required to excel within the organisation. By using the findings, employee engagement and happiness will be enhanced, resulting in increased rates of staff retention and overall performance. Moreover, the study will help the company to implement a robust leadership succession plan to promptly adapt to market changes, foster innovation, and sustain a competitive advantage in the field (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

1.8 Literature reviews and theoretical framework

The “literature review focused on the understanding of succession planning, challenges, and best practices in succession planning.

Succession planning “is a strategic process that prepares organisations for future leadership transitions by identifying and developing potential internal candidates. It ensures continuity, mitigates leadership risks, and manages talent effectively. However, many companies face challenges in implementing effective succession plans.

The theoretical framework presented different theories and models on succession planning. In particular, the succession planning model by Weller and Hart (2020) was used as the main lens for the study. The model is a roadmap for organisations to ensure leadership continuity and stability. By identifying key roles, establishing success criteria, assessing employees, fostering their growth, and regularly updating the plan, organisations are better positioned to navigate transitions” effectively.

Succession planning theories emphasise the systematic identification and development of employees to fill key leadership positions. These theories focus on ensuring continuity in leadership, retaining talent, and preparing individuals for future roles.

Succession Planning theory involves the identification, development, and preparation of potential leaders to take on critical roles in an organisation. The theory underscores the importance of talent identification, leadership training, and readiness to ensure that organisations have a sustainable leadership pipeline. By proactively preparing internal candidates, organisations mitigate risks of leadership gaps and enhance long-term stability. leaders to ensure organisational continuity (Groysberg & Abrahams, 2023).

Several models and approaches contribute to this process, including the "Leadership Pipeline Model," which emphasis continuous leadership development at all levels. " Leadership Pipeline Mode”l is crucial for the organisations to maintain leadership continuity by ensuring that a pipeline of qualified individuals is available to step into key roles. Without such

planning, organisations risk disruption during leadership transitions, especially in times of unforeseen events like illness, resignation, or retirement, which could significantly impact their stability and long-term performance (Martin & Williams, 2023). Succession planning goes beyond merely filling future vacancies; it focuses on nurturing the next generation of leaders. By identifying high-potential employees early, organisations can design targeted development programs that provide the necessary skills, experience, and knowledge to prepare them for leadership roles. This approach not only minimises the need for external hires but also ensures that the organisation's leadership remains aligned with its core values and culture (Miller & Thompson, 2022). When employees see that the organisation is committed to their long-term growth and recognises their potential, it boosts morale and engagement. Employees are more likely to stay with an organisation that invests in its people and provides clear pathways for career progression. Structured succession planning also provides transparency regarding how promotions and role changes are made, reducing uncertainty Edwards, M. (2021).

Another approach, the 9-Box Grid Model is widely used for talent assessment and management. This model evaluates employees based on two key criteria: performance (how well they're doing in their current role) and potential (their ability to succeed in higher-level roles). It's one of the most popular tools in succession planning, as it allows organisations to visually assess and categorise employees, helping to identify high potential candidates for leadership roles. From leadership development to talent retention strategies. The grid provides a transparent method for succession decisions that removes ambiguity and favoritism in promotion processes. By focusing on both performance and potential, organisations can make more objective and strategic decisions regarding who is ready for promotion and who might need additional development (Edwards, 2021).

1.9 Research methodology

The study applied an exploratory research design and qualitative methodology to delve into the intricacies of succession planning at Transnet Engineering. By employing purposive sampling, the research targeted specific participants who could provide in depth insights into their experiences and perceptions surrounding this essential process. Structured interviews were centred on fundamental questions that illuminated significant barriers and pitfalls the organisation faces in implementing effective succession planning strategies Jones, A. B. (2023).

Thematic analysis was utilised to evaluate the qualitative data collected from interviews. This approach allowed researchers to identify recurring themes and patterns, revealing a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by Transnet Engineering. This study provides valuable insights into the barriers and pitfalls that Transnet Engineering and other organisations encounter regarding succession planning Taylor, Smith, J. D., & Roberts, L. E. (2022).

The chosen qualitative methodology was selected for this study to explore the complex and multifaceted nature of succession planning at Transnet Engineering. Qualitative research is particularly effective when the goal is to gain a deeper understanding of a specific issue or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Succession planning, especially in a large organisation like Transnet Engineering, involves a range of dynamic and often hidden factors that cannot be easily quantified.

1.10 Definition of terms

1.10.1 Succession planning

Succession Planning is a strategic process aimed at identifying, developing, and preparing internal candidates to fill key leadership roles in the future. It ensures that an organisation has a continuous pipeline of talent ready to step into critical positions when needed, reducing the risks associated with leadership turnover and organisational disruption. The process includes talent identification, leadership development, and providing targeted training opportunities to ensure that future leaders are adequately prepared. Succession planning is closely aligned with broader talent management strategies and long-term organisational goals (Gartner, 2022).

1.10.2 Potential successor

Refers to an individual within an organisation who is identified as having the capabilities, skills, and potential to step into a higher-level role in the future. Potential successors are typically employees who exhibit high performance in their current role, demonstrate leadership qualities, and show the capacity to handle increased responsibilities. These individuals are often included in succession planning programs, where they undergo specific development activities, such as mentorship, training, job rotations, or leadership assignments, to prepare them for future leadership positions. The identification of potential successors

helps organisations ensure leadership continuity and mitigate risks associated with turnover in key roles.

1.10.3 Training development

Training and development refers to the continuous process through which individuals plan, manage, and progress in their professional lives. It involves activities aimed at enhancing an individual's career skills, knowledge, and experiences to achieve both personal and professional goals. Training development is typically guided by a combination of self-assessment, goal setting, skill-building, and feedback. In an organisational context, career development is often supported through structured programs that provide employees with learning opportunities, mentorship, job rotations, promotions, and career coaching. The goal of career development is not only to help employees advance in their careers but also to align their personal ambitions with the needs and opportunities within the organisation. Effective training development strategies contribute to employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention by fostering a culture of growth and opportunity (London, M. (2022).

1.10.4 Performance management

It is a systematic process used by organisations to assess, monitor, and enhance employee performance in alignment with organisational goals. It involves setting clear expectations, providing regular feedback, conducting evaluations, and offering developmental support to ensure that employees meet or exceed performance standards. The process includes defining key performance indicators (KPIs), tracking progress, and adjusting goals as necessary. Performance management is not only about measuring past performance but also about fostering continuous improvement through coaching, training, and career development. This process is crucial for achieving organisational success by maximizing employee potential and ensuring that individual efforts contribute to the broader strategic objectives of the organisation Aguinis, H., & Kraiger, K. (2020).

1.10.5 Succession planning theory

Succession Planning theory involves the identification, development, and preparation of potential leaders to take on critical roles in an organisation. The theory underscores the importance of talent identification, leadership training, and readiness to ensure that organisations have a sustainable leadership pipeline. By proactively preparing internal

candidates, organisations mitigate risks of leadership gaps and enhance long-term stability. leads to ensure organisational continuity (Groysberg & Abrahams, 2023).

1.11 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study, including its introduction, background, research problem, significance, aim, objectives, significance and purpose as well as and format, as well as the chapter outline.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A review of the relevant literature on succession planning is presented in this chapter. The following types of resources were utilised: books, journal articles, and reports.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter delineates the study's population, target population, study site, methodology, research design, data collection and analysis procedures, sampling strategies, data control techniques, pilot study, study limitations, ethical considerations, and conclusion.

Chapter 4: Results, discussion and interpretation of findings

The results and discussions of the research on the challenges affecting to succession planning at Transnet Engineering in Durban will be presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents conclusions and suggestions regarding the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering.

1.12 Conclusion

This research investigates the succession planning issues at Transnet Engineering, focusing on its sustainability and success. The chapter provides an overview of the study's background, problem, aim, objectives, questions, importance, literature review, methodology, and structure, as well as a conclusion to the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Succession “planning is a strategic process that equips an organisation for forthcoming leadership transitions by identifying and cultivating potential internal candidates. It guarantees continuity, reduces risks, and optimally manages talent. Nevertheless, numerous organisations encounter difficulties in executing efficient succession strategies. This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of succession planning, encompassing its definition, significance, challenges, risks, best practices, theories, models, and the theoretical framework that underpins the” study.

2.2 Succession planning

For every organisation to ensure long term stability and achievement, implementing a succession planning process is crucial. Succession planning involves identifying key roles within the company and developing a strategy to ensure that competent and qualified individuals are ready to replace the current incumbents if they leave or retire (Bersin, 2018). Typically, this process involves assessing the current staff, pinpointing those with the capacity to replace the current leader, and equipping them with the necessary training and development to prepare them for future leadership roles (Conger, 2020).

Succession planning is an essential component for organisations in order to achieve long-term success and preserve stability. In order to avoid disruptions and ensure a smooth transition when senior employees go, a firm might take proactive steps to identify and cultivate potential future leaders. This ensures the presence of capable individuals who are prepared to assume leadership roles whenever necessary. Furthermore, it aids in the creation of a talent pipeline (Davenport, 2017). As a result, of the accelerating pace of change and intensifying competition, organisations must be agile and responsive in order to preserve their competitive edge. Organisations may effectively adapt to changes in leadership and ensure that they have the right persons in position to drive the business ahead by implementing a comprehensive succession planning strategy (Goldsmith, 2021).

2.3 Risks of not having succession planning

If there is no succession planning in place, there is a risk of losing important institutional knowledge and abilities. The sudden or unexpected departure of key personnel may lead to a deficiency in knowledge that may be difficult to rectify. The erosion of specialised expertise may significantly impact the organisation's operations and efficiency. According to Jacob (2022), firms with strong succession planning are more successful in retaining important knowledge and skills inside the company (Hill, 2019).

If there is not enough succession planning, leadership roles may be left unfilled or filled by those who do not have the required credentials. This may result in a dearth of direction, poor decision-making, and diminished worker morale. Research done by Harvard Business Review found that businesses with effective succession planning are more likely to have a group of capable people ready to take on leadership roles when needed (Kim, 2019). Without implementing succession planning, there is a risk of increased staff turnover and the departure of valued personnel. Employees who perceive a dearth of opportunities for career advancement inside a firm are more likely to seek options outside. This might lead to increased employee turnover rates, higher costs for recruitment and training, and a loss of talented staff to competing organisations. Deloitte's research reveals that companies that implement effective succession planning see lower staff turnover rates and higher levels of employee engagement (Smith, 2018).

Without succession planning, there is a risk of a leadership vacuum that might impede the organisation's ability to adapt to changing market conditions and emerging trends. Inadequate coherence in leadership may result in missed opportunities, ineffective decision-making, and diminished competitiveness. Research done by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2020) indicates that firms with robust succession planning systems have more flexibility and enhanced ability to respond to market fluctuations. In addition, the lack of succession planning may harm the organisation's reputation and credibility (Thompson, 2023). A sudden change in leadership or a failure to fill important positions may create uncertainty and instability, both inside the business and in its external surroundings. This has the potential to erode the trust of stakeholders, reduce investor confidence, and impair customer loyalty. According to Thompson (2023), stakeholders see companies that effectively implement succession planning more favourably and are better positioned to achieve long-term success.

2.4 Best practices in succession planning

Succession planning is a vital process for all organisations and corporations to ensure the seamless continuation of their operations and growth. Without a well-defined succession plan, a firm may face challenges when key executives or staff members go suddenly, leading to service interruptions and a decline in productivity. Therefore, it is essential for companies to implement effective succession planning strategies in order to identify and nurture the next generation of leaders inside the organisation (Hill, 2019).

An ideal strategy for succession planning is to start the process at an early stage. Succession planning should be seen as a proactive rather than reactive procedure, beginning well in advance of a key employee's departure. Leaders may efficiently groom potential future leaders by promptly identifying high-potential individuals inside the organisation and providing them with suitable training and growth prospects. This technique ensures a smooth and uninterrupted transition when the time comes for a new leader to take on their role (Kim, 2019).

An essential strategy for successful succession planning is to include several stakeholders in the process. Gathering feedback from existing leaders, HR professionals, and important workers is essential to ensure that the succession plan aligns with the organisation's aims and ideals. By integrating a range of perspectives, firms may better identify the essential skills and qualities required for future leaders and then tailor their plans for their growth (Conger, 2020). Moreover, it is recommended that companies commit money to leadership development programs in order to cultivate and broaden their reservoir of skilled workers. Providing employees with opportunities to gain new skills, experiences, and exposure to other parts of the business may help them build the required abilities to succeed in leadership roles. Organisations may establish a strong group of future leaders who are prepared to take on higher roles by investing in the professional growth of their staff (Davenport, 2017).

Moreover, it is important for companies to regularly assess and modify their succession strategies to ensure they remain relevant and align with the changing needs of the business. As the corporate environment evolves, the succession plan should also adjust. Organisations may improve their preparedness for leadership changes and ensure a seamless transfer by regularly evaluating and enhancing their plan (Kim, 2019).

2.5 Challenges to succession planning in an organisation

Succession planning is a crucial process within organisations to ensure leadership continuity (Adams, 2024). While essential, it is fraught with challenges that can undermine its effectiveness. One of the challenges organisations encounter in succession planning is the presence of leadership gaps. Often, organisations may lack a clear understanding of the essential skills and qualities needed in potential successors. In many instances, the failure to identify and nurture talent early leads to a situation where there are no qualified candidates ready to step into key roles when needed. This gap can occur for various reasons, including inadequate training programs and a lack of strategic foresight. For instance, a study conducted by the Harvard Business Review revealed that nearly 70 per cent of employers do not have a straightforward succession plan in place (Adams, 2024). As a result, when pivotal leadership roles become vacant, organisations may hastily appoint individuals who are not fully prepared, leading to suboptimal organisational performance.

Carter and McKinley (2021) found that an organisation's culture significantly influences its approach to succession planning. In environments that foster competition among employees, potential successors may be reluctant to seek mentorship or development opportunities, fearing that these actions may undermine their position. Furthermore, a lack of transparency regarding the succession process can lead to employee mistrust (Johnson, 2022). If individuals perceive the process as biased or favouritism-driven, it can demotivate talent and result in high turnover. Organisations must strive to create a culture of openness where individuals feel encouraged to aspire for leadership roles without facing undue pressure from peers or management (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

Technology has also transformed the landscape of succession planning (Johnson, 2022). While it provides tools for tracking employee performance and potential, reliance on technology can also present challenges. For instance, automated systems may overlook the nuanced human factors contributing to effective leadership. These technologies can help identify candidates based on historical data, but may not account for qualities such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, or cultural fit. According to recent trends, organisations are increasingly integrating artificial intelligence into their talent management processes; however, there is still significant reliance on traditional metrics that can limit the identification of suitable successors. Organisations should balance technological tools with personal assessments to comprehensively evaluate their talent pool (Kelly, 2023).

Resistance to change is another notable challenge in succession planning (Johnson, 2022). Employees in leadership positions often view succession planning as threatening their authority or job security, leading to resistance. Some leaders are reluctant to invest time in mentoring or developing their successors, fearing that this will diminish their status. This can hinder knowledge transfer and stifle the growth of future leaders. Encouraging senior leaders to adopt a mindset focused on development rather than competition is vital. Training programmes to enhance leadership development can provide current leaders with the tools to mentor and guide potential successors effectively (Johnson, 2022).

Recent years have highlighted the growing importance of diversity and inclusion in succession planning (Lee, 2022). Organisations are recognising the necessity of fostering diverse leadership teams that reflect the demographics of the marketplace. However, achieving this goal poses its own set of challenges. Many organisations struggle with ingrained biases that affect talent identification and development. The lack of diverse leadership impacts employee morale and hinders innovation and problem-solving capabilities within the organisation. To address these issues, organisations must implement targeted initiatives that prioritise diversity in their succession plans. Companies like Starbucks and Unilever have recognised the significance of diversity and have established programs to develop diverse talent for leadership positions, serving as examples for others looking to enhance inclusivity in their succession planning efforts (Johnson, 2022).

Succession planning is expected to evolve further in response to emerging trends in the workforce (Patel & Hernandez, 2022). As younger generations enter the workforce, there will be an increased demand for flexibility and opportunities for personal growth. Organisations may need to adapt their succession planning strategies to meet these evolving expectations. Additionally, organisations are likely to emphasise developing remote and hybrid leadership skills, reflecting the changing nature of work. Future leaders must navigate complex, distributed teams while fostering collaboration and engagement in virtual environments.

2.6 Succession planning theories and models

The study explores succession planning theories and models such as the Human Capital Theory, (Becker, 2023), the Nine-Box Grid Model, and Transformational Leadership contribute significantly to effective succession planning. Their strengths and weaknesses are highlighted. These theories help organisations identify, develop, and nurture talent, ensuring

seamless transitions in leadership. The study also presents the succession planning model underpinning the study.

2.6.1 Development model of succession planning

The Developmental Model of succession planning focuses on preparing individuals within an organisation for future leadership roles (Thompson & Goldstein, 2020). This model emphasises developing employees through training, mentoring, and hands-on experience. Its foundation lies in the belief that successful succession planning identifies potential leaders and nurtures their growth within the organisation. Despite its strengths, this model has several weaknesses that can hinder its effectiveness.

One of the primary strengths of the Developmental Model is its proactive nature. Organisations that adopt this model invest in the development of their employees, which can lead to a more skilled and capable workforce (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). This emphasis on internal development can increase employee retention, as individuals often feel more valued and invested in when they see a clear pathway for growth. For instance, companies like Google and Amazon have implemented extensive leadership development programs that have resulted in a strong internal talent pool capable of stepping into key positions when necessary (Johnson, 2022).

