

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at  
a multinational organisation, South Africa**

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the degree of MBA**

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## DECLARATION

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ATO	-	Air Traffic Organisation
ATO-SPP	-	Air Traffic Organisation Succession Planning Program
BEE	-	Black Economic Empowerment
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
EQ	-	Emotional Quotient
GM	-	General Management
HR	-	Human Resources
HRM	-	Human Resource Management
HCM	-	Human Capital Management
IQ	-	Intelligence quotient
KM	-	Knowledge management
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
KPIs	-	Key Performance Indicators
MNC	-	Multi-National Companies
MTEC	-	Motorola Training and Education Center
QC	-	Quality Control
R&D	-	Research and Development
SAPMA	-	South African Paint Manufacturers Association
UKZN	-	University of KwaZulu-Natal

## ABSTRACT

This study explored succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The objectives were focused on determining the understanding of succession planning, examining the importance of succession planning, identifying challenges in implementing succession planning, and identifying ways to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The qualitative research approach was employed, using purposeful sampling to select the participants from the four relevant business units in the organisation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fourteen key laboratory staff ranging from the Head of Technical to the Research and Development technician. Thematic analysis and NVIVO 20 are employed, and tools including word cloud, tree map, cluster analysis, hierarchy chart, and word tree were used for the data analysis. The study emphasised the importance of succession planning, which involves selecting suitable successors, sharing knowledge, and ensuring continuity. Succession planning was also perceived to support staff growth and development, as well as to complement career development. The current status of succession planning is that the organisation lacked formal succession planning, despite discussions and assessments. However, some participants felt that some progress was being made and experienced personal growth, and that succession planning was slowly emerging but was not formalised. Succession planning was found to be linked to employee development; skills and qualities; performance; the organisation; and the graduate program. Participants highlighted that the challenges in implementing succession planning included ineffective succession planning, a lack of employee confidence, and procrastination, which hindered growth and knowledge sharing. Recommendations to improve succession planning included training for staff upskilling and keeping up with global trends. Succession planning should be proactive, with effective governance measures, a clear vision, and a succession policy in place. The study only drew on interviews with a few participants in a division in South Africa. The study findings thus cannot be generalised. Future research could involve a quantitative study on succession planning in the technical laboratories, as well as examining the challenges in implementing succession planning in the organisation. Another study could investigate succession planning in all global laboratories in the organisation.

Keywords: Succession planning, knowledge, training, opportunity, talent, candidate selection

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## **CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

An organisation must have the ability to hire top talent (Baporikar, 2021), nurture their talents, and prepare them for jobs that will become more and more demanding during the succession planning process. In addition, Thakur (2022) highlights that an effective workforce development to fulfil the necessary roles is ensured by the active implementation of the planning method. Thus, proactive planning makes it possible for a company to be ready for growth, employee advancements (Wajidi, Saeed, Baig, Rehan & Hussain, 2023), the hiring of qualified candidates (Desarno, Perez, Rivas, Sandate, Reed & Fonseca, 2023; Fadeyi, Oladele, Imhonopi, & Nwachukwu, 2019), and organisational re-design to take advantage of new opportunities.

Globalisation has heightened organisational competition in the modern world. Every firm needs a highly skilled workforce to stay competitive (Malik, 2019; Okeah, 2024) because skilled labour is becoming more and more important to organisations. High employee turnover in a firm is a result of increased employee stress brought on by increased competition. Increased employee turnover and shortages of trained labour pose crucial issues for firms' ability to thrive in the future (Zafar & Akhtar, 2020).

This study is a qualitative study that explores succession planning in the technical laboratories (Research and Development and Quality Control) at a multinational organisation, South Africa to determine the overall understanding and importance of succession planning in the four business units of the organisation. The laboratory workers approaching retirement age have priceless expertise. The workforce of today is more ephemeral, shifting from job to job for opportunities, sharing expertise, and providing answers to how-and-why-questions in the workplace, hence the laboratory environment will be more complex than ever. For quality continuity (Mans-Kemp & Flangen, 2022), succession planning, and knowledge transfer is encouraged by Warning (2023).

Succession planning aids in the development and retention (Umesi, 2022) of employees at all levels and companies that do not have a succession strategy risk losing key employees (Perrenoud, 2020). There will be no need to start from scratch if a succession plan is in place, according to Bano, Omar and Ismail (2021). In diverse types of organisations with distinct occupations, responsibilities, and cultures, the method, steps of execution, and elements that influence or are affected by succession planning must be examined (Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011b). With effective recruitment and selection, succession planning can be achieved and then monitored by talent management, leadership development, and employee retention (Ahsan, 2018). Succession planning is a business strategy that has attracted much attention in all

companies due to the high demand for knowledge retention and the lack of trained labour (Bano, Omar & Ismail, 2022).

The purpose of succession planning, regardless of the situation, is to combine an organisation's business strategy with its human resources to maximise the value of potential candidates for a position's succession (Philip, 2020). Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011b), mentions that the main objectives of succession planning are the development of employees (Rothwell, 2010) to raise their managerial control; reducing the timeframe it takes to fill positions; identifying extraordinary prospective employees (Olatunji, Abimbola, Richard & Samuel, 2020) and providing them with a development plan (Susanto & Parmenas, 2021); and alluring and retaining highly competent individuals (Bano, Omar & Ismail, 2024).

Chapter 1, the introduction to the study, outlines the study organisation, the background, the rationale for the study, aim, objectives, research questions, the research methodology, and structure of the dissertation.

## **1.2 The study background**

### **1.2.1 The study organisation**

The multinational organisation in South Africa creates, manufactures, and distributes products in 68 countries across the globe. Their construction and technical solutions are an important component of their current and future business goals. The technical laboratories of four business units of the multinational organisation in South Africa participated in this study and is described below.

***Business unit 1*** – has been manufacturing bitumen for the roads industry, later diversifying into waterproofing, flooring, and general construction products, and is a well-known brand in the construction industry throughout South Africa for the past 90 years.

***Business unit 2*** - is the world's largest industrial mortar maker, with a comprehensive variety of products produced with modern formulation technology to meet the most stringent technical specifications.

***Business unit 3*** - In 1929, business unit 3 was introduced to South Africa by the British Plaster Board Limited (BPB). BPB opened the first plasterboard mill in the United Kingdom approximately 100 years ago.

**Business unit 4** - is a world leader in high-performance insulation for residential, commercial, and industrial buildings, and is the market leader in sustainable insulation solutions in South Africa, with over 55 years of local experienced.

### **1.2.2 Rationale of the study**

In 2021, a key and critical employee (Senior Development Chemist) of the Research and Development laboratory at one of the technical laboratories at the multinational organisation, South Africa took early retirement. The multinational organisation had taken over this business unit in 2022. This incident happened a year before the take-over. The employee had five years left for retirement but decided to take early retirement due to personal reasons. The employee was well-known in the construction industry, serving the business unit for 32 years, and was deeply knowledgeable and well-respected by colleagues. The human assets (Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011b) of an organisation are crucial to its survival (Bano *et al.*, 2021).

The technical skills for research and development in the construction sector are limited and there was a lack of succession planning for the employee. This meant that there was no suitable technically skilled candidate, both externally and internally, that could be acquired to fill the position immediately. Management then decided to groom an internal employee from the technical laboratory into the position with technical training and mentoring. According to Bano *et al.*, (2021) an emergency succession plan (Rothwell, 2011) can quickly fill empty roles with minimal disruption to the organisation. However, this placed the promoted employee under enormous pressure to learn as much as possible from the retiring employee in a limited space of time. Apart from not having a successor, most of the knowledge gained over the years by the senior development chemist would be lost, which was invaluable knowledge acquired by the senior development chemist through 32 years of experience in the technical laboratory.

### **1.2.3 The significance of the study**

The research study will inform the organisation of the importance, understanding, and challenges the laboratories face on succession planning. The study will highlight recommendations on how the organisation can move forward on succession planning. To improve employees' knowledge (Gabriel, Biriowu & Dagogo, 2020), expertise, abilities, and proficiencies to face the difficulties produced by rough situations, organisations must consider succession planning and management (Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011b). The multinational organisation in South Africa is committed to talent management, which is a critical goal for the group strategy, and career development programs that lead employees into succession planning for key and critical positions. Succession

planning for technically skilled employees is important in all technical laboratories, which needs to be more adaptable to any sudden unforeseen changes.

The scenario above demonstrated that there was minimal succession planning and/or talent management and/or career development at one of the technical laboratories in the organisation, which led to a lack of skilled technical labour such as Chemists. The Department of Home Affairs in South Africa has listed the following technical jobs in the critical list for South Africa: (i) Chemist, (ii) Research and Development Manager, (iii) Chemistry Technician, and (iv) Project Manager (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). Organisations in South Africa must ensure that employees on the critical list are retained, and that proper succession planning is in place to prevent a shortage of these employees in the organisations.

According to Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011b) the environment today is fluctuating so rapidly that businesses are dealing with a great deal of irregularity and ambiguity, which can lead to business processes becoming unbalanced. In this uncertain environment, businesses must count on their most cherished asset their workforce (Malik, 2019 & Bano *et al.*, 2021).

### **1.2.2 The responsibilities of the multinational organisation's technical laboratories**

To generate scientific knowledge, it is imperative to increase the talent pool available and build scientific cadres since this produces the diversity of knowledge and expertise required to produce sustainable innovation. A vital seed for the development of unique and complex technological knowledge is investing in the training and development of professional talent and R&D personnel who have the curiosity to study new ideas (Sarpong, Boakye, Ofosu & Botchie, 2023). Quality control is a method or group of methods used to ensure that a service or product adheres to a specified set of quality criteria or fulfills the needs of the client or customer. The development of the manufacturing companies' products is positively impacted by quality planning, and the quality assurance of the chosen manufacturing companies is positively impacted by training (Chigozie & Chijioke, 2015).

The responsibilities of the technical department are described below, showing the value of the department to the multinational organisation, South Africa.

- The research and development laboratory is responsible for, new product development (developing new products for the company to ensure a competitive advantage); product optimisation (optimising existing products to improve performance and minimise customer complaints); raw material evaluation (evaluation of cheaper raw materials or alternate raw materials to provide cost-saving and the rationalisation of raw materials); formulation issue

and maintenance; production troubleshooting; drawing up technical data sheets and safety data sheets of products; and the investigation of customer complaints.

- The quality control laboratory is responsible for the daily testing of all manufactured batches to specification; testing of incoming raw materials; troubleshooting production batches to ensure that batches are in the specification, and the issue of the certificate of analysis for manufactured products.

The above responsibilities show the importance of the technical laboratories to the organisation and why retaining the knowledge and ensuring the succession planning of technical employees is key for the organisation.

### **1.3 The problem statement**

There were insufficient guidelines and implementation of succession planning for the technical laboratory at one of the business units at the multinational organisation, South Africa. This posed a challenge to the organisation as the position of Senior Development Chemist could not be filled immediately by a suitable candidate. Spending many years and hours in the laboratory on the bench makes one a ‘laboratory encyclopaedia’. One has thus gained immense knowledge based on experience, knowledge that cannot be found in any textbook or degree. This experiential knowledge is key and sharing it with fellow developing professionals is vital. The lack of transfer of knowledge and not having a suitable successor is due to inadequate succession planning. It is vital for a succession plan to be in place so that the unique knowledge and skills of the laboratories are not lost, and these unique knowledge and skills are transferred to ensure successful continuity of the technical laboratories.

When an employee leaves an organisation, there is a strong sense of impact, especially for those who are competent and talented and hold important leadership positions. This could result in a backlog of work that could have an impact on both the organisation and the customers, as well as the disruption of organisational continuity (Awadhi & Muslim, 2023). Succession planning can aid in business continuity (Karthik, 2023; Bano *et al.*, 2022; Gabriel *et al.*, 2020). An increase in resignations affected organisations negatively as there was a loss of knowledge. Valuable knowledge had left the organisation and the pool of available knowledge had shrunk (Serenko, 2022; Nyambok & Hongo, 2022).

There are various articles on succession planning on family businesses (Anzagaria, Badu, & Owusu-Manu, 2022; Jideofor, Okeke & Okeke, 2023; Umans, Lybaert, Steijvers & Voordeckers, 2020) and on organisations (Bano *et al.*, 2022; Coffie, Odikro & Turkson, 2022; Desarno *et al.*, 2023) however, there are limited articles of research into the field of succession planning in

technical laboratories in a manufacturing sector which is an area of critical skills. There is limited literature on the importance, challenges, and recommendations for improvement on succession planning in technical laboratories in a manufacturing sector and hence the need to conduct this research was undertaken. The research would add value to the field of succession planning in technical laboratories that have critical skill set.

Planning for succession is crucial for businesses of all sizes and in all sectors. Organisations may boost employee engagement (Desarno *et al.*, 2023) and morale (Okeah, 2024), save recruitment costs (Bano *et al.*, 2022, retain top talent (Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011b), and preserve business continuity with the help of effective succession planning (Bano *et al.*, 2022). Planning for succession also fosters a culture of leadership development and ensures that the company has a diversified talent pool (Karthik, 2023; Olayo, 2019; Desarno *et al.*, 2023; Baporikar, 2021).

## **1.4 The aim, objectives, and research questions**

### **1.4.1 Aim**

The study aims to explore succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.

### **1.4.2 Objectives**

**The objectives of this research are to:**

- Determine the understanding of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Examine the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Identify challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Determine ways to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.

### **1.4.3 Research Questions**

- What is the understanding of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa?
- What is the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa?

- What are the challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa?
- In what ways can succession planning be improved in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa?

## **1.5 Research methodology**

This study on succession planning employed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research comprehends the significance of what individuals or groups attributed to a problem and this study involved semi-structured questions and the data being collected in the participants' environment. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants from the four relevant business units in the organisation for the study. The target population was employees from the technical laboratories: i) the Research and Development (R&D) laboratory and ii) the Quality Control (QC) laboratories of the multinational organisation, South Africa. The participants were invited to participate in the study by email. The semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher on Microsoft Teams with all the participants and the interviews were recorded and transcribed via Microsoft Teams and the data was analysed using thematic analysis.

## **1.6 The structure of the dissertation**

This research comprises six chapters as outlined below:

### **Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 presents an overview of this study and discusses the introduction, background to the study, rationale of the study, problem statement, aim, objectives, research questions, and research methodology.

### **Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature and discusses extant literature and research done on succession planning. This chapter discusses the definition, importance, barriers, steps, and evolution of succession planning. Also discussed is human capital management, 'stability of tenure', and knowledge management.

### **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology and discusses the research method, research approach, aim, objectives, research questions, sampling, interviews, ethical clearance, limitations, data analysis, thematic analysis, and quality framework.

### **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 presents the results and discusses the data collected and the data analysis of this study. The qualitative analysis utilised a thematic approach using NVIVO 20, employing techniques like word cloud, tree map, cluster analysis, hierarchy chart, and word tree to identify themes and sub-themes.

### **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 is a discussion of the results obtained from the analysis of the data. The discussion is based on all the objectives of the study.

### **Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion of this study and discusses the outcome of the study, recommendations, and future recommendations for the research.

### **1.7 Summary**

The lack of transfer of knowledge and not having a suitable successor is due to inadequate succession planning. It is vital for succession planning to be in place so that the unique knowledge and skills of the laboratories are not lost, and the unique knowledge and skills are transferred to ensure the successful continuity of the technical laboratories. Chapter 1 discussed the overview of the study on exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at the multinational organisation, South Africa. The introduction, background to the study, problem statement, aim, objectives, research questions, and research methodology were elucidated. The next chapter provides a literature review on succession planning.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Every organisation is beginning to place high importance on the development of employees for organisational sustainability and business continuity. With the proper personnel, every business, regardless of size, will be able to overcome the obstacles and challenges encountered (Bano *et al.*, 2022). Succession planning provides guidance to employees, keeps the business on track to meet long-standing goals, and eventually aids in the company's achievement (Ahsan, 2018). Career development has a mediating function in succession planning and staff retention. The importance of succession planning for maintaining productive personnel and advancing their careers cannot be overstated (Malokani, Ali, Nazim, Amjad, Hassan, Rani & Ahmad, 2023). It is crucial for organisations seeking success to develop strategic succession plans for the entire organisation because these will support the corporate structure in the competitive business environment. Organisations do lose their highly skilled human resources much more quickly than they can afford to replace them. No organisation, institution, enterprise, or company can survive without succession planning (Okon, Brownson & Uwa, 2023).

Planning for and managing succession does not have to be restricted to management positions or management personnel. An efficient effort at succession planning and management should also consider the requirement for crucial back-ups and personal growth in any line of work, including crucial employees in the professional, technical, sales, clerical, and production ranks. As organisations actively work to create high-performance and high-engagement work environments (Wajidi *et al.*, 2023; Baporikar, 2021) where decision-making is decentralised, leadership is diffused throughout an empowered workforce; proprietary technical knowledge accumulated from many years of experience in one corporate culture is key to doing business; and interpersonal relationships are crucial to working. Hence the need to expand the definition of succession planning and management beyond the management ranks is becoming more important (Rothwell, 2010).

Planning for succession can relate to and help not only multinational corporations but also enhance laboratory operations. Laboratory managers oversee the daily operations and resource management of the laboratory, even though talent management may not have been covered in their previous training. When an organisational change occurs, such as a retirement or career move (Fayol, 1949; Bano *et al.*, 2022), succession planning, or rather succession development, is a proactive process of identifying key leadership and technical positions and re-assigning personnel to the appropriate positions at the appropriate times. In a laboratory, succession development takes place at various levels. It equates to selecting and preparing successors for

every job in a laboratory, from laboratory assistant to research associate to lead scientist to laboratory manager. It supports the ongoing alignment of employee talents with the laboratory's fundamental values, the maintenance of its advantages, and the addressing of its disadvantages (Shynkaruk, 2020).

The previous chapter of this research dealt with the introduction of the study, the aim, and the objectives. This chapter discusses the literature review on succession planning by discussing research that has been conducted on succession planning to provide a more in-depth analysis of the topic. This chapter provides a brief overview of succession planning, which is a broad and diversified topic. This chapter begins with human capital management, employee stability, succession planning, importance, barriers, steps involved in succession planning, replacement planning, technical succession planning, and knowledge management.

## **2.2 Human Capital Management (HCM)**

Human resources management (HRM) has transformed from a functional field to a strategic one, becoming crucial for any organisation's success (Baporikar, 2021). As a result of the shift in the human resource management role from being a purely administrative expert to a strategic partner, employee champion, and change agent, the HRM strategy is now being adapted to the business's strategy, and human resource (HR) managers must be able to provide quality human resources for the business to achieve its goals (Malik, 2019).

Organisations consider the strategic value of their human resources to be their human capital. Human capital refers to an individual's value because of their capacities, knowledge, skills, experiences, and motivation (Mirzaie, Javanmard & Hasankani, 2019). A human resource investment made to boost productivity is known as human capital (Darius, 2022). The value that employees add to businesses is referred to as human capital. It highlights how crucial it is to make strategic investments in human capital by implementing initiatives for engagement, retention, talent management, and learning and development (Wujarso, Saprudin & Dameria, 2021).

Human resources are assets that are hard to trade or imitate, are uncommon, and are suitable, and they give the business a long-term competitive edge (Malik, 2019). Leading businesses in their respective industries are those that can out-perform their competitors and offer competitive advantages. It is vital to keep in mind that if a company cannot compete in a market that is always changing, it will not last or withstand the test of time. The degree to which an organisation may be improved through innovation depends on its human capital's capacity to support a creative environment. The organisation's ability to compete will increase when its human capital is well-developed since its abilities will grow (Darius, 2022). Through good human capital management,

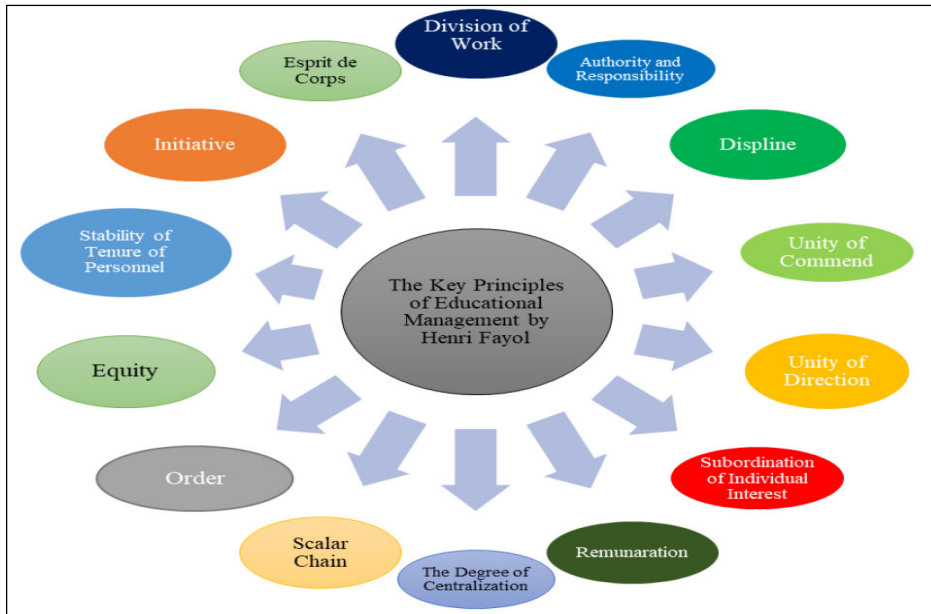
a company can modify its resources to achieve its aims and objectives. Human capital management requires integrating intellectual assets with corporate strategy and quickly adapting to internal and external changes (Hutahayan, 2020).

The criteria on how human capital can contribute to sustainable competitive advantage are: (i) Valuable – based on their diverse skill sets, human capital can create value; (ii) Rare – certain skill sets are rare in South Africa ; (iii) Inimitable – human skills are difficult to imitate; and (iv) Substitutability – when a competitor creates new technology that raises output to a high degree, substitution has occurred (Dodd, Brewster & Holland, 2021). Every person who still wishes to be independent in a competitive environment must develop their minds and skills to be better than others. The simplest approach to achieve this is to embrace constructive actions (behavioural attitudes), increase one's competence, and foster a spirit of literacy. Businesses need to be able to efficiently manage their human resources if they want to be competitive in the face of increasingly fierce competition (Malik, 2019).

When other companies are unable to imitate a value-creating strategy, a business is said to have a sustainable competitive advantage. The resource-based perspective and organisational strategy are key components in gaining a long-term competitive advantage (Dodd *et al.*, 2021). According to the resource-based perspective, a company has a competitive advantage when its resources are more unique or unusual than those of its competitors. Examples of some of these resources include people, data, tangible and intangible assets, brands, and so on (Tuan, Trang & Quan, 2022). Even while internal resources cannot be replaced, they can nonetheless help an organisation's operations. The resource-based model states that an organisation's major resource for increasing competitiveness is effectively managing its workforce (Wujarso *et al.*, 2021).

### **2.3 The importance of employee stability in organisations**

When an organisation adheres to the stability principle, its goals are successfully and efficiently achieved with the greatest possible employee input. Such an organisation's staff members are consistently content, which makes them a productive asset to the business (Okoye, Chukwueloka & Onuigbo, 2022). Fayol's famous 14 points of management in Figure 2.1, which were first stated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are still highly regarded today, states that management is responsible for ensuring the stability of tenure of personnel. If that need is ignored, according to Fayol, crucial posts will be filled by underqualified individuals (Rothwell, 2010). In this philosophy, Fayol explained the need to hire the correct people and train them on the job to keep them around for a long time. This idea is based on the idea that a company needs a reliable team of workers to succeed (Ebere-Chika & Nwankwor, 2023).



**Figure 2. 1: The 14 Management Principles of Henri Fayol**

Source: Ali, Nayan, Sarkar, Kardery & Firminsah (2021:5)

Figure 2.1 demonstrates the 14 principles of management by Henri Fayol. The explanation of ‘Stability of tenure of personnel’ in literature is tabulated below and it shows the importance of employee stability in an organisation.

**Table 2. 1: Understanding employee stability**

Authors	Year	Explanation
Oyibo & Gabriel	2020	“Employees work better if job security and career progress are assured to them. An insecure tenure and a high rate of employee turnover will affect the organisation adversely.” (Oyibo & Gabriel, 2020:224)
Ali <i>et al.</i>	2021	“Staff tenure stability reduces employee turnover and increases productivity in the organisation.” (Ali <i>et al.</i> , 2021:9)
Okoye, Chukwueloka & Onuigbo	2022	The management of the organisation should ensure that there is stability in the job and frequent changes and shuffling of positions should be avoided. When one feels secure at his job, he/she contributes a maximum of his capability towards the organisational objectives (Okoye <i>et al.</i> , 2022).

Source: Developed by researcher

From the literature in Table 2.1, one can deduce that having staff stability leads to low employee turnover, increased productivity in organisations, and job security for employees. Due to

employee commitment to their work activities, individuals who have held roles and positions within an organisation for an extended period have greater influence since they are better able to perform beyond their talents and experiences (Okoye *et al.*, 2022). The length of time a person has worked for a firm can benefit that company's internal human resource management procedures, such as training, talent recruitment/selection, and succession planning (Wang, Attatsitsey, Littrell & Volkova, 2022).

## **2.4 Succession Planning**

### **2.4.1 What is succession planning?**

The process of stabilising employee tenure is succession planning and management, which is possibly best described as any initiative intended to guarantee the ongoing efficiency of a company, division, department, or work group by arranging for the strategic development, replacement, and application of important personnel throughout time (Rothwell, 2010). An organisation's deliberate and methodical attempt to retain and build intellectual and knowledge capital for the future, support individual advancement, and assure leadership continuity in key roles is known as succession planning. Despite the present global economic issues that companies are facing, forward-thinking executives are focused on identifying, cultivating, and keeping the next generation of leaders (Gabriel *et al.*, 2020). Organisational performance and strategic leadership are related, with succession planning serving as a small but important mediator. Therefore, the strength of the link between strategic leadership and organisational performance depends on how much succession planning is influenced by the resources that strategic leadership uses to deploy (Mutungi, Beatrice, Oduor & Truphena, 2023)

Succession planning management attracts competent people into the organisation. However, it requires supplementary organisational resources and necessitates a belief that identifies the value of pools of talents and can integrate succession planning into the organisation's daily operations (Mehrtak, Farzaneh, Habibzadeh, Kamran, Zandian & Mahdavi, 2017). Succession planning is a business strategy that has attracted a lot of attention in all businesses due to the high demand for knowledge retention and the lack of trained labor (Bano *et al.*, 2022). The purpose of succession planning, regardless of the situation, is to combine an organisation's business strategy with its human resources to maximise the value of potential candidates for a position's succession (Philip, 2020). Employing successful succession planning techniques had a significant, favorable impact on employee retention. Additionally, it appears that planning for succession has a significant impact on the work environment, work-life balance, and career growth (Wajidi *et.al.*, 2023).

Succession planning aids in the development and retention of employees at all levels. Companies that do not have a succession strategy risk losing key employees (Perrenoud, 2020). There will be no need to start from scratch if a succession plan is in place (Bano *et al.*, 2021). In diverse types of organisations with distinct occupations, responsibilities, and cultures, the method, steps of execution, and elements that influence or are affected by succession planning must be examined (Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011b). Employees should see themselves as possessors or contestants in the business. Therefore, succession planning should help the organisation flourish. Investment in employees and their development leads to a talent pool, which helps the entire firm through retention. Succession planning allows a business to recognise and advance exceptional persons for upcoming higher-level and wider duties by providing education and determining where people belong (Olayo, 2019).

To assure leadership continuity for an organisation's survival and development, succession planning is a deliberate process of creating a leadership pipeline and a qualified talent pool (Desarno *et al.*, 2023). Since the goal of succession planning in some organisations is to create leaders who can lead the organisation to achieve its goals, it must be in line with strategic planning and organisational goals. The organisation's mission, vision, and values serve as the cornerstone around which the aims of the organisation are created (Chia, Rasak & Ghavifekr, 2023). Ghazali, Ghani and Rahman (2022) illustrated that there are various elements used to describe succession planning, as in Table 2.2.

**Table 2. 2: Elements of succession planning**

The Main Definition Elements	The Elements	References
Succession Planning is a process	Process/activities	Noe et al. (2000), Huang (2001), Conger & Fulmer (2003), Runestad (2014)
	Proactive process	Collins and Collins (2007), Gabour Atwood (2007), Rothwell (2016), Fink & Brayman (2006), Zepeda et al., (2012)
	Systematic process	Garman and Glawe (2004), Rothwell (2010), Adewale et al. (2011), Kim (2012), Davis (2019)
	Deliberate/intentional process	Rothwell (2010), Kim (2012), Weisblat (2018)
	Ongoing process	Dessler (2020), Atwood (2020)
	Forecasting/long term view process	Luna (2012), Davis (2017)
Identifying position	Key positions	Rothwell (2016)
	Key leadership positions	Darvish and Zahra (2014)
	Critical management positions	Orellano & Miller (1997)
	Key roles	Conger & Fulmer (2003)
	Key managerial or professional positions	Adewale et al. (2011)
	Key players	Noe et al. (2000)
For identifying, developing people	Identifying, developing, and retaining	Davis (2017)
	Mentoring, coaching, and grooming	Kim (2012)
	Knowledge transfer	Buckway (2020)

Source: Ghazali *et al.* (2022:46)

Table 2.2 displays the elements of succession planning. However, it is difficult to locate a standardised and widely acknowledged definition of succession planning. A variety of definitions is crucial because it enables one to distinguish between different types of succession and pinpoints the responsibilities involved in succession planning (Ghazali *et al.*,2022).

#### **2.4.2 Replacement planning**

Replacement planning is an emergency process where organisations identify short-term or long-term backups for critical positions, allowing individuals to assume responsibility without guaranteed promotions. This approach can be beneficial for organisations new to systematic succession planning and talent management. (Rothwell, 2011). Firms are shifting away from traditional replacement planning toward a more inclusive strategy that is primarily focused on the growth of internal talent pools. This strategy focuses on managing change and achieving the organisational mission and strategy. Considering this, both succession planning and replacement planning are crucial tactics for any organisation's survival (Suwaidi, Jabben, Stachowicz-Stanush & Webb, 2020).

In addition to helping managers and supervisors establish a talent pool of people who are willing and able to fill roles as needed, succession planning is proactive and future-focused. It is a strategy for meeting the necessary staffing demands of an organisation or department, concentrating on the quality of the candidates by addressing competencies and skill gaps, rather than just the number of candidates available (Gabriel *et al.*, 2020).

#### **2.4.3 The evolution of succession planning**

Due to organisational configurations changing regularly, employee development to have universal abilities, flexibility, and leadership potential at all organisational levels is extremely important (Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011b). Mehrabani and Mohamad further examined and cited the evolution of succession planning and management from 1950 to 2010 as illustrated in Table 2.3.

**Table 2. 3: The evolution of succession planning (1950s to 2009)**

Year	Contribution
1950 and 1959	Research on succession planning focused on management development or chief executive officer (CEO) succession.
1960 to 1969	The research concentrated on succession planning and organizational profitability.
1970 to 1979	Research in succession planning looked at human resource requirements to accomplish organizational goals
1980 to 1989	Researchers looked at how businesses meet the goals of succession/replacement planning programs.
1990 to 1999	Most organizations have recognized the need for succession planning and have implemented effective succession planning that is tailored to their specific needs.
2000 to 2009	The research advocated that strategic planning should include leadership development and succession planning.

Source: Constructed from Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011 b)

Table 2.3 shows the evolution of succession planning, which has evolved from focusing on management development in the 1950s to being part of an organisation’s strategic plan in 2009.

Succession planning has evolved as follows: a) The 1950s—1960s: succession planning emergence, b) The 1970s: Theory Development and Empirical Research on succession planning; c) The 1980s: description of the process of succession planning using review and rapid expansion; and d) The 2000s: Human Resources Planning Strategy integrates with succession planning (Ghazali *et al.*, 2022). Various models, steps, and principles of succession planning have evolved.

#### **2.4.4 The importance of succession planning**

“Changes of personnel are inevitable; age, illness, retirement, death disturb the human make-up of the firm; certain employees are no longer capable of carrying out their duties, while others become fit to assume greater responsibilities” (Fayol, 1949: 39). Succession planning is important in an unexpected event, when a sudden termination of employment, resignation, promotion, unexpected death, or illness makes a position vacant, and organisations must be prepared to fill the vacancy. With the retirement of baby-boomers, there will be an increase in the loss of experience, skills, and knowledge. In this case of expected retirement, organisations must keep track of all their employees who are about to retire. As to whether it is an external or internal successor, recruiting external staff is costly and can cause conflict with internal staff, whereas internal recruiting is easy. Internal recruiting is preferred when there is a specialised or technical

position, and in terms of labour shortage, shortages of skilled labour to fill in critical positions create pressure on many organisations (Bano *et al.*, 2022).

Succession planning and management are important for the following reasons: (i) the organisation's survival depends on having the right people for the right job; (ii) key candidates are identified; (iii) planned succession prevents incumbents from hiring successors similar to themselves; (iv) training and development plans are established; (v) individual job moves and career paths are established; (vi) an inclusive human resource planning system is created; (vii) ensuring current and future talent needs of an organisation by developing talent; and (viii) organisational knowledge management and transfer is preserved (Rothwell, 2010).

Rothwell further analyses the importance of succession planning and management programs as follows: (i) aids in the implementation of the organisation's business strategic plans; (ii) targeting the training, education, and development of employees; (iii) the talent pool of promotable employees is increased; (iv) high-potential workers see an increase in opportunities; (v) the potential of intellectual capital is tapped into; (vi) employees' career plans are realised within the organisation; (vii) the advancement of diverse groups are encouraged; (viii) employee morale increases; (ix) the ability for employees to adapt in a changing environment flourishes; (x) helps organisations cope with the downsizing; and (xi) employees can be terminated with no damage to the organisation.

The benefits of succession planning in a laboratory are: a) Uninterrupted lab operations- not having staff available to operate an instrument may cause a work overload for the laboratory; there will be a delay in sending out results to the customer; and a loss of research advantage. An unbroken workflow and contented co-workers would result from having a succession development program in place; b) Co-worker engagement creates a productive working atmosphere and higher employee retention rates; and c) Collaborative culture means that laboratories would benefit from having a proactive succession development program in place that is focused on leadership development and skill building in both group and individual settings. This would encourage cross-functional cooperation and generate valuable relationships (Shynkaruk, 2020).

According to MacCormack (2022), to ensure that laboratory operations continue, laboratory leadership must create a clear succession plan. As fewer training programs produce too few clinical laboratory specialists in the USA to replace those employees leaving, it is getting harder for laboratories across the country to hire and retain laboratory testing and supervisory workers. Given the higher standards for experience and education for high-complexity testing and supervisory employees, turnover is a considerably more challenging problem for a high-

complexity laboratory. It may be more challenging to find replacements for these employees than for the typical bench worker.

It is also important for succession planning to be transparent to all employees (Rothwell & Prescott, 2023) as shown in Table 2.4

**Table 2. 4 The benefits of transparency in succession planning**

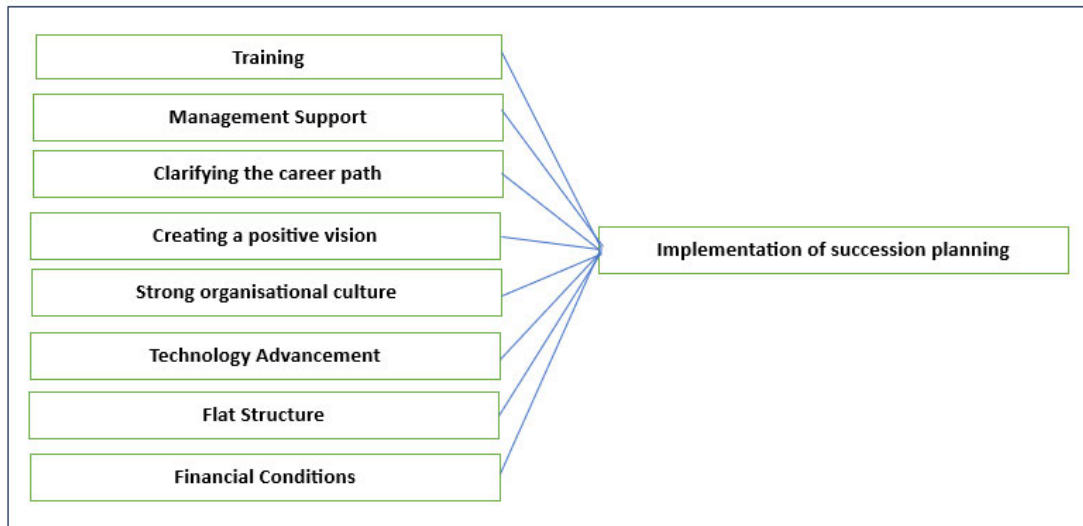
• Increases employee retention because employees are informed and feel valued.
• Encourages employees to discuss potential future positions in the business.
• Helps small businesses retain top performers by creating an environment of trust.
• Demonstrates business stability by letting employees know the company is planning for the future.
• Minimizes rumors, politics, and innuendos.
• Encourages a workplace environment that values open communication.
• Keeps employees apprised of any significant changes that might occur in the future— leadership, compensation, benefit changes, etc.
• Expands employees' comfort level to share ideas.
• Builds employees' trust and loyalty.
• Keeps employees informed about the financial health of the business.

Source: Rothwell and Prescott (2023:65)

Table 2.4 shows the benefits of transparency in succession planning in the organisation. Some of these benefits include increased employee retention, building employee trust, and minimising rumours.

#### **2.4.5 Barriers to succession planning**

As indicated in Figure 2.2, a few aspects influence the application of succession planning, and these aspects act as barriers to the implementation of succession planning (Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011a).



**Figure 2. 2: Factors that affect succession planning**

Source: Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011a:40)

Figure 2.2 shows the factors that affect succession planning, and that the implementation of succession planning is delayed because of the obstacles encountered. The barriers and impediments to succession planning differ between firms and depend on organisational values, strategies, and economic conditions. According to Mehrkat, Farzaneh, Habibzadeh, Kamran, and Mahdavi (2017), job security is another aspect that affects how succession planning is implemented because employees feel intimidated by the chosen candidate. After all, the successor may be more qualified than the employee, and there should always be healthy competition.

In a study conducted by Anzagaria *et al.* (2022), not having succession planning results in the failure of family firms to transition into the future generation. Barriers to succession planning are external barriers, family-related barriers, management-incumbent-related barriers, incumbent-related barriers, management-successor-related barriers, and successor-related barriers. It was found that incumbent-related barriers emerge from the study as the most critical group of barriers hindering the implementation of succession planning due to the owner-manager playing a critical role in the process of succession planning, which involves initiating, controlling, directing, and managing the process. Organisations would be guided by the empirical data that the research provides to pinpoint the leading barriers and assign resources to effectively deal with these barriers (Anzagira, Badu, & Owusu-Manu, 2022).

Michel (2011) found that laboratory CEOs do not develop a succession plan because they are overburdened and understaffed. Developing employees do not get the mentoring and coaching required to step into the CEO position of the pathology laboratory, and some CEOs do not want to do succession planning because it is a threat to their job security. In a study in Bangladesh,

only seven Bangladeshi CEOs, including one woman, currently lead the 62 MNCs (Multinational Companies) present in Bangladesh. With a ratio of around 1:9 overall and 1:61 in terms of women's empowerment, this demonstrates a marked difference in leadership representation. This situation is exacerbated by several issues such as regulatory laxness that encourages corporate malpractice; a leadership style that prioritises one's home country and impedes the adoption of uniform organisational policies; the absence of formal frameworks for developing leaders; profit-focused attitudes; and Bangladeshi citizens' lack of aptitude and willingness to take on more challenging roles (Tanna, Khan, Rahman & Khan, 2023).

In another study (Schiefer, Überwimmer, Füreder & Costa, 2018) management and knowledge, social issues, economic and financial issues, and governance and legislation were obstacles and challenges in business succession in central Europe (Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, & Poland) (Table 2. 5).

**Table 2. 5: Obstacles and challenges with business succession in Central European countries**

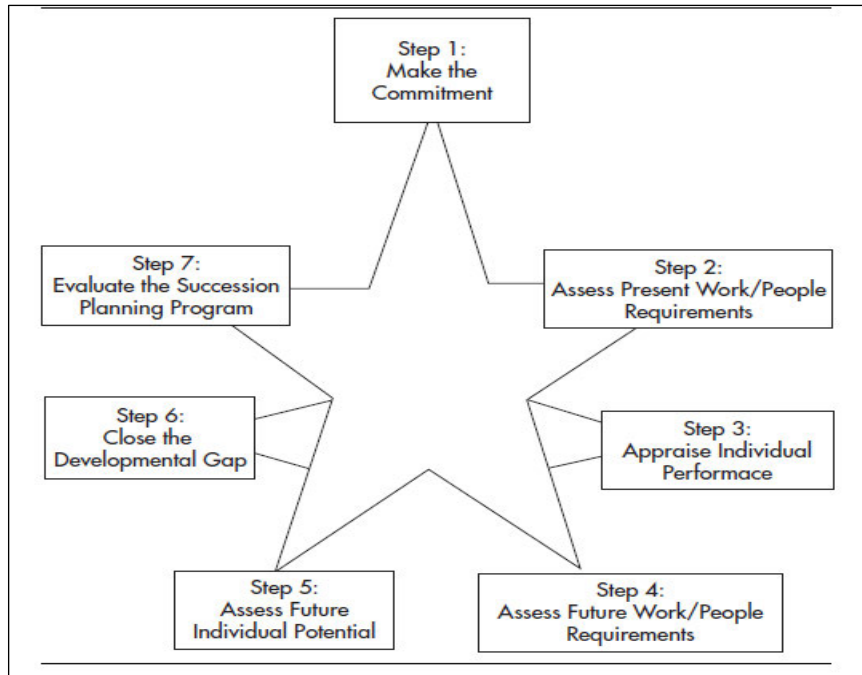
Obstacles & challenges related to ...	AT	CZ	SK	PL
Management/ knowledge	Absence of successor	No available market for succession; no knowledge due to lack of experience	Absence of successor, limited knowledge due to lack of experience	No awareness of the topic; no knowledge due to lack of experience
Social	Lack of communication Wish for more financial support mechanisms	Different values between generations	Problem of "letting go" of the seniors	Different values between generations
Finances		Minor importance	Minor importance	Minor importance
Governance/ legislation	Too many regulations which change frequently	Minor importance	The whole system does not support business succession	Many legislative barriers

Source: Schiefer *et al.*, (2018:289)

Table 2.5 highlights the obstacles in the different regions in Europe. In Poland, there are different values between generations; in Austria, there is an absence of a successor; in Slovakia, there is a problem of 'letting go of the seniors', and in the Czech Republic, there is no knowledge due to a lack of experience.

## 2.5 The steps in succession planning

The implementation of succession planning varies in organisations due to organisational culture, national culture, and the values of top management (Rothwell, 2010). Rothwell devised a seven-pointed star systematic succession planning, which is illustrated in Figure 2.3.



**Figure 2. 3: Seven-pointed model for succession planning**

Source: Rothwell (2010:83)

Figure 2.3 is the seven-pointed star model by Rothwell. The steps serve as the basis for many succession planning programs that are best practices in many businesses. Below are the steps involved in succession planning.

### **2.5.1 Step 1: Make the commitment**

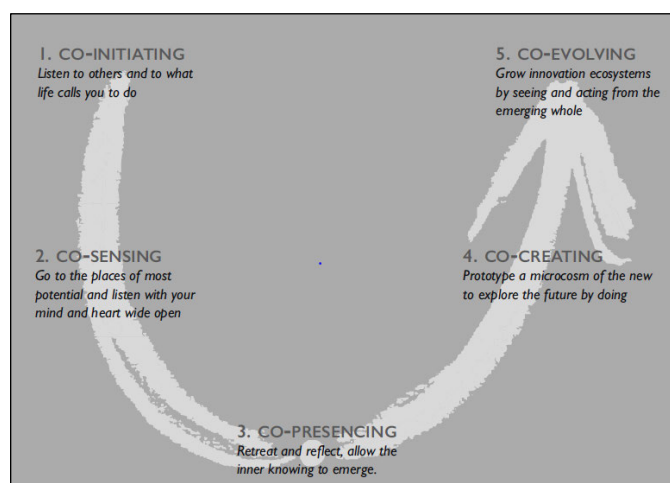
The decision-makers of the organisation ought to commit to and set up a program for methodical succession planning. The decision-makers within the company should: identify current issues and methods; determine; and support the program's necessity; identify the precise succession planning needs of the firm, strategically connect the succession planning program to corporate and human resource plans and create a mission statement for the program.

An example of a succession planning program (FOCUSED) was researched by Jones and Rivers (2021). FOCUSED was the acronym for 'fostering organisational change using structured education and development'. The FOCUSED program was a purposeful and methodical effort to support professional growth and advancement; retain and develop future leaders and assure nursing leadership continuity in important roles. FOCUSED welcomed nurses at all nursing levels. The goal for FOCUSED was to have a waiting list of candidates who are ready to step in when needed as nursing leaders. FOCUSED was intended to assess present effectiveness and leadership potential. The FOCUSED program was not a one-time event. Instead of being decided at random, candidate selection is a collaborative and controlled process, developed to promote professional growth, not just for opportunities for personal advancement (organisational benefit

must be considered); is proactive; developed to develop nursing leadership skills but is not just a job replacement strategy; and is transparent. For nurse leaders who decided to take part in FOCUSED, a 360-degree evaluation and personal growth plan were provided. Mentors were chosen based on objectives and areas that needed improvement. The FOCUSED program reduced nursing leadership turnover and vacancy rates; improved the number of internal candidates hired into leadership positions; and reduced the expenses associated with using temporary leadership employees from outside agencies.

In another study by Marrelli (2022), a succession program in the Air Traffic Organisation (ATO) was researched. The succession planning program (ATO-SPP) had two key goals: (a) create a strong leadership bench for the ATO by locating and training high-potential workers so that they may apply for positions in crucial leadership roles; (b) encourage inclusion and diversity through systematic, unbiased, merit-based talent pool application and selection procedures. The program gave every eligible employee the chance to participate on an equal basis; participation is not contingent on management approval; the program's selection process is organised, unbiased, transparent, and merit-based; every aspect of the program, including the application process, has developmental value; the curriculum is based on the most recent findings in efficient development and successful succession planning; the program aims to increase inclusivity and visibility to senior leaders for all potential and selected participants; and the program's development curriculum is based on the leadership characteristics most essential for success in the target positions.

According to Owolabi and Adeosun (2021), organisations can use the 'Theory U' process by Otto Scharmer (Figure 2.4) to make a change in succession planning possible, and the five movements are co-initiating, co-sensing, co-presencing, co-creating and co-evolving.



**Figure 2. 4: Scharmer's Theory U**

Source: Scharmer (2016:360)

As demonstrated in Figure 2.4, the five movements of Theory U are:

- 1) Co-initiating: With all stakeholders, the organisation sets a common objective for a future event.
- 2) Co-sensing: an organisation recognises the current requirement across all boundaries. At this point, fresh ideas and innovation emerge through a group effort.
- 3) Co-presencing: where the organisation's leadership begins to see the future in terms of succession planning. A futuristic plan lays the groundwork for transformation, propelling a business to its desired destination.
- 4) Co-creating: The organisation's leadership investigates the future and prototypes what it might look like. Instead of focusing on the organisation's current needs, leadership should make succession planning a long-term notion.
- 5) Co-evolving: assists a company in embracing change and implementing succession planning plans in the face of a changing future and contends that the top management group should support succession planning and take action to put it into practice. This model initially sees succession planning as starting shortly and supports the idea of a U process with five motions that can enable transformation.

The five movements in Theory U (Figure 2.4) can assist a company in embracing change, putting succession planning plans into effect, and preparing for the future. The succession planning process is compatible with Scharmer's Theory U and companies that have embraced the principles have soared to new heights and experienced long-lasting effects (Owolabi & Adeosun, 2021).

### **2.5.2 Step 2: Assess present work and people requirements**

Decision-makers should evaluate the current work requirements in key positions; identify key individuals who would be particularly difficult to replace due to their special talents, inside knowledge, or other factors; and clarify where key leadership positions exist in the organisation. Succession candidate factors are categorised into three types, namely profile, competencies, and nature (Luhukay, Goal, Meyliana & Prabowo, 2023).

**Table 2. 6: Categories of succession planning factors**

Categories	Factors
<b>Profile</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Experience</li> <li>2. Psychometrics assessment</li> <li>3. Locations</li> <li>4. Career Expectation</li> <li>5. Geographic and Structural Position</li> <li>6. Educational Background</li> </ol>
<b>Competencies</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowledge of the successor's candidate</li> <li>2. Competencies</li> <li>3. General Reasoning</li> <li>4. Qualification</li> <li>5. Business and Professional Literacy</li> <li>6. Personal Ability</li> <li>7. Networking</li> <li>8. Work Delegation Ability</li> <li>9. Adaptation Ability</li> </ol>
<b>Nature</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Helpfulness</li> <li>2. Enthusiasm</li> <li>3. Work Drive</li> <li>4. Ethical Behaviour</li> <li>5. Service Urgency</li> <li>6. Comfort with Procedures</li> <li>7. Developing Mind Set</li> <li>8. Value Integrity</li> </ol>

Source: Luhukay *et al.*, (2023:1403)

Table 2.6 displays the succession planning factors. The profile category is the background of the succession candidate. The competencies category is the ability of the succession candidate, and the nature category explains the character of the succession candidate.

A good leader must be able to manage themselves, others, and both their own and others' jobs (Kusumastuti, 2018). The competencies of an effective leader are categorised in Table 2.7.

**Table 2. 7: Competencies of a leader**

Dealing with Self	Dealing with People	Dealing with Job
Self Awareness (SA)	Teamwork (TW)	Planning (PL)
Self Management (SM)	Communication (CO)	Execution (EX)
Personal Mastery (PM)	Conflict Management (CM)	Improving Organization (IO)
Adaptability (AD)	Managing People & Coaching (MP)	Managing System (MT)
Creative Thinking (CT)	Self Confidence (SC)	Entrepreneurship (ET)

Source: Kusumastuti (2018:5)

Table 2.7 shows the competencies of the leader, which can be broken down further into candidates meeting all the competency requirements or candidates having the potential and requiring further enhancements. For example, in self-confidence, a candidate can meet the requirements by taking on the challenges of new and difficult tasks. On the other hand, a candidate who has potential would position oneself in scholarly discussions with clarity.

The compatibility of the requirements and the candidates' abilities are shown in Table 2.8.

**Table 2. 8: Requirements of job and individual competency**

Requirements and Individual Competency				
No	Competency	Results of the research on the Job Competency Requirements executive leaders	Examples of assessment results/assessments of leadership candidate competencies	Competency Gap Between Position and Candidate Competency
1	Self Awareness	3	3	0
2	Self Management	3	3	0
3	Personal Mastery	3	3	0
4	Adaptability	3	1	2
5	Creative-Thinking	3	1	2
6	Building Partnership	3	1	2
7	Communication	3	1	2
8	Conflict Management	3	1	2
9	Managing People & Coaching (MP)	3	1	2
10	Self Confidence	3	1	2
11	Planning & Organizing	3	2	1
12	Execution (EX)	3	1	2
13	Improving Organization	3	2	1
14	HE Management	3	3	0
15	Entrepreneurship	3	2	1
Total		45	26	19
% Mismatch 19/45		: 42%		
% Fit (1- % mismatch )		: 58%		
Candidate compatibility with HEIs leadership position is 58 %.				

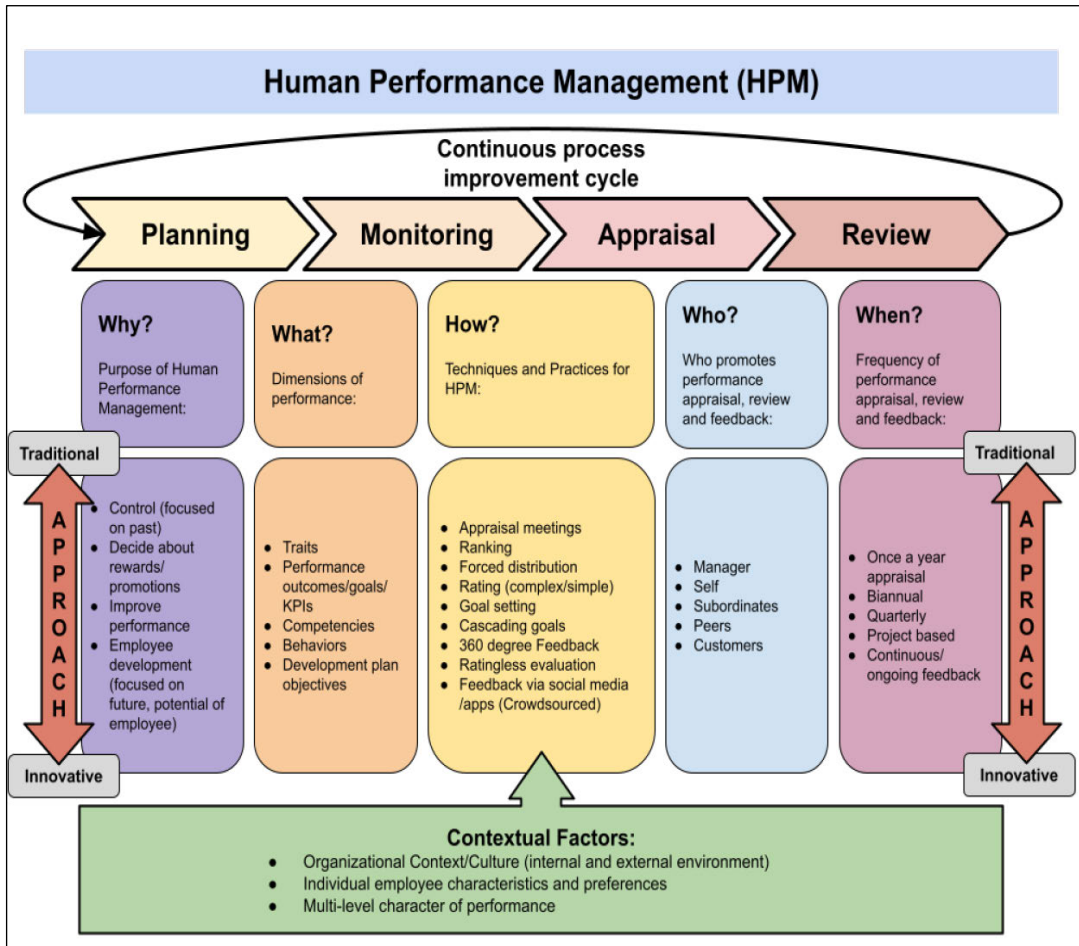
Source: Kusumastuti, Agusiadi, Komariyah and Suhendar (2023:143)

Table 2.8 shows the percentage mismatch of the candidate and the final candidate compatibility percentage to be at 58 percent. Identified competencies are necessary for effective performance on the job, making it crucial to assess them during the hiring process. One's ability to forecast their future performance can be done by looking at their past performance. It is possible to forecast future performance when a person possesses a particular set of abilities (Kusumastuti *et al.*, 2023).

### 2.5.3 Step 3: Appraise individual performance

To be eligible for progression, people must be performing well in their current positions. Managing an employee's performance is one of the critical functions of any organisation (Dodd *et al.*, 2021). The purpose of performance management systems is to educate employees about

the value of advancing business goals and objectives (Ibrahim, Baha & Ibrahim, 2019). Performance management's main objective is to give employees a performance measure for the work they do, whilst fostering higher productivity, motivation, and satisfaction. A complex process encompassing numerous variables, techniques, individuals, and applications is human performance management, as illustrated in Figure 2.5 (Terra, Barros & Barros, 2022).



**Figure 2. 5: Human performance management framework**

Source: Terra *et al.*, (2022:724)

The process of human performance management in Figure 2.5 involves planning, monitoring, appraisal, and review. Annual performance assessments are given by managers who even go as far as to offer rewarding possibilities to each employee who achieves success. This is accomplished by keeping an eye on each employee's performance for a predetermined timeframe, typically for a year. Managers evaluate work results, hold conversations, and improve employee performance. Incentives like promotions, pay raises, bonuses, and new projects can boost employee retention and prevent job search. (Atmaja, Fachrurazi, Abdullah, Fauziah, Zaroni & Yusuf, 2023). The ability to integrate a collection of indicators, including both quantitative and

qualitative data, makes a performance management system an essential tool in operational and strategic management (Lewandowski & Cirella, 2023)

#### 2.5.4 Step 4: Assess future work and people requirements

To connect future job requirements and skills with the organisation's strategic direction, future leaders could then be equipped to deal with shifting demands and corporate strategic goals. For the business, good successors can be sought both internally and externally. Although there are no hard-and-fast guidelines, there are a few crucial factors to remember whether you are hiring from within the organisation or from the outside (Rothwell & Prescott, 2023). The pros and cons of internal and external recruiting are shown in Table 2.9.

**Table 2. 9: The pros and cons of internal and external candidates**

Successor	Pros	Cons
<b>Internal</b>	Proven cultural fit therefore a better chance of gaining trust and acceptance by the individual's colleagues. For family-owned businesses— understands the intricacies of the organization including relationships, roles, and responsibilities between/among family members.	Choosing the wrong internal candidate can anger employees, customers, vendors, etc. The selected individual is not ready or prepared to move into the key leadership position. Employees are familiar with the successor and have a perception of the individual's competencies and skills which may be negative.
	Reduces downtime and lost productivity during the recruitment, onboarding, and assimilation process.	
	Understands organization specific business processes, methodologies, and overall work environment that allows the internal candidate to hit the ground running.	Comfortable and content with the culture, employees, and business as it stands which can stall innovation and fresh ideas
	Promotes employee retention and reduces the costs associated with employee turnover, as well as demonstrates that employees have an opportunity to develop and grow in the business.	
<b>External</b>	Opportunity for fresh ideas, thoughts, and innovation, as well as brings a new perspective to the business.	Longer transition time to learn the intricacies of the business, as well as increased downtime and lost productivity during the recruitment, onboarding, and assimilation processes.
	Can be open to new ways of working and adaptable to change.	
	Current internal potential candidates have insufficient crucial leadership skills for meeting current and future business needs.	
	Organizational expertise is lacking from the current internal candidate pool.	
	Business is intent on making a cultural shift that cannot be accomplished with an internal	

Source: Rothwell and Prescott (2023:54)

Table 2.9 shows the pros and cons of internal and external candidates. In businesses that require an understanding of highly specialised or intricate industry or trade processes or practices, hiring

an inside candidate has many benefits. When internal expertise is insufficient and cannot easily be developed from the current talent pool, external successors should be considered to position the company for long-term success.

### 2.5.5 Step 5: Assess future individual potential

To evaluate future individual potential, the organisation should set up an impartial method or a set of processes. Employee performance appraisals, which are past or present-focused, should not be mistaken for this process's future-focused approach. Most organisations use the performance x potential matrix, which is divided into 9 quadrants, to evaluate employee performance/potential, as shown in Figure 2.6 (Susanto and Parmenas, 2021).

<b>P E R F O R M A N C E</b>	<b>High Professional</b>	<b>Emerging Talent</b>	<b>Top Talent</b>
	Consistently produces exceptional results and high performance ratings. Individuals with highly valued technical/functional skills in their area of expertise; often have deep history of their area and/or the organization. Could assume larger responsibilities but may have chosen career path that leverages expertise rather than moving to broader experiences. 4	Consistently produces exceptional results and receives high performance ratings. Can adapt to new situations and learn new areas. Is promotable in multiple functional/technical areas or general management.	The best talent you have; typically in short supply but high demand. Performs well in almost everything they take on. Learns fast. Transfers learning from one area to another. Gets things done under tight deadlines. Can take on major stretch assignments. Can be promoted or moved laterally into just about any situation. A role model for inspiring and developing people with unique and diverse insights and experiences.
	<b>Highly Valued Contributor</b>	<b>Key Performer</b>	<b>Rising Star</b>
	A valued member of the team. Consistently meets and occasionally exceeds expectations. Knows current job well and could apply knowledge and experience to similar roles within Kraft. A position move would likely be in a similar area. Could progress higher in a specialist role and become a High Professional. Could enhance potential and become a Key Performer.	A valued member of the team. Consistently meets and occasionally exceeds expectations. Understands and knows the current job well and enhances skills for their current job as well as the near term future. Can adapt to new situations and challenges as necessary. Comfortably assumes new jobs and roles and performs well in them in time. Likely promotable a level vertically or could move laterally within the 5 organization.	A valued member of the team. Consistently meets and occasionally exceeds expectations. Has the capacity to take on new and different challenges on a consistent basis. Addresses new challenges and issues with ease. Quickly gets up to speed when taking on a new assignment. Has the potential to make career changes into different situations. Effectively inspires and develops people with unique and diverse insights and experiences.
	<b>Lower Performer</b>	<b>Inconsistent Performer</b>	<b>Emerging Performer</b>
	Is not delivering results as expected and cannot effectively adapt to new and different situations. This is the least valued cell in terms of ROI. Occupants of this cell may require performance action.	(Potential Key Performer) Is a valued contributor with potential but is not meeting performance expectations in current role. May be in the wrong job or a poor fit for the current situation.	(Potential Rising Star) Have the potential to perform exceptionally well, but the actual playing out of the potential is in the future. They may have been inconsistent in the past or may have had one or more significant stumbles recently but still considered to have the potential to be a significant contributor.
	<b>POTENTIAL</b>		

Figure 2. 6: Performance x Potential matrix of employees

Source: Susanto and Parmenas (2021:52)

By using the nine quadrants in Figure 2.6, the employer can identify key performers, emerging performers, top performers, top talent, etc. in the company. Once key candidates are identified, a development plan can be put in place to develop and grow employees to the next level in their career be it a promotion or learning new skills. The 9 Box Grid is a flexible, simple-to-use tool that approaches talent identification holistically (Rothwell & Prescott, 2023).

### **2.5.6 Step 6: Close the developmental gap**

The establishment of a continuous program for leadership development is necessary to prepare future leaders within the organisation. Decision-makers should investigate alternatives to the traditional promotion-from-within strategy to address succession demands. Utilising an organisation's learning culture will aid in attracting, retaining, and developing talent. This will advance the value of a learning culture and benefit the organisation (Srimannarayana, 2019). For businesses to compete with other businesses in a competitive market, they need to ensure that their staff is learning and developing. Knowledge is increasingly being used to gauge competitive performance as it becomes a crucial productivity component (Pangaribuan, Wijayaa, Djamila, Hidayatb & Putrabet, 2020). Organisations are looking for ways to increase the effectiveness of their internal resources. To increase effectiveness, productivity, and profitability, staff members should be able to prioritise learning and development, share knowledge, actively participate in problem-solving, and have a desire to learn and grow sustainably (Eisenberg, Ignatjeva & Ilisko, 2018).

Developing a culture of learning is the foundation of any successful firm. A learning-focused culture is present in high-performance organisations. In high-performance companies, employees four times more frequently share expertise with their peers than in low-performance ones (Srimannarayana, 2019). The most significant predictor of motivation was the organisational learning culture, which also had a favorable impact on the motivation to transfer learning to ensure that the firm's employees are motivated to use the skills they have acquired during training to perform their tasks, the organisation must ensure that the atmosphere in which they work is supportive of this. To satisfy these professions, human resource professionals need to build a culture of knowledge sharing and a successful learning organisation (Pangaribuan *et al.*, 2020).

An example of the development of employees was the Motorola Training and Education Center (MTEC), established in 1980 with a \$40 million initial investment and a particular aspect of Motorola's leadership development strategy. The goal of MTEC was to create and provide training services that aided Motorola's corporate goals. The business invests more than \$150 million yearly in employee training and development. Currently, Motorola mandates that each employee complete at least 40 hours of work-related training and education per year. The

'Building the Business' program at Pepsi, however, differs in that the CEO serves as the program's full-time lead instructor and is assisted by several additional executive professors. The core program idea at Pepsi is straightforward yet effective: A leader's primary duty is to personally develop other leaders. This is crucial at a company where internal candidates fill executive vacancy openings at a rate of 86%. The program only accepts nine executives at a time, and participants are carefully chosen (Ali & Babu, 2015).

### **2.5.7 Step 7: Evaluate the succession planning program**

A constant examination of the succession planning program is necessary to determine how well it is performing. The evaluation's findings should then be applied to uphold a commitment and make ongoing program enhancements. Due to the implementation of the FOCUSED program as previously discussed, nursing leadership turnover and vacancy rates have dropped, internal candidates hired into leadership roles have grown, and expenditures for using interim leadership staff from external agencies have decreased. Nurses at all levels, particularly clinical nurses, state that the performance review process is more relevant now that FOCUSED has been incorporated (Jones & Rivers, 2021).