However, the Developmental Model is not without its weaknesses. One significant issue is the time and resource commitment required. Developing employees takes time, and not all organisations have the luxury of waiting for potential leaders to gain the necessary experience. In fast-paced industries, immediate needs may outstrip the competencies of internally promoted candidates, leading to gaps in leadership during critical transitions. Additionally, this model can contribute to a lack of diversity in leadership roles (Johnson, 2022). When organisations focus primarily on internal development, they may overlook external candidates who could bring fresh perspectives and experiences. This insular approach can perpetuate existing biases and limit innovation. The lack of diversity in leadership has been a recurrent issue in many organisations. Research shows that diverse teams are more innovative and perform better, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach to leadership selection that includes external talent (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

2.6.2 The Leadership Pipeline Model

The leadership pipeline model has gained significant attention in recent years for its structured approach to leadership development. The Leadership Pipeline Model, first articulated by Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and Jim Noel in their 2001 book, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the transitions leaders must navigate across different levels of management (Adams, 2024). This model delineates six distinct passages that leaders must successfully traverse: from managing self to managing others, managing managers, managing a function, managing a business, and managing an enterprise. Each passage requires different skills, time applications, and work values. The model emphasises the necessity of developing leaders from within an organisation, which provides a sustainable path for growth and alignment with corporate culture (Johnson, 2022).

The impact of the leadership pipeline model on organisations is considerable. It encourages leaders' systematic development, ensuring they possess the requisite skills for their roles (Adams, 2024). This approach minimises the risks associated with leadership gaps and enhances organisational stability. Organisations that have adopted this model report better cohesion among teams and a clearer vision for leadership roles, ultimately fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Adams, 2024).

Despite its popularity and practical applications, the leadership pipeline model has weaknesses (Carter & McKinley, 2021). One significant drawback is that the model can become overly rigid. The prescribed transitions and skills at each passage may not account for the unique contexts of different organisations. As industries evolve rapidly due to technological advancements and market changes, a rigid model may fail to capture the complexity of modern leadership challenges. For example, leaders in tech companies often require agility and adaptability beyond the model's outlined expectations. A failure to accommodate the dynamic nature of different industries can lead to dissatisfaction and disillusionment among emerging leaders (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

Another weakness lies in the model's potential to create silos within organisations (Johnson, 2022). As leaders follow the prescribed pathways, they may develop a narrow view of their roles and responsibilities. Instead of fostering collaboration across functions, the emphasis on individual leadership passages can result in leaders focusing solely on their respective areas without understanding broader organisational dynamics. This can hinder innovation and

collaboration, especially in environments where cross-functional teamwork is essential for success.

The leadership pipeline model also assumes a linear progression in leadership development (Adams, 2024). However, real-world scenarios often involve non-linear career trajectories, where individuals may shift roles, industries, or even careers entirely. The model does not sufficiently address these shifts, which can lead to misalignment between leadership capability and organisational needs. For example, a leader transitioning from a technical background to a managerial role may not have received adequate preparation within the framework to handle responsibilities requiring interpersonal skills and strategic thinking. Moreover, the model has been criticised for its lack of emphasis on diversity and inclusion (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). As organisations become more focused on the importance of diverse leadership teams, the traditional pipeline approach may perpetuate existing biases. Candidates who fit the conventional mould for leadership roles may overshadow diverse talents, leading to homogeneity in thought and approach. This lack of diversity can stifle creativity and problem-solving within organisations (Johnson, 2022).

2.6.3 The 9-box grid model

The 9-box grid model serves as a strategic tool in succession planning, aiding organisations in identifying and developing potential leaders (Johnson, 2022). The 9-box grid model was introduced in the 1970s as a framework for assessing employee performance and potential. The model categorises employees into nine distinct boxes based on two axes: performance and potential. The vertical axis represents the employee's past performance, while the horizontal axis signifies potential for future leadership roles. Organisations can create a visual representation of their talent pool by placing employees in one of the nine boxes. This model has become prevalent in corporate settings as a part of a broader succession planning strategy (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

Welch emphasised the importance of talent management and succession planning, prompting organisations to adopt systematic approaches to identify high-potential employees (Carter & McKinley, 2021). His approach of categorising talent into distinct groups laid the groundwork for the 9-box grid's practical applications. As companies increasingly prioritise leadership development, the model has gained traction in various sectors, from tech start-ups to multinational corporations.

Despite its adoption, the 9-box grid model harbours several weaknesses. One primary critique is its oversimplification of complex human attributes and organisational dynamics. The model's binary classification may neglect critical nuances regarding employee capabilities (Adams, 2024). For instance, an employee showcased as a high performer might possess weaknesses in specific competency areas, which are overlooked in a broad categorisation. This can result in blind spots in leadership development strategies. Moreover, the model does not consider external factors impacting employee performance and potential (Carter & McKinley, 2021). Market fluctuations, organisational restructuring, and changing industry standards are often pivotal in determining an employee's capacity for growth. The 9-Boxes Grid's focus is primarily internal, failing to factor in external influences that may skew evaluations. Consequently, organisations may miss opportunities to nurture talent amid shifting business landscapes (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

Another significant weakness of the 9-Box Grid involves unconscious bias in evaluation processes (Carter & McKinley, 2021). Decisions regarding performance and potential are often subjective, and evaluators may unwittingly allow personal biases to influence categorisations. This can lead to a lack of diversity in leadership development pathways and perpetuate existing inequalities within organisations. For example, if evaluators favour certain demographics or personality types, the grid's effectiveness diminishes, potentially alienating qualified candidates who do not fit these moulds. Recent developments in organisational behaviour have drawn attention to these weaknesses. Many companies have begun to integrate more holistic approaches to talent management, recognising the limitations of rigid frameworks like the 9-box grid (Johnson, 2022). Techniques such as 360-degree feedback, where employees receive evaluations from multiple sources, have gained prominence. This comprehensive input helps mitigate biases and provides a more rounded perspective on an employee's abilities.

Furthermore, technology has introduced new avenues for succession planning. Data analytics and artificial intelligence tools offer enhanced insights into employee performance, allowing organisations to analyse patterns over time rather than relying solely on subjective evaluations (Adams, 2024). For instance, predictive analytics can identify potential leaders based on their skills, behaviours, and contributions to team outcomes, presenting a modern alternative to traditional models like the 9-box grid. An additional perspective on the 9-box grid's effectiveness is the increasing importance of soft skills and emotional intelligence in

leadership. As businesses navigate complex social dynamics and champion inclusive cultures, the model's focus on performance may fall short in identifying leaders who can connect with diverse teams. Future succession planning models may need to evolve, appreciating interpersonal qualities alongside traditional performance metrics and potential (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

In light of these discussions, the future of succession planning may see a blend of methodologies that combine the visual clarity of the 9-box grid with more sophisticated evaluation systems (Adams, 2024). Organisations may embrace hybrid models incorporating feedback-driven assessments, data analytics, and a broader understanding of leadership qualities. Such developments could enable a more adaptable and inclusive approach to talent management.

2.6.4 The four-step model

The four-step model consists of defining key positions, identifying high-potential employees, providing necessary training and development, and evaluating and adjusting the succession plan (Johnson, 2022). Each step serves a distinct purpose within the overall framework of succession planning. The first step, defining key positions, requires organisations to identify roles critical to their operations and strategy. This requires a deep understanding of organisational needs and the strategic direction. Historical perspectives indicate that many organisations have struggled with accurately identifying these key roles, leading to misaligned succession efforts. For instance, companies like General Electric have been known for their robust succession planning practices, allowing them to maintain a competitive edge by nurturing talent that aligns with future goals.

The second step involves identifying high-potential employees. This process typically includes evaluating employees' current performance, evaluating their skills, and understanding their growth potential. Research has shown that employees often feel motivated when they recognise their inclusion in succession planning processes. For instance, a Society for Human Resource Management study noted that organisations involving employees in identifying potential successors reported higher engagement levels. However, there is a significant risk of bias during this identification process, often leading to potential neglect of diverse candidates (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

The third step encompasses providing training and development opportunities tailored to the identified high-potential employees. Training can take various forms, including mentoring, coaching, and formal education programs. Organisations must create a culture of continuous learning to facilitate the growth of these individuals. Google has implemented various developmental programs to enhance its leadership pipeline, showcasing how investment in employee development correlates with succession workforce stability (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). The final step in the model focuses on evaluating and adjusting the succession plan. This ensures the plan remains relevant and adaptive to the changing business environment. Regular assessments allow organisations to refine their approach based on evolving needs. Companies like IBM utilise data analytics to assess the effectiveness of their succession planning, demonstrating how organisations can leverage technology to enhance traditional practices (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

Despite its structured approach, the four-step model has several weaknesses. First, the model assumes a linear progression from one step to the next, but succession planning can often be dynamic and iterative. Organisations may find themselves revisiting earlier steps due to unforeseen circumstances, such as market changes or shifts in organisational strategy. This may challenge organisations that prefer a rigid framework (Johnson, 2022).

Moreover, the second step's reliance on identifying high-potential employees can propagate bias and overlook diverse talent. Traditional evaluation methods often focus on past performance, which may not accurately predict future potential. This can hinder diversity and inclusion efforts as certain groups may be systematically excluded from leadership opportunities. The recent push for equity in the workplace highlights the need for a more nuanced approach to talent identification (Adams, 2024).

Additionally, the training and development phase may suffer from a lack of resources or commitment from leadership. Organisations may face challenges in providing sufficient opportunities for all identified successors. This is particularly pressing for small to medium-sized enterprises, which often lack the infrastructure to support comprehensive development programs (Carter & McKinley, 2021). Another notable weakness is the potential for resistance to change. Employees may resist the succession planning process because they perceive their roles are insecure. This can create a culture of distrust and competition instead of collaboration. For effective succession planning, organisations must convey the rationale

behind the process clearly and involve employees in discussions to foster a sense of ownership and transparency (Johnson, 2022).

2.6.5 The Talent review process

The Talent Review process is vital in modern human resource management. It assesses employee performance and potential, aligning workforce capabilities with organisational goals (Carter & McKinley, 2021). However, despite its intentions, this process often encounters significant weaknesses. The primary aim of the Talent Review Process is to enhance organisational effectiveness by ensuring that the right people are in the right roles. This involves the identification of high-potential employees, assessment of skill gaps, and creation of action plans for development (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). By systematically reviewing organisational talent, companies aim to retain critical skills and foster a culture of continuous learning and progress.

Despite these intentions, the Talent Review Process suffers from several weaknesses. One major concern is the potential for bias in the review process. Subjective evaluations can arise when managers rate their team members based on personal preferences rather than objective performance metrics. This can lead to a lack of equitable opportunities for employees. Research shows that women and minority groups are often rated less favourably compared to their male and non-minority counterparts, perpetuating existing inequalities (Adams, 2024). This bias compromises the legitimacy of the talent review process and undermines employee morale.

Another weakness lies in the over-reliance on past performance as an indicator of future potential (Adams, 2024). The traditional review process often fails to consider external factors that may impact performance, such as economic conditions or changes in organisational strategy. Furthermore, it may not adequately account for an employee's adaptability or willingness to embrace change, which is particularly relevant in today's fast-paced business environment where agility is crucial (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

The frequency of talent reviews can also present a challenge. In many organisations, these reviews are conducted annually or semi-annually, which can limit the effectiveness of the process (Adams, 2024). This interval does not allow for timely feedback or adjustments in employee development plans. When talent management becomes a once-a-year event, it fails

to support ongoing growth and improvement. Additionally, infrequent assessments may prevent organisations from promptly addressing underperformance or recognising outstanding contributions from employees.

Moreover, the implementation of the talent review process can lead to a limited focus on developmental feedback. Organisations often prioritise rankings and assessments over genuine conversations about growth opportunities (Carter & McKinley, 2021). Employees may perceive the review process as merely a bureaucratic exercise, leading to disengagement and a lack of trust in leadership. Effective talent management should foster open dialogues where employees feel valued and encouraged to pursue professional development (Johnson, 2022).

Considering these weaknesses, it is essential for organisations to adopt a more holistic approach to the Talent Review Process. This evolution should include continuous feedback mechanisms, diversity training to mitigate bias, and emphasising employee development rather than mere evaluation. Progressive organisations are beginning to incorporate 360-degree feedback, peer reviews, and self-assessments to offer a more comprehensive view of an employee's capabilities. These methods can enhance transparency and encourage accountability from all parties involved (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

2.6.6 The systematic succession planning model

The systematic succession planning model emerged from the need for structured approaches to ensure leadership continuity. This model arose in response to frequent leadership transitions that many organisations experience due to retirements, resignations, or unexpected departures (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). The systematic succession planning model is predicated upon several core components. These include identifying critical roles within the organisation, assessing potential successors, and implementing development programs tailored to prepare these successors for future leadership positions. The model emphasises a thorough analysis of the competencies required for key positions and evaluates existing talent against these benchmarks (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

Despite its structured methodology, the systematic succession planning model has notable weaknesses. First, one significant drawback is its tendency to be overly rigid. Organisations may become entrenched in maintaining certain processes that fail to adapt to changing

business landscapes. This is particularly problematic in fast-paced industries where agility is vital (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). For instance, technology firms often undergo rapid transformations in leadership requirements. A rigid succession plan may hinder an organisation's ability to respond swiftly to new demands (Johnson, 2022).

Another critical weakness lies in the potential for bias during the selection process. Personal relationships and subjective evaluations may skew assessments of potential successors (Weller & Hart, 2020). This can lead to favouritism or overlooking high-potential candidates who might not fit the preconceived image of a leader. Furthermore, there is a risk that organisations may primarily focus on internal candidates, inadvertently ignoring external talent pools that may offer valuable insights and skills absent within the organisation (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

Additionally, the execution of succession plans often falls short due to insufficient communication (Weller & Hart, 2020). Employees may not be aware of available development opportunities or the criteria used to evaluate performance for succession. This lack of transparency can lead to disillusionment among employees who feel they are not given a fair chance for advancement. Succession planning should be inclusive, promoting clarity and engaging employees in their development (Johnson, 2022). In examining various perspectives on succession planning, it is essential to note the differing approaches organisations adopt (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). Some prioritise internal mobility, nurturing employee potential over time. Others may focus on external talent acquisition. A balanced perspective suggests that organisations should adopt a hybrid approach, blending internal development with external recruitment to ensure diverse leadership qualities (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

Moreover, organisations must shift toward a coaching and mentoring culture. Effective leadership development should go beyond mere identification of successors (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). Mentorship programs can significantly enhance the readiness of potential leaders by providing practical experience and fostering relationships with current leaders. This shift aligns with modern leadership theories that emphasise emotional intelligence and relational skills over traditional hierarchical directives (Johnson, 2022).

As organisations contemplate the future of succession planning, several trends are set to reshape the landscape (Weller & Hart, 2020). The integration of technology and data

analytics is one notable trend. By utilising data metrics, organisations can gain deeper insights into employee performance and leadership potential, enabling more informed decision-making. Artificial intelligence may facilitate predictive analytics, allowing companies to envision various leadership scenarios and strategies accordingly (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

Moreover, the impact of globalisation cannot be understated. Organisations increasingly operate in multicultural environments, necessitating leaders who possess cross-cultural competencies (Weller & Hart, 2020). Future succession planning models will thus need to address the importance of global leadership capabilities, preparing successors to navigate diverse workforces effectively (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

Lastly, the emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion is becoming paramount within succession planning frameworks. Organisations are recognising the value of diverse perspectives and experiences in leadership roles. Future models must incorporate strategies to ensure that underrepresented groups are considered for leadership paths, ultimately leading to a more inclusive organisational culture (Johnson, 2022).

2.6.7 Succession planning model

This comprehensive model underpins the study. It is used at Transnet Engineering. The model explains: for organisations to ensure smooth transition of leadership and maintain uniformity, it is important to identify crucial roles in the company, develop comprehensive success criteria, assess employees, devise plans for their growth, nurture potential successors, ensure their preparedness, and regularly review and modify the succession plan, shown in

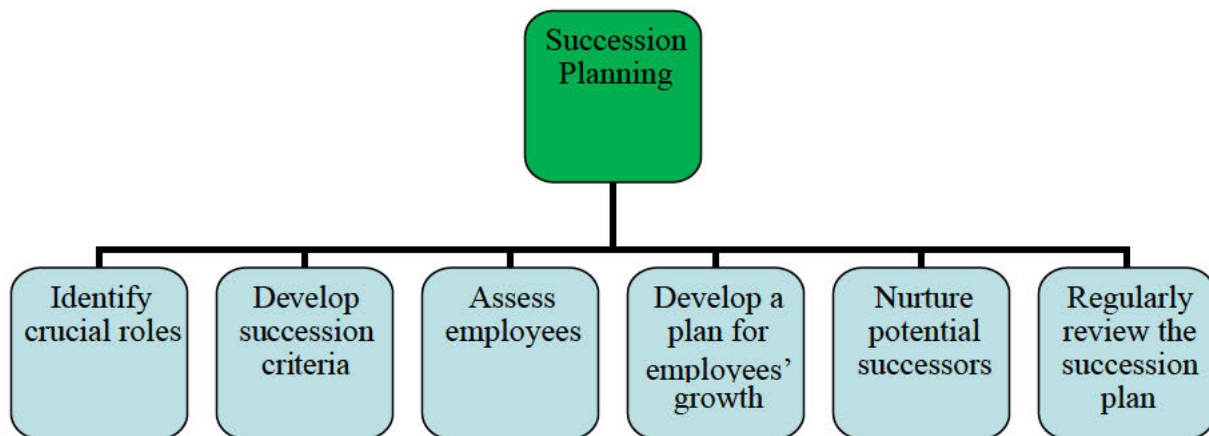


Figure 1: Succession planning model (Source: Adapted from Weller & Hart, 2020)

- **Step one: The identification of crucial roles**

One key “aspect of the succession planning model is the identification of crucial roles within the company. Recognising these roles is essential for several reasons, which significantly contribute to the long-term success and stability of an” organisation.

The model “explains that identifying critical roles allows an organisation to understand its talent pipeline better. By pinpointing essential positions, companies can assess whether they have suitable individuals ready to step into these roles as needed. For example, during pandemics, many companies face unexpected leadership gaps due to health-related absences. Organisations that have previously identified critical roles are better equipped to manage these situations effectively, ensuring continuity in” leadership (Weller & Hart, 2020).