The evaluation process of the ATO succession planning program entailed: conducting surveys of the applicants selected and not selected for a talent pool; conducting surveys of appropriate employees who chose not to apply; discussions with each succession planning board that decides which applicants to accept; midway through the program, interviews were conducted with pool members and their managers; participant surveys submitted at the end of each workshop; surveys submitted by attendees after leadership-related webinars; discussions after each review session with each member of the Talent Review Committee; Service Unit Leader's surveys and casual conversations with them every quarter; surveying or interviewing participants and their management after the program; discussions with senior leaders during program briefings; surveys conducted via phone or email amongst a sample of participants on a certain issue or occasion; observations made by the program staff regarding how well participants are doing in meeting their development requirements, as well as unofficial remarks made by the participants' managers (Marrelli, 2022). Succession planning is a process over time and not a single event, and various stages are to be completed for the effective implementation of succession planning

## **2.6 Technical succession planning**

Technical succession planning is a form of non-managerial succession planning. In technical succession planning, technical experts possess specialised knowledge that has been gained over the years due to experiences, and that knowledge is vital for the continuity of the operations of

any organisation. Technical succession planning is a form of knowledge management and has the following importance: acknowledges tacit knowledge (knowledge that people carry in their heads); essential in creativity application and productivity improvement; past knowledge is important to deal with the current issues and plans in the future; and the lack of past knowledge in organisations results in re-inventing the wheel. When employees leave organisations, the experienced knowledge is lost when not transferred or captured. This leaves a gap in the organisation as ‘who will remember how to’. Technical succession planning is transmitting information to people at the appropriate time to ensure the continuity of operations and is a foundation to look at providing improvements in the future (Rothwell & Pudoch, 2004).

The transfer of knowledge and skills to the next generation of laboratorians is called succession planning. At times, knowledge in the laboratory is not transferred due to the following: (i) Knowledge Hoarders – Knowledge and skills gained are their job security and are their ‘own property’. To maintain their competence within the organisation, we must allay their fear of losing standing; (ii) Control freaks - know all information and their way of doing a task is the only way and expertise gained may not be shared. The proverb ‘leave your ego at the door’ would be applicable in this situation because knowledge sharing may need to be a two-way street; (iii) Introverts - not comfortable in sharing knowledge and hide as being identified as an introvert. Building a bridge, finding a mentor, or nurturing a connection is necessary so that both parties feel at ease sharing knowledge, and (iv) Organisational politics – prevents knowledge sharing. The experienced individual feels inadequate to train, mentor and teach, and is not adequately compensated (Warning, 2023).

Planning for management succession places a vertical emphasis on the organisational structure. The intention is to get people ready for more serious responsibilities. Long-term attention has been given to management succession. Technical succession planning, however, scans the organisational structure horizontally. The objective is to gradually spread institutional memory from one person to another. It could be crucial for the competitive advantage of some businesses (Rothwell, 2011). Organisations should not take experienced workers for granted as they have the know-how to get the work done, and the sharing of knowledge should be rewarded. Thus, organisations need to promote this culture (Rothwell & Pudoch, 2004). Planning for efficient knowledge transfer (Pane & Christanti, 2023; Bano *et.al*, 2024) and succession ensures that personnel are hired, trained, and ready to take on leadership roles within the organisation, preventing the loss of vital institutional knowledge. Losing the institutional expertise of long-term workers harms respondents' capacity to deliver consistent and appropriate service. Organisations must work harder to ensure that tacit information is passed on (Siewert & Louderback, 2019).

## **2.7 Knowledge management**

People with a variety of abilities are essential for knowledge creation because they can create different information sources, combine theoretical and practical information, and understand how their awareness relates to actual organisational problems (Kaldeen & Nawaz, 2020). Competence, which is comprised of knowledge, skills, and expertise, is the difficult part of human capital. The acquisition of knowledge often involves training, has a theoretical component, and is connected to scientific and technical challenges. The attitude of the worker, which includes job satisfaction and motivation, is the soft component of human capital. Over the next few years, knowledge management will be crucial to the strategic management of human resources. Adopting these concepts now will help organisations be better prepared to deal with future challenges linked to human capital (Mirzaie *et al.*, 2019).

Knowledge is a dynamic blend of facts, insights, wisdom, and values, influenced by circumstances, timing, social interactions, experience acquisition, and effectiveness. The effectiveness of an organisation relies more on its potential for utilizing its human capital than its quantity, requiring the development of essential elements and potential interactions. Three elements determine the human capital's capacity for application, namely a) Employees possess the management, entrepreneurial, and creative talents, as well as knowledge, mental and creative faculties, and problem-solving ability; b) Employees are open to imparting their expertise; and c) This knowledge can be utilised and accepted by the organisation (Trenev, 2018).

Planning and managing each person's career to best suit their requirements and goals helps to increase employee engagement and retention and decrease the intention to quit the organisation. Knowledge management of an organisation's human capital through knowledge exchange and transfer is essential to its success (Desarno *et al.*, 2023). Once employees depart, it is impossible to use their specialised (and mostly tacit) knowledge to develop, integrate and reconfigure internal business processes. Intra-organisational knowledge flows are affected, and there is a negative psychological effect on the remaining employees who are dealing with disappointment, anxiety, and stress and are not willing to share knowledge. One of the ways to overcome the challenges of resignations was to review a universal succession plan for all levels of employees that possess vital organisational knowledge (Serenko, 2022).

## **2.8 Summary**

Succession planning is unquestionably applicable to all levels of employment, and it has been determined that succession planning is not just for top management. Planning for succession is more effective when it is clear to all staff, with transparency in the succession planning process

being ensured. To enhance employee engagement, the human resources department is responsible for communicating the organisation's succession plans. The process of succession planning must be understood by all employees (Bano *et al.*, 2022). This chapter discussed the literature review on succession planning and gave an overview of the definition, evolution, benefits, steps, and importance of knowledge management. The next chapter describes the research methodology of the research study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

A qualitative research approach was taken in this study and semi-structured interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams. Chapter 3 discusses the research methods used in this study, the sampling methods, the interview schedule, the limitations of the study, data collection, data analysis, ethical clearance, thematic analysis, and qualitative techniques.

### **3.2 Research paradigms**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), there are four worldviews/paradigms in research: i) postpositivism – involves empirical observations and measurements with theory verification; ii) constructivism – involves understanding and theory generation; iii) transformative – is political, involves collaboration and is change-oriented; and iv) pragmatism – is problem-centered and real-world practice-oriented. Postpositivism is used for quantitative study and is not suitable for this research. This qualitative study uses a constructivist worldview. In the constructivist worldview, the researcher relies on the participant's view of the topic and interprets the meaning that the participants have on the topic.

There are several assumptions in constructivism: connotations are created when engaging with the world; there is an understanding of the scenery of the participants by gathering data individually; and the method is mostly inductive (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this research the participants were interviewed individually on Microsoft Teams and the researcher ensured that the views of the participants came through. All transcripts from the interviews were verified and interpreted. The data was analysed for themes and subthemes.

### **3.3 Research approach**

According to Muzari, Shava and Shonhiwa (2022), the three theoretical frameworks that serve as the main pillars of qualitative research are phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ethnography. In phenomenology, the researcher must use their own words, or what is known as a voice in the text, to explain the participants' lived experiences richly or densely. To gain a greater understanding of people's way of life, ethnography comprises the observation of individuals in their natural environments. This offers the chance to obtain results that are especially connected to participants in their actual environment, which therefore demonstrates the singularity of such a group. In hermeneutics, the researcher is expected to analyse and interpret data to communicate the findings in detail in the future.

Additionally, Bazen, Barg and Takeshita (2021) describe some of the key qualitative approaches as: i) Grounded Theory – the social behaviour of a group based on spontaneous interactions; ii) Phenomenology – by eliciting and understanding the narrative of its members, one might ascertain the common lived experiences of a community; iii) Ethnography - using the experience of its members, cultural beliefs are identified; iv) Case Study – the experience of a single person or group within its context. This qualitative research study on succession planning is a case study, exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.

The researcher's role in a qualitative study is also very important and a detailed view is provided in Table 3.1.

**Table 3. 1: The researcher’s role in a qualitative study**

Qualitative method	Researcher's role
Phenomenology	The main task of researchers in the phenomenological method is transformation of data to live the experience. They bring individual experiences into words in data collection, and then attempt to understand those experiences based on the statements, and to categorize the themes in the next stage. In the last stage, investigators record the essence in writing, which results in a comprehensive description of the phenomena (6, 15).
Grounded theory	Considering the significance of personal relations in grounded theory, researchers act as a component of daily events and must therefore be completely aware of their values. Since there is no control in this natural field, investigators are not detached from the research process, and ought to be conscious of their prejudices and potential influence on the study. Researchers need to be able to perform data admission and coding concurrently, and should consequently be equipped with proper analysis skills in order to criticize and conduct abstract thinking (16, 17).
Ethnography	In ethnographic studies, researchers function as instruments that understand and analyze the culture. Therefore, ethnographic investigators need to be immersed in the culture and to live among the study population. However, ethnographers have to be notified of their role as research instruments while collecting and analyzing data (18).

Source: Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi and Cheraghi (2014:3)

In Table 3.1, the researcher's role in qualitative research is presented. In phenomenology, the researcher transforms data to live the experience. In grounded theory, the researcher must have analytical skills to conduct abstract thinking, and in ethnography, the researcher functions as an instrument to understand the culture.

### **3.4 Research methods**

#### **3.4.1 Quantitative research**

The premise of quantitative research is that the variables being studied can be measured. The processing of numerical data refers to a set of actions performed to assist researchers in drawing meaning from the data. Usually, the numerical data gathered needs to be analysed. Statistics are used in quantitative data analysis to assist one in making sense of numerical data derived from a sample. In quantitative research, data processing combines meticulous data management methods, statistical understanding, and critical thinking abilities to facilitate interpretation. However, there are challenges involved in processing quantitative research data. Data management requires skilled analysts and can be time-consuming. The quality of the data affects how well the findings turn out (Kotronoulas, Miguel, Dowling, Fernandez-Ortega, Colomer-Lahiguera, Bagcivan, Pape, Drury, Semple, Dieperink, & Papadopoulou, 2023). Quantitative data is generally organised in data sets with data generated from surveys, experiments, or digital tracking apps to detect behaviour. As the number of cases increases, the higher the statistical power (Gross & Goldan, 2023).

#### **3.4.2 Qualitative research**

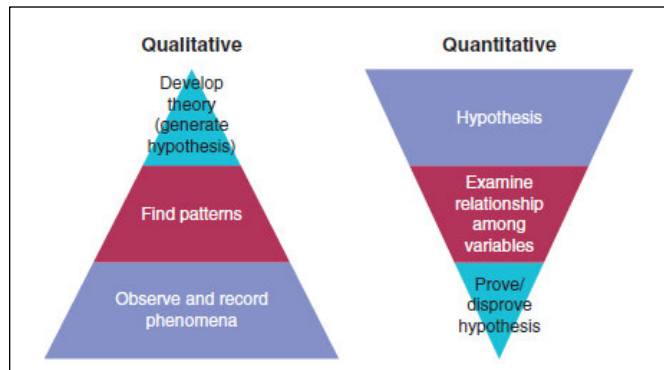
Exploring participants' views on a particular social issue is called qualitative research. It regularly features discussions or interviews that yield non-numerical results. To analyse people's social perceptions, the qualitative study consequently focuses on how individuals interpret and assign meaning to various social activities (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021). As the study of phenomena, qualitative research is specifically appropriate for tackling why something is examined (or not); assessing complex multi-component treatments; and focusing on developing interventions (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020).

By using a qualitative research design, a variation of methodologies and processes are used to explore an individual's experiences, viewpoints, and feelings (Alamri, 2019). Qualitative research has the following advantages: a) realising a thorough explanation of a problem; b) developing better research questions; c) describing the research question or topic from one group of participant's point of view; d) making complex issues simpler; and e) to produce more individualised and thorough data. Qualitative investigations can aid researchers in their efforts to analyse and clarify complicated ideas (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021). The disadvantages of qualitative analysis are: i) results are not generalisable; ii) because participation in interviews is open-ended, the participants have more influence over the information gathered; and iii)

situations, events, settings, and interactions in qualitative research contexts cannot be fully recreated (Muzari *et al.*, 2022).

### 3.4.3 The comparison of quantitative and qualitative research

A comparison of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches is shown in Figure 3.1



**Figure 3.1: Qualitative and quantitative research approaches**

Source: Bazen *et al.* (2021:243)

Figure 3.1 shows how qualitative and quantitative research methods compare visually. The qualitative research method depends on observing and documenting things to produce a theory, or a hypothesis based on patterns or themes. The numerical testing of a predetermined hypothesis is the main emphasis of the quantitative research approach. Further comparisons are shown in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2: Comparison of qualitative and quantitative approaches**

	Qualitative Approach	Quantitative Approach
<b>Methods of reasoning</b>	Inductive	Deductive
<b>Research goal</b>	Generate new findings, development of theories or conceptual understanding	Testing hypotheses, examining the impact of variables on outcomes, statistical significance
<b>Methods to generate data</b>	Interviews, observations, group discussions, etc.	Surveys, experiments, observations, etc.
<b>Data format</b>	Text (words), images, etc.	Datasets (numbers)
<b>Data analysis techniques</b>	Text interpretation, hermeneutic, e.g., grounded theory, phenomenological approaches, narrative analysis, discourse analysis	Techniques mainly based on inferential statistics, multivariate and multi-level modelling
<b># cases</b>	≤ 20, more cases possible but time-consuming to analyze	> 30; the more, the better (statistical power depends on sample and effect size)
<b>Strengths regarding intersectionality perspective</b>	Ability to manage anti-, intra- and intercategory approaches, strong focus on cases with possibility to account for specificities	Strong persuasive power for policy makers, ability to test statistically whether dis-/advantage can be explained by (multiple) group memberships in an additive form,  causal interpretation depending on analytical strategy
<b>Shortcomings regarding intersectionality perspective</b>	Combinations of numerous dimensions cannot be generalised due to limited case numbers and non-representative samples, no causal interpretation possible	Need to oversimplify complex categories such as gender or ethnic background for operationalisation, anti- and intracategorical approach cannot be examined adequately

Source: Gross and Goldan (2023:6 & 7)

Table 3.2 displays the key characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research. Using an inductive process, the qualitative technique connects the case to the pattern to develop theories and a conceptual grasp of the study object. Examples of qualitative data include writings created from interviews, video or photo content, visuals, observations, and more. The quantitative technique works with variables and uses them to evaluate theoretically formulated hypotheses based on inferential statistics (Gross & Goldan, 2023).

The research method chosen for this study was a qualitative case study on exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The researcher chose this approach to get an in-depth analysis of how the participants understand succession planning in their organisation. The importance, challenges, and how succession planning can be improved in the organisation were investigated. The qualitative analysis entailed a thematic approach using NVIVO 20. Techniques inclusive of word cloud, tree map, cluster analysis, hierarchy chart, and word tree were used.

The choice of suitable research methods that improve credibility and reduce researcher bias hangs on having a well-defined, focused research issue that is supported by a solid conceptual framework. When attempting to address the research question, iterative approaches to qualitative data collection and analysis are frequently used (Johnson, Adkins & Chauvin, 2020).

### **3.5 Sampling**

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants for the study. An example of purposeful sampling is criterion sampling, used to construct a comprehensive understanding based on predetermined criteria, which has specific inclusion and exclusion criteria that are clearly stated, and the studies are then analysed (Ames, Glenton & Lewin, 2019). To address the research question, the sampling design is not random but stipulated purposefully to involve suitable persons in suitable situations. Qualitative researchers are aware that several participants are more likely to be richer' with information or insight than others, making them pertinent and valuable in achieving the study's aim (Johnson *et al.*, 2020). The technical laboratories of the multinational organisation, South Africa included: i) the Research and Development (R&D) laboratory and ii) the Quality Control (QC) laboratory. The participants of the research study work in these laboratories and are shown in Table 3.3. The participants were known as P1 to P14, to protect the identity of the participants.

**Table 3. 3: Details of the participants**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Male	Research and Development Manager
Male	Research and Development Manager
Male	Head of R&D
Female	QC Laboratory Supervisor
Female	Research and Development Technician
Male	Research and Development Technician
Male	Research and Development Technician
Female	Research and Development Graduate
Female	Laboratory Technician
Female	Laboratory Technician
Male	Quality Control Technician
Female	Quality Control Technician
Female	Quality Process Technician
Female	Senior Development Chemist

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 3.3 shows that the fourteen study participants were more senior members of the laboratory and included managers, a supervisor, a chemist, a graduate, and technicians from the R&D and QC laboratories. There was a mixture of male and female participants. The exclusion criteria were the laboratory analysts and assistants. The target population was employees from the technical laboratories in Durban, Johannesburg, and Cape Town.

Even though purposeful sampling is a time-consuming process that demands a lot of resources and flexibility from researchers, it offers the chance to develop a rich conceptual model that can be helpful (Benoot, 2016). The selection of the ultimate sample size is mostly based on the ability to gather acceptable pertinent data to achieve data saturation, which occurs when there are no new evidence, coding, or themes obtainable from the data collection. Before claiming that data saturation has been reached, care should be taken to ensure that an adequate amount and quality of data has been gathered (Johnson *et al.*, 2020).

### **3.6 Interviews**

Interviews can be structured (same precise questions), semi-structured (add or omit questions), and unstructured (no guided questions) (Alamri, 2019). Qualitative interviews have the advantage over written surveys of being interactive, which enables the researcher to attend to unexpected issues as they occur (Busetto *et al.*, 2020). Table 3.4 highlights the strengths and weaknesses of interviews.

**Table 3. 4: Strengths and weaknesses of interviews**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Practices controlled data collection procedure.	Interviewer presence affects the participant's behavior and answers.
Provides more comprehensive understanding through triangulation.	Intervention promotes biases among the participants.
Enables the researcher to introspect and reflect on the collected data.	Less reliable data.
The preplanning of the interviews helps the interviewer to guide the session.	Time-consuming in terms of data analysis.
Promotes the researcher to clarify any misgivings related an answer.	Time-consuming in terms of data transcribing.
Better iteration by interaction among the participants and interviewer.	Recalling the previous events or situations.

Source: Alamri (2019:68)

In Table 3.4, the ability to clarify and understand is greatly enhanced by semi-structured interviews. The strengths of the interviews conducted in this research were that the researcher preplanned the interviews and it made the researcher guide the interview sessions, the researcher clarified any misgivings during the interview and conducting of the interviews enabled the researcher to reflect on the data collected. A weakness of the interviews conducted in this research was that it was time consuming to verify the transcriptions and analyse the data which took approximately one month.

The semi-structured interviews in this research study were conducted via Microsoft Teams and were recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interview schedule developed by the researcher (Appendix 4) included the demographic questions of age, race, gender, site location, years of experience, type of laboratory, job title, and the research questions. The demographic questions were for information purposes only. Semi-structured interviewing requires relational focus and facilitation skills, including the study purpose, participant identification, ethical considerations, logistical planning, interview guide development, trust building, conducting, memoing, data analysis, research trustworthiness, and presentation (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

### **3.7 Ethical clearance**

Researchers should prioritise the principle of 'no harm' to participants, being aware of potential harm that may be inflicted on study subjects (Sanjari *et al.*, 2014). In every research project, it is crucial to protect human participants by using the right ethical guidelines. Due to the extensive nature of the study process in a qualitative investigation, ethical questions have a special resonance (Arifin, 2018). Ethical conduct defines how honourable values and beliefs are added to the study process. It is possible to create data of superior quality depending critically on respondents' beliefs of ethical behavior (Johnson *et al.*, 2020). The obligations of researchers toward their participants, audience, society, and academic communities are at the center of ethics. To be sure that they have followed the fundamentals of sound research practices, researchers can consult certain ethical guidelines (Mirza, Bellalem, & Mirza) 2023).

The interviews in this research were done ethically, and ethical permission was acquired from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) (Appendix 1). There was a gatekeeper for the project at the multinational organisation, South Africa. All participants were invited to be part of the research via email. Upon acceptance of the email, interviews were scheduled with the participants. The informed consent form (Appendix 2) was emailed to participants 24 hours before the interview so that they could review and decide if they wanted to participate in the study. Before the interview, the participants signed the informed consent form and emailed it to the researcher. Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, where the participants were comfortable, and all participants were protected from any stress or harm. The individual interviews were conducted in June and July 2023 and the researcher is the only person who can match the recordings and transcriptions with the participants. Confidentiality was preserved by not revealing the names of the participants. The recordings and transcriptions were stored on encrypted devices that are protected. The research data will be kept for five years on the researcher's computer.

The qualitative researcher must guarantee that participants have the freedom to decide whether to participate in the study; to safeguard participants' identities throughout the recruitment and dissemination processes; and encourage readers of the research with straightforward and truthful reporting that is free from misrepresentation (Arifin, 2018).

### **3.8 Data analysis**

The overview of the process of qualitative data analysis is shown in the steps below (Creswell & Creswell, 2018):

Step 1: The information obtained from the study will be arranged in an orderly manner. The data is being prepared for the analysis.

Step 2: Read all information collected and reflect on the meaning of the data.

Step 3: Analyse all information, organise the data, and start coding the data obtained.

Step 4: Produce themes or categories looking at the objectives of the study. The major findings in qualitative research are from the themes produced.

Step 5: Characterise the data into themes and sub-themes.

Thematic analysis evaluates data, involving classifying, tabulating, or otherwise re-combining the data to address the study's main claim. It concentrated on locating, examining, and documenting forms or themes within the gathered data (Coffie *et al.*, 2022). In an inductive or data-driven approach, Byrne (2022) states that an investigator could set up codes that are entirely reflective of the data's content and unbound by any preconceived principles or conceptual frameworks. Xu and Zammit (2020) based their research on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis, as follows:

STEP 1. The researcher must become familiar with the data - initial interaction with the data aided in identifying early themes that were beginning to emerge across the dataset, which prompted more in-depth analysis.

STEP 2. Initial codes are generated – the raw data are reduced to smaller units.

STEP 3. Themes are searched - concerning various codes, a collection of potential themes was developed, along with a miscellaneous theme.

STEP 4. Themes are reviewed – to determine whether the candidate thematic map accurately captures the meanings in the entire dataset, the themes were read, and it was determined that the data extracts appeared to create a consistent theme.

STEP 5. Themes are defined and named - additionally, each theme must be integrated into a larger narrative about the data, with overlap to be avoided. To be clear and precise, the names of each topic were reviewed at this point.

STEP 6. The report produced the data analysis and went on to the write-up phase with a set of completely developed themes.

The following techniques were used in the qualitative analysis of this research study. These techniques provide validity and reliability of the research conducted.

- I. Word cloud - Using the most used terms, a word cloud creates an attractive visual representation that highlights important words in various sizes and colours according to frequency. Any data, including assessment data, is made simple to read and understand when it is organised in a graphical format (DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014). An example of a word cloud is shown in Figure 3.2.



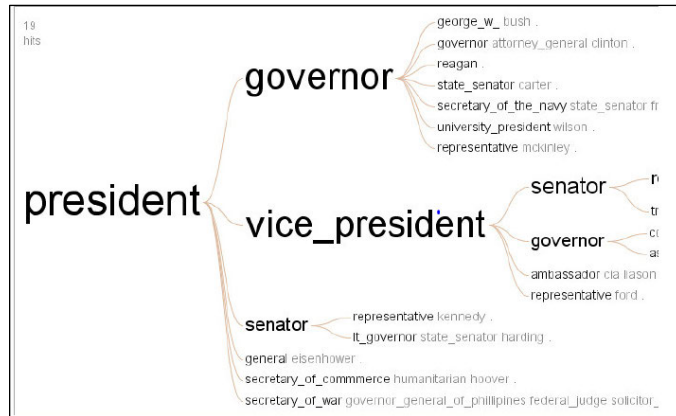


Figure 3. 3: An example of a Word Tree

Source: Wattenberg and Viégas (2008:1226)

### 3.9 The Total Quality Framework

Regardless of the qualitative research method used, the Total Quality Framework is a comprehensive approach that considers every step of the research process. The paradigm is based on the idea that qualitative research, regardless of the method used, ought to be reliable, testable, transparent, and helpful. The four interconnected elements of the framework—credibility, analysability, transparency, and usefulness—are defined by this fundamental knowledge of qualitative research (Roller, 2019).

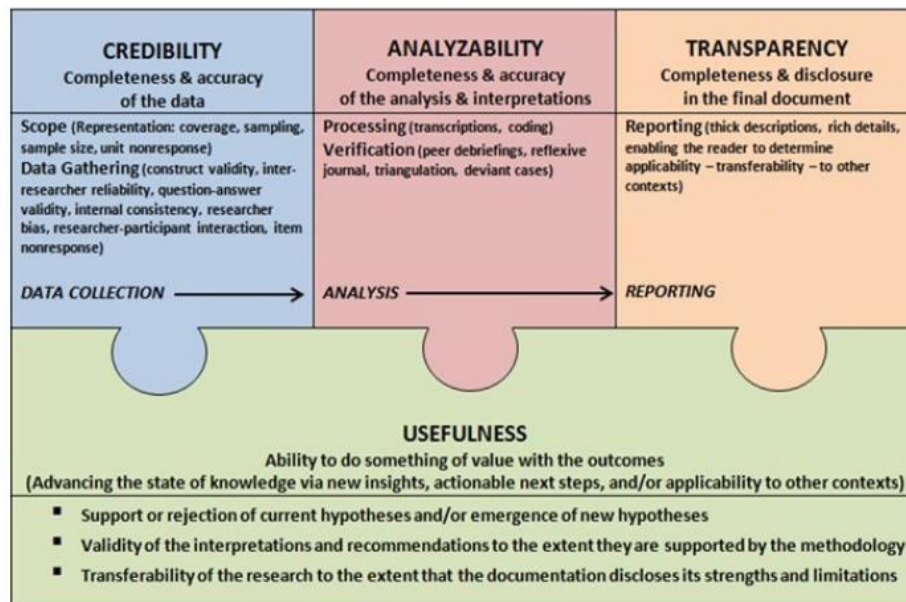


Figure 3. 4: Total Quality Framework

Source: Roller (2019:8)

In Figure 3.4, credibility is the accuracy of the scope and data collected. The scope entails, for example, the sample size and representation. In this study, the sample size was 14, and purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. Data gathering involves, for example, the reliability and validity of the research. In this study, all interviews were done on Microsoft Teams and were recorded and transcribed. From credibility, the research goes into analysability.

Analysability is the accuracy of the processing and the verification of the data. Processing, for example, entails coding and transcriptions. The verifications entail, for example, peer debriefing. In this study, all transcriptions obtained from the interviews were coded and verified using various qualitative techniques. From analysability, the research goes onto transparency.

Transparency is the disclosure of the reporting of the data and enables the researcher to provide completeness and disclosure of the research. In this study, all data analysed were placed into themes and sub-themes.

Usefulness is how the research adds value, having the ability to do something with the outcome of the research. This entails, for example, the rejection of the present hypothesis and the development of a new hypothesis. In this study, a laboratory framework for succession planning was developed by the researcher and presented in Chapter 5. The usefulness of the research is determined by credibility, analysability, and transparency to obtain quality and rigor in qualitative research, decrease the bias, and improve the accuracy and reliability of study findings (Johnson *et al.*, 2020).

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is fundamental to both validity and reliability (Coleman, 2021). The techniques listed below can be used to help ensure rigor in the study design components.

- **Credibility** of the conclusions reached within a research study is validated by various tools that are used to reduce validity threats and improve credibility:
  - Mechanical recording and rich data - The interview transcripts are referred to as ‘rich data’. Using audio or video recording equipment allows for the scrutiny of raw data. Where financially feasible, have the recordings and transcriptions done by an independent professional service provider. In this research study, the researcher conducted the interviews on Microsoft Teams. The interviews were recorded and transcribed to obtain ‘rich data’. The analysis was conducted using Nvivo 20.

- Quasi-statistics - Descriptive numerical data provides a useful supplementary type of evidence to support validity. It looks at how frequently respondents within a study bring up difficulties, preferences, or other phenomena. In this research study, the analysis of the research was done using various qualitative techniques, and the data is presented in Chapter 4.
- Neutrality – This is when a researcher is thinking about their contribution to the study. The pursuit of objectivity and the explicit presentation of such reflection are thought to be beneficial practices that show rigor in the work. Qualitative researchers must include all their thoughts and reflections related to the study. In this research, the researcher has studied the topic of succession planning to the best of her ability and has provided insight throughout the dissertation.
- **Conformability** is important in qualitative research and is also known as dependability, reliability, and consistency. Detail and transparency and replicability are some tools to bring rigour to qualitative research.
  - Detail and transparency - The reader of the research could assess the credibility of the study through transparency and comprehensive explanations of how the research design and its execution were justified. Throughout this research, there has been transparency and explanations of the research study.
  - Replicability – Refers to procedural trustworthiness. Whenever an interview has been used to acquire data, there is a significant chance to prove procedural trustworthiness through audio recordings and full transcriptions. In this research, all recordings and transcriptions are available, and the data and information have protected the identity of the participants.

### 3.10 Summary

Chapter 3 elucidated the research methodology. This study was a qualitative case study exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The technical laboratories of the multinational organisation, South Africa included: i) the Research and Development (R&D) laboratory and ii) the Quality Control (QC) laboratory. The target population was employees from the technical laboratories in Durban, Johannesburg, and Cape Town. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants, and the participants ranged from the Head of Technical to laboratory technicians. The semi-structured interview was conducted on Microsoft Teams and a thematic analysis was done on the information obtained.

Qualitative techniques inclusive of word cloud, tree-map, cluster analysis, hierarchy chart, and word tree were used. This chapter provided an overview of the research approach, research methods, sampling, interview schedule, ethical clearance, data analysis, thematic analysis, and qualitative techniques used. The next chapter of the study presents the findings of the qualitative data.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the research methodology of the study. The research methodology discussed qualitative studies in detail and the qualitative techniques used in this study. This chapter outlines the qualitative analysis of the participants' feedback obtained from the semi-structured interviews on succession planning. The qualitative analysis entailed a thematic approach using NVIVO 20. Techniques inclusive of word cloud, tree-map, cluster analysis, hierarchy chart, and word tree were used to eloquently determine respective themes and sub-themes.

The analysis of the participants' feedback was aligned with the objectives of the study which were to:

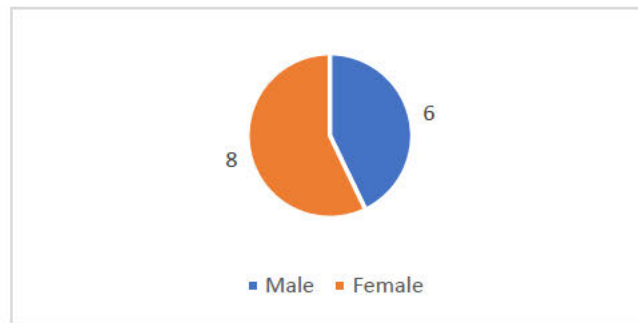
- Determine the understanding of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Examine the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Identify challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Determine ways to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.

An analysis of the above objectives is conducted in this chapter, broken down into themes and sub-themes. In analysing the above objectives, the current status of succession planning, succession planning linkages, candidate selection of succession planning, and evaluation of succession planning was also determined and analysed in this chapter. The demographic data of the research participants is also evaluated.

### **4.2 Demographic data**

Analysed below is the demographic data of the participants of the research study. There were fourteen participants in total from four business units of the organisation. The gender, age, title, race, length of employment, laboratory type, site, and business unit of each participant were analysed.

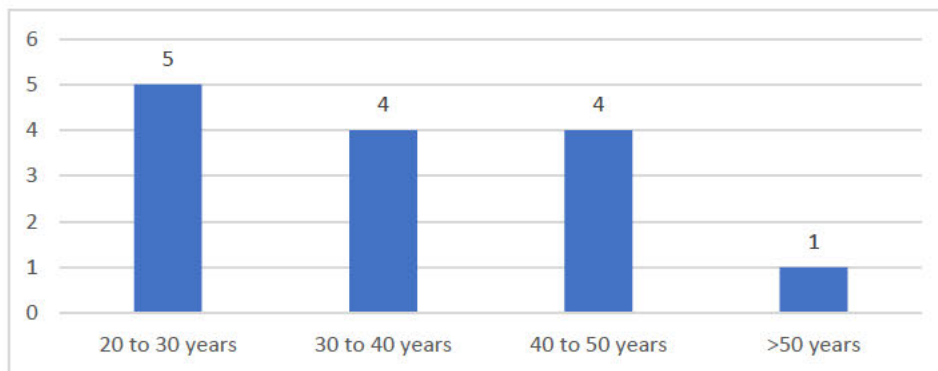
#### 4.2.1 Gender



**Figure 4. 1: Gender of the participants**

Figure 4.1 displays more female participants than males, thus indicating strong female representation in the sector, which relates to female/women empowerment.

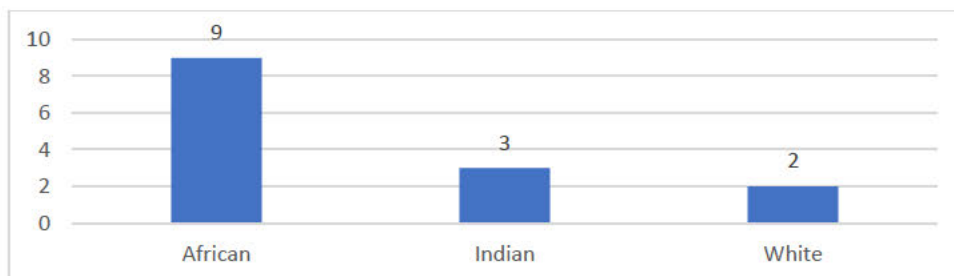
#### 4.2.2 Age



**Figure 4. 2: Age of the participants**

Figure 4.2 displays that most participants were above the age of 30 years old.

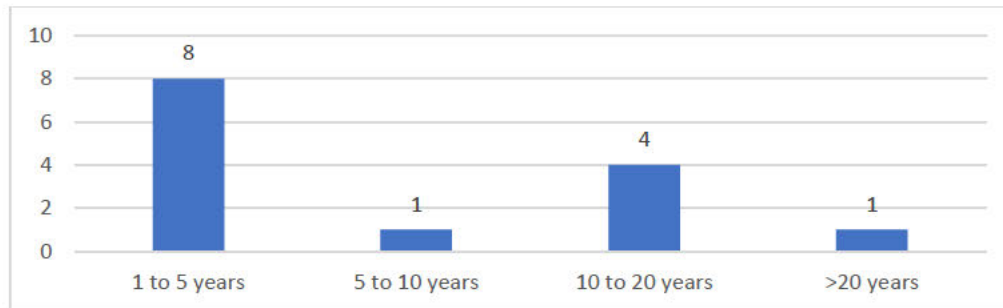
#### 4.2.3 Race



**Figure 4. 3: Race of the participants**

Figure 4.3 displays that most participants were African, which implies strong compliance with BEE conditions as well as the empowerment of previously disadvantaged persons.

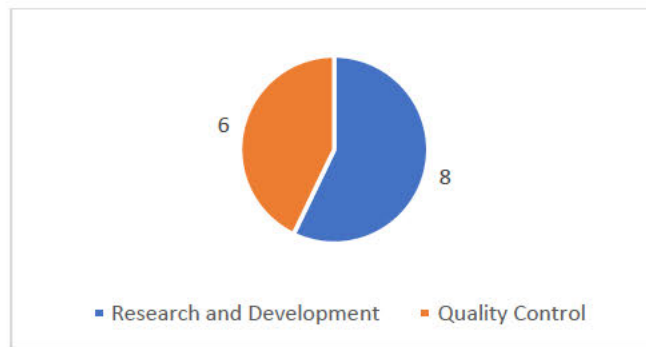
#### 4.2.4 Length of employment



**Figure 4. 4: Length of employment of participants**

Figure 4.4 displays that most participants were employed for five years or less, which may indicate a turnover of staff within the first five years.

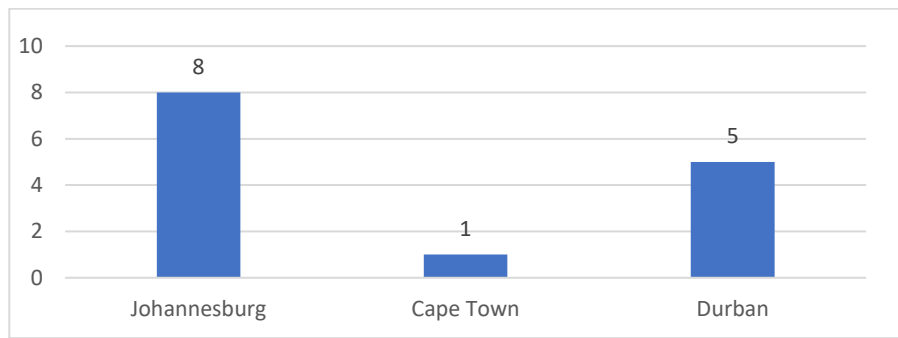
#### 4.2.5 Laboratory type



**Figure 4. 5: Laboratory type of the participants**

Figure 4.5 displays that there was an almost equal distribution but slightly more participants from the Research and Development Laboratory than from Quality control.

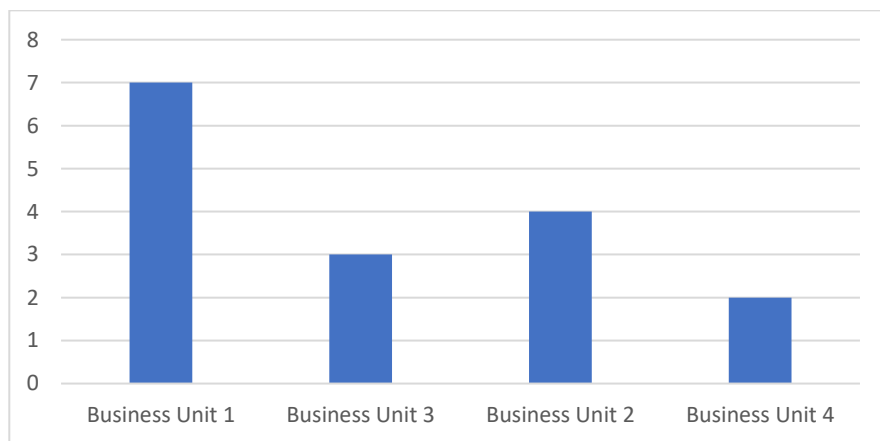
#### 4.2.6 Site



**Figure 4. 6: Sites of the research study**

Figure 4.6 displays that there was representation from the three major cities, but mostly from Johannesburg and Durban.

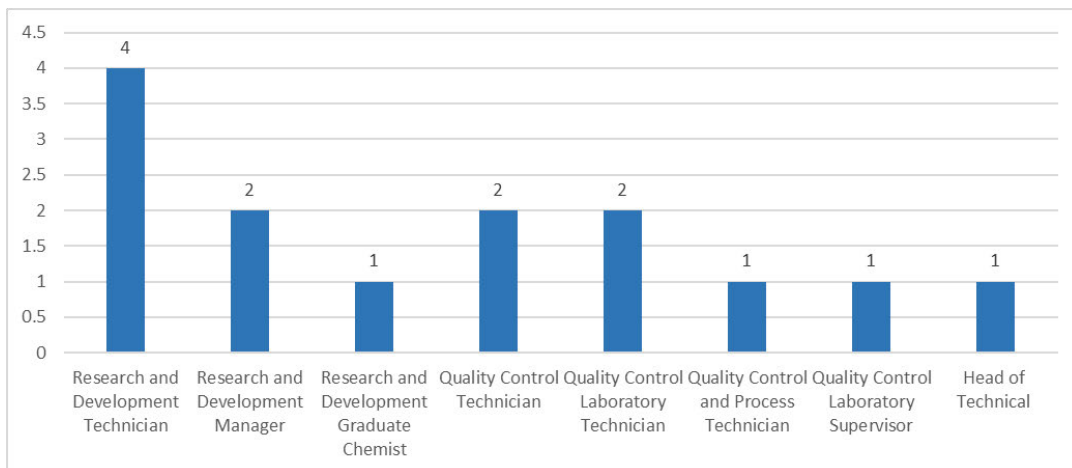
#### 4.2.7 The business units



**Figure 4. 7: Business units of the research study**

Figure 4.7 displays that there was good representation from most business units.

#### 4.2.8 Job title



**Figure 4. 8: Job titles of the participants**

Figure 4.8 displays that the job titles were diverse, which was positive as it provided insight from various perspectives.

#### 4.3 Qualitative analysis

The analysis of the objectives of the research study is conducted in this section, broken down into themes and sub-themes. In analysing the above objectives, the current status of succession planning, succession planning linkages, candidate selection of succession planning, and evaluation of succession planning was also determined and analysed.

##### 4.3.1 Current status of succession planning

In analysing the objectives, the current succession planning status of the organisation was reviewed. Results imply that there was an overall lack of succession planning.

**Table 4. 1: Themes on the current status of succession planning**

<b>CURRENT STATUS of SUCCESSION PLANNING</b>	<b>Themes</b>
	Lack of Planning
	Review and planning
	Personal growth
	Emerging

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 4.1 displays that the current status of succession planning has four themes: 1) the lack of planning; 2) review and planning; 3) personal growth; and 4) emerging. The analysis of the themes is shown below, and the themes were broken down further into sub-themes.

#### **4.3.1.1 Theme One: Lack of planning**

Most participants felt that there was a lack of succession planning because they were not aware of a formalised plan. There were talks about succession planning, but none were implemented. In addition, some departments still had key positions that were not filled after respective staff had left. There was a lack of plans to groom staff into senior positions or plans that have not been finalised with staff.

*“A formalised plan, not that I know of.” [P2]*

*“No, I’ve just been here for two years, so I can’t elaborate regarding the previous times, but we did have a supervisor in a position and that position has not been filled.” [P6]*

*“No, I don’t think so.” [P7]*

*“I wouldn’t say the essence of session planning QC currently doesn’t have a supervisor. There are only two people in QC, so no one has that supervisor position or holds the title of a supervisor in the lab.” [P5]*

*“Unfortunately, no, we don’t have any succession planning. I’m the only one in the department right now and we’ve tried in the past.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.1.2 Theme Two: Review and Planning**

However, some participants felt that there was some progress being made in succession planning. Reviews were being done in some departments about the performance levels of employees as they were being identified for succession planning. Candidates in departments have also been identified for succession planning.

*“We had a session, most probably a month ago as well in the multinational organisation where we look at succession planning. You review your department’s performance levels on a grid of 1 to 9 to save the steady employees, steady performers, or stars in the making. And then from there they usually will also identify succession plans. So, in my department, there’s been two candidates identified as potential succession candidates for my position.” [P8]*

*“Currently doing that and we’ve just had the meeting with the human resource and where we assessed my direct reports just to see that those who got potential and to succeed as a high*

*performer, to succeed there we've had those talks discussion with each other. that is about, me and my direct reports already know what is going on.” [P13]*

#### **4.3.1.3 Theme Three: Personal growth**

One participant conveyed their own experience in terms of their growth. They moved from one department to another where they gained growth and exposure. Based on the knowledge gained, they were able to apply this knowledge in other areas. Staff that have been well trained have the knowledge and skills and the ability and the opportunity to move from one technical department such as quality control to another technical department, such as research and development. Staff is being recognised for their value to the technical department.

*“I was employed last year as the QC technician. Then I had the opportunity to go to R&D. So, I integrated from QC to an R&D technician. To me, that is the growth that is the succession planning because now I understand more. I do also have the QC background of our product so I think it's that that could be succession planning.” [P3]*

*“Since I joined the team last year, I spent almost six to seven months in QC where I learned everything about the company. I learned everything about quality control, so I have this opportunity now to grow within the company to go to the research side of the company. So where I can research our products and how can I make an improvement to our products and look at raw materials to investigate., I can say that it's a growth to me because I have moved from one position to another position.” [P3]*

#### **4.3.1.4 Theme Four: Emerging**

Other participants asserted that succession planning was slowly emerging whereby discussions with HR were underway. However, it was not formalised yet. Previous succession plans were very informal, like a handover from one staff to another. Currently, a formal and structured plan is being put in place so that the succession planning process is being documented. This will assist the company in monitoring the process and determining if any changes need to happen to the process. The process must give positive results in the succession plan.

*“We are currently in discussion with the HR department in terms of a formal and structured succession plan at this moment in time. It is according to HR. It is a new pilot project that they haven't looked at before and that's what I'm involved in succession planning for R&D.” [P12]*

*“Previous succession plans have been somewhat informal, with sort of more across-the-table discussions. And whereas the company going forward plans that we have not just like a handover*

*period, but we make sure that everybody is fully fluent in what we need to do daily and is fully integrated into the company when the change comes.” [P12]*

### 4.3.2 Succession planning linkages

In analysing the objectives, the succession planning linkages within the department/organisation were determined. It was informed by the following found in Table 4.2.

**Table 4. 2: Themes and sub-themes of succession planning linkages**

SUCCESSION PLANNING LINKAGES	
Theme	Sub-themes
<b>Employee development</b>	Training
	Knowledge
	Growth
	Recognition
	Measurement
<b>Skills and qualities</b>	Skills vs position
	Candidate qualities
	Understanding
<b>Performance and innovation</b>	Performance
	Innovation
	Technology
<b>Organisational</b>	Organisational success
	Management
	Goals
	Transparency
<b>Graduate Program</b>	Fresh minds
	Experience

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 4.2 displays the succession planning linkages, which were employee development, skills, and qualities, performance, and innovation, organisational and graduate programs. The analysis of the themes is below, and the themes were broken down further into sub-themes.

#### 4.3.2.1 Theme 1: Employee development

Employee development was the most highly ranked factor of linkage.

##### 4.3.2.1(a) Sub-theme 1.1: Training

Participants indicated that within employee development, training is a crucial component. Training can enhance competence levels, which has a direct bearing on performance. Therefore, this relates well to succession planning. Training can either be done internally as on-the-job

training, or externally. Moreover, training in the laboratories can be both soft skills and technical skills.

*“I think training is essential for any employee to build on their skills, be it soft skills or technical skills, to be able to fulfill a role. So, for example, within the laboratory, I think technical skills are very important and that's something that can be incorporated into ongoing training, be it through training on-site through your peers or external training. That gives you a certain qualification within your technical expertise.” [P4]*

*“So learning is those methods whereby we have people that train us like when you have people from outside that come to show us procedures on certain machines that we buy from them” [P5]*

#### **4.3.2.1(b) Sub-theme 1.2: Knowledge**

Relating to training, participants were of the view that succession planning is linked to knowledge building. Having the person with the right knowledge to commence the successive role is pertinent. Such knowledge can only be attained through qualification, training, and experience that are aligned with succession planning. Knowledge sharing was also an important factor in enhancing one's knowledge.

*“Gaining more knowledge, improving on yourself, and being identified for that to be either promoted or getting a role higher than what you've already currently in.” [P4]*

*“Time, actually gives you that ability to gain that extra knowledge as well as knowing how to deal with situations, also communication as well as knowing a product for example, how it would behave, and the trends may be associated with that product.” [P6]*

*“That is also knowledge sharing because they are imparting their knowledge onto us and then also the career day when we are sharing and teaching people what is required if they're also going to a certain field.” [P5]*

#### **4.3.2.1(c) Sub-theme 1.3: Growth**

Participants felt that succession planning is linked to growth. A successive role is usually a role that is more senior to the current role of the candidate. The participants also associated development with growth. As employees develop themselves in an organisation that leads to growth.

*“An employee and the future growth into the role that they would envision themselves in. That's my link to it. Just growth and personal development.” [P4]*

*“Development I would associate very closely to growth as well because I feel they both are quite similar or synonymous.” [P4]*

*“When I hear the word succession planning, I would link it to growth. I guess being able to move from one position to another.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.2.1(d) Sub-theme 1.4: Recognition**

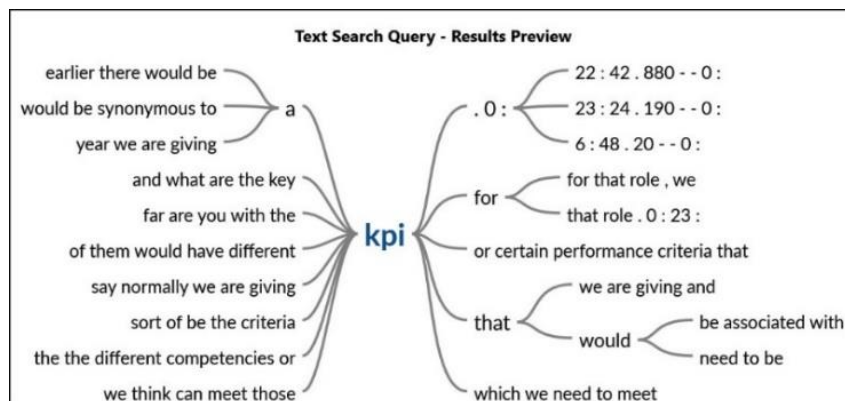
The participants indicated that succession planning was also linked to recognition, whereby an organisation could recognise the potential of a successor to a role. Employees who are recognised must then be groomed and nurtured to eventually fill a role. In terms of identifying the candidate, organisations must look at the employee’s potential, views, and personality.

*“What I would link it to a company being able to recognise a potential in a person and also after identifying it, grooming it, nurturing it such that it will serve its purpose.” [P9]*

*“In terms of identifying and grooming, I would say that in a team we’ve got different people with different personalities, different aspects, different views, and different potentials.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.2.1(e) Sub-theme 1.5: Measurement**

The participants felt that employee development for succession planning also revolved around the measurement of their performance through the respective KPIs. The KPIs provide information on employees’ performance in their department, as well as the organisation, which is measured in the KPI.



**Figure 4. 9: Word Tree for ‘KPI’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.9 displays that the participants linked ‘KPI’ to criteria, competence, and performance.

*“And there would be through one’s performance and in terms of performance would be looking at your KPI and also in terms of the input that an individual is putting within their respective team department or the company at large.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.2.2 Theme 2: Skills and qualities**

Skills and qualities were another important linkage to succession planning.

##### **4.3.2.2(a) Sub-theme 2.1: Skills vs positions**

Participants were of the view that succession planning was about ensuring that the right skills were linked to the right positions. There had to be an adroit fit in this regard whereby the successor must have the proper qualifications and experience, as well as soft skills for the respective position. Certain skills are required to be in a leadership role and when identifying a candidate to fit the leadership role, the organisation would be looking at those skills.

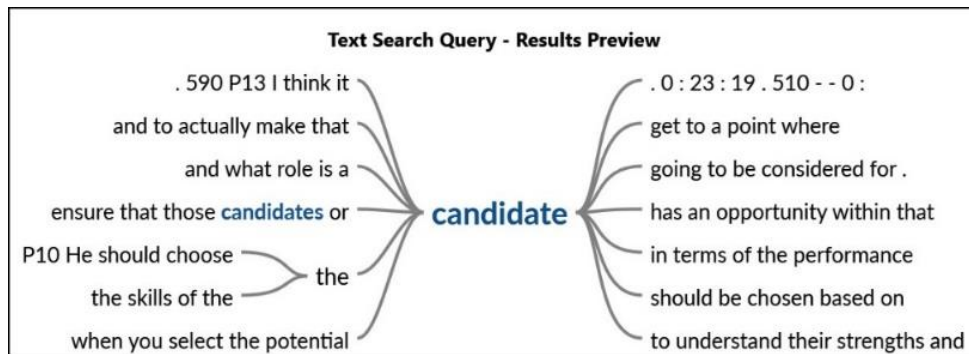
*“From starting as maybe a graduate like myself and then improving on my technical skills, my soft skills to eventually grow into, for example, a permanent position or soon, maybe a management position. Anything that indicates a higher qualification, if I may put it or a higher job title, that would be considered growth as well as gaining more knowledge.” [P4]*

*“The ability for one to, carry out the duties, is that ability to get, the results from the tasks given, that skills, that the ability that you have because if it doesn't have the skills then it might be very difficult you might not be able to produce the result it's just the ease with which a person can produce a result and using their knowledge y because it's skilled and not just skills as it the skill and knowledge they go hand in hand ” [P13]*

*“They see that, you have skills, and we see that, they might be gaps somewhere in, maybe there will be a position opening. Possibly. You can learn different skills so that way you get confident.” [P14]*

##### **4.3.2.2(b) Sub-theme 2.2: Candidate qualities**

The participants argued that candidate qualities are also linked to succession planning. Whilst a candidate may have qualifications and experiences, they may not possess the necessary character qualities to perform in a specific role. For example, in a management position, the candidate must not only have technical skills but also be able to manage a team, be assertive, and be able to interact with senior management. It is important to remember that not all employees have the skills to be moved into a management position.



**Figure 4. 10: Word Tree on ‘candidate’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.10 shows how the participants linked ‘candidate’ to role, potential, and opportunity

*“It is basically for the continuation of the business and then for the candidates to meet the requirements will be somebody that will have not just the technical knowledge, but also the ability to manage a team, lead a team successfully motivated the team but still have all the management requirements with regards to being strict when it needs to be strict but also maintaining abilities, training abilities, being able to function and interact with higher up management because you get people that have that ability and then other people struggle to do that.” [P8]*

*“People would display a certain character that you can work on. People who are willing to work in a team or with other people who are willing to learn and to give.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.2.2(c) Sub-theme 2.3: Understanding**

The participants indicated that the understanding of different departments and processes was a much-needed skill. This understanding would allow the candidate to perform the duties in the role more efficiently. The technical laboratory serves many departments, namely: i) Production: assist production in troubleshooting batches that require adjustments, ii) Marketing: assist marketing in developing new products; and iii) Procurement: assist procurement in testing alternate raw materials. Hence, it is important to understand how these departments operate.

*“You can understand the different types of divisions that you deal with and the whole process that large.” [P6]*

### **4.3.2.3 Theme 3: Performance and innovation**

Performance was an important linkage of succession planning as outlined below.

#### **4.3.2.3(a) Sub-theme 3.1: Performance**

Participants indicated that performance must be monitored and reviewed in terms of succession planning when selecting the right person so that the organisation is not at risk when taking on a successor for a position. The performance of the employees will aid in choosing a successor for the position.

*“The performance, review and then where you look at the performance of say your direct reports, and then from there then you can and start to do the succession planning.” [P13]*

*“I would guess that in terms of succession planning you’d want to make sure that the lab's responsibility contribution performance within the realms of, the overall company itself are not compromised.” [P1]*

#### **4.3.2.3(b) Sub-theme 3.2: Innovation**

As the world continuously changes, innovation becomes important, especially in a competitive environment. This is hence an important linkage. Participants were of the view that having a good succession plan in place would aid in having the most suitable candidate, which will assist in developing new products that will aid the business to do well in the market.

*“They can innovate. new product in the company, new technologies in the company. It is very important to have good succession planning as well so that you can have, a good product and you can as well as do very well.” [P3]*

#### **4.3.2.3(c) Sub-theme 3.3: Technology**

The participants felt that using updated technology is a critical part of succession planning. Employees must be able to use new technology to be efficient in the tasks conducted and to keep up to date with technological changes in the industry. Technology is a driver of innovation and development in an ever-changing environment.

*“Nowadays we have moved to the 4th Industrial Revolution whereby we use the technology in our lives and our work depends on the technology and the succession planning. We as the workers need to be trained and be updated on our software cause most of the time, we use the analytical*

*instruments that are updated with the technology that we are using, which are more advanced compared to the one that we were using in the past.” [P3]*

#### **4.3.2.4 Theme 4: Organisational**

Key organisational linkages to succession planning were informed by the following:

##### **4.3.2.4(a) Sub-theme 4.1: Organisational success**

Participants were of the view that succession planning will lead to developing employees that are more knowledgeable and experienced, which will lead to organisational success. Organisational success is important for sustainability. To attain this, every department needs to perform optimality, and this is dependent on having the right people.

*“The success of the company is when the company has good succession planning, which means they develop their employees. Employees have more experience, and they have the skills.” [P3]*

*“Which means that the company will grow as you have people who are more equipped with knowledge and experience.” [P3]*

*“Say growing as a person and a company” [P5]*

##### **4.3.2.4(b) Sub-theme 4.2: Management**

The participants indicated that the management of the organisation needs to create opportunities for staff to grow and progress through succession planning. Until such time, all employees can do is apply themselves and wait for the opportunity to arise.

*“This I think all we can do at this level, is just apply ourselves as much as we can and management can create opportunities for us.” [P7]*

##### **4.3.2.4(c) Sub-theme 4.3: Goals**

Participants felt that employee goals and organisational goals should be linked to succession planning, which is critical so that there is a focus on succession planning

*“Employees goals and the organisation's goals.” [P2]*

##### **4.3.2.4(d) Sub-theme 4.4: Transparency**

Participants argued that management must be transparent about succession planning at an organisational level so that staff can be aware of it and know what is required of them. In having transparency, employees would know what is required from them in order to be part of the

succession planning process. Employees will also know if they are being considered as a successor for any roles in the organisation.

*“In the sense that, for example, an individual should know what the requirements are for you to reach that step of being you know the next step as well as being able to communicate with the person looking for someone to reach that step of what are they looking for and what are their strengths.” [P6]*

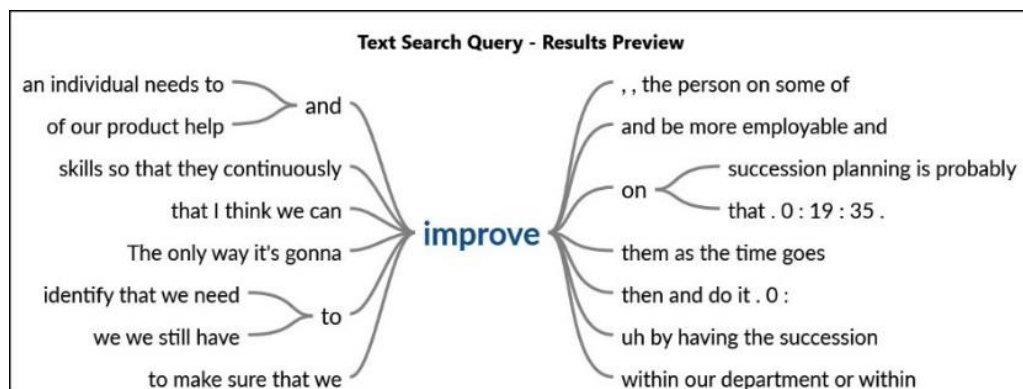
*“And you find that sometimes you get new positions and for me, I feel like if everyone who is not in a management role has knowledge or education about it. The leadership roles or whatever plans that the organisation might have.” [P7]*

#### 4.3.2.5 Theme 5: Graduate program

The graduate program was mentioned by one participant as a linkage to succession planning.

##### 4.3.2.5(a) Sub-theme 5.1: Fresh minds

The graduate program served to impart skills and experience to those who were new graduates from tertiary institutions. The participants felt that the program also allowed for areas of improvement to be identified as graduates with fresh minds could identify potential gaps. This promoted continuous improvement, which is linked to performance.



**Figure 4. 11: Word Tree on ‘Improve’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.11 shows how the participants linked ‘improve’ to individual needs, succession, and continuity.

*“What did opportunities like this wait, which equipped you with the knowledge and experience and skills cause it's from those who are still fresh are coming from university.” [P3]*

*“It's very important to have a fresh mind within your department, because there are a lot of gaps that shield, or he can identify that we need to improve within our department or our organisation.” [P3]*

#### **4.3.2.5(b) Sub-theme 5.2: Experience**

The participants were of the view that the graduate program focused on providing industrial experience as tertiary institutions focus mainly on theory rather than practice. This then allowed for such graduates to grow into their respective departments.

*“As for now because we've got a graduate program where we give the student, an opportunity to experience the industrial experience with the work environment. That is a good opportunity to groom young people. We also have the opportunity as an employee as well to grow within our department, as mentioned before I've moved from QC to R&D.” [P3]*

#### **4.3.3 Candidate selection for succession planning**

In analysing the objectives, the candidate selection for succession planning was considered, as shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4. 3: Themes and sub-themes of candidate selection for succession planning**

<b>CANDIDATE SELECTION FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING</b>	
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>
<b>Skills and knowledge</b>	Experience and qualifications
	Soft skills
	Knowledge base
	Leadership skills
	Interests
<b>Performance</b>	Performance record
	Specialised
	Training
<b>Orientation and attitude</b>	Growth orientated
	Emotional Quotient
	Attitude
<b>Measurement</b>	Evaluation of candidate
	Criteria and KPI

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 4.3 shows the links to candidate selection for succession planning, which were skills and knowledge, performance, orientation attitude, and measurement. The analysis of the themes is below, and the themes were broken down further into sub-themes.

#### **4.3.3.1 Theme 1: Skills and knowledge**

Skills and knowledge base was the highest-ranked factor in terms of candidate selection.

##### **4.3.3.1(a) Sub-theme 1.2: Experience and qualifications**

The participants were of the view that candidates must possess the appropriate qualifications and experience so that performance will not be compromised. Employees must perform their roles at the highest standard. The development plans for employees to fill in future roles should consider their current experience and qualifications.

*“The skills must be based on the experience as well as the qualifications.” [P3]*

*“For, that particular position or that particular role, perform your work at the very highest standard.” [P3]*

*“In that sense, for the development planning for specific roles, I feel that they should take into account their qualifications and their experience”, [P2]*

*“And how qualified is that person? The knowledge in the department.” [P10]*

##### **4.3.3.1(b) Sub-theme 1.2: Soft skills**

Participants felt that apart from skills and qualifications, the candidate must also possess the appropriate personality, and soft skills such as communication skills. Communication is very important, especially when working in a team and with various departments. The technical laboratory serves many departments and hence communication is a key skill in the department.

*“Also, their character and just the way they communicate, the way they interact with the rest of the team.” [P2]*

*“To identify those high-performing individuals to say, that might be great scientists, but can they also do management You might have a great scientist but he's not at all a people person you know they can't manage people, so you have to identify those type of soft skills as well.” [P8]*

*“Like the communication probably you know, can they?” [P14]*

##### **4.3.3.1(c) Sub-theme 1.3: Knowledge base**

Participants indicated that the candidate must have a strong knowledge base when it comes to their knowledge of products, processes, and operations. For the technical department to run

efficiently, a knowledge base is critical. The technical department cannot serve other departments if there is no sound and strong knowledge base.

*“And knowledge base is going to be one either product related or at the same time probably then you know knowledge that would be academical you know that your background knowledge in terms of the chemistry required to produce manufacturing get these products to perform. The knowledge based on one would be what our current products do, but at the same time you need to know in the background what makes them do what they do.” [P12]*

#### **4.3.3.1(d) Sub-theme 1.4: Leadership skills**

Participants felt that leadership skills are very important to have, especially when managing a department. In the technical laboratory, it is not only the leadership skills that are required as technical skills, and all these skills will make the leader efficient in the department.

*“But at the same time, you would also need to look at leadership skills, though it’s not an easy question to ask.” [P12]*

#### **4.3.3.1 (e) Sub-theme 1.5: Interest**

Participants indicated that the candidate must have an interest in the area/role that they will be a successor. The candidate must want to be in the role that he/she is being groomed for. If a candidate does not have an interest in the position and is eventually promoted to the position, they will not be able to function optimally.

*“To understand their skills and to understand their interest, that and what plans they have” [P7]*

#### **4.3.3.2 Theme 2: Performance**

The performance of the candidate was another strong factor.

##### **4.3.3.2(a) Sub-theme 2.1: Performance record**

The performance record of the candidate must speak for itself and show details of their performance history. The participants were of the view that the ideal candidate would be the one who has excellent performance reviews, a candidate who has excelled in their job consistently.

*“Should they choose one based on performance I guess” [P6]*

*“He should choose the candidate in terms of the performance first.” [P10]*

*“I think it candidate should be chosen based on the performance and then the potential because when you look at the performance, a performance will be something that you would have had measured, over the years. Then you will have a record, of all the performance of your staff.” [P13]*

*“You see it in a person, those two things: performance and potential. I think that should be used when choosing the best and it should be, taken for succession planning.” [P13]*

#### **4.3.3.2(b) Sub-theme 2.2: Specialised**

The participants indicated that candidates must have specialised skills according to the space they will be placed in so that they can perform optimally. In the technical laboratory, there are many specialised skills (i.e., colour matching, raw material evaluations, new product development, project management, and quality control). If there is a position that requires colour matching, the candidate requires colour matching skills to perform the job efficiently.