Besides, “recognising crucial roles aids in targeted development of employees. Once key positions are identified, organisations can focus on developing the specific skills and competencies required for these roles. This strategic approach to employee development creates a more skilled workforce, ultimately enhancing overall organisational performance. Companies like Google and Microsoft have successfully implemented targeted training programs to prepare high-potential employees for leadership roles, ensuring they have the necessary skills for future” challenges (Rothwell, 2019).

The model “explains that identifying crucial roles helps mitigate risks associated with talent loss. In a rapidly changing business environment, turnover in key positions can have significant repercussions (Johnson, 2022). By identifying these roles and preparing succession plans, organisations can reduce the impact of sudden departures. For example, when a CEO leaves unexpectedly, having a ready successor can prevent organisational turmoil and maintain stakeholder confidence (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

Moreover, “role identification fosters employee engagement and retention. Employees are more likely to stay with a company that demonstrates a commitment to their career advancement (Rothwell, 2019). When individuals see a clear path for growth into critical roles, they tend to invest more in their jobs and the organisation itself. Companies that prioritise succession planning often report higher levels of employee satisfaction and lower” turnover rates.

In addition, “understanding critical roles helps organisations align their strategic goals with their human resource planning. This alignment ensures that the right people are in place to drive the organisation's vision forward. For instance, if a company seeks to expand into new markets, having the right leaders in strategic roles can facilitate a smoother transition” and effective execution of growth strategies (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

- **Step two: Developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria**

Succession “planning model explains that it is important for an organisation to develop comprehensive and transparent success criteria. Comprehensive and transparent success criteria provide a clear framework for identifying and evaluating potential successors. When organisations have well-defined criteria, they can systematically assess candidates against specific competencies, skills, and experiences that align with the organisation’s strategic goals (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). For example, a technology firm may prioritise candidates with advanced technical skills and innovative thinking for leadership roles in a fast evolving” industry.

The model “explains that the success criteria help to align the succession plan with the overall business strategy. By developing criteria that reflect the organisation’s vision and goals,

leadership can ensure that successors will be equipped to drive the company forward (Weller & Hart, 2020). For instance, if a company is focusing on digital transformation, success criteria might include familiarity with digital tools and the ability to manage change effectively. This alignment ensures that the future leaders can navigate the” organisation toward its objectives.

Moreover, “the model posits that having comprehensive and transparent success criteria enhances transparency and fairness in the selection process. Clear criteria reduce ambiguity, making it easier for employees to understand how decisions are made regarding promotions and leadership roles. This transparency fosters a culture of trust and motivates employees to” strive for the required competencies (Rothwell, 2019).

The model “also holds that successful succession planning with defined criteria allows for targeted development programs. Organisations can invest in training and mentoring programs that specifically address the identified gaps in skills and competencies among potential successors (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). By doing so, they prepare employees to take on leadership roles effectively when the time comes. A recent case is Microsoft's approach to leadership training, where they tailor their development programs based on success” criteria that align with future business needs (Weller & Hart, 2020).

In addition, “comprehensive and transparent success criteria enable organisations to regularly assess and update their succession plans. As business environments change, so too must the criteria for success. Regularly revisiting and refining these criteria ensures that they remain relevant to the organisation's evolving landscape, helping to mitigate risks associated with” leadership transitions (Weller & Hart, 2020).

- **Step three: Assessing employees for succession readiness**

The succession “planning model holds that assessing employees is paramount for various reasons, which can significantly benefit the organisation in the long term. Assessing employees for succession readiness

helps identify potential leaders within the organisation. By evaluating skills, abilities, and performance levels, management can discover individuals who demonstrate the capacity to take on more” responsibility (Rothwell, 2019).

The model “holds that employee assessments can highlight skill gaps and areas for development. Organisations must ensure that their future leaders possess the necessary competencies to navigate complex challenges (Weller & Hart, 2020). For example, a tech company may find that its potential successors lack proficiency in emerging technologies. By recognising this during assessments, the organisation can provide targeted training and development opportunities, thus ensuring its leadership is well-equipped for the” future (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

A thorough “assessment can enhance employee engagement and morale. When employees know that their organisation is invested in their growth and development, they tend to feel more valued and motivated (Johnson, 2022). This can create a positive feedback loop where engaged employees are more likely to contribute to succession planning efforts, enhancing the organisation’s overall performance. Recent studies have shown that companies with strong employee development programs tend to have higher retention rates, which is particularly important amidst the ongoing talent war” (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

The model “explains that assessing employees allows organisations to create a diverse leadership pipeline. A diverse leadership team often leads to better decision-making and innovation since it brings different perspectives to the table (Weller & Hart, 2020). By intentionally assessing and selecting candidates from various backgrounds and experiences, organisations can build a more inclusive future leadership landscape. This focus on diversity is increasingly recognised as not only a moral imperative but also a business necessity in today’s global” market (Rothwell, 2019).

In addition, “employee assessment in succession planning aids risk management. By having a clear understanding of who can step into key roles when needed, organisations can reduce operational disruptions caused by sudden departures (Weller & Hart, 2020). For example, when a key executive unexpectedly leaves, companies that have carefully assessed their workforce can easily transition someone into that role, maintaining stability and”” continuity.

- **Step four: Provision for the growth and development**

The model “explains that a well-structured succession plan is crucial for any organisation aiming for longevity and sustainable growth and development.

One critical aspect of this plan is the provision for the growth of employees. By investing “in employee growth, it enhances overall organisational performance (Johnson, 2022). When companies prioritize employee development, they equip their workforce with the necessary skills and competencies to meet evolving market demands. For instance, during the rapid technological advances observed in recent years, businesses that invested in upskilling their employees often outperformed their competitors. This demonstrates that organisations with a skilled workforce are more adaptable and can better respond to industry” changes.

Moreover, “fostering employee growth increases employee engagement and retention. When employees see opportunities for personal and professional development, they are more likely to feel valued and committed to their organisation. Thus, by nurturing talent, companies not only improve morale but also reduce turnover costs associated with recruiting and” training new staff (Weller & Hart, 2020).

A focus on “employee growth facilitates succession planning itself. By developing a pool of skilled employees, organisations can ensure a smooth transition when key leaders retire or leave. This continuity helps maintain stability and preserves the organisational culture that has been developed over time. For example, companies like IBM have long established mentorship programs that prepare employees for leadership roles, ensuring that the transition is seamless, and the culture is preserved” (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

Moreover, “promoting employee growth can help bridge the skills gap prevalent in many industries today. As technology evolves, so do the skills required to thrive in the workplace (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). Organisations that proactively develop their employees can better align their workforce with the company's strategic objectives, thereby closing the gap between current skill sets and future demands. This adaptability is essential for organisations aiming to remain competitive in rapidly changing markets” (Weller & Hart, 2020).

The model “posits that focusing on employee growth encourages a culture of continuous learning and innovation (Rothwell, 2019). When employees are encouraged to develop their skills, they are more likely to bring new ideas and solutions to the table. This culture of innovation can lead to significant improvements in processes, products, and services, ultimately benefiting the organisation as a” whole (Weller & Hart, 2020).

- **Step five: Nurturing and preparing potential successors**

The succession planning model argues that nurturing and preparing potential successors is vital. The “model holds that continuity of leadership is essential for any organisation. When a leader departs, whether through retirement, resignation, or unforeseen circumstances, the immediate need for effective leadership arises. By nurturing potential successors, companies ensure that there are trained individuals ready to step into leadership roles. This seamless transition minimised disruption and maintained stable leadership” (Johnson, 2022).

Moreover, “nurturing successors is crucial for retaining organisational knowledge. Over time, key employees accumulate valuable insights and experiences that contribute to the company’s success (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). If these individuals leave without suitable successors prepared to take their places, an organisation risks losing not only those employees but also the critical knowledge and skills they possess” (Weller & Hart, 2020).

Additionally, “potential successors contribute to improved employee morale and engagement. When employees see that their organisation is committed to promoting from within, they feel more invested in their work. This can lead to higher productivity and lower turnover” rates (Carter & McKinley, 2021).

Furthermore, nurturing “potential successors is essential for strategic growth. Organisations that have a clear plan for developing leaders are better positioned to respond to market changes and capitalise on new opportunities. For example, tech companies frequently invest in leadership development programmes to foster innovation and agility within their workforce, allowing them to navigate rapidly changing industry landscapes” (Weller & Hart, 2020).

In addition, the “model explains that in an ever-evolving global market, the ability to adapt to change is fundamental. Organisation can only remain competitive if they have leaders who can guide them through transitions effectively. By investing in the development of future leaders, companies position themselves to handle unexpected challenges with” confidence and foresight (Rothwell, 2019).

- **Step six: Naturing and preparing potential successors**

The succession “plan model explains that one of the most critical aspects of a succession plan is the preparedness of naturing and preparing potential successors. It holds that prepared successors have the necessary skills and knowledge to take on leadership roles (Johnson, 2022). Organisations often face rapid changes in the market, technology, and consumer expectations. For instance, recent developments in artificial intelligence and remote work technologies have transformed many industries. Leaders who are well-prepared can adapt to these changes more effectively, thereby maintaining the organisation's competitive edge. If successors lack the requisite training or experience, they may struggle to make informed” decisions, potentially jeopardising the organisation.

The model “holds that prepared successors can foster stability within the organisation. Leadership transitions can create uncertainty among employees, causing anxiety and reducing morale. For example, when a long-term CEO steps down, employees may fear for their job security and question the company’s direction. However, if successors are well-prepared and have established relationships within the organisation, they can provide a sense of continuity and reassurance (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). This stability is crucial for team cohesion and maintaining productivity during the transition” period.

Moreover, “ensuring preparedness allows for smoother knowledge transfer. Leaders often possess invaluable institutional knowledge that is not always documented. When successors are well-prepared, they can engage in mentorship or shadowing experiences with current leaders. This process helps them to absorb critical insights into the organisation’s operations, culture, and strategic goals (Rothwell, 2019). Such knowledge transfer is essential to avoid disruptions and maintain operational efficiency during and after” the transition.

Moreover, “prepared successors can enhance the organisation’s reputation. An organisation that demonstrates foresight in its succession planning sends a positive message to stakeholders, including investors, customers, and employees (Johnson, 2022). For instance, companies like Microsoft and Apple have made headlines for their strategic succession plans, which have helped them navigate changes in leadership without losing momentum. A positive reputation can lead to increased trust and confidence from” stakeholders, ultimately benefiting the organisation's bottom line.

Besides, “the model argues that ensuring preparedness in succession planning helps mitigate risks associated with leadership changes (Carter & McKinley, 2021). Unexpected departures due to emergencies, like health issues or personal crises, can leave an organisation vulnerable. By having well-prepared successors, organisations can minimise the disruption caused by such events. It ensures that leadership roles remain filled with capable individuals who can steer the organisation through challenging times” (Weller & Hart, 2020).

- **Step seven: Regularly reviewing and modifying the succession plan**

The succession “plan model explains that it is not enough to have a succession plan. It is crucial to regularly review and modify it. This is because the business landscape is continuously evolving. Changes in technology, market trends, and consumer behaviours can render a succession plan outdated. Organisations must assess their leadership needs regularly to ensure that future leaders possess skills relevant to a rapidly changing market (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

Moreover, “talent development is not static. Employees grow, and their aspirations may change over time (Johnson, 2022). A leadership candidate who seemed perfect a year ago may find fulfilment in a different role or industry. Regular reviews of the succession plan let organisations identify emerging talent within their ranks and invest in their development, ensuring that they are ready for future roles. This adaptability helps in retaining valuable” staff and minimises turnover costs.

Besides, “unexpected events can dramatically affect an organisation. Natural disasters, economic downturns, or even sudden resignations can disrupt leadership continuity (Weller

& Hart, 2020). For instance, several well-known companies saw abrupt leadership changes during the pandemic, revealing gaps in their succession plans. By modifying the succession plan regularly, businesses can create contingency strategies that prepare them” for unforeseen circumstances.

In addition, “stakeholder expectations are continually changing. Investors, employees, and customers increasingly prioritize corporate social responsibility, diversity, and ethical leadership (Johnson, 2022). A succession plan that does not reflect these values may fail to inspire confidence among stakeholders. By conducting frequent reviews, companies can ensure that their leadership candidates align not only with organisational goals but also with the expectations of their” audience.

Finally, the “model holds that regular updates facilitate better communication within the organisation. A clear, updated succession plan nurtures a culture of transparency and trust among employees (Johnson, 2022). When potential leaders understand the criteria for advancement and see opportunities for growth, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated. This communication is vital as it fosters loyalty and enhances” overall workplace morale (Rothwell, 2019).

The constructs of the succession planning model, the importance of identifying crucial roles, developing clear success criteria, assessing employees, creating growth plans, nurturing successors, and regularly reviewing succession plans are interconnected processes that foster a thriving organisational culture. These constructs will be used to inform the research questions.

Eskom succession planning

Eskom has faced significant leadership turnover in recent years, which can undermine long-term succession planning efforts. This is one reason why a Relay Succession Planning approach, which involves gradual leadership transitions, could be particularly beneficial for Eskom. This model would help ensure smoother leadership changes, reducing the potential for disruptions in leadership roles and maintaining organisational stability during transitions (Deloitte, 2022).

As a state-owned enterprise (SOE) in South Africa, Eskom faces several challenges typical of public sector organisations, including political influences, resource constraints, and organisational restructuring. These factors can complicate effective succession planning by introducing uncertainties regarding leadership appointments and the continuity of key strategic initiatives (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2021). While the specific details of Eskom's succession planning models are not always publicly disclosed, it is likely that Eskom's approach aligns with common practices seen in SOEs and some private sector models. This could include elements of non-probability sampling, where leadership positions are influenced by familiarity with internal operations, but with an increased emphasis on mentorship and internal talent development (Rothwell, 2020).

2.8. Toyota Motor Corporation in Japan succession planning

Toyota employs a Leadership Pipeline Model that integrates strong mentoring and talent development programs. This approach ensures that leadership is developed internally, allowing leaders to become well-versed in the company's values, culture, and operational practices. This model supports organisational continuity by providing a structured path for leadership development within the company (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2020).

By focusing on internal development, Toyota ensures that leadership transitions occur smoothly with minimal disruption. New leaders are well-prepared to assume their roles because they have been developed from within, avoiding the steep learning curve that external candidates might face. This strengthens organisational stability and continuity in leadership (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Toyota's succession planning creates a clear pathway for career growth within the company, boosting employee engagement and loyalty. When employees know they have opportunities to advance and rise through the ranks, they are more likely to stay long-term and contribute to the company's success. This approach also helps preserve the company's institutional knowledge and expertise, built over decades (Bersin by Deloitte, 2021). Toyota's leadership development programs ensure that leaders are well-equipped to face challenges not only in Japan but also in various international markets. The company's global leadership pipeline enables it to maintain competitive advantage and adapt to changing market conditions across the world. By cultivating leaders who understand global dynamics, Toyota remains agile and prepared for new challenges (PwC, 2023).

Individual contributor to manager, then to senior leadership, which is a critical aspect of succession planning. This model is particularly useful to explore leadership development across various organisational levels and the processes that prepare individuals for greater responsibility. It's also a great way to frame how organisations can structure leadership development programs to ensure that the right people are prepared to step into leadership roles when the time comes. (Day, & Harrison, 2020).

Based on the analysis of Transnet Engineering's succession planning practices, the study identified several key recommendations. One key theoretical framework relevant to succession planning is the Leadership Pipeline Model, proposed by Charan, Drotter, and Noel (2011). This model stresses the importance of developing leaders at every level of an organisation, with clear paths for progression from one leadership role to the next. The lack of evaluation mechanisms found in the study aligns with the challenge highlighted in the Leadership Pipeline Model, where organisations fail to systematically assess the readiness of their leadership pipeline and ensure a smooth transition from one leadership level to the next. The barriers to identifying critical positions identified in your study suggest that Transnet Engineering may be missing opportunities to integrate leadership development at all levels, which is a central tenet of the pipeline model. This gap also indicates a lack of strategic foresight and alignment between the organisation's leadership needs and talent development strategies (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2020).

2.9 Conclusion

Succession planning is a strategic process that prepares organisations for future leadership transitions by identifying and developing potential internal candidates. It ensures continuity, mitigates leadership risks, and manages talent effectively. However, many companies face challenges in implementing effective succession plans. This chapter discussed the meaning, importance, challenges, risks, best practices, and theories and models underpinning succession planning, as well as the theoretical framework that guided the study Creswell & Creswell (2023).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The significance of research design and methodology in carrying out methodical and structured studies is covered in this chapter. Research philosophy, methodology, strategy, sampling, data collection, analysis, pilot study, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the conclusion are some of the important topics it covers.

Transnet Engineering is a subsidiary company of Transnet, a state-owned firm in South Africa. It is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and manufacturing of locomotives and other rolling stock for the national railway system. Transnet Engineering plays a vital role in ensuring the smooth operation of the railway system, which is the backbone of the country's economy. Thirty participants in particular who can supply information to comprehend the phenomenon being studied were chosen for the study. For the study, fifteen managers and fifteen first line managers from the Durban-based company Transnet Engineering were selected. These participants were carefully chosen according to their managerial and professional backgrounds. From each of the 6 departments or businesses, one manager and one supervisor were chosen. Fifteen managers and fifteen first line managers of the Durban-based company Transnet Engineering made up the study's sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.2 Research design and methodology

The study utilised qualitative research methodology to investigate the challenges to succession planning at Transnet, a Durban-based company. This approach allows a deeper exploration of people's attitudes, views, opinions, desires, feelings, and behaviour. The method's selection was based on its ability to examine participant interpretations of the research problem and its ability to examine the phenomenon in an authentic environment, producing trustworthy data on Transnet Engineering. The complexity of succession planning affecting Transnet necessitates a qualitative research methodology. The study yielded significant benefits and facilitated selecting an appropriate research strategy to

understand the challenges to succession planning at Transnet (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.3 Research strategy

This study employed an exploratory research design to investigate a problem in a relatively unknown field (Yin, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2015). An exploratory research design is used when a phenomenon has not received much attention from researchers, according to Creswell (2014). Understanding a research problem is facilitated by the exploratory research design. The aim of the study is to assess challenges to succession planning at Transnet. Since the research design allowed the researcher to look into an unidentified phenomenon regarding the challenges to succession planning at Transnet, an exploratory research design was appropriate for this study.

3.4 Target population and sample size

A target “population is a portion of the population a researcher is interested in, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2013). The study's target population consisted of twelve managers at Transnet Engineering in Durban.

3.5 Sample size

A “sample size refers to the total number of individuals chosen to partake in the study (Creswell, 2014). The sample size for this study was twelve, comprising managers from Transnet Engineering in” Durban.

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3.6 Sampling strategy and process

The research study adopted a case study research design as the most suitable approach.

A qualitative research methodology was selected to explore the phenomenon in detail. Transnet Engineering, located in Durban, was identified as the study site. For participant selection, the study employed a *non-probability* sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, where participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research objectives.

(Creswell & Poth 2022).

According to Creswell (2014:9), “sampling is the process of choosing a small subset of the population to represent the entire population.” Teddlie and Tashakkori (2016) distinguished between two categories of sampling techniques probability, which is based on the random sampling principle, and non-probability, which depends on the researcher’s judgment. Non-probability sampling was used in the study for a specific purpose. Using this method allowed the researcher to choose participants based on the study's objectives and the researcher’s familiarity with the population being studied. Twelve participants, in particular, who provided information to comprehend the phenomenon being studied, were chosen for the study. Twelve managers from the Durban-based company Transnet Engineering were selected for the study. These participants were carefully chosen according to their managerial and professional backgrounds. From each of the twelve departments or businesses, one manager was chosen. Twelve managers of the Durban-based company Transnet Engineering made up the study’s sample Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2016).

3.7 Data collection method, instrument and process

Interviews were used to collect study data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), interviews are qualitative research methods in which questions are posed and responses are provided. Fewer respondents in these types of interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of respondents’ perspectives on a given subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In-depth interviews were used in the study and were classified as semi-structured, unstructured, or structured (Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used in the study to gather data. The study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews since they were adaptable and systematic interviewing methods. Semi-structured in-depth interviews made it possible to collect data in a targeted and flexible manner. Data from one-on-one interactions was gathered through in-person, in-depth interviews (Yin, 2014). The data collected was on the challenges to succession planning at Transnet. The following sections made up the interview guide:

Section 1: The challenges Transnet Engineering face in identifying critical roles for succession planning.

Section 2: The challenges arise in developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria within Transnet Engineering.

Section 3: The key challenges associated with assessing employees for succession readiness in Transnet Engineering.

Section 4: The obstacles hinder the effective planning and facilitation of employee growth and development for succession purposes.

Section 5: The challenges involved in nurturing and preparing potential successors within Transnet Engineering.

Section 6: The challenges are encountered in the regular review and modification of succession plans at Transnet Engineering.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research is crucial for maintaining the integrity and credibility of scientific work. Researchers rely on dependability, confirmability, transferability, and credibility to maintain the validity and reliability of their findings Creswell, J. W. (2018).

3.8.1 Transferability

This method assesses the applicability of qualitative research findings to various contexts. The study ensured that the study's context and findings were highlighted, facilitating researchers to determine the transferability of the research findings Creswell, J. W. (2018).

3.8.2 Dependability

The method ensures consistency and repeatability of research findings. This was realised by ensuring the scientific methodology was used in specific data collection instruments, allowing interested researchers to apply the methodology and obtain comparable results (Hill, 2012).

3.8.3 Credibility

This data control measure was used to make sure that the primary methodologies employed in the study are those that have been tried and tested and have proven to be trustworthy in

producing accurate results. In addition, interviews were only conducted with willing study participants to obtain insightful data Creswell, J. W. (2018).

3.8.4 Confirmability

Relates to the extent to which additional people could verify or corroborate the findings (Leedy & Ormond, 2015). If participants' opinions about the turnover factors expressed in semi-structured in-depth interviews are reflected in the results, the study ensured that the findings are validated by the literature review and the participants.

3.9 Data analysis and process

In order to “find relevant information, draw conclusions, and aid in decision-making, data analysis was the process of examining, purifying, transforming, and modelling data (Hubbuck, 2015). Thematic analysis, useful for identifying, evaluating, and reporting themes from data collected, was used to analyse qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher organised and presented the data produced for this study through thematic analysis (Creswell, 2009). The aim of thematic analysis was to find meaning-related patterns in a dataset that addressed the research question at hand. A thorough process of data familiarisation, data coding, theme development, and revision was used to find patterns. NVivo 12, a computer software programme for qualitative data analysis, was used for the analysis. In order to develop a methodical understanding of the research problem, the method was selected to assist the study in creating patterns, themes, and categories of abstract units of information.

3.10 Ethical considerations

This is a collection of ideals and guidelines that tackle the issues of right and wrong in human affairs. Ethics looks for justifications for doing or not doing things, for endorsing or disapproving behaviour, and for accepting or rejecting ideas about morally righteous or immoral behaviour or laws (Crotty, 2015). Obtaining ethical approval is primarily done to make sure that everyone's human rights and dignity are upheld. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and a gatekeeper's letter from Transnet Engineering (The University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2024).

3.10.1 Ensuring participants gave informed consent

Enough details about the study's objectives and their part in it were provided to participants to enable them to decide whether or not to take part. The study provided this information clearly and concisely. Each participant voluntarily granted permission to participate Creswell, J. W. (2018).

3.10.2 Making certain participants are safe

The researcher ensured that participants did not experience any negative effects physical, psychological, or otherwise during the study. Regarding security and safety issues, the interviewees chose the locations. Moreover, the interview guide did not contain" any questions likely to cause candidates' anxiety Creswell, J. W. (2018).

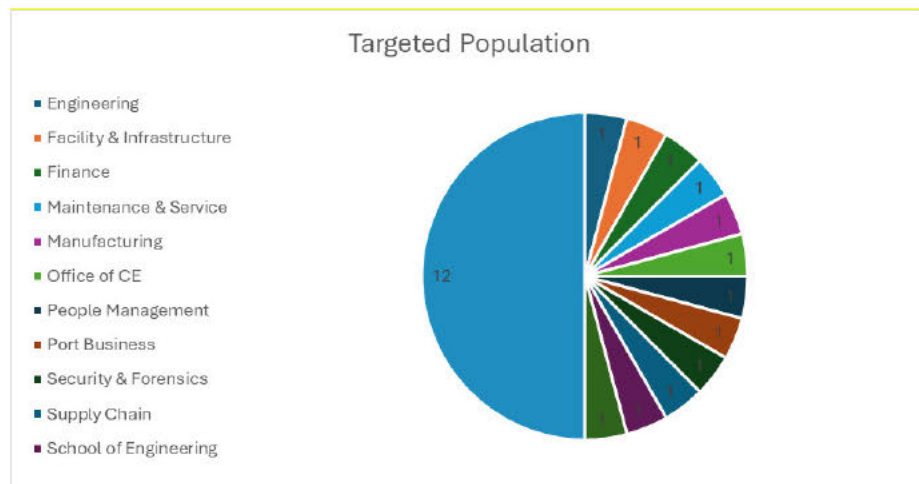
3.10.3 Maintaining anonymity and privacy

The study took precautions to guarantee participant anonymity to any parties not directly involved in the research to maintain confidentiality. The identities of the participants were only known by the researcher. Participants in the study were also informed of their right to privacy concerning particular data. To guarantee appropriate data management and security, interview guides were locked and secured at the researcher's office. No records containing personally identifiable information were used to preserve anonymity. As a result, the interview guides did not contain any personally identifiable information, such as names, addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses. Each participant had the right to a private interview and the option to withhold any information they felt uncomfortable sharing to protect their privacy (Tracy, 2019; Mertens, 2020).

3.10.4 Making sure permission is obtained

The University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee granted the ethical clearance. The relevant Transnet Engineering authority provided the gatekeepers with the letter (The University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2024).

Figure 2: Creswell, J. W. (2014).



Non-probability sampling according to Creswell (2018), sampling is the process of choosing a small subset of the population to represent the entire population Creswell, J. W. (2018).

3.10.5 The rationale for selecting twelve participants

The selection of twelve managers for this study is based on a stratified approach, where one manager was chosen from each of the 12 departments within Transnet Engineering. This approach was adopted for the following reasons Creswell, J. W. (2018).

3.10.6 Departmental representation

Transnet Engineering is an operational division of Transnet LTD. A large organisation with diverse departments, each potentially facing unique challenges in terms of succession planning and leadership development. By selecting one manager from each department, the study aims to capture a broad range of perspectives and experiences related to succession planning across different areas of the company. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how succession planning is perceived and managed in various contexts within the organisation (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Moreover, the interview guide did not contain” any questions likely to cause candidates’ anxiety Creswell, J. W. (2018) therefore the role of participant was not disclosed.

3.10.7 Manageability of sample size

Participants were intentionally kept to two to allow for a more focused and in-depth qualitative study. Given the sensitive nature of succession planning and leadership

development, fewer participants help ensure that the data collected is rich and detailed, rather than diluted across a larger number of respondents. The smaller sample size is particularly beneficial for exploring complex issues like resistance to succession planning, as it allows for deeper, more meaningful discussions (Creswell, 2018).

3.10.8 Practical constraints and research focus

Given the challenges in recruiting a larger sample, particularly due to potential resistance to the topic of succession planning, the 12 participants represent a manageable and willing subset. This enables the study to focus on the underlying issues and barriers to succession planning in a focused and concentrated manner, ensuring that the research maintains depth over breadth. (Pritchard & McIntyre, 2020).

3.11 Conclusion

Research design and methodology are critical components of any research study as they lay the foundation for the entire research process. In this chapter, the researcher explored into various aspects of research design and methodology, including research approach, philosophy, strategy, sampling strategy, data collection, data analysis, pilot study, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations. By carefully planning and implementing this research design and methodology, the researcher ensured the validity and reliability of the findings while upholding ethical standards. The researcher paid careful attention to these aspects to ensure the success of their study and contributed valuable knowledge to their field (Creswell, 2018; Mertens, 2020; Flick, 2018).

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This “chapter presents the results of a study on succession planning at Transnet Engineering, focusing on challenges such as identifying crucial roles, developing comprehensive succession criteria, assessing employees, devising plans for employee growth, nurturing potential successors, and regularly reviewing and modifying the succession plan. The chapter uses a narrative format with quotes from interview transcripts, providing a detailed account of the research process, key findings, and general recommendations” for future research (Weller & Hart, 2020).

4.2 Recap of the research process

This research obtained ethical approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) to guarantee ethical and responsible conduct. The research investigated employees of Transnet Engineering. The face-to-face interview was conducted with the total of twelve managers in twelve departments. Participants in the study were selected through purposive sampling following the research objectives. This research gathered data through comprehensive participant interviews. Through in-depth interviews, researchers can gain insights into participants' experiences, perspectives, and opinions. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the interview data. Structuring the data into themes facilitated the researcher's comprehension and inference from the study Creswell, J. W. (2018).

4.3 Research questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- What challenges does Transnet Engineering face in identifying critical roles for succession planning?
- What challenges arise in developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria within Transnet Engineering?

- What are the key challenges associated with assessing employees for succession readiness in Transnet Engineering?
- What obstacles hinder the effective planning and facilitation of employee growth and development for succession purposes?
- What are the challenges involved in nurturing and preparing potential successors within Transnet Engineering?
- What challenges are encountered in the regular review and modification of succession plans at Transnet Engineering?

4.4 Demographics

Twelve Transnet Engineering employees, each with over three years of experience, were chosen for their expertise and experience.

4.5 Age of the participants

Table 4.1: Age of the participants

Age brackets	Frequency	Percent
19–26 yrs	0	0 percent
27–36 yrs	2	2 percent
37–56 yrs	5	40 percent
Above 56 yrs	5	40 percent
Total	12	100 percent

Table 4.1 “indicates that all participants were over 18, contributing experience, wisdom, stability, reliability, diverse perspectives, and intergenerational dialogue, thereby enhancing the analysis of the research” problem.

4.6 Gender

Table 4.2: Gender of the participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	5	40 percent
Female	7	60 percent
Total	12	100 percent

Table 4.2 “shows 7 females (60%) and 5 males (40%) who spoke isiZulu and English. By including men and women in the study sample, the researcher increased the credibility” of the study.

4.7 Coding of data

Qualitative “interview and document data were coded by identifying themes or patterns. Analysing and drawing conclusions was easier after segmenting complex data. Transnet Engineering's issues with employee evaluation, development plans, succession planning, and monitoring and adjustment are” themes Creswell, J. W. (2018)..

4.8 Themes

The “process involved data familiarisation, coding, thematic categorisation, and comprehensive review to produce themes. Insights are derived from a profound human experience. The study methodically analysed data to elucidate the research” problem (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2018).

4.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: Critical roles for succession planning

Research question 1: What challenges does Transnet Engineering face in identifying critical roles for succession planning?

Rapidly changing technological landscape

A recurring theme among participants was the challenge posed by the rapidly changing technological landscape. Technological advancements such as automation and predictive maintenance tools were frequently mentioned as re-shaping job roles and the competencies required. As one participant (Participant 2) emphasised, technological developments constantly redefine traditional roles, making it increasingly difficult to identify which roles are critical for succession planning. Another participant (Participant 3) noted that this shift demands an ongoing reevaluation of job roles and competencies, further complicating the identification of critical positions.

Diverse range of functions

Another challenge frequently highlighted was Transnet Engineering's diverse functional areas. The organisation spans manufacturing, maintenance, and project management, each requiring distinct skill sets. As (Participant 1) explained, identifying crucial roles within such a broad spectrum of operations becomes convoluted. This sentiment was echoed by (Participant 12), who pointed out the complexity in balancing the needs of different sectors, such as manufacturing and project management, each with its own critical positions.

Impact of workforce dynamics

Specifically, the aging workforce alongside an influx of younger, less experienced employees was identified as a significant challenge. (Participant 11 and Participant 10) explained that the generational gap creates a mismatch between experienced senior employees who are nearing retirement and younger employees who lack the necessary expertise. This dynamic complicates the identification of roles that are becoming more critical as the organisation navigates this knowledge gap.

Ongoing organisational changes

The continuous transformation within Transnet Engineering, driven by efficiency goals and strategic shifts, adds another layer of complexity. As organisations evolve, some roles lose their importance, while others rise to prominence. (Participant 10) mentioned that roles in environmental compliance, for example, have become more critical due to sustainability objectives, overshadowing traditional engineering roles. This evolving landscape requires ongoing adjustments in succession planning criteria.

Theme 2: Developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria

Research question 2: What challenges arise in developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria within Transnet Engineering?

Diverse skills

The diversity of skills required within Transnet Engineering was a common challenge. With such a broad spectrum of technical expertise needed, crafting a one size fits all succession criterion proves difficult. (Participant 7) highlighted the necessity for succession criteria that address both current and future demands, considering the diverse technical, managerial, and industry specific skills required in the organisation.

Cultural and generational shifts

The generational shift and changing workforce values were also seen as major obstacles. Younger employees value inclusivity, agility, and innovation, which may conflict with traditional, seniority-based succession criteria. (Participant 6 and Participant 5) emphasised that aligning these expectations with the existing organisational culture is a challenge. An ongoing dialogue and assessment are necessary to create a succession framework that resonates with the younger generation, while also maintaining the values of the more experienced workforce.

Assessment process

Another significant issue in developing transparent succession criteria was the objectivity of the assessment process. Several participants, such as (Participant 4 and Participant 2), highlighted the risks of biases both conscious and unconscious affecting the fairness and transparency of evaluations. The implementation of standardised assessment tools, such as

performance metrics and third party evaluations, was seen as necessary but challenging due to resource constraints and complexity.

External market pressures

External market pressures, such as economic fluctuations and technological advancements, were also noted as complicating succession planning. Participant 1 explained that market conditions demand flexibility in succession criteria, as external dynamics (e.g., fluctuating demand, technological shifts) can quickly alter the landscape in which Transnet operates. Succession plans must, therefore, be adaptable and responsive to external challenges.

Theme 3: Succession readiness

Research question 3: What are the key challenges associated with assessing employees for succession readiness in Transnet Engineering?

Diverse workforce

The diversity of the workforce, with varying educational backgrounds and experience levels, poses challenges in designing uniform growth plans. (Participant 1 and Participant 12) noted that creating growth plans that cater to different needs whether basic skills training or advanced leadership development was a significant challenge. Additionally, fostering mentorship and peer support, which are essential for employee development, was noted as difficult due to varying levels of comfort among employees.

Employee retention

Employee retention emerged as a significant obstacle to effective growth and development. (Participant 9 and Participant 7) explained that employees may leave for better career opportunities if they feel that their development is stagnating. The lack of a clear career progression framework was identified as a key issue, with employees often unaware of their growth opportunities within Transnet Engineering.

External economic environment

External economic factors, such as budget constraints during economic downturns, were noted as limiting the ability to invest in employee growth initiatives. (Participant 2)

highlighted that during tough economic times, resources are often diverted away from training and development efforts, impacting succession planning.

Theme 4: Employee growth and development for succession purposes

Research question 4: What obstacles hinder the effective planning and facilitation of employee growth and growth and development for succession purposes?

Diverse workforce

The diversity of the workforce, with varying educational backgrounds and experience levels, poses challenges in designing uniform growth plans. (Participant 1 and Participant 12) noted that creating growth plans that cater to different needs whether basic skills training or advanced leadership development was a significant challenge. Additionally, fostering mentorship and peer support, which are essential for employee development, was noted as difficult due to varying levels of comfort among employees.