*“Then, once people get to know all of that, the basics, then you can start saying this technician functions better in the plaster space or better in the board space or better in insulation space, and then you start developing those specialised skills and that technician. So that's where we then start saying, but now we've got a specialised technician in a certain field and that will be critical because there's a lot of knowledge and experience with that technician.” [P8]*

#### **4.3.3.2(c) Sub-theme 2.3: Training**

Participants felt that a training program must be put in place for the candidate to develop the required skills and other areas that may need improvement. The ideal candidate must have a training plan to enhance their development for future roles. The training will ensure that the candidate has the competency to fulfill the role.

*“If we feel like they are unable to fulfill it at this stage, then we can now put in place a training plan with development. What would be the purpose of succession planning to ensure that those candidates or candidate has an opportunity within that timeline to achieve those skills or those competencies so that they can meet those KPIs for that role in the future?” [P4]*

#### **4.3.3.3 Theme 3: Orientation and attitude**

The candidate must be growth-orientated and have a progressive attitude.

##### **4.3.3.3(a) Sub-theme 3.1: Growth-orientated**

Participants were of the view that the candidate must be growth-orientated and able to elevate to the next level in their careers. The ideal candidate must be willing to take the next step in their career and be able to study and progress themselves.

*“He needs to look at how willing the employee is to grow, how willing they are to further their studies and to progress themselves, I feel there's going to be a hindrance to the company if they want to invest in individuals who are set to leave.” [P2]*

*“Whoever wants or is ready to take the next step in their career, and then that's I feel is who.” [P7]*

##### **4.3.3.3(b) Sub-theme 3.2: Emotional Quotient (EQ)**

There was a difference between EQ and IQ. Whilst IQ focuses on skills and qualifications, EQ is equally important to possess the ability to work with people through communication and engagement. The participants argued that team leaders should be able to handle the pressures of the job.

*“Can manage projects while as a team leader. Can manage people? Well, how do they handle conflict and things like that? How do they engage with other departments? External and internal how do they engage with much more senior people as well? Do they get on the nerves, or can they manage through, that pressure and things? How do they function under pressure? And so those are all things that you keep in mind when you select the potential candidate.” [P8]*

##### **4.3.3.3(c) Sub-theme 3.3: Attitude**

An important quality would be the attitude of the candidate. Participants were of the view that the candidate's attitude must be encouraging to others and not pessimistic. They must embrace setbacks and not falter in this regard. Moreover, they needed to foster motivation.

*“Qualification is not just experienced, but it's a combination of all of those factors and the attitude and the characters of the employees.” [P2]*

*“I think it's extremely important, I feel that. Every individual or employee needs to understand that there's no perfect environment, and there's always going to be setbacks and there's always going to be disagreements, difficulties, or delays. The character of the individual plays a role in*

*how they handle those moments and that's why I feel it's important for the individual to understand that if you are looking for growth.” [P2]*

#### **4.3.3.4 Theme 4: Measurement**

The potential candidate must be measured according to related criteria.

##### **4.3.3.4(a) Sub-theme 4.1: Evaluation of candidate**

The participants argued that the candidate must be evaluated to understand their skills and weaknesses. This can inform a developmental plan. All necessary skills should be considered during the evaluation process. The evaluation must look at, experience, qualifications, knowledge, knowledge sharing, strengths, weaknesses, leadership skills, and proactiveness.

*“It's important to understand the skills of the candidate to understand their strengths and weaknesses or their qualifications so that you can prepare the development plan or that training plan accordingly to allow for them to develop on their skills for that role.” [P4]*

*“After having interviews, that's where you get to know a person when they speak. What knowledge do they have? What knowledge did I have to share? What are they willing to do?” [P5]*

*“I think they will have to look at the experience, the qualifications, the characteristics, all the leadership skills of that person and knowing how proactive that person can be.” [P9]*

##### **4.3.3.4(b) Sub-theme 4.2: Criteria and KPI**

Participants indicated that the KPIs of the role and the criteria to meet those KPIs can be valuable in evaluating the right candidate. It was important to understand the criteria needed to be fulfilled in the role so that the correct candidate could be chosen. If the candidate is not ready to fill the role, then a development plan needs to be in place.

*“I think it's important to understand what criteria must be fulfilled and what role is a candidate going to be considered for. If we understand what the role is and what are the key KPIs for that role, we can then identify suitable candidates that we think can meet those KPIs. If we feel like they are unable to fulfill it at this stage, then we can now put in place a training plan with development.” [P4]*

*“Criteria would be synonymous with a KPI. So whatever key performance indicators, or once they opt for that role. That would sort of be the criteria KPI for that role.” [P4]*

#### 4.3.4 Evaluation of succession planning

In analysing the objectives, the themes, and sub-themes for the evaluation of succession planning were derived as depicted in Table 4.4.

**Table 4. 4: Themes and sub-themes on the evaluation of succession planning**

EVALUATION OF SUCCESSION PLANNING	
Themes	Sub-themes
Review and measurement	Performance review
	KPIs
	Compliance
	Staff turnover levels
Knowledge	Experience and knowledge
	Training
Skills	People skills
	Transfer Leadership skills
Role Development	Role vs Fit
	Staggered approach
	Internal consideration
Planning and Involvement	Collective involvement
	Growth and awareness

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 4.4 displays the evaluation of succession planning. It was found that the participants viewed: review and measurement, knowledge, skills, role development, planning, and involvement as key criteria. The analysis of the themes is provided below, broken down further into sub-themes.

##### 4.3.4.1 Theme 1: Review and measurement

The review and measurement of succession planning must revolve around the following:

##### 4.3.4.1(a) Sub-theme 1.1: Performance reviews

Participants felt that performance reviews must be done on employees to determine their performance strengths and weaknesses. This can be in line with the projects that they are working on. Gaps can be identified through regular engagements to determine ways to close gaps. The performance review would look at both performance and potential.

*“You, see your direct reports and then you do an assessment using I think the multinational organisation is using the 9 boxes which is the method that they use to identify the performers and then as well as those who have the potential is an engagement where then your first time it can be between the manager and the HR and then now you sit down and then you identify the performance of your direct reports to the each other put the performance and even the potential*

*is and then eventually it will include your direct reports as well. Well, then, now you'll have to sit with them and then go through all the gaps, and then to see how then you close the gaps”* [P13]

#### **4.3.4.1(b) Sub-theme 1.2: KPIs**

The participants argued that the KPI must be monitored to see if the candidate is performing effectively. The KPI will monitor the performance of the candidate for their job role to ascertain if the KPI has been met.

*“KPI would be a key performance indicator, and so for every role, there would be key performance indicators or certain responsibilities or targets. That an employee would have to meet. For their job role. For example, if we do have succession planning in place and they are all these roles, each of them would have a different KPI that would need to be met.”* [P4]

*“I would say normally we are giving KPI which we need to meet by the end of the year each year we are giving a KPI's. We are being evaluated according to those performances.”* [P10]

#### **4.3.4.1(c) Sub-theme 1.3: Compliance**

Participants were of the view that the evaluation of succession planning must follow organisational policies and regulations to ensure that succession planning is done ethically and has merit.

*“It would also have to be within the constraints of a company regulation or in in form of legal compliance, and all of that at the same time, bearing in mind and understanding why it was done or why it happened, and trying to understand from the persons or perspective as to what happened.”* [P6]

#### **4.3.4.1(d) Sub-theme 1.4: Staff turnover levels**

Participants indicated that staff turnover levels need to be monitored. If staff are leaving regularly, then it means that they are frustrated and stifled. This can inform having a succession plan to mitigate such a scenario.

*“I want to say turnaround of staff, so if there's, staff staying for a long period in the department, you don't get people leaving the department. We can evaluate it in that way because it's almost an indication that the employee feels that there is growth for them and that they can see themselves developing further in that same department.”* [P2]

#### **4.3.4.2 Theme 2: Knowledge**

Knowledge became a recurring theme, even in the evaluation of succession planning.

##### **4.3.4.2(a) Sub-theme 2.1: Experience and knowledge**

Knowledge is derived from experience. The participants were of the view that evaluation should be done according to certain tests to ascertain the knowledge of people in certain areas and scenarios. This can determine how many people are the correct fit for succession planning. In technical laboratories, the employees need to have a knowledge of Chemistry, which is the backbone of the raw materials and the products manufactured, as well as be able to read and understand instructions.

*“In my department, you need to know about chemistry because you will be analysing a lot of chemicals. Chemistry should be there. If you did chemical engineering, that would be great, or chemistry, analytical chemistry. You need to be able to write reports. You need to be able to read instructions and understand them on your own, because sometimes you come across standard operating procedures, and you must try something out and there's nobody there to show you step by step how to do it. You need to be able to do that.” [P9]*

##### **4.3.4.2(b) Sub-theme 2.2: Training**

Training remains a key component of knowledge generation. Participants felt that a structured training program must be developed, in conjunction with the gaps identified that can be addressed through training. Succession planning must hence be evaluated to close such gaps.

*“I would say maybe it would be training records because they indicate the knowledge that we have been taught or given by others.” [P5]*

*“And then also like the business having interviews with the people and understanding where they come from, the abilities, looking at their training records, if they're trained external training and things, are they performing those training levels against other peers in the group?” [P8]*

*“Well, basically what the training will entail is that to identify the shortcoming, even if we say, let's just use your example where you're not too familiar with cement, then they would review the succession plan and see whether you need to sort of maybe go out to an institution that can train you on a couple of short term courses, even if they take two days or a week to bring you up to speed in some of the background knowledge that we would require and say cement testing.” [P12]*

#### **4.3.4.3 Theme 3: Skills**

Apart from knowledge, other skills must be part of succession planning evaluations.

##### **4.3.4.3(a) Sub-theme 3.1: People skills**

The participants have mentioned previously that people skills are an important skill to have in the technical laboratory. The candidates must have ample people skills to be able to resolve conflict situations and communicate well at all levels, and not just at a technical level, due to the technical laboratories serving many departments.

*“No, it will be based on the experience, the way they are, resolve conflicts, situations, how they are with people, the people skills, their communication skills.” [P6]*

*“Depending of course on the type of report that you'll be sending out, and you need to be able to communicate with other people on lab work with people from production, from warehouse, from raw materials.” [P14]*

##### **4.3.4.3(b) Sub-theme 3.2: Transfer leadership skills**

The participants indicated that succession planning must involve the transfer of leadership skills as this was important when it came to providing guidance to others and generating new ideas. Leadership skills must come with experience in the role.

*“Good succession planning is passing the leadership skills from one to another so that we can have leadership skills and experience within our roles.” [P3]*

*“You lead the team, so you have to have good leadership skills where you come up with the ideas, what the team should do, and what the new product is.” [P3]*

#### **4.3.4.4 Theme 4: Role development**

Succession planning must be evaluated in line with role development.

##### **4.3.4.4(a) Sub-theme 4.1: Role vs. fit**

The role-to-fit ratio must be evaluated so that the right person occupies the right role. Participants were of the view that for a candidate to fit into the role, they must have the requisite abilities, performance, and knowledge.

*“One is the roles, two would be knowledge that we have.” [P5]*

*“The abilities, their performances, their skill levels, their knowledge.” [P8]*

#### **4.3.4.4(b) Sub-theme 4.2: Staggered approach**

One participant mentioned that succession planning should be evaluated by having roles in a staggered approach. This is whereby different competencies can be associated with a specific role and management can measure employees according to those competencies or KPIs. The participant felt that an employee can grow from a junior role to a senior role, and then into a management position.

*“I think succession planning should be evaluated by having roles in a staggered approach. For example, if we have management positions, there should be roles below that to show that I'm an employee, for example, myself. How we can grow from a graduate position to, for example, junior to senior and further into management roles to be able to evaluate that there has to be that staggered job title or the staggered development in place and also the different competencies or KPI that would be associated with each of that roles so that employees can assess themselves or management can assess employees to take over those roles as they feel employees are competent to take over those roles.” [P4]*

#### **4.3.4.4(c) Sub-theme 4.3: Internal consideration**

Participants were of the view that there should also be internal consideration of departmental staff for successive roles rather than looking outside. The experience and the qualifications of staff should be considered when looking into successive roles.

*“I think having to look at the people that they have within the department? Consider their experience and not leave out the academic qualifications.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.4.5 Theme 5: Planning and involvement**

The planning and involvement aspects must be considered when evaluating succession planning.

##### **4.3.4.5(a) Sub-theme 5.1: Collective involvement**

Participants indicated that there must be a collective involvement of all stakeholders to ensure that everyone's input is considered towards a succession plan. This needs to be done so that everyone is working towards a common objective and all stakeholders are included.

*“I think my department should evaluate the succession planning by actually involving all the employees as well as management.” [P3]*

*“We go through their performance; we go through their gaps and everything. From there, we can then identify what needs to be done., but again, I will also have to sit down with the employees and involve them and then make sure that, we all have the same objective, so why are we doing this and what needs to be done? I think then it's very inclusive.” [P13]*

#### **4.3.4.5(b) Sub-theme 5.2: Growth and awareness**

Participants felt that the planning must entail how employees can see themselves grow in the organisation. In addition, there must be ample awareness of the plan created so everyone can be aware and involved. Participants felt a sense of growth if the organisation approached them with their development plan to grow them.

*“The plan has got to go with the involvement, a greater awareness of what is happening daily and getting more involved with the support structure and the interaction with all the people involved daily and the structure and getting that in is something that is well and we're not involved in it.” [P12]*

*“The sense of growth is seeing the organisation coming to you and saying we do have a plan for you, and we do want you to develop your career, develop your skills, develop your abilities. We have a plan in place to grow you within the organisation and I think that's why it's very important.” [P2]*



**Table 4. 5: Themes and sub-themes of objective one: The understanding of succession planning**

<b>OBJECTIVE ONE: THE UNDERSTANDING OF SUCCESSION PLANNING</b>	
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>
<b>Experience &amp; Qualification</b>	Qualifications
	Technicalities
	Learning from experienced staff
	Knowing different departments
	Opportunities
<b>Knowledge creation and dissemination</b>	Knowledge sharing
	Knowledge preservation
	Knowledge transfer
	Informal
<b>Continuity and progression</b>	Transfer of work
	Role continuity
	Progression
	Mitigate setbacks
<b>Growth and development</b>	Development into role
	Critical development vs. action plans
	Opportunity to grow
	Career development
<b>Organisational and leadership</b>	Organisational progress
	Leadership continuity
	Strategy

Source: Developed by researcher

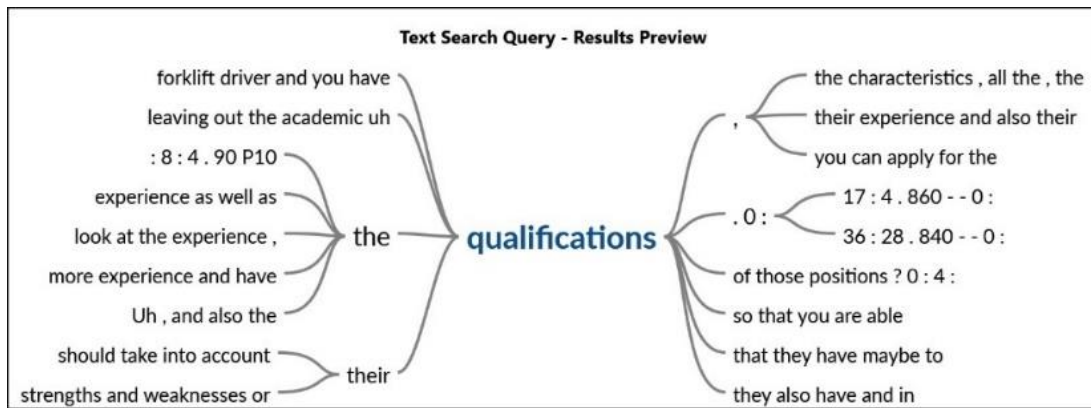
Table 4.5 shows the five themes that emerged in the understanding of succession planning: 1) experience and qualification; 2) knowledge creation and dissemination; 3) continuity and progression; 4) growth and development; and 5) organisational and leadership. The highest-ranked theme from the participants was experience and qualifications. The analysis of the themes is below, broken down further into sub-themes

#### **4.3.5.1 Theme 1: Experience and qualifications**

This was the highest-ranked sub-theme in terms of the understanding of succession planning. Most participants felt that succession planning was about ensuring that the successor had the right qualifications and experience.

##### **4.3.5.1(a) Sub-theme 1.1: Qualifications**

Some participants believed that having the right qualifications was necessary. One could not be placed in a position where they did not have the right qualifications for the job/department. Qualification is important, an accountant cannot be placed in a laboratory where specialised knowledge and skills in Chemistry are required.



**Figure 4. 14: Word Tree on ‘Qualifications’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.14 displays how the word ‘qualifications’ was linked to positions, experience, strengths, and weaknesses.

*“The qualifications they also have and in terms of knowledge in that field. For example, you can’t take someone who did accounting and bring them into a laboratory where we need people who have chemistry and so forth.” [P10]*

#### **4.3.5.1(b) Sub-theme 1.2: Technicalities**

An important point was raised whereby a key aspect of succession planning was to have a person with technical knowledge, as some departments were highly technical and specialised. Most participants argued that technical background is very important for understanding the materials the laboratory is working with. Very specialised knowledge is required in the industry.

*“Especially in our technical field, where there’s a lot of knowledge and understanding required to manage a technical department, whoever takes overall as successor needs to be able to carry on firstly have some knowledge on the current projects that are happening.” [P8]*

*“He’s basically with the technical fields and in the business, for instance, understanding your product knowledge, your technical background regarding the materials that you use.” [P8]*

*“It’s overall knowledge of a specialised knowledge of the raw materials and the materials used in the process and the product and things like that.” [P8]*

**4.3.5.1(c) Sub-theme 1.3: Learning from experienced staff**

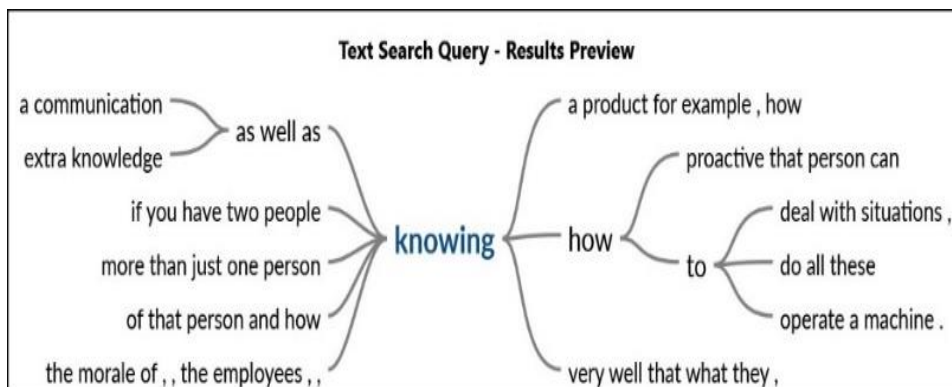
Some participants felt that it was also important for a person to learn from experienced staff before occupying a succession position. Sometimes, such experience was invaluable and not something that one learned only through qualifications. Some participants were of the view that learning from experienced staff was very important because they know about doing tasks in a certain way, which will assist the employees.

*“Not as sharing as just having someone with more experience teaching you and giving that knowledge that they have. So, if somebody more experience with who has done the work trains you and tells you what to do, shows you all the let's say test methods tells you where to find things.” [P5]*

*“I’m talking about the things that you learned in the work and things that you have acquired during working in that position or in that field of work.” [P10]*

**4.3.5.1(d) Sub-theme 1.4: Knowing different departments**

Some participants felt that it was important to also know about other departments and explore further. This can accumulate inter-disciplinary knowledge. To grow within the company, employees must know the functions of other departments.



**Figure 4. 15: Word Tree for ‘knowing’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.15 shows how the word ‘knowing’ is linked to products, machines, and knowledge.

*“Let's say you allow your employees to grow within the company.” [P3]*

*“They accumulate the experience of the company, and they grow.” [P3]*

*“They will know between different departments.” [P3]*

*“And allowing them to explore to other departments” [P3]*

#### **4.3.5.1(e) Sub-theme 1.5: Opportunities**

Participants also felt that people must be allowed to accumulate experience in different areas. Employees must be given opportunities to grow and accumulate experience, which is very important.

*“I think to give people the opportunity so that they can accumulate experience.” [P3]*

*“And for example, as I'm working as a research technician, those are the heart of the business because we are the ones who evaluate and develop our product. We research more of our products to help and improve them as time goes on technologically and with the rheology and performance as well. So, the production depends on us too. Develop the quality product and to start research and investigate our product and to optimise them and make them be the comparative product and be the best product into the market.” [P3]*

#### **4.3.5.2 Theme 2: Knowledge creation and dissemination**

Many participants felt that it was about further knowledge creation and dissemination. This was informed by the following factors.

##### **4.3.5.2(a) Sub-theme 2.1: Knowledge sharing**

Participants felt that succession planning was about knowledge sharing. This entailed sharing knowledge that has been accumulated over time to the next person/others who could be potential successors to a specific position. If the knowledge is not shared, there will be a gap. The HR division must come up with a formal way of knowledge sharing and follow up with the successor within a few months on the knowledge sharing.

*“All of that, like they share the knowledge that they have accumulated over time, an important to you so that you can also import it to others if the time or when the time comes.” [P5]*

*“Where the HR is involved and then they come up with a formal way, of the things that need to be shared with and can be another employee who maybe was seen to have their potential to be the successor. It can be four months and maybe HR then every month they'll just follow on the progress.” [P13]*

#### **4.3.5.2(b) Sub-theme 2.2: Knowledge preservation**

Participants were of the view that knowledge preservation meant that knowledge could be preserved and kept within the organisation, and it would not be lost when the respective person left the organisation. Knowledge specific to the company should be retained in the company.

*“To me, it means, the preservation, of the information, the knowledge you see in the company. It’s the knowledge and information, the knowledge that we want to retain in the company.” [P13]*

#### **4.3.5.2(c) Sub-theme 2.3: Knowledge transfer**

Participants felt that succession planning was also about knowledge transfer as it was seen as transferring knowledge from the experienced to the inexperienced. It was important for experienced staff to guide inexperienced staff on projects.

*“If somebody needs to manage a department, you need to understand firstly and be able to guide, younger, less experienced people on projects”. [P8]*

#### **4.3.5.2(d) Sub-theme 2.4: Informal**

One participant was of the view that knowledge dissemination did not have to be necessarily formal but could even be done informally whilst people were working together. However, it was important to have a record of such knowledge sharing and transfer. Informal training can be on-the-job training.

*“It can be even if it's informal, that it doesn't necessarily have to be formal. It can also be something, that is informal that when every day then we work together. Then we also have been shared that information, but the tricky thing about that is that there won't be any record, evidence, of the transfer” [P1]*

#### **4.3.5.3 Theme 3: Continuity and progression**

Succession planning was about continuity and progression, with minimal to no setbacks.

#### **4.3.5.3(a) Sub-theme 3.1: Transfer of work**

Participants argued that it was about the effective transfer of work to the right person who can take over such work responsibilities. There will be a time were a new employee with inadequate skills needs to come up to speed with understanding the technicalities to be able to perform the job. In the absence of an employee, there must be someone in the department who will be able to perform the duties.

*“That's quite specialised in that field that you have to be able to fully do that function and give*

*the correct guidance where somebody comes out from a different background.” [P8]*

*“For instance, they would appoint somebody in my position from externally who hasn't worked in a field for any time there's a lot of technical knowledge that they won't have. So, there will be a time that it will take that person to catch up and understand the technicalities regarding the raw materials, the processes, the product performance requirements, and things like that.” [P8]*

*“I think it means having as a business or in my department having somebody who can perform the duties if I'm not around.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.5.3(b) Sub-theme 3.2: Role continuity**

Participants were of the view that role continuity was very important in the sense that a successor needed to be able to carry out their new role effectively to foster continuity. Hence, ample plans inclusive of training plans needed to be a part of this. Succession planning was on the continuity of roles in the organisation. When someone leaves the organisation, there must be someone available to fill the vacant role.

*“Succession planning to me means a development plan or training plan that's put together by management or by the business to ensure that there is a passing on or pass on of leadership roles.” [P4]*

*“To me, it's making sure that that there's a person or persons ready to take over or carry on with a certain role.” [P8]*

*“It's not one that I thought of in terms of how what, but I mean succession planning is making sure that that we have continuity here going forward when the time comes for me to step aside.” [P1]*

#### **4.3.5.3(c) Sub-theme 3.3: Progression**

Succession planning was about staff progression, this can be an incentive to grow rather than being stifled. Participants felt that with succession planning, employees can prosper in the company. Moreover, there should be set measures and plans in place.

*“I think it's just having an understanding of how to go about the progress of the staff in the lab and the department.” [P2]*

*“My understanding is that succession planning is having measures or plans set in place for people to not only grow but prosper in the company.” (5)*

#### **4.3.5.3(d) Sub-theme 3.4: Mitigate setbacks**

Participants argued that with succession planning, there can be continuity in the department, and the department can still function and support the business. It was very important for continuity to occur so that setbacks could be mitigated. A setback can hurt departmental and organisational performance.

*“Ensure that there's always continuity and there's no setbacks in the progression of running the department.” [P2]*

*“Once a person either retires or leaves the business then that creates continuation without really causing a dip in the performance of the department.” [P8]*

#### **4.3.5.4 Theme 4: Growth and development**

Succession planning was also related to the growth and development of respective staff members.

##### **4.3.5.4(a) Sub-theme 4.1: Development into role**

Most participants were of the view that employees can be developed into a role with the proper training and development plan. A staff member who needed to be developed into a successive role needed to have a developmental plan in place that would cater to all developmental needs. This can entail identification based on potential and performance, further training, and experience building.

*“A development plan would be understanding for example, an identified person who would be suitable for a leadership role and working through their strengths, their weaknesses, or what training they have already and trying to put together a plan of action or timeline to achieve all the necessary skills or training that they would have to undergo to meet a certain leadership role.” [P4]*

*“It could mean training in the sense of internal as well as external training, given the opportunity to deal with different areas within and the company by an interdepartmental communication liaising with different people from different departments.” [P6]*

##### **4.3.5.4(b) Sub-theme 4.2: Critical development vs. action plan**

An action plan must accompany a developmental plan so that development for critical positions can occur. The plan should be detailed with a careful analysis and should also include procedures and timelines. The participants felt that critical positions in the organisations needed to be

identified and a development plan for employees to fill those positions needed to be in place. The development plan will also assist in identifying the current status of an employee, where the employee needs to grow, and how the development of the employee will take place.

*“Process of identifying the critical position within the organisation and development action plans for an individual tutor.” [P3]*

*“And individual development plan for each of the employees to see that, this is where you are currently. This is where you need to be, and these are the steps that we need to take to get you to the point we need you to fill in this specific role. So, it's just an action plan basically or a development plan.” [P2]*

*“Is there a procedure for that, cause that's a different field than quality control, so proving as a sense with by can an employee have the ability to move from one department to another and then learn more.” [P5]*

*“I think the best procedures will have, would be firstly what's already in place, that's already has been said as well as screening for and none sharing between people. So maybe someone from R&D can show us in QC to see what is required as an R&D technician you know?” [P5]*

#### **4.3.5.4(c) Sub-theme 4.3: Opportunity to grow**

Participants believed that succession planning was an opportunity for growth. Succession planning must be based on growth and development, which must revolve around the opportunity for staff to grow. Moving from one position to a higher position allows for such growth. However, if an employee is the only person in the department, then it is difficult to grow as there is no opportunity to grow. In some instances, the participants were doing both a technician role and a manager role. Currently, some laboratories only have technician/s who report directly to the manager. There are no opportunities to progress to a Senior Technician, Chemist, Senior Chemist, or Laboratory Supervisor as these positions are not available.

*“Creating an opportunity for me to grow in this organisation.” [P7]*

*“And for example, I'm a lab technician here and I'm the only lab technician and I'm in quality. We don't have anyone else other than me. My post is part of a process manager, so I'm part of quality and process, but there's really, I don't think there's any way to go from here because, with just the quality parts, I'm the only person.” [P7]*

*“It's part of maybe their growth and development system as well.” [P14]*

*“Growth for me growth is about, I think it's different for each person. so, moving from one position to another, they can see that as growth.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.5.4(d) Sub-theme 4.4: Career development**

Relating to growth and development, succession planning can complement career development. This entailed career progression within similar fields. An example quoted by Participant P6 was moving from the in-services level to a permanent position and then to higher levels. The participant felt that succession planning would assist in this process.

*“Succession planning means that one can develop a career in the same environment or working space. It would be moving a next a higher step forward. For example, if we have maybe an in-service technician succession planning could be making them permanent and becoming equality technician moving up.” [P6]*

#### **4.3.5.5 Theme 5: Organisation and leadership**

Succession planning had a lot to do with the organisation as well as the leadership of the organisation.

##### **4.3.5.5(a) Subtheme 5.1: Organisational progress**

Participants were of the view that succession planning should be part of the organisational goals in terms of organisational progress. Hence, this needed to be understood by both leadership and staff so that performance could be aligned with progress in this regard.

*“And to have a way of talking and listening with your employees from the organisational goals. From the organisational goal for either a specific task or also from a personal perspective in understanding.” [P9]*

*“That the process of the company, the lab function, the process continues without these sorts of being a drop in performance or any impact on the company in terms of the daily running and the functioning of the company.” [P12]*

##### **4.3.5.5(b) Sub-theme 5.2: Leadership continuity**

Participants argued that succession planning was also about leadership continuity. Leadership has an important role to play concerning organisational direction. Hence, leadership skills are critical and need to be passed on to the right candidate. These include decision-making skills, communication, staff management, EQ, and many other related leadership skills. If such skills are not transferred, then organisational direction can be compromised.

*“And leadership skills or when I would elaborate on that, I would say that in terms of their succession planning, it is when the one, let's say the current leader is passing his leadership skills in terms of communication, the emotional intelligence decision making and whoever that they are grooming to take over the same position.” [P9]*

*“Leadership skills would be goal setting delegation and time management and so forth. And bearing in mind that it's not just going to restrict the successor into whatever that's being taught, but it will. It's just going to be an add-on in above what the success will be having.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.5.5(c) Sub-theme 5.3: Strategy**

Participants were of the view that succession planning should become a strategy for the department and/or organisation. Having such a strategy will mean that it is viewed at the highest level and therefore prioritised accordingly. If there is suddenly a vacant position, there will be no lapse in the department if a proper succession plan is in place.

*“Strategy of the business for that department. How we get involved in and function towards this common goal for the business. So, continuation will then actually help with not certainly if one person leaves or gets sick or whatever the case might be. If there's a vacancy that there's suddenly now, there's a sort of a lapse in what needs to happen and function as a department.” [P8]*

#### **4.3.6 Themes and sub-themes for objective two**

The objective was to examine the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. All participants viewed succession planning as important, and this was classified into themes, as tabulated in Table 4.6.

**Table 4. 6: Themes and sub-theme of objective two: The importance of succession planning**

<b>OBJECTIVE TWO: THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCCESSION PLANNING</b>	
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	Knowledge and skills
	Knowledge continuity
	Skills and knowledge retention
<b>Roles and positions</b>	Identify talent
	Fill critical position
	Job titles and future roles
<b>Transition for progress</b>	Transition
	Prevent operational standstill
	Preparedness for uncertainty
	Prevent errors
<b>Confidence and motivation</b>	Motivation and morale
	Confidence

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 4.6 refers to the themes identified for the importance of succession planning. The themes were knowledge, roles and positions, transition for progress, confidence, and motivation. The analysis of the themes is below, and the themes were broken down further into sub-themes

#### **4.3.5.6 Theme 1: Knowledge**

Succession planning was a complement to the knowledge of the organisation through its staff.

##### **4.3.6.1(a) Subtheme 1.1: Knowledge and skills**

Succession planning was important as it was primarily about knowledge and skills development and sharing. Knowledge and skills need to be effectively passed on so that the department can perform at its optimum. This in turn has a positive effect on the organisation. The participants argued that staff should share their knowledge so that everyone has the same knowledge in getting the tasks completed in the laboratory. It was very important for staff to learn new ways of accomplishing a task.