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External economic environment

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Theme 5: Preparing potential successors

Research question 5: What are the challenges involved in nurturing and preparing potential successors within Transnet Engineering?

Training and development

Training and development were identified as crucial but challenging components of succession planning. (Participant 7 and Participant 5) emphasised that even when potential successors are identified, ensuring they receive adequate training and development opportunities can be difficult due to resource constraints. This gap between potential and actual performance can hinder the organisation's ability to prepare successors effectively.

Organisational culture

The organisational culture at Transnet Engineering was also seen as a potential barrier to nurturing future leaders. (Participant 8 and Participant 5) pointed out that a culture resistant to change could hinder the implementation of new strategies and the development of future leaders. Without active support from current leadership and a culture conducive to growth, it is difficult to nurture and prepare successors.

Competitive landscape

The constantly evolving competitive landscape in the engineering sector requires Transnet Engineering to remain agile in its succession planning. As noted by (Participant 10), new technologies and methodologies are constantly emerging, and Transnet must adapt its succession plans to keep pace with these changes. However, the lack of organisational agility was highlighted as a key issue, leading to mismatches between the organisation's needs and the capabilities of potential successors.

Theme 6: Review and modification of succession plans

Research question 6: What challenges are encountered in the regular review and modification of succession plans at Transnet Engineering?

Dynamic nature of the engineering sector

The dynamic nature of the engineering sector is a major challenge in reviewing and modifying succession plans. The fast pace of technological advancement, as noted (by Participants 12 and 10), demands continuous adaptation in workforce requirements. Transnet must constantly evaluate and adjust its talent pool to ensure that the workforce is prepared for future demands.

Retention of Talent

Talent retention remains a significant issue. Skilled professionals are in high demand, and Transnet Engineering faces the risk of losing potential successors to competing organisations. As Participant 3 noted, losing key talent disrupts the succession pipeline, requiring frequent revisions of the succession plan.

Resistance to change

Resistance to change was another obstacle identified in the ongoing review of succession plans. (Participant 3 and Participant 5) noted that both employees and management may resist new strategies or changes to existing plans, particularly when they feel secure in their current roles. This resistance slows the process of identifying and grooming new leaders.

External factors

External factors such as economic fluctuations and changes in government policies complicate the regular review of succession

4.9 Research questions

Key questions were posed to twelve participants.

4.9.1 What challenges does Transnet Engineering face in identifying critical roles for succession planning?

When participants were asked to share their views on the challenges of identifying crucial roles within Transnet Engineering, several responses were shared.

4.9.1.1 Rapidly changing technological landscape

A participant representing majority of the participants had this to say:

As for me, the challenge is the rapidly changing technological landscape. You see, Transnet Engineering operates in an environment where advancements in technology, such as automation and data analytics, continually redefine job functions. For example, with the rise of predictive maintenance tools, positions traditionally focused solely on manual inspections may now require a blend of engineering skills and technological proficiency (Interview, Participant 2).

Another participant, in agreement, said:

There is a shift on how things are done because of technology which necessitates a revaluation of job roles and the competencies needed, complicating the identification process (Interview, Participant 3).

The finding suggests that the rapidly changing technological landscape presents significant challenges for identifying crucial roles for Transnet Engineering. The finding is supported by Williams (2022), who found that incorporating advanced technologies, such as automation and artificial intelligence, has transformed how engineering functions operate. For instance, introducing automated systems in railway maintenance can improve efficiency and reduce operational costs. However, this shift also means that traditional roles may become obsolete or require new skill sets. The challenge for Transnet Engineering lies in identifying which roles will be crucial for the future operational landscape and ensuring that its workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to thrive in this changed environment.

In agreement, Tharp (2021) found that the fast pace of technological advancement can lead to skills gaps within the organisation. Employees well-versed in older methodologies may find it difficult to adapt to new systems, resulting in a mismatch between existing capabilities and future demands. Transnet Engineering must continuously assess its workforce and provide training programs that align with emerging technologies. This is particularly important in fields such as data analytics and digital manufacturing, where a skilled workforce is paramount for maintaining a competitive edge.

In agreement, Smith and Jones (2023) said that the globalisation of the engineering sector adds another layer of complexity. With companies operating internationally, Transnet Engineering must compete with local firms and international players who may have access to cutting-edge technologies. This competition necessitates a keen understanding of what roles will be most valuable globally. As different regions adopt varying levels of technological advancement, Transnet Engineering must strategically identify where to invest its resources to ensure that it can attract and retain the best talent.

4.9.1.2 Diverse range of functions

The study found that diverse range of functions was a challenge at Transnet Engineering. Here is what a participant said:

The challenge based on experience here lies in the diverse range of functions within Transnet Engineering. The organisation encompasses various sectors, including manufacturing, maintenance, and project management, each with unique requirements and skill sets. Identifying positions deemed crucial across these varied functions can be convoluted (Interview, Participant 1).

In agreement, another participant said:

We have so many sectors within the organisation, for while a welder may be critical in the manufacturing process, a project manager holds significant importance for overseeing multiple project timelines. Balancing the needs across distinct operational areas complicates the identification of key roles (Interview, Participant 12).

The finding is supported by Smith and Jones (2023), who found that the challenge arises from the vast array of services provided by companies such as Transnet Engineering. Organisations involved in engineering solutions are forced to expand their focus on innovative freight transport and maintenance technologies. This breadth of operations means that specialised knowledge is required in different engineering disciplines, making it difficult to delineate roles. Employees work across multiple projects requiring different skill sets, creating a situation where roles blur and overlap, and individuals are unsure of their primary responsibilities. Morgan and McCarthy (2024) said that the diverse nature of tasks can lead to challenges in communication. In an environment where engineers, project managers, and operations staff must collaborate, misunderstandings may arise. For example, a mechanical engineer may prioritise a certain technical requirement, while a project manager focused on timelines might overlook this aspect, leading to potential project delays or failures. Therefore, effective communication and role clarity are crucial to ensure each team member can function at their best while understanding the broader organisational goals.

Syed and Kramer (2023) found that engineering company also faces the external challenge of adapting to technological advancements and changes in the global market. The introduction of digital solutions, such as automated maintenance systems and data analytics for performance optimisation, requires the workforce to adapt continually. This adaptation means that training and development become essential to equip employees with the skills

needed in a rapidly evolving landscape. As a result, Transnet must frequently reassess its roles and responsibilities to align with current and future demands.

4.9.1.3 Impact of workforce dynamics

The study found that workforce dynamics was a challenge at Transnet Engineering. A participant had this to say:

The impact of workforce dynamics presents additional hurdles. The aging workforce in certain technical roles alongside an influx of younger, less experienced employees creates a gap in knowledge and experience. Senior positions become challenging to fill due to retirements, while younger employees may not yet possess the necessary expertise making it hard to identify important roles (Interview, Participant 11).

In agreement, another participant said:

The workforce dynamics makes it difficult to pinpoint which roles are becoming increasingly critical and which ones may evolve or diminish over time (Interview, Participant 10).

In support of the finding above, Syed and Kramar (2023) found that the rapid change in workforce demographics and skills poses challenges. With advancements in technology and shifts in labour markets, the skills required in engineering are evolving. For instance, the increasing reliance on automation and data analytics means that conventional engineering roles may become obsolete while new roles focused on system integration, data management, and innovation emerge. This shift makes it difficult for companies to pinpoint which positions are essential for future success. Managers must constantly assess and adapt to these changes, which can lead to uncertainty and confusion regarding crucial roles. Additionally, the diverse nature of the workforce presents a challenge in identifying crucial roles. Companies such as Transnet Engineering employ individuals from various backgrounds, ages, and experience levels. This diversity brings a wealth of perspectives and ideas, but can also create complexity in understanding team dynamics and roles. For example, younger employees may prioritise technological innovation and flexibility, while seasoned workers may emphasise reliability and established practices. Balancing these different viewpoints and determining which roles are most beneficial to the organisation is difficult.

In agreement, Chen and Lee (2020) said that the pace of change in the engineering field and the broader economic environment adds another layer of complexity. Globalisation, environmental issues, and shifting market demands require organisations like Transnet Engineering to remain agile. Consequently, roles that are deemed crucial may change swiftly. Failure to adapt to these shifts can result in a mismatch between workforce capabilities and organisational needs.

4.9.1.4 Ongoing organisational changes

The study found that a diverse range of functions was a challenge at Transnet Engineering. Here is what a participant said:

Transnet Engineering is continuously scrutinising its operations to improve efficiency. This ongoing transformation means that job positions constantly evolve, and roles that were once considered essential may no longer hold the same importance as the company adjusts strategies and operational goals (Interview, Participant 10).

In agreement, a participant put it this way:

As sustainability becomes a greater focus, roles related to environmental compliance rise in priority, overshadowing traditional engineering roles (Interview, Participant 9).

In agreement, Syed and Kramer (2023) found that restructuring efforts often lead to ambiguity in job descriptions and responsibilities. As companies such as Transnet Engineering adapt to shifts in demand and operational efficiency, roles may be redefined or eliminated. Employees may find themselves transitioning into new positions or having their tasks altered significantly. For instance, the integration of new technologies to enhance productivity can lead to new skill sets being required, which can challenge the existing workforce. This results in difficulty pinpointing who is responsible for crucial operations, as overlapping duties create confusion. Consequently, this ambiguity hampers effective communication and collaboration, as team members may not be clear on their specific contributions to the organisation.

Moreover, Hartmann, Bock and Schulz (2019) said that the introduction of technological advancements necessitates a re-evaluation of existing roles. Some companies, including Transnet Engineering, have adopted automation and digital solutions to streamline operations. While this is primarily beneficial for efficiency, it can lead to the fragmentation of traditional roles. Employees whose functions rely heavily on manual processes may find themselves sidelined or needing retraining to keep up with automated systems. Additionally, in agreement, Chen and Lee (2020) found that workforce adaptability plays a critical role in managing ongoing changes. The ability of employees to adjust to new roles and responsibilities is vital for organisational success. However, if the workforce is not adequately prepared for these changes, resistance may lead to decreased morale and productivity. Training and support become essential tools for Transnet Engineering to help employees navigate their evolving roles. Moreover, engaging employees in the change process can foster ownership and clarity about their responsibilities.

4.9.2 What challenges arise in developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria within Transnet Engineering?

When participants were asked to share their views on the challenges of developing comprehensive succession criteria within Transnet Engineering, several responses were shared Weller, J., & Hart, M. (2020).

4.9.2.1 Diverse skills

The study found that diverse skills were a challenge at Transnet Engineering. Here is what a participant said:

The challenge I see here is the diverse nature of skills required within Transnet Engineering. The engineering sector demands a wide range of technical expertise, management skills, and industry-specific knowledge. Succession criteria must account for this variety while ensuring that potential leaders are equipped to handle both current and future challenges (Interview, Participant 7).

Another participant had this to say in agreement:

The challenge I see here is diverse nature of skills needed. For instance, as technology evolves, emerging sectors such as digital engineering and automation require leaders who are not only technically proficient but also adaptable. This necessitates a multifaceted approach to define succession criteria that capture essential competencies across different engineering fields (Interview, Participant 8).

In agreement with the findings above, Chen and Lee (2020) said that some companies employ individuals from various disciplines, including mechanical, electrical, and civil engineering. Each of these disciplines requires specific technical expertise and experience. As a result, establishing a universal set of succession criteria that applies equally across all fields can be difficult. For example, the skill sets required for a mechanical engineer working on train design differ from those needed by an electrical engineer supporting train control systems. Consequently, a one-size-fits-all approach to succession criteria may overlook the unique competencies necessary for different roles. Additionally, Hartmann, Bock and Schulz (2019) said that diverse skills can lead to varying levels of employee experience and preparedness. Some workers may have advanced qualifications and extensive experience, while others may be in the early stages of their careers. This disparity complicates the identification of potential successors. Organisations must assess who is ready to step into critical roles and ensure that the criteria are adequately aligned with current capabilities and potential for growth. For instance, employees with extensive practical experience but limited formal education may be overlooked for promotion despite their considerable on-the-job knowledge. In agreement, Chen and Lee (2020) said that another challenge arising from a diverse skill set is the potential for misalignment between the skills of successors and the future strategic goals of Transnet Engineering. As the company evolves and adapts to new technologies and market demands, the necessary skills for leadership may change. For example, as industries move towards more digital solutions, successors must possess traditional engineering skills and a strong grasp of emerging technologies, such as data analytics and software engineering. This shift necessitates continuously updating succession criteria to ensure they remain relevant.

4.9.2.2 Cultural and generational shifts

The study shows that cultural and generational shifts were a challenge at Transnet Engineering. A participant put it this way:

For me a significant challenge is addressing the cultural and generational shifts within the workforce. With an increasingly young and diverse workforce, Transnet Engineering must develop succession criteria that resonate with newer generations of employees (Interview, Participant 6).

In agreement, another participant said:

We have a problem of cultural and generational shifts. This generation often values attributes such as inclusivity, agility, and innovation, which may differ from the traditional criteria based on seniority and experience. Aligning these expectations can be difficult and requires ongoing dialogue and assessment to create a succession framework that is both relevant and engaging (Interview, Participant 5).

4.9.2.3 Assessment process

The study found that assessment was a challenge at Transnet Engineering. A participant said:

There is the challenge of ensuring objectivity in the assessment process. Succession planning is sometimes hindered by biases, whether conscious or unconscious, that affect decision-making. It is vital to implement processes that foster transparency and fairness in identifying potential successors (Interview, Participant 4).

Another participant said:

There is lack of objectivity in the assessment process. The use of performance metrics, feedback mechanisms, and third-party assessments can aid in creating a more objective framework, but establishing these criteria can be resource-intensive and complicated to manage (Interview, Participant 2).

The study shows that the assessment process is critical in developing comprehensive succession criteria within Transnet Engineering. One challenge reported is the subjective nature of assessments. Traditionally, organisations rely on performance reviews and personal opinions, which can introduce biases. For instance, if evaluators have preconceived notions

about certain employees' capabilities, they may overlook or undervalue potential candidates who do not fit their expectations but possess the necessary skills for leadership roles. This subjectivity can lead to a lack of diversity in potential successors, ultimately undermining the goal of comprehensive succession planning. In agreement, Khoza and Nkomo (2020) found that Transnet Engineering, like many organisations, faces difficulties aligning assessment processes with its strategic goals. The need to define what skills and competencies are essential for future leaders is complex, particularly given the dynamic nature of the engineering sector. Leaders need to adapt to changes such as digitisation and sustainability trends. If the criteria for succession do not reflect these changing demands, the organisation risks placing individuals in leadership roles who are not equipped to meet these challenges. Therefore, developing a clear and relevant framework for assessments is crucial (Williams & Ngqabutho, 2017).

In agreement, Mulaudzi and Masemola (2019) there is often resistance to change within organisations, including Transnet Engineering. Employees may feel threatened by new assessment procedures or be sceptical about the accuracy of the evaluation mechanisms. This can create a culture of mistrust, making it more difficult to achieve buy-in from employees and management. A successful succession plan requires a transparent assessment process that engages all stakeholders, which is often challenging to implement. This resonates with Conger (2020), who said that time constraints impede thorough assessments. The fast-paced nature of business can pressure decision-makers to rush the succession planning process. This urgency may lead to superficial assessments that overlook in-depth evaluations of candidates' capabilities. A meaningful assessment requires time to gather data, conduct interviews, and evaluate skills comprehensively (Williams & Ngqabutho, 2017).

4.9.2.4 External market pressures

The study shows that external market pressure was a challenge at Transnet Engineering. A participant put it this way:

The external market pressures introduce further complexity to succession planning processes. Fluctuating economic conditions, technological advancements, and competitive dynamics rapidly alter the landscape in which Transnet Engineering operates. As a result, succession criteria must

be robust and flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances
(Interview, Participant 1).

In agreement, another participant said:

I have seen that external market pressures make it difficult to have an effective succession plan. Constant change in the market implies that ongoing evaluation and refinement of succession strategies are critical
(Interview, Participant 1).

The findings show that the rapid technological advancement at Transnet Engineering is a challenge. As industries increasingly adopt new technologies, the competencies required for leadership roles evolve. For instance, leaders must possess strong digital skills and an understanding of innovative engineering practices. This shift necessitates that Transnet Engineering regularly evaluates and updates its succession criteria to ensure potential leaders can handle modern challenges (Marques & Ferreira, 2019). The difficulty lies in choosing criteria that are flexible enough to accommodate these changes without losing sight of the foundational skills necessary for effective leadership.

Additionally, the organisational culture within Transnet Engineering plays a critical role in succession planning. A culture that does not encourage mentorship and skill development can impede the identification and grooming of suitable candidates for leadership roles. If current leaders are not actively engaged in transferring their knowledge and experiences to emerging leaders, the company may struggle to maintain a robust leadership pipeline. A lack of open communication regarding career pathways can lead to disillusionment among employees, resulting in decreased motivation and productivity (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016).

Moreover, external factors, such as economic fluctuations and political uncertainties, impact Transnet Engineering's ability to attract and retain talent. With unpredictable market conditions, potential leaders seek more stable opportunities elsewhere, leaving the company with a limited pool of candidates for succession. This issue is exacerbated by skill shortages in the engineering sector, which can hinder the development of a strong internal leadership pipeline (Meyer & Botha, 2020).

4.9.3 What are the key challenges associated with assessing employees for succession readiness in Transnet Engineering?

When participants were asked to share their views on the challenges of assessing employees within Transnet Engineering, several responses were shared.

4.9.3.1 Diverse skill set and levels of expertise

The study shows that diverse skill set and levels of expertise was a challenge at Transnet Engineering. A participant put it this way:

A participant had this to say:

The main challenge is the diverse skill set and levels of expertise among employees. Transnet Engineering operates with individuals from various technical backgrounds, ranging from engineering to logistics. This diversity makes it difficult to create a standardised assessment framework that can accommodate varying roles and responsibilities (Interview, Participant 3).