*“I think within any business, in every organisation they understand it's, they understand their objectives, they understand. what they need and it's always and every organisation is always evolving, and they always need different skills.” [P7]*

*“One person would analyse it differently, the other one would analyse it differently, and they can come up with two different solutions to the same problem, so having people share their knowledge would help us widen our vision and of course, we would most likely be a person's intellect. the*

*work through the work they do and how they do their work. That would be a skill, cause people don't do or analyse things in the same way. I believe that to be a skill.” [P5]*

#### **4.3.6.1(b) Sub-theme 1.2: Knowledge continuity**

Relating to the above, succession planning was important to ensure knowledge continuity. For example, if there was only one person with specialised knowledge and that person was unavailable, off sick, or has left the organisation, then the organisation should not come to a standstill. Participants were strongly of the view that succession planning was based on continuing such knowledge to other staff, and as one participant mentioned ‘*equip your team as best possible*’.

*“For example, the way things are is there's only one person who works in the lab, which is me, the quality lab technician. When I'm not around, not just get done if anything goes wrong in the plant, or the raw material, nobody will verify if the issue is the raw material. If we produce, for example, glass in the line and they think there's an issue with the batch, nobody's there to test if the chemical is in order. When it comes to training, we need to have more than just one person knowing how to do all these tests that we need to support the process.” [P14]*

*“Defining what knowledge is before we can even talk about knowledge transfer knowledge is, in my own opinion, it is either the facts or the information or the school, skills acquired through experience. When you are passing the knowledge the knowledge transfer then means people who are in a better position in terms of experience or leadership roles. I want to think that they have better knowledge, they have better experience, or they have better, better knowledge in terms of academics and terms of experience. When you are transferring that knowledge, it means that you equip your team as best possible.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.6.1(c) Sub-theme 1.3: Skills and knowledge retention**

Succession planning would ensure that knowledge is not lost, and that key skills and knowledge are retained. Participants were of the view that their department had unique knowledge and skills and hence it was vital to ensure that these unique knowledge and skills were not lost. It would be a challenge to replace those unique skills, and knowledge retention was very important in the technical department.

*“Again, and like I said, more for continuation and for retaining knowledge and skills. If you suddenly have a lot of staff, you're going to lose a lot of knowledge and skills. You must continuously make sure that those specialised people or the guys with a lot of knowledge and high skills and abilities, that there's somebody that shadows them or learns from them and have*

*at least the same into 80% of that knowledge and skills that the critical ones that you don't lose that when people move or design or get promoted to other positions.” [P8]*

*“I think it's very important to each department, but then in my department, that's very critical because we want to retain, that knowledge the information because the kind of, the line of work that we are in, you see it needs unique skills and knowledge and it's very difficult to get that. So that is why I think when you have those unique skills and knowledge, then it's very important just to retain them because if you lose them then it will be a challenge. After all, these are very scarce, skills and knowledge to get.” [ P13]*

#### **4.3.6.2 Theme 2: Roles and positions**

Succession planning had an important role to play in the positions and roles within the department/organisation.

##### **4.3.6.2(a) Sub-theme 2.1: Identify talent**

Succession planning can be used to identify the right talent and skills to occupy the right positions. This can allow for the prospective person to be identified early and necessary development can take place to groom them into the role. Participants felt that to have a good succession plan in place, the organisation needs to identify the skills of the employees so that they can be placed in the proper succession plan. Employees should not be groomed for succession if they are not competent.

*“I think it is very important that so that we identify people, or we identify myself and the people who have potential as people who, who are hunger actually to be more, developed.” [P3]*

*“Think it's extremely important because you must have people who are competent or who are knowledgeable enough to lead. The team is equally on an understanding of all the concepts. Who is well trained, so if for example, it all must be available, there must be equally as competent to undertake that position. Although so it's very important to have succession planning in place so that no gap must be filled within a short space of time because they are employees that are equally confident to fill those positions when they do become available.” [P4]*

*“I think it's very important for us to identify our capabilities and to understand our interests and to develop ourselves.” [P7]*

#### **4.3.6.2(b) Sub-theme 2.2: Fill critical positions**

In any organisation, there will be critical positions that need to be constantly filled. Participants felt that these positions, if not filled, could have a negative implication on productivity. Hence succession planning allowed for such positions to be filled if/when required and allowed growth and opportunity for existing staff. Participants were of the view that these critical positions needed continuity to serve other divisions within the organisation.

*“The critical positions and to be more innovative in our department as others have mentioned, area on that you are the critical department that will we need to come up with the new ideas, new product. So that would be relevant to the market.” [P3]*

*“And another thing, it also means as a quality technician also can't move to another position cause if an opportunity comes in and I'm like hey, I'm interested in that, they'll be like, oh, but there's a gap here which we cannot fill. We can't leave a gap open; you know. So now I also can move so it is important for the department to be able to support the plant and is also important for the personal growth of the people who work in the department so that they can also get the opportunity to be able to move to other positions should they be available without leaving a gap in this department.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.6.2(c) Sub-theme 2.3: Job titles and future roles**

For some participants, succession planning was also about attaining their job titles. Participants argued that they may not wish to remain in a junior or graduate role throughout their tenure, but instead reach that respective job title that they envisioned. Participants felt that with succession planning, one can reach a certain job title or role within the organisation.

*“By job titles, I mean in terms of succession planning for example, I'm currently in a graduate role, so my title would be a research and development chemist graduate. If I were to consider succession planning, further development, and growth for myself would be maybe envisioning myself in a prominent position and then gradually improving on that title to maybe getting to it.” [P4]*

*“Goals and interest in developing myself and potentially one day be in a leadership role or a team of my own.” [P7]*

#### **4.3.6.3 Theme 3: Transitioning for progress**

Succession planning was important for transition purposes, especially in terms of transitioning for progress.

#### **4.3.6.3(a) Sub-theme 3.1: Transition**

Participants were of the view that succession planning is crucial for a smooth transition. This entailed the unhindered passing of knowledge from one person to another for a successive role and ensuring that the organisation continues smoothly in terms of its operations and its respective performance and progress due to the technical department being a vital department for the organisation: 'it's the engine of the car'.

*"Because of the roles that we are all playing within the company, and it is to ensure that, this is a very important department, I want to think that it's the engine of the car. We are making things happen. We are making this company grow, so it is very important to ensure that a smooth transition becomes a part of the plan." [P9]*

*"Smooth transition passing the knowledge, passing their proper, or having their proper teachings. Propriety information is, transferred from one person to the next. Not putting the companies in for the department's information and the risk of understanding." [P9]*

*You just want to have the smooth transition in terms of succession that one person drops off." [P12]*

#### **4.3.6.3(b) Subtheme 3.2: Prevent operational standstill**

Relating to the above, the transitioning process would prevent an operational standstill. Participants argued that such a standstill can occur when staff who have key knowledge of a product or process are no longer available. This would severely impact operations and direction. If knowledge is not transferred, then new employees in the department would be trained by staff having limited knowledge, which may slow down the performance of the department and hence impact other departments that require the services of the technical division.

*"I think it's very important regarding the running of the department and making sure that there aren't any setbacks and we left without the staff we need and the support that we need." [P2]*

*"Let's say now we have a new person coming, and that person would not have any knowledge or the basic stuff. And then we would have to slow down production because now we must start training that person with the limited knowledge we have. So now that not only affects our department, start impacting other departments, because now we might take longer to analyse stuff." [P5]*

*"Because when you look at the product and development, then if we don't have the product there is nothing to sell. But then to have these products, to develop them, then you need the skills you*

*need the knowledge. Then, if you don't have the skills, you don't know, you might not have the product. And if you don't have the product, then you have nothing to sell.” [P13]*

#### **4.3.6.3(c) Sub-theme 3.3: Preparedness for uncertainty**

In the current economic times, there was much uncertainty whereby staff turnover levels were high. Participants felt that employees were not staying in organisations over the long term and were leaving within 3-5 years. Participants argued that succession planning was important to embrace the uncertainties of tomorrow and have successors in place who can step up to the responsibility when the need arises.

*“Are there candidates that can take over if, for some reason, they might promote me to something different or send me on a project into Africa or whatever, so you need to have that option available, I mean from an HR point of view, it's driven through Sain-Gobain to have succession planning, especially within the business where there's I mean and it's not just us, I mean it's if you look at the current trends globally on people not staying long in positions 3-5 years, then they feel like they need to move on. So, you have to have full critical positions, some planning place to say, if this person is not yet to ready in a week or a month or two months whatever. Is there somebody to take over?” [P9]*

*“You don't have the sort of period where the people are a bit confused and don't know what to do...steps up know exactly what their responsibilities, their roles, and their function are.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.6.3(d) Sub-theme 3.4: Prevent errors**

The participants felt that, in the laboratory environment, it was important to be pedantic and mitigate errors as much as possible. However, such errors can arise when a new person with limited knowledge takes over a department. Succession planning can prevent such occurrences when adequate knowledge is transferred.

*“I think maybe that would have helped mitigate a lot of issues because some of the issues we've had might have been because there hasn't been too much knowledge sharing between the people in QC because there hasn't been a lot of training that has been set out. But I think it would help mitigate a lot of issues that we have and reduce errors or any other problems that have occurred.” [P5]*

#### **4.3.6.4 Theme 4: Confidence and motivation**

Succession planning can serve to build confidence and motivation, which are important to promote performance.

#### **4.3.6.4(a) Sub-theme 4.1: Motivation and morale**

Participants were of the view that when people are placed in successive roles, it boosts their morale and gives them added motivation to perform. They will not feel stifled and frustrated. Hence, succession planning is important in this regard and aids in organisational performance. Participants also felt that senior members believing in an employee to do the job also gives employees motivation. Motivation stems from the self, co-workers, and senior management.

*“I think it's important to encourage the team morale to encourage a good, healthy working environment and just to ensure that we're able to perform at the level that the organisation requires the department to perform at.” [P2]*

*“It should be self-motivation as well and concerning motivation, it's like the kind of support that you get from co-workers which adds to motivation the kind of support you get from as a senior member in your department as well as I think motivation.” [P6]*

*“I'll say the changes that I've seen when we look at the subordinate. I've seen the employees, becoming more motivated you see. Then when you start to raise issues like your succession planning issues, that does not bring confidence to, you the employees the subordinates. Maybe if a senior person must leave, then they'll go outside just to get a replacement. So at least then if you talk about these things to make sure that they are in place and then implemented, then it boosted the morale of the employees, knowing very well that what they will be afforded, is an opportunity.” [P13]*

#### **4.3.6.4(b) Sub-theme 4.2: Confidence**

Participants argued that how they are communicated with and treated builds up their confidence. Trust, responsibility, and accountability aid in employee confidence. Succession planning can also foster confidence in an individual to fulfill a new role. because they would feel that the organisation has trust and faith in them to carry out the role.

*“It gives one the confidence that they can, that they can fill in a role or fall in that higher role and it gives them a sense of responsibility as well.” [P6]*

*“Confidence is something that I would say that personally, it's a mindset as well as a feeling as well as how you are treated within an organisation as well as communication, how you're communicated to.” [P6]*

“I think all these outside, all these different factors would impact on a person's confidence. Confidence can easily be broken if there is no trust. If there is no accountability, if there is no responsibility. I think various factors contribute to confidence and I think support is the major one which attribute and helps in developing confidence.” [P6]

#### 4.3.7 Themes and sub-themes for objective three

The objective here was to identify challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at the multinational organisation, South Africa. This objective was pertinent to determining the current challenges and barriers that may hinder succession planning implementation. It was informed by a plethora of sub-themes. Below are two qualitative graphs and a table highlighting the analysis of objective three.

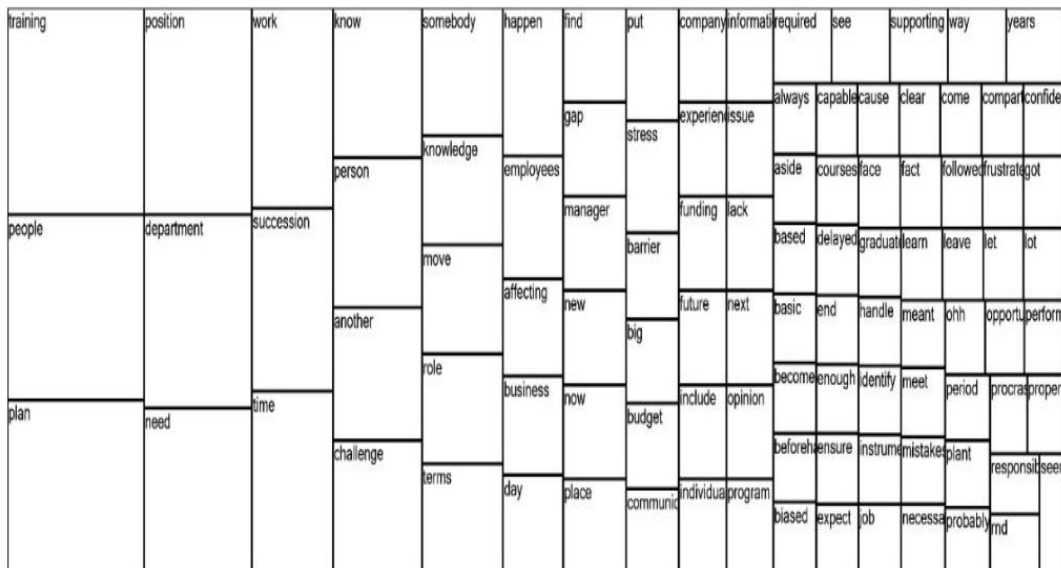


Figure 4.16: Tree-map on objective three

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.16 displays the most common words used by participants relating to challenges in succession planning: training, people, and planning.



Table 4.7 shows the themes linked to challenges in succession planning, namely: 1) managerial; 2) funding; 3) training and knowledge; 4) workload and capacity; and 5) personal. The analysis of the themes is below, broken down further into sub-themes.

#### **4.3.7.1 Theme 1: Managerial**

There were challenges and barriers at the managerial level, which was informed by the following:

##### **4.3.7.1(a) Sub-theme 1.1: Lack of strategy**

The participants were of the view that there was an overall lack of succession planning strategy at a managerial level. This in turn caused challenges at the operational level. There is no visible plan of what and how succession planning is going to be done. Furthermore, employees are not aware of the strategy for succession planning.

*“The lack of strategy. I think it would be the lack of strategy and not having enough people to work with.” [P9]*

*“It is the plan in place in terms of, knowledge transfer in terms of the succession plan having to know what to do or how you're going to do it. The planning in place is what we are going to do, and this is how we are going to do it.” [P9]*

##### **4.3.7.1(b) Sub-theme 1.2: Management lack of confidence**

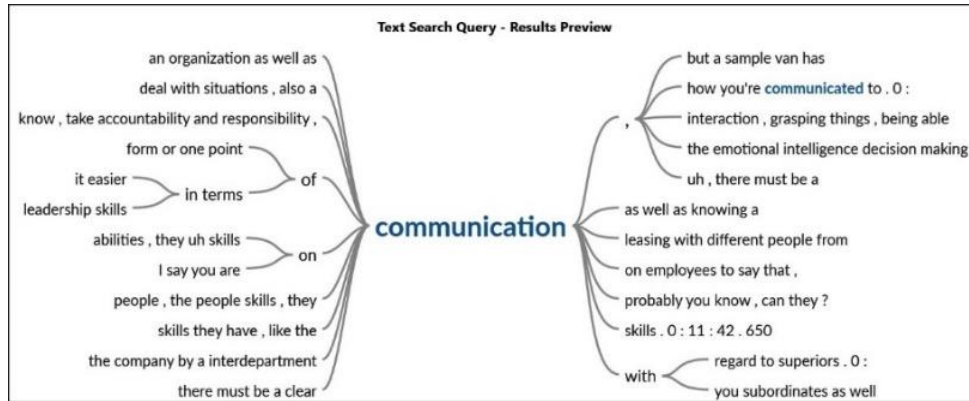
Participants argued that management also seemed to have a lack of confidence in employees to fill certain positions, which led to employees not being grown into positions. Management has a lack of confidence in employees who have not been in certain positions for a certain period and feel that the employee is not ready for movement into other positions.

*“I've experienced it as lack of confidence in employees by the management, they didn't have that confidence in employees to grow them or maybe to put them in those positions.” [P10]*

*“They will think maybe that person is not capable of doing that work because he was not prepared to be in that position. they will do for someone who's been in that position for a certain period. People who have those skills were in that position.” [P10]*

##### **4.3.7.1(c) Sub-theme 1.3: Communication**

The participants argued that clear communication was currently lacking in terms of succession roles and positions. Employees are not aware of any plans to fill positions when the position becomes available, nor who the successor will be.



**Figure 4. 18: Word tree on ‘communication’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.18 shows how ‘communication’ is linked to ‘interdepartmental, organisation and situation’.

*“Because if I say you are on communication, there must be a clear communication on employees to say that, or maybe a plan to say that if it might happen at this position becomes vacant, then we have someone who can be in that position and occupied.” [P10]*

#### **4.3.7.1(d) Sub-theme 1.4: Expectations**

Participants were of the view that management sometimes had their own opinions and expectations on how something should be done. This did not allow for the freedom of employees to apply their minds.

*“I think based on their opinion, their personal opinion they have, they have this expectation of an individual of how it should have been done, whereas there are many ways to resolve its problem or situation.” [P6]*

#### **4.3.7.1(e) Sub-theme 1.5: Procrastination**

Participants indicated that management does procrastinate in developing an effective succession plan and sharing knowledge. With procrastination, there would be a delay in implementing succession planning.

*“It affects succession plan because you'd find that people always procrastinate in terms of sharing the knowledge or in terms of starting to work on the succession plan itself. Then you'd find that at the end of the day, you end up not having enough time.” [P9]*

#### **4.3.7.2 Theme 2: Funding**

Funding was a challenge when it came to the following:

##### **4.3.7.2(a) Sub-theme 2.1: Training**

Training is dependent on funds and budget. Participants indicated that without funding, staff are not able to develop themselves timeously. Not being able to develop oneself would put one at a disadvantage in terms of having the necessary skills to fill a vacant position.

*“I would assess the employees. I want to get the training. And will be limited on the funding.”*  
[P3]

*“Is for every department. They get a certain amount. Yearly for them to get training and training or certificates or short courses because it's very important to do those training, that short courses so that you can have.”* [P3]

*“The second would be budgeted for training as I mentioned.”* [P4]

##### **4.3.7.2(b) Sub-theme 2.2: New technology and equipment**

Participants indicated that new technologies and equipment are much needed for performance and productivity. However, obtaining such equipment is dependent on funding. Gaining exposure to new technology and equipment would place staff in a better position for skills development.

*“We need, like some most advanced instrument and so the funding is the basic fact I could use the one that affects us.”* [P3]

*“Also, turn up on the new technologies. A new instrument that you need. It's affecting us on that, but I think has the time goes by maybe the company will see the need to include the funding.”*  
[P3]

##### **4.3.7.2(c) Sub-theme 2.3: Succession planning**

Overall, the participants argued that there is not enough budget allocated to succession planning in general. For the successful implementation of succession planning, there must be an allocated budget to ensure a successful transition.

*“Also, the fact of budget constraints and what the company has been going through over the years, so that also impacts us a succession planning to a bit”* [P6]

### **4.3.7.3 Theme 3: Training and knowledge**

There were challenges and barriers to training and knowledge transfer.

#### **4.3.7.3(a) Sub-theme 3.1: Training**

Participants were of the view that currently, there was a lack of a structured program for training. A training program must consider the training needs, areas of weaknesses for development, performance and productivity needs, knowledge base, and other related components to be comprehensive. A proper training program can result in better succession planning.

*“I mentioned earlier there would be a KPI or certain performance criteria that you would have to meet for your role. If we are having succession planning and we are aware of what the next position demands, we can put training in place to ensure that employees who are going to be selected in the future have been trained to meet those requirements for the next role within the company.” [P4]*

*“With regards to training to make those people ready for taking over or being able to apply for positions like this or whatever in the plants, there's not a clear plan at this stage. There are some actions taking place, but there's probably more definition of what's required. Specifically with regards to training wise and to make that candidate get to a point where you can say they 80% suitable to take over that position or 90% or whatever the requirement would be.” [P8]*

#### **4.3.7.3(b) Sub-theme 3.2: Information and knowledge transfer**

The participants were of the view that, currently, there was no structured form of knowledge transfer from experienced staff to the other staff. This causes challenges in continuity when older and experienced staff leave the organisation. Knowledge transfer should be both technical and soft skills.

*“Information from much older, more experienced technicians. That's been one of the setbacks. And then I would say supporting another department is also important. And a bit of a stressful situation with succession planning because you feel as if your work is kind of getting a little bit delayed sometimes. And you need to, you know, put it aside to support another department so it can be seen as, you know if I'm looking at it in the context of people who have left. It can be seen as one of the downsides, I would say as compared to other departments or other industries.” [P2]*

*“You would need the knowledge of how to delegate how to you know, take accountability and responsibility, communication with your subordinates as well as seniors in that sense.” [P6]*

#### **4.3.7.3(c) Sub-theme 3.3: Skills and tools**

Participants argued that there was a lack of knowledge, skill, and the right tools to perform effectively in key roles. For example, a person who needs to be placed in a supervisor role must learn supervisory skills to be able to perform their duties adequately.

*“And I think that is one of the barriers about, providing the necessary tools for that position, for example, say in QC, if we needed a supervisor, that person must have a be equipped with the necessary supervisory skills, maybe a supervisory course.” [P6]*

*“I would say if people were not capable, which means they don't know that area of work as you need some knowledge to be able to do your duties in those positions.” [P10]*

#### **4.3.7.4 Theme 4: Workload and capacity**

Workload and capacity were added challenges and barriers.

##### **4.3.7.4(a) Sub-theme 4.1: Number of staff**

Some departments were understaffed, which meant that there were limitations in terms of coverage areas. Participants felt that more staff needed to be employed to fill relevant positions. Being understaffed meant that it was difficult for staff to undergo training, due to them not having the ability to leave their position and do the training. The employees' workload is high, and they are unable to train other staff members as well.

*“But it has to do with being approved to get somebody to hire somebody to work full time, like increasing the number of heads in the department. Hence, we still don't have somebody else other than me.” [P14]*

*“Another thing is, I think is affecting the plant is that I think we are working with a skeleton when I say we are working with a skeleton, I mean like where you would have maybe where you would expect to have maybe like two people working, you'll find that you have one person working.” [P14]*

*“When that happens, is even when we are trying to get somebody maybe from another department to be trained in my department, it's a bit difficult because when they leave, they're station and come here for training, we have an open gap there and we can't afford that as well.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.7.4(b) Sub-theme 4.2: Turnover**

Staff turnover was a contributor relating to staff shortages. Participants argued that people were looking for other opportunities and they could suddenly leave. This led to added workload for others and intensified the need for succession planning. Having such a high turnover is concerning because key skills and knowledge are lost when staff leaves the organisation, which will impact succession plans.

*“You might identify a person as a potential succession planning for a position, but if it doesn't happen within a time frame, that's favourable for that person itself. They might move out of the business or move to another department or another opportunity. And then you have a challenge again with identifying additional people for this succession planning. I wouldn't say it's a barrier. I mean, they might feel that the barrier is the person being long in a position. But if the person stays there for 20-30 forty years, people get frustrated because they don't see a future for them to exceed, move up in the ranks so they will move out.” [P8]*

*“When someone is leaving, and you know the workload intensifies. Whether it's in our R&D department or all QC departments, it does generate a lot more stress for the remaining members. All of those I feel are kind of hindrances to the succession planning.” [P2]*

#### **4.3.7.4(c) Sub-theme 4.4: Multitasking**

Participants were of the view that being short-staffed meant that staff had to multi-task. This was stressful and left little time to attend development training and learn about other aspects. Not being able to develop the skills required would hinder an employee's growth into a position, and ultimately hinders succession planning.

*“I feel that you know it does become very stressful and certain individuals may not be able to handle that kind of stress where you know your day-to-day kind of roles changes depending on what is needed for the other department. In that sense, I would say it's some individuals who maybe can't handle that suggestion or they can't multitask that level or they can't really. I've compartmentalised the work, so it's basically like you have a plan for the day of what needs to get done for your role. But now you need to put that aside and stop, and it's going to be delayed because you need to go and assist in another in another role. So that can be challenging for some I feel.” [P2]*

*“Most of the time we tend to not have the time to learn or training on certain things cause most of the time it just focuses on testing products, making sure that we adhere to the project plan, making sure that the testing times and the turnaround times are met.” [P5]*

#### **4.3.7.5 Theme 5: Personal**

There were also personal challenges for staff in terms of succession planning.

##### **4.3.7.5(a) Sub-theme 5.1: Intimidating**

Participants indicated that some staff felt intimidated to take on a larger role as they feared they may not perform adequately. Employees are also in a comfort zone and do not want to take on more responsibility. Employees were also intimidated by other highly skilled employees.

*“Let's take somebody who is in a position that is way up there followed by a way low position, such that having to feel the next person's shoes would be too big. I think that in our department that could be the challenge. Having people who have so much knowledge and information or experience exposed in certain things and followed by people who have a bare minimum of the same information.” [P9]*

*“Sometimes people get into a comfort zone and then they don't really want to take on a new challenge, or they just perceive that the new challenge is too much responsibility.” [P12]*

##### **4.3.7.5(b) Sub-theme 5.2: Envy**

The participants indicated that there was also personal and professional jealousy between staff members. Transfer of knowledge between staff members could be compromised because of this envy.

*“We often experience jealousy amongst co-workers or, you know, opinions that are interpreted differently.” [P6]*

##### **4.3.7.5(c) Sub-theme 5.3: Favouritism**

Participants felt that there were also occurrences of favouritism from management whereby certain managers favoured certain staff and they were placed in successive roles due to this rather than their skills, qualifications, and experience. The organisation needs to have a succession plan that is fair and open to all employees.

*“Because that can happen, as a manager, when you lead people that you find that you got, this favouritism, it is in towards, someone. That is why I say that it must include the even, other people, even if you make sure that you include the other managers, to make sure that the whole thing is fair. You can be biased based on your feelings towards your subordinates.” [P13]*

#### 4.3.8 Themes and sub-themes for objective four

The analysis of objective four was on determining ways to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The improvement in succession planning is displayed in the two qualitative charts and table below.

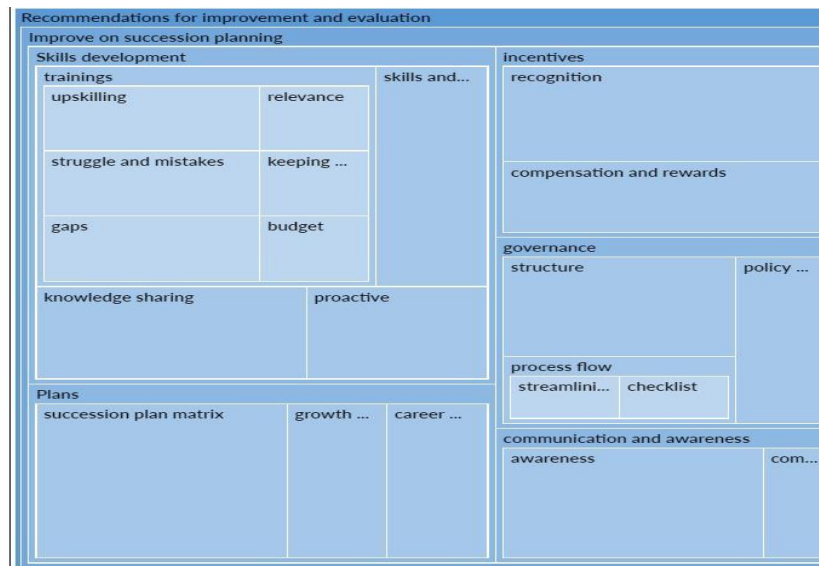


Figure 4. 19: Hierarchy chart for recommendations for improvement in succession planning

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.19 shows the hierarchy chart for objective four, one of the themes shown is ‘incentives’.

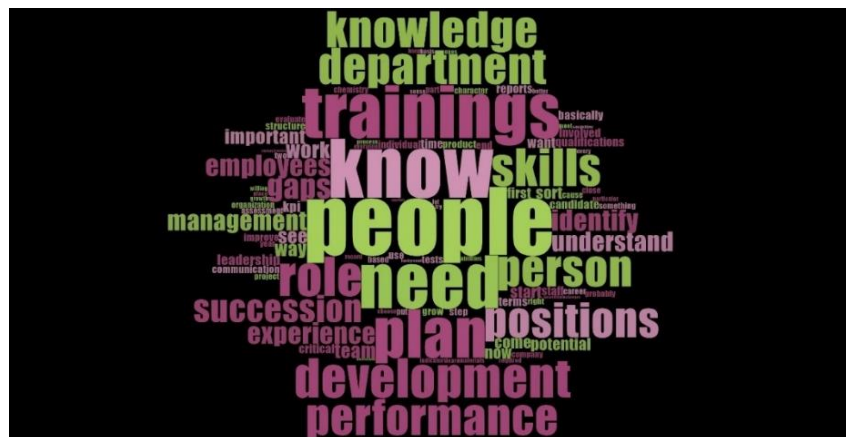


Figure 4. 20: World Cloud for recommendations for improvement of succession planning

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.20 shows the word cloud, the participants linked the recommendations for improvement to training, knowledge, development, skills, and plans.

**Table 4. 8: Recommendations for improvement in succession planning**

<b>OBJECTIVE FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN SUCCESSION PLANNING</b>	
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Skills Development</b>	Training
	Skills and roles
	Knowledge sharing
	Proactive
<b>Governance</b>	Process flow
	Policy and procedures
	Structure
<b>Plans</b>	Succession plan matrix
	Growth development plan
	Career development plan
<b>Communication and awareness</b>	Awareness
	Communication
<b>Incentives</b>	Recognition
	Compensation and rewards

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 4.8 shows the themes on how to improve succession planning: skills development, governance, plans, communication and awareness, and incentives were important and key items. The analysis of the themes is below, and the themes were broken down further into sub-themes.

#### **4.3.8.1 Theme 1: Skills development**

Skills development was the most highly ranked recommendation. It entailed the following.

##### **4.3.8.1(a) Sub-theme 1.1: Training**

Training was again recurring, thereby emphasising its importance.

- **Upskilling**

Participants were of the view that more training must be done to ensure the adequate upskilling of staff to fill successive roles. Upskilling employees within the team will groom them for better positions within the company.

*“The business has started with a GM program. I think last year already. And I think they've had the 4th intake already on that. Part of that succession planning was the people that's been identified to also include them in that programs that they get exposure as a general manager, basics learning on that.” [P8]*

*“In terms of developing the people would be to try and upskill the ones that are already within the team or try to get the ones that are in the team in a better position.” [P9]*

- **Struggle and mistakes**

Participants indicated that training could serve to mitigate the mistakes made by staff and encourage those who may be struggling. Sending staff for training is a way of showing them that organisations want to invest in them.

*“I feel it's important to provide the necessary training and development for them, so even if they're struggling, they know that the organisation is willing to invest in them. I think all those factors would help.” [P2]*

*“Firstly, we need to have maybe set up more training for us. That way we can learn a lot more, so we have fewer mistakes.” [P5]*

- **Gaps**

The participants felt that training can serve to close performance gaps in various positions. Employees need to identify the skills they are lacking and what training is required to close the gap.

*“The gaps are in our department and then we'll be able to learn and train and educate.” [P7]*

*“Gaps identified I'm referring to the kinds, that they may acquire or maybe the skills that they don't have to be in those positions, maybe they can be a training for them to close those gaps or to acquire those skills that they need to be in, those positions.” [P10]*

- **Keeping up with change**

Participants were of the view that training also allowed the staff and organisation to holistically keep up with a changing environment and global trends. New technology is surfacing every day globally, and the technical department needs to be updated with the latest technologies for products, raw materials, testing, and equipment.