Another participant had this to say:

The challenge is different levels of expertise among employees. For instance, while an engineer may be evaluated on technical knowledge and problem-solving skills, a logistics manager may need to be assessed on efficiency and planning capabilities. This discrepancy leads to the potential for bias and inconsistency in evaluations, creating challenges in accurately measuring employee performance across different functions (Interview, Participant 2).

The findings imply that assessing employees within Transnet Engineering poses significant challenges owing to the diverse skill set and varying levels of expertise in the workforce. Transnet Engineering operates in a complex environment where the integration of engineering, logistics, and operations is vital. As a result, employees often come from different educational backgrounds and possess a wide range of skills, which complicates the assessment process. In agreement, Williams and Ngqabutho (2017) said that one major challenge is creating a standardised evaluation system that fairly measures performance across diverse job roles. For instance, employees engaged in mechanical engineering,

electrical engineering, and project management might have different key performance indicators. Developing a one-size-fits-all assessment tool can lead to disparities in evaluations. For example, a mechanical engineer may excel in hands-on technical skills, while a project manager might demonstrate superior leadership abilities. Assessing both with identical criteria could underestimate the strengths of each role (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2022).

Moreover, the differences in levels of expertise among employees add another layer of complexity to assessments. Employees in Transnet Engineering may have varying amounts of experience, ranging from recent graduates to seasoned professionals with decades of experience. New employees might be adept in theoretical knowledge but lack practical application skills, while experienced workers may not be as familiar with the latest technologies or methodologies (Smith & Jones, 2023). This disparity complicates the benchmarking process and may result in biased outcomes, where less experienced employees are evaluated unfavourably compared to their more experienced counterparts, despite having growth potential (Tharp, 2021).

In support of the findings, Williams (2022) states that the push for continuous professional development has emphasised upskilling and reskilling within the organisation. Thus, it is vital that the assessment processes evolve alongside these initiatives. For instance, implementing a 360-degree feedback mechanism can provide a more holistic view of an employee's performance, incorporating different perspectives from peers and supervisors. This multi-faceted approach helps ensure that assessments are not only based on quantitative metrics but also on qualitative insights (Williams, 2022).

4.9.3.2 Nature of performance assessments

The study shows that the nature of performance assessments was a challenge at Transnet Engineering. A participant had this to say:

The challenge is the subjective nature of performance assessments. Performance evaluations often rely on the opinions of supervisors and managers, which can introduce subjectivity into the process. Different managers may have varying standards and expectations, leading to discrepancies in assessments (Interview, Participant 7).

In agreement, a participant said:

Different managers tend to use their own performance assessment methods. For example, one manager may prioritise punctuality and attendance, while another emphasises innovation and creativity. These conflicting criteria can result in confusion and dissatisfaction among employees regarding how their performance is judged (Interview, Participant 11).

Another participant said:

As a result, of having different performance approaches, establishing a clear, objective set of criteria across the board becomes a crucial but challenging task (Interview, Participant 9).

The study found that one of the challenges is the subjectivity inherent in performance assessments. Evaluations often depend on the perceptions and biases of managers and peers. For example, if a manager favours certain traits or styles of work, this may skew the assessment of an employee's true capabilities. Consequently, those who may be more deserving of promotion could be overlooked, leading to a gap in the succession planning process. This subjectivity may result in a lack of trust in the assessment outcomes, thereby affecting employee morale and motivation. Another significant challenge is the alignment of performance assessments with organisational goals. Transnet Engineering, like many organisations, operates within a rapidly changing environment (Williams & Ngqabutho, 2017). Performance metrics that were relevant a few years ago may no longer apply today due to shifts in technology and market demands. For instance, employees in engineering roles are assessed primarily on technical skill sets. However, in recent years, competencies such as adaptability and innovation have gained importance. Failure to update assessment criteria in line with current organisational needs can create a disconnect, making it difficult to develop criteria that accurately reflect the potential of candidates for future leadership roles.

In agreement, Smith and Jones (2023) found that the integration of diverse evaluation methods represents another challenge. Performance assessments can include self-assessments, peer reviews, and manager evaluations. Each of these methods carries unique strengths and weaknesses. Balancing these different approaches is complex. For instance, self-assessments can provide valuable insight but may also lead to inflated perceptions of

one's abilities. If not carefully managed, reliance on one method over others can hinder a thorough assessment process, making it difficult to establish a well-rounded succession criterion. In agreement, Tharp (2021) found that the dynamic nature of workforce demographics also poses a challenge. Transnet Engineering is not considering the varying expectations and career aspirations of a diverse workforce. Younger employees, for instance, may prioritise career development opportunities over traditional metrics of success. As such, performance assessments must be adaptable to these evolving expectations to effectively identify future leaders (Tharp, 2021).

4.9.3.3 Rapid changes in technology

The study shows that assessing employees within Transnet Engineering was a challenge. A participant put it this way:

The rapid changes in technology and market demands pose additional pressures on performance assessment. As Transnet Engineering integrates new technologies and adapts to evolving industry standards, employees must continuously acquire new skills. Evaluating employees in a context of constant change can complicate assessments, as what was deemed valuable a year ago may no longer apply (Interview, Participant 2).

Another participant in agreement said:

My experience here shows that technological developments affect succession planning. For example, the rise of automation in engineering processes requires employees to adapt quickly, leaving performance assessments unable to keep pace with these technological advancements (Interview, Participant 8).

The study suggests that the speed at which technology evolves poses challenges at Transnet Engineering. For instance, advancements in automation and artificial intelligence have transformed manufacturing and engineering processes. This shift requires a workforce that is not only technically proficient but also adaptable to ongoing changes. Traditional succession planning may focus on established skills and experiences, which rapidly become obsolete as new technologies emerge. As a result, Transnet Engineering must identify leadership candidates who not only possess current skills but also demonstrate the ability to learn

quickly and adapt to technological advancements. Furthermore, the integration of digital platforms within engineering practices has necessitated a change in the competencies needed for leadership roles. Candidates must possess not only technical know-how but also an understanding of digital transformation and data analytics (Tharp, 2021). For example, as Transnet Engineering adopts more sophisticated data management systems for tracking performance and predicting maintenance needs, future leaders must be skilled in interpreting data and using it to make informed decisions. However, traditional succession criteria not sufficiently account for these emerging skills, posing a challenge in identifying suitable candidates.

In agreement, Glen (2020) said that another significant factor is the need for collaboration across various disciplines. Modern engineering projects often require interdisciplinary teams that mix engineers, data analysts, and information technology specialists. Consequently, effective leaders in this environment must exhibit strong interpersonal skills and the ability to foster teamwork. Transnet Engineering faces the challenge of ensuring that succession criteria emphasise such soft skills alongside technical qualifications, thus allowing for a more holistic approach to leadership development. Moreover, the external environment is constantly changing, influenced by global trends, economic shifts, and regulatory changes (Tharp, 2021). Leaders within Transnet Engineering must be equipped to foresee these changes and navigate their implications. Therefore, succession planning must be agile enough to account for unpredictable future scenarios, as rigid criteria may fail to prepare the organisation for unforeseen challenges.

4.9.4 What obstacles hinder the effective planning and facilitation of employee growth and development for succession purposes?

Participants were asked to share their perspectives on the challenges of devising plans for employees' growth within Transnet Engineering, several responses were shared.

I have noticed that the main challenge is the rapid technological advancement in the engineering field. As new technologies emerge, such as automation and artificial intelligence, employees must continually upgrade their skills. This can create a gap between current employee competencies and the skills required for future projects (Interview, Participant 5).

Another participant said:

For instance, if employees remain untrained on new software or machinery, they may struggle to adapt to changing industry demands. Transnet Engineering must invest heavily in continuous training programs to ensure that workers remain relevant. However, allocating resources for such training can be challenging, especially in times of budget constraints (Interview, Participant 6).

The finding shows that rapid technological advancements is the skills gap pose challenges to the succession planning at Transnet Engineering. As new technologies develop, they frequently outpace the existing skills of the workforce. For instance, automation and artificial intelligence become integral to manufacturing processes, requiring employees to possess advanced technical skills that they may not currently have. This skill gap at Transnet Engineering leads to a workforce that is ill-prepared to meet the demands of a modern engineering environment. Additionally, the pace of technological change contributes to the difficulty in creating long-term employee development plans (Tharp, 2021). Rapid advancements lead organisations to shift their focus quickly, making it challenging to establish fixed career paths for employees. For example, a new software system was implemented that changed the workflow entirely, rendering existing job roles obsolete. In agreement, Smith and Turner (2019) found that the integration of new technologies can result in resistance from employees who are accustomed to traditional methods. This resistance can hinder the effective implementation of new systems, affecting productivity and morale. Transnet Engineering faces the challenge of managing this resistance while promoting a growth mindset among its employees. It is crucial to communicate the benefits of technological advancements clearly and involve employees in the transition process to foster acceptance and enthusiasm for change (Tharp, 2021).

4.9.4.1 Diverse workforce

The study shows that a diverse workforce within Transnet Engineering was a challenge to the succession planning. A participant put it this way:

The challenge I see is the diverse nature of the workforce. Employees at Transnet Engineering come from different educational backgrounds and

experience levels. This diversity can hinder the development of a uniform growth plan that caters to everyone's needs (Interview, Participant 1).

A participant said:

Look at this way. For example, while some employees may require basic skills training, others may need advanced leadership development programs. Tailoring growth plans to meet varying levels of expertise and ensuring inclusivity can be difficult. Moreover, fostering a culture of mentorship and peer support is crucial yet challenging, as not all employees may feel comfortable in such roles (Interview, Participant 12).

The study suggests that the challenges to the succession planning are communication and understanding among employees from different cultural backgrounds. Each culture has unique perspectives and communication styles, which lead to misunderstandings. For instance, a team member from a more collectivist culture may prioritise group harmony and consensus, while someone from an individualistic culture may focus more on self-promotion. This clash can hinder collaboration and complicate the process of creating personalised growth plans that cater to the diverse needs of all employees (Tharp, 2021). In support of the finding, the Transnet Engineering (2023) report found that differing educational backgrounds and work experiences add another layer of complexity. In Transnet Engineering, employees come from various technical schools and universities, leading to inconsistencies in skills and knowledge levels. Crafting development plans that effectively address these disparities requires a nuanced understanding of each employee's background and potential, which can be resource-intensive. A one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be effective in a diverse workforce, thereby complicating efforts to foster individual career growth.

In agreement, Wang, Zhao and Liu (2021) found that the challenge of bias in talent management emerges. Unconscious biases influence decision-makers when assessing employee potential and designing growth initiatives. For instance, if certain traits are valued more highly due to prevailing stereotypes, individuals who do not fit these stereotypes may be overlooked for growth opportunities. This at Transnet Engineering leads to feelings of exclusion and lower morale among employees, hampering their overall development and engagement. In the same vein, another aspect is the alignment of diverse needs with organisational goals. Transnet Engineering, like many organisations, aims to balance the

personal development of its employees with the overall strategic objectives of the company. Employees may have aspirations that do not necessarily align with the technical and operational goals of the organisation. Understanding each individual's career ambitions while ensuring they contribute positively to the company's objectives can be challenging.

4.9.4.2 Employee retention

The study found that employee retention within Transnet Engineering was a challenge to the succession planning. A participant said:

For me employee retention poses a challenge in devising growth plans. Skilled employees may seek opportunities elsewhere if they feel that their career development is stagnating (Interview, Participant 9).

Another participant, in agreement, said:

Transnet Engineering has no clear and appealing career progression framework to motivate its workforce. Therefore, there is no strategy for ensuring that all employees see tangible outcomes from their growth plans within the organisation. There are also no regular feedback and career development discussions (Interview, Participant 7).

The study revealed that one of the primary challenges of employee retention at Transnet Engineering is the competitive labour market. In agreement, Wang, Zhao and Liu (2021) found that in recent years, the engineering sector has seen heightened demand for skilled labour, resulting in a talent shortage. Many employees possess specialised skills that are in high demand, making them attractive to other companies. For instance, skilled engineers may receive offers from rival firms or industries offering better remuneration and working conditions. This competition pressures Transnet Engineering to continuously enhance its compensation packages and employee benefits to retain its talented workforce. Moreover, Thompson and Goldstein (2020) in agreement said that employee engagement plays a vital role in retention. In a diverse organisational environment like Transnet Engineering, employees may have varying career aspirations and expectations. If employees feel that their growth is not aligned with the organisation's vision, they are likely to become disengaged. Corporate culture should foster open communication and encourage feedback, allowing employees to express their professional development needs. However, if upper management

fails to address these concerns, employees may leave the organisation in search of better opportunities that align with their goals (Patel & Hernandez, 2022).

Additionally, in support of the views above, Thompson and Goldstein (2020) said that effective career development plans are essential in combating turnover rates. Transnet Engineering must implement strategic planning for training and professional growth. Providing robust training programs empowers employees to ascend the career ladder. However, without motivation and assurance of advancement within the organisation, employees may lack the incentive to stay long-term. For instance, if employees perceive a lack of promotional opportunities or feel that their skills are not being utilised, their likelihood of staying diminishes (Patel & Hernandez, 2022).

4.9.4.3 External economic environment

A participant put it this way:

The external economic environment affects the ability to implement growth plans effectively. Economic downturns can lead to budget cuts and a focus on essential operations rather than employee development initiatives (Interview, Participant 2).

Another participant said:

External factors such as pandemics has forced including Transnet Engineering, to re-evaluate its priorities, often side-lining employee growth in favour of immediate operational survival (Interview, Participant 2).

The findings imply that challenges to succession planning arise from economic fluctuations. For instance, periods of economic downturn can lead to reduced budgets for training and development programs. During such times, organisations often prioritise immediate survival over long-term employee growth. Transnet Engineering, which operates within the larger Transnet Group, struggles to allocate sufficient resources for employee development when facing economic constraints (Patel & Hernandez, 2022). This not only affects training initiatives but can also impact employee morale, as workers may feel unsupported in their career ambitions. In addition, Lee (2023) said that technological advancements also represent a critical aspect of the external economic environment that can hinder employee growth. The

rapid pace of technological change means that skills can quickly become outdated. Employees at Transnet Engineering need continuous training to keep up with new technologies, equipment, and processes. However, the challenge lies in identifying the right areas for development and ensuring that training programs are aligned with both current and future organisational needs. If the organisation fails to adapt to technological trends, it risks losing its competitive edge, which could further complicate efforts to invest in employees (Patel & Hernandez, 2022).

In agreement with the view presented above, Thompson and Goldstein (2020) argue that changing market demands also influence employee growth strategies. The transportation and logistics sector, which includes Transnet Engineering, faces shifting customer expectations and regulatory requirements. As markets evolve, so too must the skills and competencies of the workforce. For instance, if there is a push towards greener technologies and sustainable practices, Transnet Engineering must ensure that its employees are equipped with the relevant skills to meet these new expectations. This requires ongoing assessments of skill gaps and a willingness to adjust training programs accordingly, which can be challenging in a volatile economic environment (Patel & Hernandez, 2022).

4.9.5 What are the challenges involved in nurturing and preparing potential successors within Transnet Engineering?

Participants were asked to share their perspectives on the challenges of nurturing potential successors within Transnet Engineering, and several responses were shared.

The challenge is identifying the right candidates for succession. Transnet Engineering, as part of a large and complex organisation, requires leaders who possess not only technical skills but also strategic thinking and emotional intelligence. The process of identifying these qualities in potential successors can be difficult (Interview, Participant 7).

A participant had this to say:

You see, the succession plan necessitates a thorough understanding of both the current and future needs of the company, as well as the personal attributes and competencies of employees. Without a reliable method for evaluating potential successors, Transnet may struggle to ensure that it has

prepared individuals ready to take on critical leadership roles (Interview, Participant 2).

Their findings suggest that Transnet Engineering has challenges with nurturing potential successors. In support of the importance of nurturing potential successors, Johnson (2022) said that nurturing potential successors involves providing candidates with the necessary training, mentorship, and opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Transnet Engineering has not fully recognised the importance of exposing these individuals to different facets of the organisation. Through rotational programmes and cross-departmental projects, potential successors gain diverse experiences that equip them with a well-rounded understanding of the company. This exposure not only builds their skill set but also enhances their confidence and readiness for future roles (Patel & Hernandez, 2022). In support of the view above, Kelly (2023) said that nurturing potential successors fosters a culture of engagement and loyalty. When employees see a clear path for advancement and receive the support to grow, they are more likely to remain committed to the organisation. This commitment is essential in an industry that relies on specialised skills and experience. Johnson (2022), in agreement, found that the emphasis on diversity and inclusion shapes succession planning in organisations. By actively seeking out diverse candidates for leadership roles, the organisation broadens its talent pool and fosters innovation and creativity within its teams. This approach ensures that future leaders can relate to a wider range of employees and customers, enhancing overall organisational effectiveness (Kelly, 2023).

4.9.5.1 Training and development

A participant put it this way:

The challenge I see is the need for training and development. Even when potential successors are identified, ensuring they have access to the necessary training and development opportunities is crucial.

A participant also said:

Transnet Engineering's fast-paced environment requires that future leaders be agile, adaptable, and equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills. However, funding and resources for training programs can sometimes be

limited. This limitation can lead to a gap between employee potential and actual performance, hindering effective succession planning.