*“As well to undergo training because I feel ongoing training, especially within research and development, is essential since the technologies and the chemistry of the products and the raw materials are constantly changing. It's important for employees also to be able to be equipped with the ongoing knowledge that the industry has to offer.” [P4]*

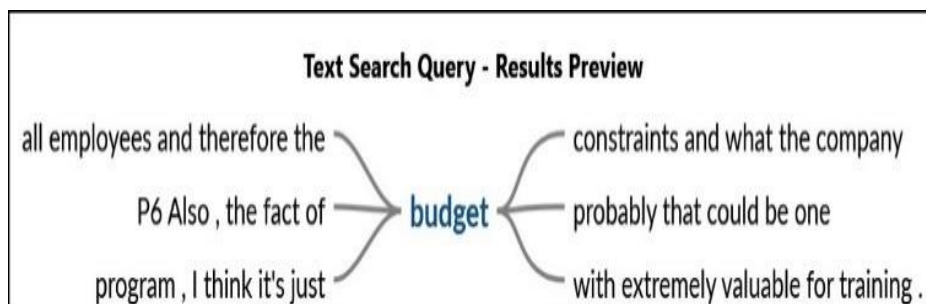
- **Relevance**

The participants argue that more training would also allow for knowledge to remain relevant and current. Having training relevant to an employee’s job will enhance their knowledge. Relevant training can also be with suppliers who supply the organisation with raw materials.

*“The next step that you must take is training so that we have even confidence and knowledge of what we are doing and training like SAPMA, where you can understand what you like. Pigments, paint, and the resins. Why you could get like the most knowledge and to have the training with the suppliers as well. Training as well, as new technologies. I think on that side, we still must improve on that.” [P3]*

- **Budget**

The participants felt that a budget and funding must be allocated for more training. This is very important to ensure that staff training is done. Without the proper funding and budget, staff training cannot be done.



**Figure 4. 21: Word Tree on ‘budget’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.21 displays the word ‘budget’ linked to employees, training, and constraints.

*“In that regard, I would consider training very essential within this field for all employees, and therefore the budget with be extremely valuable for training.” [P4]*

#### **4.3.8.1(b) Sub-theme 1.2: Skills and roles**

Participants were of the view that the organisation must ensure that the right skills are employed for the right roles, whether such skills are coming from within or outside the organisation. This applies to leadership roles as well, not just operational.

*“I’ll just say if the role is to be a leader and you do not have, at the right in our leadership skills and then that is identified, then that is the focus area. That is your improvement area.”*

*That is way then we need to focus on just to make sure that we improve, the person on some of the traits, that will be required for that specific group.” [P13]*

*“If we are looking outside of the department, probably because we do employ engineers as well if they need to be, then looking at alternative options outside of the department, then it's a case of getting more involved in things like world-class manufacturing, which is very much focused in the plants, which is almost like a requirement for anybody that wants to apply for the process engineer position in the plant.” [P8]*

#### **4.3.8.1(c) Sub-theme 1.3: Knowledge sharing**

The participants indicated that there must be effective knowledge sharing and transfer from experienced staff to inexperienced. Hence, more mechanisms for this transfer must be in place.

*“All have started but the type of qualification for that role so that they have the background our knowledge of what they're going to do. Cause it's very vital when working in critical roles without knowledge.” [P3]*

*“I think as part of the succession plan, if we incorporate the succession planning, it can help. Imagine if you have two people who know how to operate a machine. The other one leaves you have another person who knows how to operate the machine. They know if this machine has a problem somewhere if you need to use Sellotape, I'm just making an example.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.8.1(d) Sub-theme 1.4: Proactive**

Participants were of the view that succession planning must not be left till the end and must not be reactive. It needs to be a proactive exercise so that a successor will be available to commence a role immediately when needed. This will avoid setbacks.

*“I think, challenging-wise of again it was at some point we were more focused on, on all. We had a lot of young or inexperienced people appointed with a few more specialised persons, and then one of the guys resigned and then it was a big gap. Fortunately, we already started understanding that this person might be looking for alternative employment. I started putting in some of the related experience people to work with that person, but still, I think most probably we had like a 3–4-month gap before we got to get the other person up to speed again to the same level as previously.” [P8]*

*“I think there are successful succession plans, maybe in other departments depending on maybe I'm how critical or how they think the position, how important it could be. But I think in the smaller positions right on the floor we sometimes we often overlook the succession plan*

*opportunity and until like it's too late and we are struggling to get people to work and do something and maybe somebody has gone has left in the position or they're resigned or now we don't have the skills we don't know.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.8.2 Theme 2: Governance**

There must be effective governance measures for succession planning.

##### **4.3.8.2(a) Sub-theme 2.1: Process flow**

A process flow should be created to guide the implementation and process of succession planning.

- **Streamlining**

Participants argued that the process of succession planning should be streamlined. A clear vision of succession planning must be created, with a start and ending point. This can be from the time a graduate arrives till the time they can reach the managerial level. Thereafter all processes can be mapped accordingly to support this.

*“I think it's important for all systems to be linked so that there is a clear vision from start to end of how a result is being captured or recorded. It makes it easier in terms of communication, but a simple one has already taken that into account by implementing SAP because we now have a system that can. Check each section from the beginning to the end and I feel like that makes it much easier for a graduate to management to be able to see what goes on within a transaction or raw material from the beginning to end. That would simplify the process and ensure better succession planning and management of the raw materials or the testing right up until the release of the product.” [P4]*

- **Checklist**

Participants felt that a checklist can be developed and is currently in progress. Such a checklist contains all the necessary key items for the successor to perform their new role. This allows the candidate to be aware of their needs.

*“Well, at this, this moment in time it's been designed by HR, but you know the checklist is going to entail not just what the person has to do daily, but more also are they brought up to speed. Are they trained? Are they assisted in troubleshooting and support services that we do all the functions of R&D that go sort of above and beyond just testing materials and coming up with a, you know, with a report, it's those, those things that need to be sort of the future incumbent in needs to be made aware of and needs to 1 accept that they want to sort of take on those challenges and who know what's what lies ahead.” [P12]*

#### **4.3.8.2(b) Sub-theme 2.2: Policy and procedures**

The participants were of the view that there should be a succession policy in place, accompanied by a set of procedures to support such a policy. The policy can serve as a strong point of reference to guide succession planning.

*“It has its way of doing things right and there are things I do not understand at my level, but I think you know if we could have like sort of like some sort of a policy sort of a policy kind of a thing that would sort of like force us every department to have some succession plan in place that way I think we can cover most of the gaps.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.8.2(c) Sub-theme 2.3: Structure**

Participants indicated that a formal structure must be in place to govern the process of succession planning. This can include the assessment process of successors as well. The structure can assist in improving succession planning because currently, the company does not know where the shortcomings are.

*“Some structure to grow people. So that they can be in those positions, or maybe they can be able to be in this position if they become vacant or available. The company must or the department on its own must have that structure whereby people will grow. The people will be assessed. If maybe there are gaps, there must be a plan again on how to close those gaps.” [P10]*

*“The only way it's going to improve on succession planning is probably taking the structured format that the multinational organisation wants and developing it further in time. No, not now, because we wouldn't know what the shortcomings are given that it's, you know, we're in the process of being the first people to do this formally. We wouldn't know what happens further downstream.” [P12]*

#### **4.3.8.3 Theme 3: Plans**

More plans must be put into place, informed by the following:

##### **4.3.8.3(a) Sub-theme 3.1: Succession plan matrix**

Participants were of the view that a succession plan matrix can assist in the planning aspect. The matrix can have a criteria section that can be mapped to critical roles. There are various criteria such as high potential, bench strength, pipeline utilisations, development activities, and others. This can ensure that the right experience is transferred.

*“The people who are to identify what you have people in your team that that have friend actually that are capable of actually the filling the positions where you have people who are more*

experienced that have actual strength the to do the work so to fill up all the position that is critical.” [P3]

“We can say, you know, our department where you have the from the graduate program to the manager people, they the being trained and knowledge and experience is transferable between these people and also the leadership is transferable to everyone.” [P3]

**4.3.8.3(b) Sub-theme 3.2: Growth development plan**

Participants felt that a growth development plan should also be created so that staff can know their growth trajectory and work towards it. This is especially true for staff at lower levels. Employees need to know what position they need to grow into and what plans organisations have for them.

“Growth development plan for each employee in the department. I feel that every team member needs to know what they're working towards and what the goal is for them in the organisation.” [P2]

“Because, for example, we'd be having people who would be in positions or lower positions for quite some time, people who, who are capable, people who have the ability, people who know that department, people who can be grown so they must be a plan on how to grow them into those positions.” [P10]

**4.3.8.3(c) Sub-theme 3.3: Career development plan**

The participants indicated that a career development plan must be developed relating to growth. Staff would want to further develop their career whilst in the organisation rather than being stuck on a certain career path. There could also be opportunities for staff to move to other departments and start a new career path.



**Figure 4. 22: Word Tree on ‘career’**

Source: NVIVO 20

Figure 4.22 shows the word ‘career’ linked to development, achievement, and driven.

*“You know those one-on-ones that we have a person would talk about their career development plans. We should create such a thing for ourselves as well, and work on that.” [P14]*

*“Who knows all a project position or research like to be able to grow within the company if imagine working in the same department for so many years until you retire and you're in the same position because, like your skills, it's like they are not good enough for you to be moved anywhere else. To me that career development is like being able to move from there to higher positions as well.” [P14]*

#### **4.3.8.4 Theme 4: Communication and awareness**

More efforts must be made in terms of communication and awareness.

##### **4.3.8.4(a) Sub-theme 4.1: Awareness**

The participants were of the view that awareness must be created so that employees are aware of succession planning and will be more enthusiastic about it. This can lead to more encouragement for staff to develop themselves and can also break any fear or intimidation of the process for staff. In terms of raising awareness, this could be done in training or meetings.

*“I would probably think that greater awareness is what's needed in terms of succession planning. One that people know that it is out there. Well, two, they mustn't be intimidated by this process because a lot of people might say it's a step too far and that's it. Don't want to take on the added responsibility and I just think that perhaps greater awareness into exactly what goes on and what the requirements should be part and parcel of that.” [P12]*

*“I suppose what you can have, you can have meetings and training sessions discussion as to as to you know what?” [P12]*

##### **4.3.8.4(b) Sub-theme 4.2: Communication**

The participants indicated that there must be clear communication of the process of succession planning from superiors to staff. Communication must not be scattered and must follow one format, and there must be one point of communication.

*“It's not like scattered and instructions are taken from a supervisor and a reporting or feedback is given to the supervisor, so it's just one form or one point of communication about superiors.” [P6]*

#### **4.3.8.5 Theme 5: Incentives**

Lastly, there should be incentives offered for staff when it comes to succession planning.

#### **4.3.8.5(a) Sub-theme 5.1: Recognition**

Participants felt that incentives can be a means to finally recognise staff performance and efforts. Staff will be able to see that they are being appreciated as they are pre-positioned for a new or senior role. This will minimize staff frustrations of not being recognised.

*“I would say that for our skills to be recognised, as well as taking into account the, the challenges that we face on a day-to-day basis in the department.” [P6]*

*“We could recognise employees. Who is interested in advancing.” [P7]*

#### **4.3.8.5(b) Sub-theme 5.2: Compensation and rewards**

Participants were of the view that staff progression into new roles was also about being appropriately compensated. Staff needed financial progression and rewards as this could promote more satisfaction with their working environment. Being compensated and rewarded was very important for the participants.

*“I think that it's important to compensate fairly so they know that. The role that they're working hard in is being seen and it's being rewarded accordingly.” [P2]*

*“There needs to be development for them. They need to see growth for them. They need to know that they're being compensated fairly, they need to be happy with their working environment and they need to have a passion for their job. I just feel all those things play an equally important factor.” [P2]*

*“Progressing in the sense of not just the experience and the training, but the compensation, because as you're developing yourself, you're gaining more experience, you are becoming more valuable to the organisation. In that sense, that kind of progression.” [P2]*

### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter presented the findings on participants' feedback in the semi-structured interviews. The analysis was aligned with the four objectives of the study. The qualitative analysis entailed a thematic approach using NVIVO 20. Techniques inclusive of word cloud, tree map, cluster analysis, hierarchy chart, and word tree were used to eloquently illustrate respective themes and sub-themes. In analysing the above objectives, the current status of succession planning, succession planning linkages, candidate selection of succession planning, and evaluation of succession planning was also determined and analysed in this chapter. The demographic data of

the research was also presented in this chapter. The next chapter provides a discussion of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the analysis of the participant feedback in the semi-structured interviews. In the analysis, various themes and sub-themes emerged on all the objectives. This chapter presents a discussion of the themes and the sub-themes, aligned with the objectives of the study. The study findings were compared to previous research findings on succession planning.

### **5.2 Current status of succession planning**

Participants were unaware of a formalised strategy for succession planning, which showed that succession planning was lacking. Although there were discussions on succession planning, none of them were carried through. There had been some progress in succession planning, with appraisals of employees' performance levels being conducted in several departments as they were being identified for succession planning. The value of the staff was acknowledged, and they had the option to switch from one technical department, like quality control, to another technical department, like research and development. Earlier succession plans were far more casual, resembling a handover from one employee to another. To document the succession planning process, a formal organised plan is currently being implemented.

The above is in line with Owolabi and Adeosun's (2021) study which discovered that the company lacked an effective succession planning strategy or program that could train junior employees for leadership positions and lower staff turnover. Coffie *et al.* (2022) had similar views that although some businesses may not have explicit succession planning plans in place, some do engage in informal succession planning.

### **5.3 Succession planning linkages**

According to the study, staff development ranked as the most important connection factor. Training is essential and can be completed internally through on-the-job training, or outside. Another crucial connection to succession planning was based on abilities and traits. A candidate could be qualified and experienced, yet they might not have the moral traits to fulfill a certain post. Performance was a crucial component in succession planning. When identifying a replacement for the post, performance must be tracked and evaluated in light of succession planning. Organisational links to succession planning were influenced by the idea that succession planning will result in the development of workers who are more knowledgeable and experienced, which will result in organisational success. One participant made the connection between the graduate program and succession planning, noting how it helped uncover opportunities for

development by allowing graduates with new perspectives to spot potential gaps. Such graduates were able to advance in their departments as a result, which supported ongoing improvement.

These views are supported by Fadeyi *et al.* (2019). The study demonstrated that, despite operating in a dynamic business environment, a well-planned succession will increase the firm's agility in how it responds to operational business problems. Owolabi and Adeosun (2021) also put forward a similar assertion where the effective implementation of a succession planning strategy in the organisation is hampered by managers' failure to foster initiative and programs designed to improve junior staff capacities. Since there are no opportunities for career advancement, it renders most of the workforce unable to work for the company. Mans-Kemp and Flanagan (2022) had similar views, where the interviews provided several recommendations for expanding the local talent pool that can be used to find board candidates. They recommended providing scholarships, internships, and graduate programs to deserving, diverse candidates.

#### **5.4 Candidate selection for succession planning**

The study findings indicated that the highest ranked element in terms of choosing candidates was found to be skills and knowledge base. To ensure that performance is not jeopardised, the participants agreed that candidates must have the necessary qualifications and experience. Additionally, the applicant needs to have a positive personality and soft talents, including communication abilities. Regarding product, process, and operation knowledge, the candidate needs to have a broad knowledge base. Leadership abilities are crucial to possess particularly while heading a department. The potential successor's interest in the field or position must be demonstrated. Another significant consideration was how well the candidate performed. Therefore, a candidate's performance history must be transparent and speak for itself. The candidate must be career-focused, possess a progressive attitude, and be able to go to the next level. An individual must also have a positive outlook on life, encourage drive, and learn to accept setbacks.

This is in line with Ahmad, Ming and Sapry's (2020) study showing that the employees at University A must score highly on their annual evaluation at the University to be included in the applicant pool list. For those potential individuals, training is required to meet future demand. This is also supported by Luhukay *et al.* (2023), whereby they categorised succession candidate factors into three types: (i) profile, (ii) competencies, and (iii) nature. The profile category is the background of the succession candidate; the competencies category is the ability of the succession candidate, and the nature category explains the character of the succession candidate. Jumawan (2023) had similar views whereby four commonly acknowledged categories of employee competencies were covered. The corporation is seeking core competencies, which are standards

that apply to all levels of the organisation and are universal. Functional Competency outlines an employee's various job tasks and the outcomes of those activities. This ability also contains a variety of knowledge needed to finish the activity. Role competencies reflect each employee's place in the organisation and team. Employee behavioural competencies, skills, knowledge, and behavioural competencies are examples of competence. It refers to actions taken by workers in the workplace, such as decision-making and leadership.

### **5.5 Evaluation of succession planning**

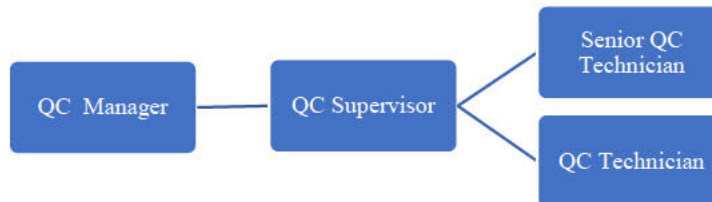
Participants were of the view that employee performance reviews that identify their performance strengths and weaknesses must center on succession planning review and measurement. To guarantee that succession planning is done ethically and has validity, the review of succession planning must adhere to organisational norms and laws. Monitoring the amount of staff turnover will help develop a succession plan to lessen it. Nyambok and Hongo (2022) had similar views where it was found that the main determinants of staff turnover are inadequate training and development programs for staff; job satisfaction depending on the favourability of the job; poor pay and lack of benefit conditions; work climate or environment; and leadership style.

Even in the examination of succession planning, knowledge began to recur as a factor. Experience is the source of information, and education continues to be an important factor in the production of knowledge. Evaluations of talent like communication and interpersonal skills, in addition to knowledge, must be based on succession planning. The transfer of leadership abilities must be a part of succession planning because these abilities are crucial for inspiring creativity and guiding others. Role development must be taken into account while evaluating succession planning. A candidate must possess the necessary skills, performance, and knowledge to be successful in the position. Additionally, rather than relying solely on outside candidates, departmental workers should be given internal consideration for advancement. These views are supported by Ahmad *et al.* (2020), where a decision-making job demands experience. University A will only give internal or existing personnel priority when filling the crucial empty position. Finding an outside candidate to fill a vacancy in a strategic position is extremely uncommon. Most important open posts will only be filled by current employees, as University A favours internal advancement over external hiring.

Roles should be created so that employees could grow into. An example of role development is displayed in Figures 5.1 and 5.2.



**Figure 5. 1: Current structure in QC laboratory**



**Figure 5. 2: A proposed role development for the QC laboratories**

Source: Constructed by researcher

As per Figure 5.2, the laboratory staff will have roles to grow into. Staff can grow from being a technician, into a senior technician then into a supervisor role, and then into management.

When assessing succession planning, the planning and involvement components must be allowed for. To guarantee that everyone's perspective is considered while creating a succession plan, all stakeholders must meet and participate. The succession plan must also be widely known so that everyone may be informed and participate. These views are supported by Malokani *et al.* (2023), who revealed a similar argument where career development plays a mediating role in succession planning and employee retention. The results of the study showed that in the presence of the employee's career development, the good impact of succession planning could not be disregarded in maintaining a productive employee. Umesi (2022) also posited a similar assertion where the research showed that 92.48% of respondents concur that succession planning significantly improves worker retention in firms in the Hospitality sector, and a company's capacity to plan its workforce's career possibilities through appropriate engagement and placement. This ensures that the organisation will have staff members who can fill vacant positions in the event of changes without upending the organisational structure.

### **5.6 Determine the understanding of succession planning – objective one**

The study analysis derived five themes that emerged in the understanding of succession planning: 1) experience and qualification, 2) knowledge management), 3) continuity and progression, 4) growth and development, and 5) organisational and leadership. The findings on objective one,

which was to determine the understanding of succession planning, are presented below and compared with the findings in literature.

### **5.6.1 Experience and qualifications**

The results highlighted that in terms of understanding succession planning, experience and qualifications were paramount. Making sure the successor has the necessary training and experience was the goal of succession planning. Before taking on a succession job, a person needs to get knowledge from more experienced employees. It was important for employees to understand the roles of other departments if they wanted to advance within the business. People must also be given the chance to develop their skills and gain experience in many fields.

These views are supported by Coffie *et al.*'s study (2022), whereby employees were chosen based on their shown leadership skills, talent for the top position, evaluation systems, and a strong formal educational foundation. Then, as part of the preparation process, prospects were guided through several exercises. The best applicants would be chosen based on demonstrations of remarkable capabilities and leadership skills. As Henri Fayol (1949) clearly states, management is responsible for ensuring the stability of tenure of personnel. If that need is ignored, according to Fayol, crucial posts will be filled by under-qualified individuals. Fadeyi *et al.* (2019) had similar views where in most banks, qualifications and experience are the main criteria considered for succession.

### **5.6.2 Knowledge management**

Participants were of the opinion that sharing information was a major component of succession planning. This required imparting long-acquired knowledge to the next person or people who would be considered candidates to fill a particular role. Knowledge preservation was the ability to maintain knowledge within an organisation such that it would not be lost if a particular person departed that organisation. As it was understood to be a transfer of knowledge from the experienced to the novice, succession planning also had to do with knowledge transfer. The sharing of knowledge may even take place informally while people are collaborating. It didn't need to be official.

This is in line with Mirzaie *et al.* (2019), who points out that knowledge generation, knowledge storing, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilisation, have a favourable influence on improving human capital. Trenev (2018) had similar arguments in that effective knowledge management is crucial for a company's human capital management to be successful, which includes finding solutions to the following issues: a) knowledge to be formalised and integrated into goods,

services, documents, databases, information technology, and software; b) ensuring that knowledge is available to and relevant to employees; and c) fostering an environment conducive to learning where individuals may share information and ideas regularly and use different learning strategies.

### **5.6.3 Continuity and progression**

The results highlighted that planning for succession focused on maintaining continuity and progression while minimising or eliminating setbacks. Effective work transfer to the proper successor is required. To maintain continuity, a successor must be able to perform their new function successfully. Staff advancement was a focus of succession planning, which can encourage growth rather than impede it. Employees can grow in the organisation with succession planning, and there should be established standards and plans in place. This was supported by Ahmad *et al.* (2020); whereby planning for succession is crucial to maintaining leadership in University A and helping the incumbent become more effective. Mans-Kemp and Flangen (2022) had similar views in that the need to build the talent pipeline to maintain business continuity was emphasised by every interviewee.

### **5.6.4 Growth and development**

The study revealed that planning for succession considers the professional development of the relevant staff members. With the right training and development plan, it was discovered that employees may develop into a role. The development plan will also help in determining a person's standing, areas of growth, and methods of development. Growth is possible by moving up from one position to a higher one. However, it is challenging to grow if an individual is the only person in the department because there is no room for growth. Succession planning can support career development in terms of growth and development, which requires advancement within fields that are related.

This was supported by Tettah and Asumeng (2020), where the findings in the research imply that career development programs served to mitigate the impact of succession planning on employee retention such that succession planning had a greater impact on employee retention when career development programs are high rather than low. This is in line with Thakur (2022), who stated that establishing a clear path for the employees' career growth through the implementation of leadership programs that effectively utilise the perspectives of mentors or managers and identify potential employees is crucial for organisations.

### **5.6.5 Organisational structure and leadership**

It was found that organisational structure and leadership both played major roles in succession planning. Regarding organisational orientation, leadership has a crucial function to play. Planning for succession should become a strategy for the division or organisation. It will be considered at the highest level and given the proper priority if such a strategy is in place. If the department has a proper succession plan in place, there will not be a void if a post becomes available at an unexpected time.

Philip (2020) also had similar views where the purpose of succession planning, regardless of the situation, is to combine an organisation's business strategy with its human resources to maximise the value of potential candidates for a position's succession. These views are supported by Chia *et al.* (2023), who found that the goal of succession planning in some organisations is to create leaders who can lead the organisation to achieve its goals, and it must be in line with strategic planning and organisational goals. The organisation's mission, vision, and values serve as the cornerstone upon which the aims of the organisation are created.

## **5.7 Examine the importance of succession planning – objective two**

The analysis shows that all participants viewed succession planning as important. The themes were 1) knowledge, 2) roles and positions, 3) transition for progress, and 4) confidence and motivation. The findings on objective two, which was to examine the importance of succession planning, are presented below and compared with the findings in literature. These themes link to the study by Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011a), discussed in Chapter 2.

### **5.7.1 Knowledge**

The study findings indicated that the expertise acquired by the organisation through its workers was supplemented by succession planning. For the department to operate at its peak capacity, knowledge and skills must be successfully transferred. Planning for the next generation was essential to maintaining information flow. The retention of important skills and expertise would be guaranteed via succession planning. Replacement of special skills would be difficult in the technical division as knowledge and talent management are crucial. The Human Capital Theory by Shultz (1961) showed that when paired with other human investments, the acquisition of knowledge and skill largely explains the productive dominance of technologically advanced nations.

This assertion was supported by Olatunji *et al.* (2020), where organisations that place more emphasis on identifying talents than just important positions inside the organisation will be able

to navigate volatility with ease. If the impact of these jobs is to be felt inside the organisation, these critical positions should be filled by competent individuals. Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin and Michaels III (1998) had similar views that talent management must become a top business concern before one can win 'the war for talent'. To draw in and keep the talent required, senior management must develop and constantly improve the employee value proposition. This is their justification for why a bright, motivated, and ambitious person would choose to join one's team over the one next door.

### **5.7.2 Roles and positions**

The results highlighted that succession planning was crucial in terms of responsibilities and positions within the department or organisation. The ability to fill positions as needed and to provide existing staff with opportunities for growth was made possible by succession planning. The goal of some employees is to obtain the specific job title that they had in mind, rather than staying in a junior or graduate position throughout their employment. A worker can advance to a certain position or role within the company with the help of succession planning.

This is in line with Suwaidi *et al.* (2020), who said that the availability of leadership development opportunities, as an element of executive success planning, increases employee satisfaction and improves organisational performance. Haziroh, Putra, Christi and Demircioglu (2023), had similar views where the situation indicated that government organisations still required systematic processes that aligned individuals' skills and competencies with the requirements of a position. Because of this circumstance, the placement of employees did not correspond with their skills and credentials.

### **5.7.3 Transitioning for progress**

The study revealed that succession planning was crucial for transitional reasons, particularly for a seamless transition and transitioning for progress. This required the free transfer of knowledge from one individual to another for a succeeding function. Due to the technical department being a crucial department for the organisation, 'it's the engine of the car' this ensures that the organisation continues to operate, perform, and advance smoothly. Suwaidi *et al.* (2020) had similar views where the difficulty of succession planning resides in its capacity to strike an effective balance between granting the new executive ample freedom to lead and maintain the outgoing executive's collaboration, when necessary, both before and after the leadership transition. Nosike and Egbunike (2024), also showed that to ensure smooth transition the small to medium enterprises should have succession plans in place and the role of the successor should be structured.

#### **5.7.4 Confidence and motivation**

The participants argued that building confidence and motivation, which are critical to promoting performance, can be accomplished through succession planning. People's morale is raised and their willingness to perform is increased when they are given successive roles. Senior members' confidence in an employee's ability to perform their duties also inspires workers. Employee confidence is boosted by how they are spoken to and treated. Employee confidence is also boosted by trust, responsibility, and accountability. The ability to take on a new role can be strengthened through succession planning as employees would believe that the organisation has faith in them to perform the task, which would make them feel trusted and confident. Maslow's (1943) Theory of Motivation mentions five goals, namely: basic needs, physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualisation. Employees will move from one goal to the next when their goals are fulfilled.

These views are supported by Jumawan (2023), whereby employees who are currently on a less promising career path are made aware of more potential ones through succession planning. In addition to being driven to excel in their current positions, employees are also driven to advance and better themselves. The desire exists to do better as one goes up the employment ladder. Tetteh and Asumeng (2020) also put through a similar assertion that organisations that implement appropriate succession planning strategies are more likely to have an impact on their workers' decisions to stay with the company. Some employees may have been promoted because of succession planning, and these employees may have viewed this move as motivational in some way, which is why they chose to stay.

### **5.8 Identify challenges in implementing succession planning – objective three**

The study found that the themes linked to challenges in succession planning were: 1) managerial; 2) funding; 3) training and knowledge; 4) workload and capacity; and 5) personal. The findings on objective three, which was to identify the challenges in implementing succession planning, are presented below, and compared with the findings in literature. These themes link to the study by Mehrabani and Mohamad (2011a), discussed in Chapter 2 where the barriers to the implementation of succession planning were: training, management support and financial condition.

#### **5.8.1 Managerial**

It was found that overall, the managerial level lacked a strategy for succession planning. Employees were not promoted since management did not seem to have enough faith in them to take on certain roles. Currently, there is a lack of transparency in communication, and employees

are unaware of any plans to fill jobs when they become vacant, or who will take their place as the successor. Sometimes, management has its ideas on how things ought to be done. Employees were restricted in their ability to exercise their minds. The management puts off sharing information and creating a successful succession plan. Procrastination would cause the implementation of succession planning to be delayed.

This was supported by Anzagira *et al.* (2022), where incumbent-related barriers emerge from the study as the most critical group of barriers hindering the implementation of succession planning due to the owner-manager having a critical role in the process of succession planning, which involves the initiating, controlling, directing, and managing of the process. Jidefor *et al.* (2023), had similar views that some businesses do not prepare for succession. Such unfairness of poor management in family enterprises affects the day-to-day operations of the business. When the owner/manager passes away, the heir or whoever takes over the business may not have the necessary expertise or experience to carry on the operation of the business. Another recent study by Jahwari and Nur (2023) demonstrated a contradicting finding whereby the effectiveness of succession planning is independent of management support due to a new generation moving from a dependency on people to a dependency on systems and policies.

### **5.8.2 Funding**

The study indicated that the available budget and resources available determine training. Having the abilities required to fill a position would be hampered by one's inability to develop oneself. To perform and be productive, new technologies and tools are essential. However, financing is necessary to purchase such equipment. Staff would be in a better position to develop their talents if they were exposed to new technology and machinery. Moreover, a lack of funding for succession planning in general was discovered. This is in line with Bano *et al.*'s (2022) study, where programs for succession planning need significant funding for chances for training and growth. Unfortunately, organisations frequently operate under tight financial constraints.

### **5.8.3 Training and knowledge**

The results highlighted that there was no formal training program in place. For a training program to be complete, it must consider the training demands, development needs for weak areas, performance needs, knowledge base requirements, and other relevant factors. Better succession planning can be achieved with the right training program. At the moment, there is no formal system in place for transferring information from seasoned employees to less experienced employees. When more senior and experienced employees depart the company, this presents problems with continuity.

These views are supported by Suwaidi *et al.* (2020), who stated that the transfer of information is crucial, especially between an incumbent CEO and their successor, according to knowledge management architecture. To guarantee that organisational expertise is retained after CEOs leave, organisations should create systems that make it easier for people to transfer and share such information. Bano *et al.*, (2024) showed that effective knowledge management is crucial for employee retention, with mentoring and coaching being the most effective training methods for transferring tacit knowledge.

#### **5.8.4 Workload and capacity**

The study revealed that due to a lack of workers in some departments, staff training proved challenging. As a result of their increased workload, the individual is unable to mentor other employees. Staff shortages were exacerbated by employee turnover. This increased the workload of other people and made succession planning even more necessary. The tension of a heavy workload made it difficult to attend development training sessions and learn about other topics. A worker's advancement into a position and, ultimately, succession planning would be hampered by their inability to acquire the necessary skills. Owolabi and Adeosun (2021) share similar views where employees would seek out companies where they had a chance to hold leadership positions if their employers failed to look internally for successors and failed to train lower-level workers for future responsibilities.

#### **5.8.5 Personal**

It was found that staff members were afraid to take on bigger responsibilities because they worried that they might not be able to deliver. Additionally, workers are in a comfortable place and do not want to assume extra responsibilities. Other highly competent employees intimidated workers as well. Employees were jealous of one another on both a personal and professional level. This envy may compromise the sharing of knowledge amongst staff members. There were also instances of favouritism on the part of management in which particular managers preferred certain employees and promoted them to higher positions despite their lack of experience, education, or qualifications. All employees must be able to participate in the organisation's fair succession plan.

Marrelli (2022) also made a similar assertion that only a select few are known to senior executives and hiring officials, thus equal opportunity might be restricted. The common succession planning practice of senior leaders personally identifying promising employees, giving them special development opportunities, and then promoting them into critical positions is prohibited by the

merit system principle: 'Recruit, select and advance on merit after fair and open competition' (Marelli, 2022: 630). This is in line with Fadeyi *et al.* (2019), where in certain instances, low-level management personnel with extensive work experience who are eligible for promotion are denied those opportunities because certain senior management personnel refuse to make recommendations to that effect.