The finding is supported by Kelly (2023), who argues that the absence of structured training programs limits employees' ability to acquire essential knowledge and competencies. For instance, like many other organisations, Transnet Engineering relies on advanced technology and innovative practices to enhance its operations. Employees not provided with updated training may struggle to understand or utilise these technologies. This gap in knowledge not only hinders their career advancement but also impacts the overall efficiency and competitiveness of the organisation. When potential successors lack the skills required for advanced positions, it creates a vacuum that can be challenging for the organisation to fill. Moreover, a lack of development opportunities can lead to low employee morale and increased turnover rates (Adams, 2024). Employees who see no pathway for professional growth or feel unprepared for the next step in their careers will likely seek opportunities elsewhere. This is particularly relevant in the current job market, where skilled professionals are in high demand. In Transnet Engineering, failure to invest in training results in a loss of valuable talent, thereby diminishing the pool of individuals who could eventually step into leadership roles. In agreement, Kelly (2023) found that the inability to effectively mentor and coach potential successors is detrimental to the organisational culture. Mentorship and coaching are essential elements of professional growth. When organisations like Transnet Engineering do not prioritise these relationships, they miss out on fostering a supportive environment where employees feel encouraged to learn and develop. A strong mentorship program not only prepares employees for future roles but also cultivates a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organisation (Patel & Hernandez, 2022).

4.9.5.2 Organisational culture

A participant said:

The organisational culture at Transnet Engineering can pose challenges. A culture resistant to change may hinder the development of new leaders and the implementation of innovative strategies. If the existing leadership does not actively support succession planning initiatives and does not foster an environment conducive to growth and development, potential successors may struggle to develop their skills effectively (Interview, Participant 8).

Another participant said:

The organisation has no strategies to cultivate a supportive atmosphere that encourages mentoring, collaboration, and open communication to help future leaders flourish (Interview, Participant 5).

The findings show that Transnet Engineering's organisational culture is lagging behind in terms of collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to performance excellence. A collaborative culture encourages employees to share knowledge and skills, fostering an environment where potential successors can learn from established leaders (Wang, Zhao & Liu (2021). For instance, mentorship programs are often implemented, allowing junior employees to gain insights from experienced professionals. This mentorship is vital in forming a solid foundation for future leaders and ensures that institutional knowledge is passed down. In agreement, Patel and Hernandez (2022) found that when a company promotes a forward-thinking mindset and encourages employees to propose new ideas and improvements, that company is likely to have effective succession planning. This culture of innovation not only aids in employee engagement but also empowers potential successors to think creatively and strategically (Carter & McKinley, 2021). When employees feel that their contributions are valued, they are more likely to step up and take on leadership roles. This openness to new ideas creates an atmosphere conducive to identifying and nurturing individuals with the potential to lead.

Furthermore, Wang, Zhao and Liu (2021) found that the emphasis on performance excellence drives accountability among employees. Transnet Engineering has challenges in setting clear expectations and goals and failing to push employees to strive for high standards. This environment prepares potential successors to understand the importance of accountability in leadership. By being part of a high-performing culture, these individuals become aware of the skills necessary for effective leadership, such as decision-making under pressure and strategic planning. However, Adams (2021) said that challenges can arise within organisational cultures that tend to prioritise hierarchy over collaboration. Potential successors may feel stifled if there are rigid structures that discourage initiative or risk-taking. For Transnet Engineering to create robust leaders, it must continually assess and adapt its culture to ensure it aligns with the needs of developing successors. This involves actively listening to employee feedback and being willing to implement changes that foster a more inclusive and empowering environment (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

4.9.5.3 Competitive landscape

A participant put it this way:

The competitive landscape of the engineering sector is constantly evolving, with new technologies and methodologies emerging frequently. As such, Transnet Engineering must remain responsive to these changes, adjusting its succession planning accordingly (Interview, Participant 10).

A participant said:

The organisation lacks responsiveness that requires agility that is not always present, which leads to mismatches between the capabilities of potential successors and the demands of the industry (Interview, Participant 3).

The study implies that one of the factors affecting succession planning is the rapid evolution of technology and processes within the engineering sector. As Transnet Engineering embraces cutting-edge technologies such as automation and digitalisation, there is heightened pressure to equip successors with the necessary skills. This imperative necessitates a focus on continuous learning and professional development, ensuring that potential leaders are adept in modern engineering principles as well as industry trends. For instance, the introduction of advanced maintenance systems for locomotives and wagons requires successors to have a firm grounding in both technical and managerial competencies, highlighting the need for a well-rounded training approach. In agreement, Wang, Zhao and Liu (2021) said that the competitive landscape prompts companies to create a more attractive and stimulating environment for their employees. Organisations that prioritise the development of their talent are likely to outperform their competitors. Recognising this, Transnet has to implement mentorship programs and leadership workshops to identify and cultivate emerging talent. By fostering relationships between experienced professionals and potential successors, the company enhances knowledge transfer and prepares the next generation for leadership roles (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021). This also means that Transnet Engineering must consider the demographic changes within the workforce. As experienced workers retire, filling these gaps becomes crucial. The company faces the challenge of finding skilled individuals and ensuring that they are groomed for leadership positions in alignment with the organisation's strategic

goals. This requires a strategic focus on diversity and inclusion, ensuring that a variety of perspectives contribute to the leadership pipeline, which is essential in a competitive environment (Thompson & Goldstein, 2020).

4.9.6 What challenges are encountered in the regular review and modification of succession plans at Transnet Engineering?

When participants were asked to share their perceptions of the challenges of regularly reviewing and modifying the succession plan within Transnet Engineering, this is what the majority said:

4.9.6.1 Dynamic nature of the engineering sector

When participants were asked to share their perspectives on the challenges of regularly reviewing and modifying the succession plan within Transnet Engineering, several views were shared.

I think the main challenge is the dynamic nature of the engineering sector, particularly at a national level like Transnet Engineering. rapid technological advancement requires continuous adaptation, which can impact workforce requirements (Interview, Participant 12).

Another participant in agreement said:

You see, the dynamic nature of the engineering sector is the many hurdles. For instance, the rise of automation and digital technologies demands new skills that the current workforce may not possess. This need for new competencies can complicate the succession planning process, as the organisation must evaluate the existing talent and the training and development required to prepare future leaders (Interview, Participant 10).

The study suggests that technological advancements are a challenge to the succession planning in Transnet Engineering. In agreement, Thompson and Goldstein (2020) said that the engineering sector is undergoing a transformation with the advent of new technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence, and digital engineering. Transnet Engineering must keep pace with these changes while formulating succession plans. Identifying potential leaders who can navigate and lead through these technological shifts becomes essential yet

complicated. For instance, a leader trained in traditional engineering practices may not have the necessary skills to manage projects involving advanced technology. Therefore, the succession plan must be flexible enough to adapt to these new skills and competencies. In agreement, Morgan and McCarthy (2024) said that market demands in the engineering sector are continuously evolving. With globalisation and competition, organisations need leaders who can think strategically and respond to changing customer needs. In recent years, such changes have been evident with the emphasis on sustainability and renewable energy (Thompson & Goldstein, 2020). Transnet Engineering faces the challenge of ensuring that its succession plans incorporate leaders who are not just technically skilled but also possess a vision that aligns with these market trends. This requires a comprehensive evaluation of both the current leadership and potential successors, an ongoing and complex task. Additionally, in support of the finding, Morgan and McCarthy (2024) said that the workforce dynamics, including demographic shifts and varying employee expectations, further complicate succession planning. The younger workforce, often comprised of millennials and Generation Z, may have different priorities and career aspirations than previous generations. These shifts lead to a need for succession plans that are strategically sound and empathetic to the expectations of a diverse workforce. For instance, employees today value mentorship and developmental opportunities. If the succession plan does not address these aspects, the organisation may face challenges in retaining talent.

4.9.6.2 Retention of talent

A participant put it this way:

The challenge lies in the retention of key talent. You see, South Africa's competitive job market means that skilled professionals are often sought after by various organisations. Transnet Engineering faces the risk of losing potential successors to rival companies, making it difficult to maintain a robust succession plan (Interview, Participant 3).

Another participant said:

Employees may be tempted to leave for better opportunities, resulting in a talent gap that can disrupt the succession pipeline and necessitate frequent revisions to the plan (Interview, Participant 8).

The findings underscore that one of the issues faced by succession planning at Transnet is the high turnover of skilled employees leading to instability within the organisation. When talented individuals leave, especially those identified as potential leaders, it creates gaps that are difficult to fill (Morgan & McCarthy, 2024). The study suggests that Transnet Engineering is experiencing challenges in retaining its skilled workforce, often due to better employment opportunities elsewhere. This constant flux of talent undermines the company's ability to develop a robust succession plan, as potential leaders may not have enough time or experience within the organisation to be considered competent successors. Moreover, Thompson and Goldstein (2020) said that the process of regularly reviewing and modifying succession plans requires a comprehensive understanding of the existing workforce. When organisations face retention issues, the data and insights needed to assess and adjust these plans effectively can become outdated or unreliable. For instance, if Transnet Engineering has to frequently alter its plans due to the departure of key personnel, it can lead to a reactive rather than proactive approach to leadership development. This hinders long-term strategic planning, which is essential for aligning the organisation's goals with talent management (Syed & Kramer, 2023). Another challenge is the potential impact on employee morale and culture. When talented individuals perceive that their contributions are not valued or that opportunities for growth are limited, they may opt to seek employment elsewhere. This sentiment can create a perception of instability within the organisation, further complicating efforts to cultivate a supportive environment for future leaders (Morgan & McCarthy, 2024). An organisation like Transnet Engineering, which relies heavily on skilled labour and leadership, finds it increasingly difficult to instil a sense of loyalty and commitment among its employees.

4.9.6.3 Resistance to change

A participant said:

For me, the challenge is resistance to change that poses a challenge in the ongoing review of succession plans. Employees and management may exhibit apprehension regarding new strategies or proposed changes, especially if they feel secure in their current roles. This resistance can slow down the process of identifying and grooming new leaders, ultimately limiting the effectiveness of the succession planning initiative (Interview, Participant 3).

Another participant said:

There is resistance to change making succession planning important. This is due to lack of communication and engagement with employees vital to overcoming such barriers, which also requires considerable time and resources (Interview, Participant 5).

The finding suggests that resistance to change at Transnet Engineering occurs due to a fear of the unknown. Employees feel uncertain about their future roles, career development opportunities, or job security as they see modifications to the succession plan. For instance, when Transnet Engineering shifted from a traditional leadership model to a more innovative and collaborative approach, existing leaders and employees were hesitant to embrace new expectations. This fear hinders effective communication and feedback, reducing the quality of input essential for a well-developed succession plan. In agreement, Syed and Kramar (2023) found that long-standing organisational cultures can contribute to resistance. At Transnet Engineering, where legacy practices define daily operations, employees cling to the familiar and view any change as unnecessary or disruptive. For example, if a succession plan involves introducing new competencies that emphasise technological skills, those accustomed to classic operational methods resist these adaptations (Rothwell, 2021). This resistance stagnates the review process, as stakeholders argue against changes rather than engage in constructive discussions about their benefits. To address this challenge, leadership at Transnet Engineering must prioritise change management strategies. This includes actively involving employees in discussions about the importance of succession planning and how it impacts the organisation and their careers. Educational programs and workshops can demystify the reasons behind the modifications, fostering a sense of ownership and involvement among staff. Furthermore, showcasing success stories of individuals who have progressed through revised succession plans can encourage acceptance and excitement about the changes (Syed & Kramer, 2023).

4.9.6.4 External factors

A participant said:

My experience shows that external factors, such as economic fluctuations and changes in government policies, also complicate succession planning.

For instance, Transnet Engineering must navigate budget constraints and shifts in funding policies that could impact workforce expansion or modification (Interview, Participant 4).

I agree, another participant said:

External dynamics require agile planning and adaptation, stretching the organisation's ability to maintain an effective succession plan (Interview, Participant 11).

The study revealed that external factors affect Transnet Engineering's succession planning. Economic fluctuations, such as recessions or booms, can impact staffing needs and how the organisation views leadership roles. For instance, during a downturn, the company might freeze promotions or limit hiring, thereby complicating the existing succession plan (Rothwell, 2021). With fewer opportunities for advancement, talent may leave the organisation searching for better career prospects elsewhere, leading to a depletion of potential successors. Maintaining a robust pipeline of future leaders becomes increasingly difficult under such conditions. In addition to economic factors, social changes heavily influence succession planning (Syed & Kramer, 2023). For example, generational shifts in the workforce mean that younger employees often have different values and expectations than their older colleagues. This variation in expectations can create challenges in recognising and preparing successors. Transnet Engineering must adapt its succession planning to align with these evolving workplace dynamics. If the company fails to bridge the generational gap, it risks losing valuable talent that does not feel supported or valued in their career development.

In support of the findings, Rothwell (2021) said that technological advancements also present a hurdle. As industries evolve, so do the skills and competencies required for leadership roles. Transnet Engineering must ensure that its succession plan accounts for the rapid pace of technological change. For example, leaders today must possess digital skills and the ability to manage virtual teams. If the succession plan does not reflect this need for new competencies, the organisation may find itself with leaders unprepared for current challenges. In agreement, Syed and Kramar (2023) found that political factors can also disrupt succession planning. Regulatory changes or shifts in government policy can affect the overall strategy of an organisation, leading to restructured teams and altered leadership needs. For instance,

Transnet Engineering must adjust its succession plan in response to new transportation regulations or funding cuts, impacting who is deemed suitable for leadership roles.

The study found that while Transnet Engineering has a succession planning framework in place, there is a significant gap in evaluating the effectiveness of the process. This often leads to unclear leadership pipelines and missed opportunities for developing high potential employees. The study exposes a critical gap in understanding the factors that influence leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of succession planning. While succession planning is often recognised as an essential process, the lack of evaluation and the factors that prevent effective evaluation remain an area that has not been adequately explored. This research aims to fill this gap by critically examining the reasons why leaders may neglect or under-evaluate the effectiveness of succession planning programs, despite their potential benefits to the organization (Groysberg, B., & Abrahams, R. (2023).

The Leadership Pipeline Model emphasises developing leaders at all levels of the organisation. The model focuses on preparing employees for the various leadership roles to be assumed over time, with specific competencies and responsibilities required at each stage. The goal is to ensure a steady pipeline of leaders who are capable of handling increasing responsibilities, which helps organisations address leadership shortages and ensure leadership continuity. A process for developing leaders at every level is to ensure a continuous supply of leadership talent (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2021).

Organisations can structure leadership development programs to ensure that the right people are prepared to step into leadership roles when the time comes. (Day, & Harrison, 2020).

The 9-Box Grid Model the most popular tools in succession planning, as it allows organisations to visually assess and categorise employees, helping to identify high-potential candidates for leadership roles. The 9-Box Grid is useful when research focuses on how organisations assess, develop, and retain high potential talent. The model's flexibility in categorising employees by both performance and potential makes it applicable in various organisational contexts (Janson, & Kuijpers, 2022). Another approach is the The Relay Succession Planning Model emphasises a gradual transition of leadership duties over time, ensuring the successor is well prepared before fully taking over the role. It's a structured, long-term approach where the current leader supports the successor in the process, passing the "baton" gradually to avoid disruptions and ensure leadership continuity. A gradual, phased leadership transition where responsibilities are handed overtime (Deloitte, 2022).

Relay Succession Planning," involves a gradual handover of leadership responsibilities from one leader to a successor over time (Weller & Hart, 2020).

The research revealed that traditional, paper-based methods continue to dominate the succession planning process, despite the growing need for digital transformation in managing and tracking talent in the modern workforce. Barriers to identifying critical positions.

The study uncovered challenges in identifying critical positions for succession planning. Factors such as leadership perception, departmental silos, and a lack of alignment between the business strategy and succession needs were identified as key obstacles McKinsey & Company. (2023).

There is evidence of resistance to change within the organisation is also a challenge, with some leaders reluctant to evaluate the effectiveness of succession planning due to entrenched attitudes and fears that change could destabilise established power structures which makes it difficult to be led by such leaders Kotter, J. P. (2021).

Furthermore, in this study, Transnet Engineering serves as the primary case study, providing an in depth exploration of the succession planning practices within the organisation. Through a comprehensive case study methodology, the research explores how succession planning is applied in the context of a large South African organisation in the engineering sector. This case study approach allows for a detailed examination of real world challenges, successes, and lessons learned from the organisation's succession planning efforts, offering insights into the broader application of these strategies in similar contexts (Patel & Kramer, 2023).

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of a study on succession planning at Transnet Engineering, focusing on challenges such as identifying crucial roles, developing comprehensive succession criteria, assessing employees, devising plans for employee growth, nurturing potential successors, and regularly reviewing and modifying the succession plan. The chapter uses a narrative format with quotes from interview transcripts that inform the analysis and discussion of the study's key findings. The chapter concludes with policy recommendations and future research recommendations, and the conclusion of the chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Succession planning is a critical process for organisations to ensure continuity and stability, particularly in sectors that demand specialised skills, such as engineering. Transnet Engineering, a division of Transnet Limited in South Africa, faces various challenges in its succession planning efforts. This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations for the succession plans at Transnet Engineering and the associated challenges. It offers recommendations for Transnet Engineering to enhance succession planning effectiveness and address current challenges.

5.2 Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter covers the introduction, background, problem, significance, aim, and objectives. This chapter will also describe the study's format.

Chapter 2: Literature review:

This chapter reviews succession planning literature. Books, journal articles, reports, and grey literature were used.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter presented the study's research methodology. This chapter discussed the study's population, target population, site, methodology, and design. Data collection, analysis, and sampling methods are covered in this chapter. This chapter discussed data control, pilot study, study constraints, ethics, and the chapter's conclusion.

Chapter 4: Results, discussion and interpretation

The chapter presented findings and discussions on Transnet Engineering's Durban succession planning challenges.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presented conclusions and suggestions on Transnet Engineering's succession

5.3 Conclusions from the Key Findings

Conclusions are based on the key findings.

5.3.1 To examine the challenges encountered in identifying critical roles essential for succession planning within Transnet Engineering.

The study found that identifying critical roles within Transnet Engineering presents several challenges. The rapidly changing technological landscape is one of the foremost challenges. Transnet Engineering operates in an environment that sees continuous advancements in technology, such as automation, artificial intelligence, and digitalisation. These technologies are altering how engineering processes are conducted. For instance, the introduction of smart manufacturing systems requires employees who can manage, interpret, and maintain these advanced technologies. As technology evolves, so do the skills needed; thus, roles that were previously considered crucial may become obsolete, while new roles emerge. This constant change complicates the identification of essential functions within the organisation, as it requires ongoing assessments of employee skills and technological relevance (Weller & Hart, 2020).

The study found that Transnet Engineering encompasses a diverse range of functions, including maintenance, production, and logistics. Each of these areas has distinct roles that contribute to the company's overall objectives. For example, the maintenance team ensures the longevity of equipment, while the production team focuses on output efficiency. Identifying which roles are crucial across these varied functions demands a nuanced understanding of each area's specific contributions and challenges. This complexity can cloud decision-making processes, making it difficult to prioritise resource allocation and development efforts (Weller & Hart, 2020).

Findings show that that workforce dynamics also play a significant role in the challenges faced by Transnet Engineering. The organisation has to navigate a multi-generational workforce, each with varying expectations, skills, and work styles. Younger employees tend to prioritise flexibility and technological proficiency, while older employees value stability

and experience. This diversity creates tension in defining roles and responsibilities, as expectations may conflict. Additionally, issues related to talent retention and recruitment further complicate this landscape. With skilled professionals in high demand, it becomes challenging for Transnet Engineering to maintain an adequate pipeline of talent for crucial roles (Cameron & Green, 2020).

The study revealed that ongoing organisational changes, such as restructuring or mergers, impact role identification. These changes often lead to shifting priorities and altered strategic goals, necessitating a re-evaluation of roles deemed critical. For instance, during an organisational merger, overlapping functions might lead to role redundancy, while new strategic goals might highlight the importance of previously overlooked positions.

5.3.2 What challenges arise in developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria within Transnet Engineering?

The study found that challenges in developing succession criteria include the diverse skill sets required within Transnet Engineering. The organisation operates in a highly technical field that demands a mix of engineering, management, and operational expertise. As technology continues to evolve rapidly, there is an increasing need for employees to possess not only traditional engineering skills but also skills related to emerging technologies like digital engineering and automation. This diversity necessitates a thorough understanding of which skills are most valuable for future leaders. For instance, if a future technological advancement requires a specific technical skill that is currently underrepresented, identifying and fostering that talent for succession can be particularly challenging.

The study revealed that there are cultural and generational shifts that impact how organisations develop their workforce. With employees spanning multiple generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and even Generation Z, differences in work values and expectations can complicate succession planning. Younger generations often seek flexibility, work-life balance, and a sense of purpose in their roles, which might differ from the views held by older employees (Carter & McKinley, 2021). This generational gap can create challenges in aligning the leadership qualities needed with the expectations of potential successors. For example, the study found that while a traditional leader might focus

mainly on operational results, a Millennial successor prioritises team engagement and sustainability.

Additionally, the study found that establishing an effective assessment process is crucial yet challenging. This process must not only evaluate technical skills but also consider leadership qualities, teamwork, and cultural fit within the organisation. Inadequate and different assessment methods lead to promoting individuals who are not suited for leadership roles, thereby affecting the organisation's performance. Regularly updating assessment criteria to reflect the dynamic needs of the industry is essential but can be resource intensive. The study also revealed that external market pressures, such as economic fluctuations and competition, impose additional challenges on succession planning. Transnet Engineering must remain agile and responsive to these external factors, which can affect talent acquisition and retention strategies. The fluctuating demand for transportation infrastructure development leads to uncertainties in workforce continuity, making it difficult to ensure that a robust pool of successors is always available (Wang, Zhao & Liu, 2021).

5.3.3 To analyse the challenges related to assessing employees' readiness, capability, and potential for leadership succession.

The study found that assessing employees within Transnet Engineering presents various challenges. One of the main challenges is the diversity of skills and expertise among employees. Transnet Engineering employs a wide range of professionals, from engineers to technicians, each possessing different qualifications, experiences, and capabilities. This diverse skill set complicates the assessment process; as standard evaluation criteria may not accurately reflect the contributions of employees in different roles. For instance, assessing a seasoned engineer alongside a recent graduate using the same metrics may lead to unfair evaluations, as the experienced employee may outperform the novice in areas that are not critical to entry-level performance. Adapting assessment methods to account for this diversity is essential but also poses a logistical challenge for management (Rothwell, 2021).

Findings show that the nature of performance assessments within the organisation introduces additional complications. Traditional evaluation methods at Transnet Engineering often rely on set metrics that may not align with the dynamic work environment typical of engineering sectors. In times of project-based work, where collaboration and adaptability are crucial, rigid performance metrics fail to capture an employee's true contributions and potential.

Consequently, Transnet Engineering must embrace more holistic and flexible evaluation methods, such as 360-degree feedback or continuous performance appraisals, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of employee performance over time. Additionally, the study found that rapid changes in technology pose significant challenges to assessing employees at Transnet Engineering. With the fast-paced evolution of engineering tools and techniques, employees must continually upgrade their skills. This necessity for ongoing learning can complicate performance assessments, as the standards for evaluation are continually shifting. For example, an employee proficient in a certain software quickly becomes obsolete if a new technology is adopted. Consequently, assessments must not only reflect current competencies but also encourage adaptability and lifelong learning among employees (Lee, 2023).

5.3.4 To investigate the barriers that hinder effective planning and facilitation of employee growth and professional development in preparation for leadership transitions.

The study can safely conclude that Transnet Engineering faces challenges of devising effective plans for employee growth within the organisation. Firstly, Transnet Engineering operates within a diverse workforce characterised by various cultural backgrounds, skills, and experiences. This diversity can be a double-edged sword; while it fosters innovation and creativity, it also presents challenges in developing comprehensive growth plans that cater to all employees. For instance, employees from different backgrounds may have varying expectations regarding career advancement, training opportunities, and work-life balance. This necessitates a tailored approach to development programs, which can be resource-intensive. Crafting initiatives that are effective for all employees means acknowledging these differences and developing customised solutions that promote inclusivity while also aligning with organisational goals (Rothwell, 2021).

The study shows that employee retention poses a significant challenge. In recent years, businesses across various sectors, including engineering, have faced high turnover rates due to improved job prospects elsewhere. For Transnet Engineering, retaining skilled employees is crucial for maintaining operational efficiency and institutional knowledge. Employees are more likely to leave if they feel that there are limited opportunities for growth or if their contributions are not valued. This emphasises the need for growth plans that not only focus on skill enhancement but also foster a sense of belonging and purpose within the organisation. Implementing mentorship programs, regular feedback mechanisms and clear

pathways for advancement can be effective strategies to enhance employee retention (Thompson & Goldstein, 2020).

The study also found that the external economic environment significantly impacts Transnet Engineering's ability to implement growth plans. Economic fluctuations, supply chain disruptions, and global competition can hinder the organisation's capacity to invest in employee development. Transnet Engineering faces the challenge of navigating these challenges while still committing to its workforce's growth. Finding ways to leverage technology, such as online training and digital resources, can help alleviate some financial pressures while providing continuous learning opportunities for employees (Adams, 2021).

5.3.5 To evaluate the organisational and cultural factors that affect the nurturing and development of potential successors

The study shows that nurturing potential successors within Transnet Engineering poses several challenges that are critical to the organisation's sustainability and future growth. The challenge includes training and development are foundational elements in nurturing potential successors. Transnet Engineering operates in a highly technical environment, where specific skills and knowledge are essential for effective performance. A major challenge is the need for tailored training programs that not only equip individuals with the necessary skills but also align with the unique demands of the organisation. For instance, technical training must integrate both engineering principles and Transnet's operational standards. However, the investment in time and resources for these programs can strain budgets, especially in a constantly evolving industry. Ensuring that training programs are current and relevant is vital, yet difficult, as technology and market requirements change rapidly (Thompson & Goldstein, 2020).

The study indicates that organisational culture significantly influences the success of succession planning within Transnet Engineering. A culture that fosters openness, mentorship, and collaboration can encourage employees to aspire to leadership roles. However, since the existing culture is hierarchical and resistant to change, it stifles potential leaders. In recent years, Transnet had to navigate challenges such as resistance to new ideas and inadequate communication among teams. This discourages younger employees from taking initiative or seeking leadership roles, ultimately impacting the effectiveness of succession planning efforts. Thus, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment is

crucial for nurturing potential successors (Adams, 2021). In agreement with the idea above, Thompson and Goldstein (2020) said that the competitive landscape also poses challenges to developing future leaders. The transportation and engineering sectors are characterised by rapid changes and intense competition. As other companies adopt innovative technologies and practices, Transnet Engineering must ensure that its successors are not only skilled but also adaptable to shifting market demands. A relentless focus on cost efficiency can sometimes overshadow the importance of leadership development, leading to a short-term mindset that undermines long-term succession efforts. For instance, if management prioritises immediate operational efficiency over investing in leadership capabilities, they risk a shortage of qualified successors in the future.

5.3.6 To assess the challenges associated with regularly reviewing, monitoring, and updating succession plans to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

The study shows that succession planning is an essential strategy for organisations Transnet Engineering, as it ensures continuity and stability in leadership. However, regularly reviewing and modifying the succession plan comes with several challenges. One of the significant challenges is the retention of talent. In a competitive job market, retaining key employees identified as future leaders is imperative for the success of any succession plan. For Transnet Engineering, ensuring that these talented individuals feel valued and engaged is paramount. The organisation struggles to provide clear career pathways, professional development opportunities, and competitive compensation packages. As a result, employees perceive a lack of growth opportunities and feel unrecognised in their current roles, which makes them seek employment elsewhere. For instance, a recent trend in various industries has shown that organisations with effective engagement strategies tend to retain top talent, ultimately strengthening their succession plans (Thompson & Goldstein, 2020).

The study also shows that resistance to change is one of the challenges faced by Transnet Engineering. Succession planning often requires a cultural shift within an organisation, as it can involve introducing new ideas, leadership styles, or operational processes. Employees accustomed to the status quo may resist these changes, fearing uncertainty about their roles, responsibilities, and the organisation's future direction. At Transnet Engineering, there are measures of fostering a culture that embraces change, which is vital. Leaders do not communicate the benefits of succession planning clearly and do not involve employees in the process to mitigate resistance. There is a lack of teams engaging in discussions around

potential changes, and soliciting their feedback can help build ownership and reduce apprehension regarding the succession plan.

The study found that external factors also significantly impact reviewing and modifying the succession plan. Economic fluctuations, technological advancements, and changes in industry standards can all necessitate adjustments in succession strategies. For instance, with the advent of automation and digital technologies, Transnet Engineering does not effectively prepare its workforce for new skills and competencies. This means that succession planning cannot be a static exercise but must consider these external shifts and incorporate flexibility to adjust accordingly (Syed & Kramar, 2023). Organisations such as Transnet must continuously assess their external environment to ensure their succession plans remain relevant and effective.

5.4 Policy recommendations

- Transnet Engineering should consider policy recommendations, such as conducting a comprehensive role analysis to identify critical functions accurately. Implementing a robust framework for succession criteria encompassing technical and soft skills can enhance the selection process.
- Additionally, adopting diverse assessment methods, including 360-degree feedback and peer reviews, can provide a more holistic view of employee performance.
- Finally, establishing mentorship programs and continuous training initiatives can facilitate long-term growth for potential successors, ensuring that the organisation is well-prepared for future leadership needs. Regularly engaging employees in discussions about their career goals can also foster a culture of growth and alignment with the company's vision. These strategies will support Transnet Engineering's commitment to developing a resilient and capable workforce.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

- Future research at Transnet Engineering should focus on developing flexible frameworks for identifying critical roles and succession criteria that adapt to industry changes.
- There is a need to investigate best practices within similar organisations that could inform processes, ensuring they remain relevant.

- Additionally, there is a need to conduct research on effective assessment techniques that can predict leadership potential while considering individual growth, which will provide valuable insights. Understanding the impact of organisational culture on succession planning will also be pivotal in fostering a supportive environment for mentorship and growth.

5.6 Conclusion

The shows that succession planning is vital for organisations like Transnet Engineering to remain stable and effective in an increasingly competitive landscape. However, Transnet Engineering is facing succession planning problems. This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations regarding succession planning at Transnet Engineering in Durban, as well as the associated challenges. Additionally, this chapter provides recommendations for Transnet Engineering to improve the effectiveness of its succession plan and address the challenges that are currently being faced.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GATE KEEPERS LETTER



19 August 2024

Merebank Durban
4052

Email: thabi.qaqane@transnet.net

Dear Thabile Qaqane

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at Transnet SOC Limited

Your email of request for permission to conduct research at Transnet on "An Assessment Of The Challenges To Succession Planning At Transnet Engineering: A Case Study of Transnet Engineering, Durban" 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 name of University of KwaZulu-Natal 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 performance of the Transnet Strategy.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Itumeleng Matsheka
Chief of People Management & Learning
Transnet SOC LTD
Date: 22/08/2024

Transnet SOC Ltd
Registration Number
1990/000900/30

138 Eloff Street
Braamfontein
JOHANNESBURG
2000

P.O. Box 72501
Parkview, Johannesburg
South Africa, 2122

Directors: A Sangqu (Chairperson) C Benjamin R Buthelesi M Debeli B Jija L Letsoelo PS Mufemadi D Patel B Sedupene MP Zambane
M Phillips* (Group Chief Executive) H Makhathini* (Acting Group Chief Financial Officer)
*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

APPENDIX B: COVERING LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS AND CONSENT FORM

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 10 January 2025

Dear Participant

My name is Thabile Qaqane, and I am doing research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards Master's Degree in Management Commerce, College of Law and Management Studies School of Management, Information Technology and Governance.

I am conducting this research to an assessment of the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering in Durban KwaZulu-Natal.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves thirty employees and managers who work at "Transnet Engineering in Durban KwaZulu-Natal. These participants will be carefully chosen according to their managerial and professional backgrounds from each of the nine departments or businesses, one manager and one employee will be chosen. Fifteen managers and fifteen employees of the Durban-based company Transnet Engineering in Durban KwaZulu-Natal.

The aim and purpose of the study is to explore and assess challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering Durban KwaZulu-Natal in order to develop a succession planning framework. As a result, this study will employ a qualitative methodology to examine the research problem of challenges influencing Transnet Engineering's succession planning. If you choose to enroll and remain in the study, the expected duration of your participation is expected to be thirty minutes. The study is not funded.

The study does not involve any risks and/or discomforts, instead it will provide direct benefits as the participants are directly impacted. We hope that the study will contribute to the body of knowledge and help to inform Transnet Strategy.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number _____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher Thabile Qaqane on [REDACTED] /email address 217080499@stu.ukzn.ac.za or researcher's supervisor Prof Thokozani Hzimakwe on 0[REDACTED] /email address nzimakwe@ukzn.ac.za

Alternatively, you may contact University of KwaZulu-Natal 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

Please feel free to express your own views in terms of the research topic by responding to the research questions below. There is no right or wrong answers.
All information will be treated as confidential. You are entitled to your opinions to be shared in this interview. You have the right to withdraw from the study without any consequences.

Participation in this research is voluntary and that participants may withdraw participation at any point, and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. There are no potential consequences to the participant for withdrawal from the study. As a result of participation in the study there are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

The steps will be taken to protect confidentiality of participating in this study, the findings will be used to write the research report for my degree purposes. Data collected will be safely kept and secured with care by the researcher.

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled an assessment of the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering in Durban KwaZulu-Natal.
by Thabile Qaqane.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

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 entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher Thabile Qaqane on [REDACTED] email address
217080499@stu.ukzn.ac.za

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, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

_____ Signature of Participant	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Witness (Where applicable)	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Translator (Where applicable)	_____ Date

APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/GUIDE

WELCOMING REMARKS

I will first greet the participant, introduce myself and then request the participant to do the same, I will present a short presentation related to the topic.

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

My name is Thabile Qaqane, and I am doing research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards Master's Degree in Management Commerce, College of Law and Management Studies School of Management, Information Technology and Governance.

I am conducting this research to assess the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

Please feel free to express your own views in terms of the research topic by responding to the research questions below. There is no right or wrong answers.

All information will be treated as confidential. You are entitled to your opinions to be shared in this interview. You have the right to withdraw from the study without any consequences.

INTERVIEW

What challenges does Transnet Engineering face in identifying critical roles for succession planning?

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What challenges arise in developing comprehensive and transparent succession criteria within Transnet Engineering?

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What are the key challenges associated with assessing employees for succession readiness in Transnet Engineering?

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What are the challenges of devising plans for employees' growth within Transnet Engineering?

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What are the challenges involved in naturing and preparing potential successors within Transnet Engineering?

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What are the challenges encountered in the regular review and modification of succession plan at Transnet?

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CLOSING REMARKS

Thank you very much for your contribution today. Are there any last comments that anyone would like to raise?

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



14 January 2025

Thabile Nomusa Qaqane (217080499)
School of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear TN Qaqane,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00008098/2024
Project title: An assessment of the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 12 December 2024 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 14 January 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,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)
/nng

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

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

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Hlware College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX E: EDITING LETTER

Ricky Woods Academic Editing Services

Formatting Certificate

Ricky Woods Academic Editing Services

Cell: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Formatting of Master's Dissertation

I, Marietjie Alfreda Woods, hereby certify that I have completed the formatting of the dissertation: **An assessment of the challenges to succession planning at Transnet Engineering by Thabile Qaqane** This service included the following:

- Pagination and spacing
- Checking of heading styles and captions
- Creation of an automated Table of Contents and Lists of Figures and Tables.

Name of Editor: Marietjie Alfreda (Ricky) Woods

Qualifications: BA (Hons) (Wits); Copy-editing and Proofreading (UCT); Editing Principles and Practice (UP); Accredited Text Editor (English) (PEG)

12 March 2025



Ricky Woods
Full Member
Accredited Text Editor (English)

Membership number: WOO003
Membership year: March 2024 to February 2025

<https://rickywoods604.wixsite.com/website>

www.editors.org.za