## **5.9 Determining ways to improve succession planning – objective four**

The study found that the themes on how to improve succession planning were: 1) skills development, 2) governance, 3) plans, 4) communication and awareness, and 5) incentives. The findings on objective four, which was to determine ways to improve succession planning, are presented below and compared with the findings in literature.

### **5.9.1 Skills Development**

The study findings indicated that the recommendation that ranked highest was skills improvement. Training guarantees that employees are adequately upskilled for succeeding responsibilities. By sending employees on training, businesses may demonstrate their commitment to them. Additionally, training helped the organisation to keep up with trends throughout the world in an environment that was changing. Globally, new technology is being developed every day, thus the technical department must stay current with the newest innovations in equipment, testing methods, raw materials, and finished goods. Whether these abilities come from within the organisation or from outside, organisations must ensure that the proper people are hired for the correct responsibilities. This is true of both operational and leadership jobs. In order for a successor to be available to start a post right away when needed, succession planning must be a proactive process.

These views are supported by Mans-Kemp and Flanagan's (2022) study where many participants emphasised the value of quickly recognising skills gaps. The majority of those who participated in the interviews mentioned using a skills matrix. The respondents specifically mentioned how important information technology skills are to addressing the opportunities and difficulties associated with Industry 4.0. Ali and Babu (2015) had similar views where some roles within organisations offer employees the chance to grow professionally through training and rotational job shadowing. However, the business should make sure that this opportunity is extended to all positions identified.

### **5.9.2 Governance**

The participants were of the view that effective governance practices are required for succession planning. A start and end point must be established for a distinct succession planning concept.

This could be from the time a graduate begins working until they are promoted to a managerial position. All processes can then be mapped in accordance with this to support it. It is possible to create a checklist for succession planning, and work on it is already underway. Such a checklist includes all the essential components that the successor needs to carry out in their new role. The candidate will then be able to identify their needs. It is necessary to have a succession policy in place, which may be supported by a set of procedures. The policy can be a reliable source of information to direct succession planning.

Umans *et al.* (2020) also made forward a similar assertion where the CEO can be informed by family business consultants that planning the succession process is in the best interests of the company because failure to do so would ultimately result in the family business ceasing to exist. These views are supported by Ahmad, Ullah, Akbar, Devendra, Kodwani and Brahma (2024), given the potential impact on a company's ability to survive challenging economic times, the creation of additional board committees and CEO succession planning are demonstrated to be significant factors in strategic decision-making inside organisations. Considering the dynamic nature of competitive landscapes, the UK CGC (United Kingdom Corporate Governance Code) mandates that nominating committees for firms, establish long- and medium-term strategies for board of director nominations.

### **5.9.3 Plans**

It was found that the planning aspect can be helped by a succession plan matrix. A component of the matrix can be devoted to criteria related to crucial positions. The appropriate experience can be transmitted if this is done. It is also important to create a growth development plan so that employees may understand their growth trajectory and work towards it, particularly for lower-level employees. Employees must also be aware of the positions they can advance to and the organisation's goals for them. Employees would like to advance their careers while working for the company rather than be limited to a single professional path. Employees might also have the chance to switch departments and embark on a new career path.

Susanto and Parmenas (2021) had similar views that the company's retention strategy is primarily focused on strengthening relationships with employees and keeping talented workers on board. The company's retention initiatives include employee appreciation, numerous employee welfare programs, leadership programs, clear and guided career development plans, and open and comfortable communication patterns with employees. The company will be able to deliver qualified human resources and have a supply of talent to fill essential position demands in the future with the establishment of suitable succession planning backed by successful retention

planning initiatives. These views are supported by Okpoko and Igbokwe-Ibeto (2023), who state that succession planning had an impact on the quality of service provided at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, due to the existence of a clearly defined career path for its staff.

#### **5.9.4 Communication and awareness**

The study revealed that more needs to be done to increase awareness and communication as this may inspire employees to advance professionally and can dispel any intimidation or fear that personnel may have regarding the succession planning process. The awareness-raising process could be carried out through meetings or training. Jahwari and Nur (2023) expressed similar views that for succession planning to be effective, communication had a positive and significant impact. This was supported by Ali and Babu (2015), who stated that succession plans need to be shared throughout the organisation. Businesses practice succession planning at a senior level currently, but for the strategy to be effective, it must be set up at the middle and lower levels as well since this will provide accountability for participation.

#### **5.9.5 Incentives**

The participants argued that when it comes to succession planning, rewards should be presented to the personnel. Rewarding employees for their performance and efforts through incentives is a possibility. As they are set up for new or more senior roles, employees will be able to tell that their efforts are recognised. Financial advancement and incentives were required for the workforce since these may increase workplace satisfaction. Atmaja *et al.* (2023) also had similar views that employee performance will suffer if they do not receive enough appreciation, which increases the likelihood that they will look for other employment. Promotions, salary increments, bonuses, new projects, bigger leave packages, and other incentives are just a few of the many prizes that employers can give their staff.

#### **5.10 The need for succession planning**

From the analysis and discussion of the research, the researcher has explained why organisations need succession planning. The observations are tabulated in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5. 1: Why organisations require succession planning**

Why Succession Planning?	
Linked to knowledge building	Was about ensuring that the right skills were linked to the right positions
Linked to growth	Linked to candidate qualities
Linked to recognition	Lead to developing employees that are more knowledgeable and experienced and this will lead to organisational success
Revolved around the measurement of employee performance	Was about knowledge transfer
Linked to organisational goals	Was on the continuity of roles in the organisation.
Was about knowledge sharing	There can be continuity in the department
Was about continuity and progression with minimal to no setbacks	Can complement career development
Was about staff progression	Should become a strategy for the department and/or organisation
Was an opportunity for growth	Would ensure that knowledge is not lost, and that key skills and knowledge are retained
Was also about leadership continuity	Is crucial for a smooth transition
Was important to ensure knowledge continuity	Can serve to build confidence and motivation
Can be used to identify the right talent and skills to occupy the right positions	
Was important to embrace the uncertainties of tomorrow	

Source: Developed by researcher

Table 5.4 summarises succession planning as derived from this research and explains why organisations require succession planning. Succession planning plays a vital role in organisations and all organisations will benefit from succession planning, as stipulated in the above table. The importance of succession planning in previous research discussed in Chapter 2, is aligned with the above table for example: Rothwell (2010) - having the right people for the right job; Shynkaruk (2020) – uninterrupted lab operations; Bano *et al.* (2022) - development of employees for organisational sustainability and business continuity; Ahsan (2018) - keeps the business on track to meet long-standing goals and Malokani *et al.* (2023) - maintaining productive personnel and advancing their careers.

### 5.11 Towards developing a framework for succession planning

The researcher has reviewed the themes and sub-themes of the objectives, looked at common concepts in the research conducted, and has developed a succession planning framework for the technical laboratories. The themes and sub-themes of the research are tabulated in Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

**Table 5. 2: Themes of the objectives**

Objectives	Themes				
<b>The Understanding of Succession planning</b>	Experience & Qualification	Organisational and leadership	Growth and development	Continuity and progression	Knowledge creation and dissemination
<b>Importance of succession planning</b>	Knowledge	Roles and positions	Transition for progress	Confidence and motivation	
<b>The challenges on succession planning</b>	Managerial	Funding	Training and knowledge	Workload and capacity	Personal
<b>Improve on succession planning</b>	Skills development	Governance	Plans	Communication and awareness	Incentives

Source: Developed by researcher

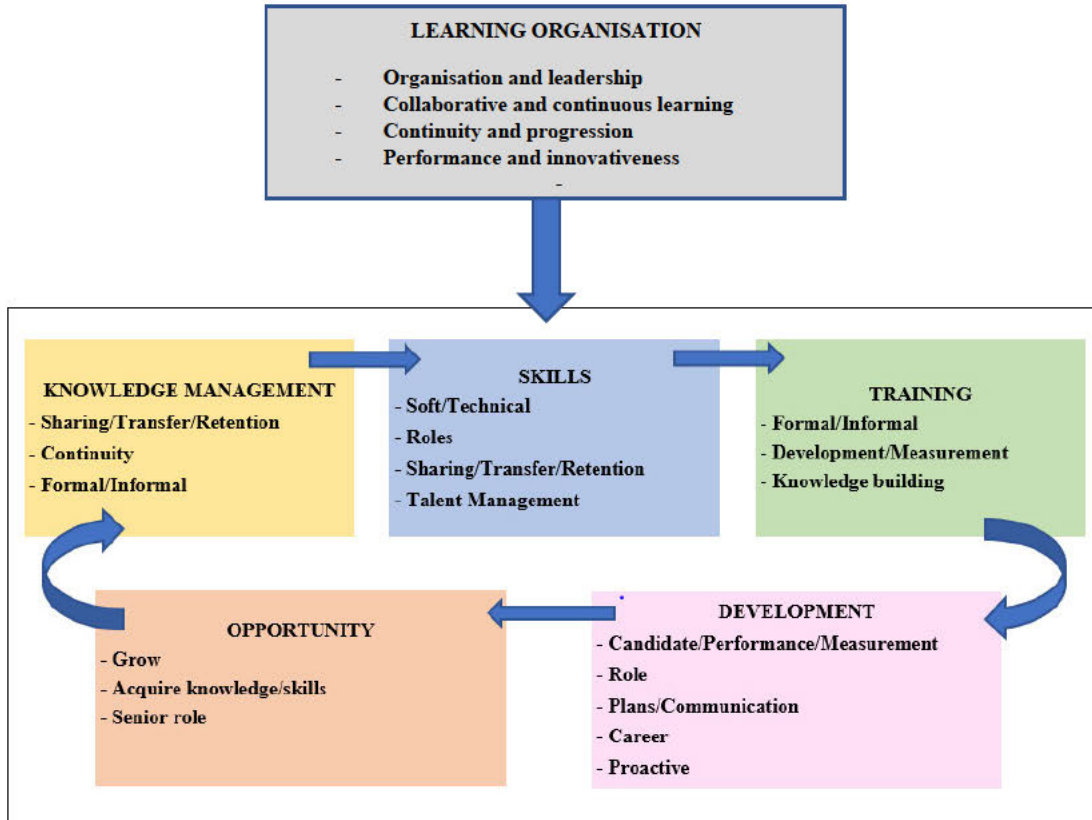
Table 5.2 highlighted the common themes, which were knowledge and development, broken down further into their subthemes in Table 5.3.

**Table 5. 3: Sub-themes of knowledge and development**

Common themes (Knowledge and Development)	Subthemes			
<b>Growth and development</b>	Development into role	Critical development vs action plans	Opportunity to grow	Career development
<b>Knowledge creation and dissemination</b>	Knowledge sharing	Knowledge preservation	Knowledge transfer	Informal
<b>Knowledge</b>	Knowledge and skills	Knowledge continuity	Skills and knowledge retention	
<b>Training and knowledge</b>	Training	Information and knowledge transfer	Skills and tools	
<b>Skills Development</b>	Training	Skills and roles	Knowledge sharing	Proactive

Source: Developed by researcher

In Table 5.3, one sees that knowledge, skills, training, development, and opportunity were the key criteria from the sub-themes, and a succession planning framework using these criteria was derived, as in Figure 5.3.



**Figure 5. 3: Constructed framework for succession planning in the technical laboratory**

Source: Developed by researcher

Figure 5.3 is a constructed Framework of Succession Planning in the technical laboratory and consists of the following:

### 5.11.1 Learning Organisation

An organisation must practise being a learning organisation, where learning is ongoing. This commitment must be driven by leaders of the organisation. Being a learning organisation impacts directly on organisational performance and innovativeness. Learning organisations are those where learning and work are interwoven consistently and systematically to enable continual improvements in individuals, groups, and organisations (Odor, 2018). There must be a way to convert knowledge into learning to improve learning within an organisation. Therefore, job training typically includes both a written and a practical component to help turn knowledge into experience (Kerin, 2022). A learning organisational culture has a direct impact on organisational performance and innovativeness, and employees in learning organisations view learning as an

ongoing activity and gain knowledge from almost everything they do. Learning ought to be ingrained in an organisation's philosophy, basic values, and culture. Only by doing this will the organisation be prepared for the future (Odor, 2018).

### **5.11.2 Knowledge management**

Knowledge management entails the sharing, transfer, retention, and continuity of technical knowledge. Knowledge from experienced staff needs to be transferred to non-experienced staff. The knowledge gained over the years working in a laboratory is not written in any manual or textbooks but acquired from experience. For some scholars, “knowledge management is the management of humans, and human management is the management of knowledge” (Mirzaie *et al.*, 2019:1). Knowledge is increasingly being used to gauge competitive performance as it becomes a crucial productivity component (Pangaribuan *et al.*, 2020). To increase effectiveness, productivity, and profitability, staff members should be able share knowledge (Eisenberg *et al.*, 2018) and organisational knowledge management and transfer is preserved (Rothwell, 2010).

Knowledge generation, knowledge storing, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilisation have a favourable influence on improving human capital. It implies that these activities are required for upgrading four processes that account for individual and organisational human capital: personal attitude, individual merit, organisational learning, and organisational innovation. Knowledge is an essential component of personal and human capital and may provide all organisations with a consistent competitive advantage (Mirzaie *et al.*, 2019; Uto, Uwa & Akpan, 2024). It is possible to develop a scenario where knowledge loss and the possibility of collaborator absence or resignation can be reduced through succession planning and knowledge management (Durst, Zarelli, Vaz, Muran & Selig, 2015).

### **5.11.3 Skills**

Knowledge is about being equipped with the necessary skills to function optimally. Employees require technical skills as well as soft skills, leadership skills, and communication skills. This also entails the sharing, transfer, and retention of skills. Talent management should be practiced in the organisation whereby key employees are retained in the organisation. Maintaining a talented workforce is essential to achieving success. Furthermore, having a pool of specialists as successors who are also motivated and empowered with a sense of belonging enhances succession planning by ensuring self-sustenance and competitive advantage. To maintain a great work environment and a contented workforce, institutions must develop and implement retention techniques. Talented people are hard to find today, hence the human resources department must have plans in place for luring and keeping them. An organisation should hire and nurture the best

personnel to create a leadership pool for succession planning (Baporikar, 2021) and every person who still wishes to be independent in a competitive environment must develop their minds and skills to be better than others (Malik, 2019).

#### **5.11.4 Training**

Knowledge and skills gaps are identified, and training is conducted either formally or informally to develop the employees. Training from experienced staff was extremely important due to the knowledge gained from experience. Measurements are used to see the effectiveness of the training, which allows for knowledge and skill building. Investing in the training of R&D personnel who has the curiosity to study new ideas is crucial for the development of unique and complex technological knowledge (Sarpong *et al.*, 2023). Quality planning and training significantly enhance the development and quality assurance of manufacturing companies (Chigozie & Chijioke, 2015).

#### **5.11.5 Development**

The employee is then developed into a role based on the performance, knowledge, and skills acquired. It was important to have the correct skills to fit a role in the organisation. A clear development plan for succession planning is done and communicated with the employee and regular assessment against the KPI is conducted. Succession planning is proactive, and the chosen candidate is ready for growth and/or a senior role, acquiring knowledge and skills when the opportunity arises. In Chapter 2, Rothwell (2010) emphasized that creating employee training and development plans was a crucial aspect of succession planning. In addition, implementing an organisation's learning culture can significantly enhance talent attraction, retention, and development (Srimannarayana, 2019) and to thrive in a competitive market, businesses must ensure their staff is continuously learning and developing (Pangaribuan *et al.*, 2020).

#### **5.11.6 Opportunity**

Once the opportunity arises, the process starts again to further uplift the employee to succeed and prepare for succession to the next level. Growth can be either obtaining further knowledge, which is technical succession planning or succeeding in a more senior role. Jones and Rivers (2021) highlighted in Chapter 2, that the FOCUSED program was a purposeful and methodical effort to support professional growth and advancement. Suwaidi *et al.* (2020) suggested that leadership development opportunities, as part of executive success planning, enhance employee satisfaction and organisational performance.

It was found that the recurring themes in this research were knowledge, retaining knowledge and skills, and training of employees in the technical department. It can be concluded that three aspects, namely knowledge management, talent management, and learning organisation, are extremely vital to ensure the success of succession planning in technical laboratories.

## **5.12 Summary**

This chapter presented a discussion of the research results, which imply that there is an overall lack of succession planning currently. However, some respondents felt that some progress was being made and experienced personal growth, and that succession planning was slowly emerging but was not formalised. Key challenges in the implementation of succession planning included managerial, funding, training and knowledge, workload and capacity, and personnel challenges. The recommendations for improvement induced by the study included candidate selection skills and knowledge, effective review and measurement, knowledge, skills, planning, and involvement. There should also be effective governance and placement of the succession planning process and more effort must be made in terms of communication and awareness of succession planning to employees, complemented by incentives. A constructed framework for succession planning in the technical laboratories was derived from the observation of the analysis. The framework consists of knowledge management, skills, training, development, and opportunity. It was also important for the organisation to practise knowledge management, talent management, and being a learning organisation. The next chapter of the research presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

This study explored succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The technical laboratory at one of the business units did not have sufficient guidelines or succession planning in place. The organisation faced a dilemma as a critical post could not be filled right away by a qualified candidate. The expertise of laboratory workers who are nearing retirement is invaluable. Therefore, a laboratory must have a plan in place to capture and disseminate important information. Due to insufficient succession planning, expertise is not being transferred and a suitable successor is lacking. To successfully maintain the technical laboratories, a succession plan must be in place to ensure that the unique knowledge and abilities of the laboratories are not lost and are successfully transmitted.

This study on succession planning employed a qualitative research approach as a case study using purposeful sampling to select the participants from the four relevant business units of the multinational organisation. This led to the adoption of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with fourteen key laboratory staff ranging from the Head of Technical to the Research and Development technician. Qualitative analysis entailed a thematic approach using NVIVO 20. Techniques inclusive of word cloud, tree map, cluster analysis, hierarchy chart, and word tree were used to eloquently determine respective themes and sub-themes.

The study aimed to explore succession planning in the technical laboratories at Multinational organisation, South Africa, and the objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the understanding of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Examine the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Identify challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.
- Determine ways to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.

The previous chapter provided a discussion of the themes and was aligned with the objectives of the study. A framework for succession planning in the technical laboratory was also derived in the previous chapter. The framework consisted of knowledge management, skills, training, development, and opportunity. The conclusion and recommendations on each of the objectives

are presented in this chapter. Future research is also recommended for further study of this important construct.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The conclusion is based on the four objectives of the study. Succession planning linkages and the current status of succession planning are concluded in objective one. The evaluation of succession planning is concluded in objective two. The candidate selection for succession planning is concluded in objective four. The conclusion was used to determine if each objective was addressed in the succession planning study.

### **6.2.1 Objective one: Determine the understanding of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa**

The study findings highlighted five themes in this objective: 1) experience and qualification; 2) knowledge creation and dissemination (knowledge management); 3) continuity and progression; 4) growth and development; and 5) organisational and leadership. The participants' view of the understanding of succession planning was that succession planning involved ensuring successors had the right qualifications and experience, sharing knowledge, and ensuring that there was continuity. Succession planning also supported staff growth and development, complementing career development. Moreover, succession planning was crucial for both the organisation and leadership, with a well-planned strategy prioritising it.

The participants' view of the current status of succession planning was that the organisation lacked formal succession planning, despite discussions and assessments. Progress has been made in recognising employees' values and implementing a detailed plan. Previous plans were ad hoc, but now a structured strategy was being implemented to document the succession process.

It can be concluded that succession planning can be linked to the following:

- Employee development where training is crucial and can either be done internally, in on-the-job training, or externally.
- Skills and qualities that a candidate may possess, the necessary character or qualities to perform in a specific role.
- Performance must be monitored and reviewed in terms of succession planning when choosing a successor for the position.
- Succession planning will lead to developing employees that are more knowledgeable and experienced, which will lead to organisational success.
- The graduate program allowed the graduates to grow in their respective departments.

### **6.2.2 Objective two: Examine the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at Multinational organisation, South Africa**

The findings show that all participants viewed succession planning as important. The themes were: 1) knowledge, 2) roles, and positions, 3) transition for progress, and 4) confidence and motivation. The participants' view of the importance of succession planning was that it was crucial for maintaining knowledge continuity and ensuring the retention of essential skills within an organisation. Succession planning allowed for smooth transitions and progression, enhancing motivation and self-assurance, and preparing employees for new responsibilities, ultimately contributing to the overall success of the organisation.

It can be concluded that the participants felt that the evaluation of succession planning must include the following:

- The review and measurement of succession planning must revolve around performance reviews to determine the performance, strengths, and weaknesses of employees.
- The succession planning program must follow organisational policies and regulations to ensure that succession planning is done ethically and has merit.
- Knowledge became a recurring factor in the research and is derived from experience. Training remains a key component of knowledge generation.
- Other skills must inform succession planning evaluations such as people skills and communications skills.
- Succession planning must involve the transfer of leadership skills as this was important when it came to providing guidance to others and generating new ideas.
- Succession planning must be evaluated in line with role development.
  - A candidate must have the abilities, performance, and knowledge.
  - Internal consideration should be considered for successive roles rather than looking outside.
  - Roles should be created whereby employees could grow into them.
- There should be adequate planning and involvement consideration.
  - A collective involvement of all stakeholders to ensure that everyone's input is considered towards a succession plan.
  - There must be ample awareness of the plan created so that everyone can be involved.

### **6.2.3 Objective three: Identify challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa**

The study found that the themes linked to challenges in succession planning were: 1) managerial, 2) funding, 3) training and knowledge, 4) workload and capacity, and 5) personal. The

participants' view on the challenges in implementing succession planning was management's ineffective succession planning, lack of employee confidence, and procrastination hinder growth and knowledge sharing. Lack of funding, inadequate training programs, and understaffing contributed to high workloads and staff shortages. Staff felt intimidated by high-skilled colleagues, which led to personal and professional jealousy and there was favouritism from management.

#### **6.2.4 Objective four: Determine ways to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa**

The study found that the themes on how to improve succession planning were: 1) skills development, 2) governance, 3) plans, 4) communication and awareness, and 5) incentives. The participants' view on improving succession planning was that training was crucial for staff upskilling and keeping up with global trends. The technical department should be updated with the latest technologies for products, raw materials, testing, and equipment. Succession planning should be proactive, with effective governance measures, a clear vision, and a succession policy in place. Succession planning ensures that the right skills are employed for the right roles.

A succession plan matrix and growth development plan are essential for staff planning and understanding their growth trajectory. Communication and awareness efforts are crucial for staff to explore new career paths. The study found that this can be done by enhancing staff development and overcoming fear of succession planning through training or meetings, offering incentives, financial progression, and rewards to promote satisfaction and appreciation for new or senior roles.

The participants felt that the following must be considered when choosing a candidate for succession planning:

- Appropriate qualifications and experience are required so that performance will not be compromised.
- Have the personality and soft skills, such as communication skills.
- Demonstrate a strong knowledge base when it comes to knowledge of products, processes, and operations.
- Have strong leadership skills which is very important, especially when managing a department.
- Show an interest in the area/role in which they will be a successor.
- The performance history of the candidate must speak for itself.
- Have a progressive attitude and be able to elevate to the next level in their careers.

- Be encouraging to others and not pessimistic. Be able to embrace setbacks and not falter in this regard, and they need to foster motivation.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The recommendations listed below are on participant's feedback on the objectives of the study.

- The organisation should take into consideration that candidates must have the right qualifications and experience to fill a position due to very specialised technical knowledge and skills requirements in the laboratory. Nosike and Egbunike (2024), found that the successor of the organisation must be experienced to oversee the organisation.
- The transfer of knowledge from experienced staff must happen as they have skills and knowledge about doing tasks that are not in any manual or textbook. The organisation should practice knowledge management as well as talent management to ensure that knowledge and talented people are retained in the organisation. This will ensure the continuity of knowledge and skills. To manage top talent performance a talent management strategy should be developed (Waldick & Schultz, 2023).
- The organisation must create opportunities for staff to accumulate experience in different areas/departments and opportunities to grow in the organisation; give employees the freedom to apply their minds in the succession planning process and be part of the process; and make employees aware of positions they can grow into. Mans-Kemp and Flanagan (2022), recommended providing scholarships, internships, and graduate programs to deserving, diverse candidates.
- There must be ample plans, inclusive of training plans, as part of succession planning to ensure the continuity of roles in the organisation. There needs to be a developmental plan in place that would cater to all the developmental and career needs of employees, inclusive of the growth needs of the employees. The organisation must not procrastinate on the succession planning of employees. In Susanto and Parmenas (2021) study, the company's retention initiatives include employee appreciation, numerous employee welfare programs, leadership programs, clear and guided career development plans, and open and comfortable communication patterns with employees.
- The organisation should consider creating roles/positions for employees to grow into. Employees need to overcome their personnel challenges of not performing adequately in a role/position. A succession planning program (FOCUSED) was researched by Jones and Rivers (2021) and was a purposeful and methodical effort to support professional growth and

advancement; retain and develop future leaders and assure nursing leadership continuity in important roles.

- The organisation should take into consideration proper communication and treat employees in a way to help boost employee confidence to fill roles/positions. Furthermore, they need to look at resource needs in the department to prevent high workloads on employees, practice succession planning that is fair and open to all employees and offer staff incentives. As mentioned earlier in the research, “Recruit, select and advance on merit after fair and open competition” (Marelli, 2022: 630).
- The organisation should consider ensuring a smooth transition in the succession process. Not having succession planning results in the failure of family firms to transition into the future generation (Anzagaria *et al.*, 2022).
- The organisation should take into consideration creating awareness of the succession planning strategy and improving the communication and awareness of succession planning. Jahwari and Nur (2023) expressed similar views that for succession planning to be effective, communication had a positive and significant impact.
- The organisation must ensure that there is adequate funding for training and the implementation of succession planning.
- The organisation should ensure that they are up to date with the latest technology in the market and to implement a structured program for training that allows the training of staff to keep up with the latest technology. Shultz's Human Capital Theory (1961) posits that the acquisition of knowledge and skill, when combined with other human investments, significantly contributes to the productivity of technologically advanced nations.
- The organisation must identify skills that are lacking in employees and the training required to close the gap. The right skills must be employed for the right roles. The organisation must identify the skills of the employees so that they can be placed in a proper succession plan and have skills development programs in place for employees. Waldick and Schultz (2023) made forward a similar assertion where gap in skills of talent was identified for reskilling and development initiatives secured to retain talent.
- The organisation must ensure that succession planning is proactive, along with effective governance of succession planning (checklist, procedures, and policies) to make succession planning a strategy of the organisation so that it is given a high priority. Umans *et al.* (2020) stated that planning the succession process is in the best interests of the company because failure to do so would result in the family business ceasing to exist.

The key criteria identified from the research were knowledge, skills, training, development, and opportunity, leading to the emergence of a succession planning framework that was discussed in detail in Chapter 5. This research highlights the importance of knowledge management, talent

management, and learning organisations at a multinational organisation's technical laboratories' succession planning, focusing on retaining skills/knowledge and training employees.

#### **6.4 Limitations**

Limitations to the research were that some participants chose not to conduct the interview, which resulted in less data collection. All participants and the researcher are full-time employees, and some participants could not leave their workstations to conduct the interview. The original sample size was 20. However, six participants could not attend the interviews and sent their apologies. Participants were not available on weekends to conduct the interviews. The researcher and the participants work for the same organisation. The presence of the researcher may bias responses from participants. Bias from the researcher was overcome by using the same interview schedule form and all participants were asked the same questions.

#### **6.5 Recommendations for future research**

Future research could investigate the challenges in implementing succession planning in the organisation, as well as consider a global view of succession planning in all global laboratories in the organisation. Future research could also investigate knowledge management, talent management, and a learning organisation impact on succession planning in technical laboratories. Future research could also be a quantitative study on succession planning in technical laboratories.

#### **6.6 Summary**

This chapter presented the conclusion and recommendations on the four objectives of the study: 1) Determine the understanding of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa; 2) Examine the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa; 3) Identify challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa; and 4) Determine ways to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. There were various conclusions and recommendations for each objective. The conclusions and recommendations aimed to allow for improvements in succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa.

A succession planning laboratory framework was also derived and consisted of knowledge management, skills, training, development, and opportunities. The outcome of the conclusions and recommendations of the research was that the organisation needs to practice knowledge

management, and talent management and be a learning organisation to have a positive outlook on succession planning in the technical laboratories. Each objective was successfully addressed in the research study. It was also concluded that future research should explore challenges in succession planning, global perspectives, knowledge management talent management, and learning organisations, as well as quantitative studies. Succession planning in the technical laboratories was found to foster growth in terms of knowledge and/or growth into a senior position.

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## APPENDIX 1 – ETHICAL CLEARANCE



13 March 2024

Saroja Maharaj (221121173)  
Grad School Of Bus & Leadership  
Westville Campus

Dear S Maharaj,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005306/2023

Amended title: Exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa  
Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 27 February 2024 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an 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.

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

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully








.....  
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000  
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587

Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

## APPENDIX 2 – INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Date:

Dear,

My name is Saroja Maharaj, an MBA student in the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Student email: 221121173@stu.ukzn.ac.za, telephone number: 0 [REDACTED]

You are being invited to participate in a study that involves a research study entitled, *Exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa*. The aim and purpose of this research is to examine succession planning in the various technical laboratories, determine the current state of succession planning and how we can improve the process of succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa. The study is expected to enroll staff from the research and development and quality control laboratories, from the various business units throughout South Africa. It will involve the following procedures: interviews will be conducted via Microsoft Teams on succession planning. You will be asked a few questions relating to succession planning. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be approximately 1 hour.

We hope that the study will create the following benefits to the participants and the company; the status of succession planning in the technical laboratories and what steps can be done to improve succession planning in the technical laboratories.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number 00005306/2023).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at ([REDACTED]) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

### **HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw participation at any point, and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation you will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which you are normally entitled. There are no consequences if you withdraw from the study. There are no costs, incentives, or reimbursements for participation in the study.

All your participation in the research is confidential. Your name will not be divulged to the company, or any other person known or unknown. All recordings of the interview

will not be shared with any person known or unknown. The results of your participation will be included in the research dissertation.

-----  
-----  
**CONSENT (Edit as required)**

I the participant, have been informed about the study entitled (*Exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa*) by Saroja Maharaj.

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 am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at ([221121173@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:221121173@stu.ukzn.ac.za) and 0 [REDACTED]).

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](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Witness  
(Where applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Translator  
(Where applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

### APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MBA dissertation interview schedule by Saroja Maharaj

Student number: 221121173

Cell number: XXXXXXXXXX

<b>Title: Exploring succession planning in the technical laboratories at a multinational organisation, South Africa</b>		
<b>Participant Number: P1</b>		
<b>Date of interview:</b>		
<i>Questions: Demographic</i>		
What is your gender?	Male	
	Female	
	Prefer not to say	
What is your age?	20 to 30 years	
	30 to 40 years	
	40 to 50 years	
	>50 years	
What is your race?	African	
	Indian	
	White	
	Coloured	
	Other	
How long are you employed at the multinational organisation?	1 to 5 years	
	5 to 10 years	
	10 to 20 years	
	>20 years	
Which laboratory do you work in?	Research and Development	
	Quality Control	
	Other	
Which site are you located?	Johannesburg	
	Cape Town	

	Durban	
Which business unit are you employed in?	Business unit 1	
	Business unit 2	
	Business unit 3	
	Business unit 4	
What is your job title?		
<b>Questions: Interview questions</b>		
<p><b>A) Research Question</b>  What is the understanding of succession planning in the technical laboratories at the multinational organisation, South Africa?</p> <p><b>Interview questions</b>  What does succession planning mean to you?  What do you link succession planning to?  Is there any succession planning currently in your department? Please elaborate.</p> <p><b>B) Research Question</b>  What is the importance of succession planning in the technical laboratories at the multinational organisation, South Africa?</p> <p><b>Interview questions</b>  How important is succession planning in your department?  Why do you think succession planning is important in your department?  How should your department evaluate succession planning?</p> <p><b>C) Research Question</b>  What are the challenges in implementing succession planning in the technical laboratories at the multinational organisation, South Africa?</p> <p><b>Interview questions</b>  What challenges have you experienced or observed in implementing succession planning in your department?  Please elaborate on the barriers in implementing succession planning in your department.</p> <p><b>D) Research Question</b>  In what ways can succession planning be improved in the technical laboratories at the multinational organisation, South Africa?</p> <p><b>Interview questions</b></p>		

How can your department improve on succession planning?

How should your department choose a candidate for succession planning?

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**